

2. Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

Why in News?

- Recently, India has urged the member nations to stay dedicated to the conservation and preservation of the oceans and its biodiversity during the ongoing session (Feb-March 2023) Of Intergovernmental Conference (IGC)i.e., IGC-5 of Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).

Highlights

- India supported the high ambition coalition for the early conclusion of the International Legally Binding Instrument of BBNJ under United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- Several rounds of intergovernmental talks have been ongoing since 2014, with the most recent one taking place in Feb-March 2023.
- Despite significant progress on several major issues, negotiations are still ongoing, and consensus not arrived at important issues like funding, intellectual property rights and institutional mechanisms.
- India’s approach to biodiversity management is congruent with three globally accepted principles: conservation, sustainable usage, and equitable benefit sharing.
- The “BBNJ Treaty”, also known as the “Treaty of the High Seas”, is an international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction within the framework of the UNCLOS.
- BBNJ encompasses the high seas, beyond the exclusive economic zones or national waters of countries.
- According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), these areas account for “almost half of the Earth’s surface”.
- These areas are hardly regulated and also least understood or explored for its biodiversity – only 1% of these areas are under protection.
- Launched at the One Ocean Summit in February 2022, the High Ambition Coalition on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction brings together many delegations engaged in the BBNJ negotiations on a common and ambitious outcome at the highest political level.