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ENVIRONMENT CONVENTIONS

1

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Convention on Wetlands)

- International treaty for “the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands”.
- It is named after the **city of Ramsar in Iran**.
- The Convention was signed on the 2nd of February, 1971.
- The **2nd of February** each year is **World Wetlands Day**.
- The number of parties to the convention (COP) is 171.
- **The Ramsar Convention Secretariat** has its headquarters in **Gland, Switzerland**
- Montreux Record under the Ramsar Convention is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance.
- Currently, two wetlands of India are in Montreux record: **Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) and Loktak Lake (Manipur)**.
- **Chilika Lake (Odisha) was placed in the record but was later removed from it.**
- The United Kingdom has the world’s largest number of Ramsar sites i.e 175.

List of Ramsar sites in India

Ramsar Sites in India	State – Location
Ashtamudi Wetland	Kerala
Beas Conservation Reserve	Punjab
Bhitarkanika Mangroves	Odisha
Bhoj Wetlands	Madhya Pradesh
Chandra Taal	Himachal Pradesh
Chilika Lake	Odisha
Deepor Beel	Assam
East Kolkata Wetlands	West Bengal
Harike Wetlands	Punjab
Hokera Wetland	Jammu & Kashmir
Kanjli Wetland	Punjab
Keoladeo National Park	Rajasthan
Keshopur-Miani Community Reserve	Punjab
Kolleru lake	Andhra Pradesh
Loktak lake	Manipur
Nalsarovar Bird sanctuary	Gujarat
Nandur Madhameshwar	Maharashtra
Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary	Punjab
Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
Parvati Agra Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu
Pong Dam lake	Himachal Pradesh
Renuka lake	Himachal Pradesh
Ropar Wetland	Punjab
Rudrasagar Lake	Tripura
Saman Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
Samaspur Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
Sambhar lake	Rajasthan
Sandi Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh

Sarsai Nawar Jheel	Uttar Pradesh
Sasthamkotta lake	Kerala
Surinsar- Mansar lakes	Jammu & Kashmir
Tsomoriri	Jammu & Kashmir
Upper Ganga river	Uttar Pradesh
Vembanad Kol Wetland	Kerala
Wular lake	Jammu & Kashmir
Sunderban Wetland	West Bengal

2

Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage

- It was adopted by the **General Conference of UNESCO in 1972**.
- **Objective:**
 - It is based on the premise that certain places on Earth are of outstanding universal value and should, therefore, form part of the common heritage of mankind, and therefore should be conserved.
 - The countries that ratify the Convention (States Parties) have to become part of an international community, united in a common mission to identify and safeguard our world's most outstanding natural and cultural heritage.
- While fully respecting the national sovereignty, and without prejudice to property rights provided by national legislation, the States Parties recognize that the protection of the World Heritage is the duty of the international community as a whole.
- According to the sites ranked by country, Italy is home to the greatest number of World Heritage Sites with 51 sites, followed by China (48), Spain (44), France (41), Germany (40), Mexico (33), and India (32).

3

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)/ Washington Convention

- It is an international agreement to regulate worldwide commercial trade in wild animal and plant species.
- It was signed on March 3, 1973 (**World Wildlife Day is celebrated on March 3**).
- It is administered by **the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
- **Secretariat** — Geneva (Switzerland).
- **CITES is legally binding** on state parties to the convention, which is obliged to adopt their domestic legislation to implement its goals.
- **Classification:**

- **Appendix I:** It lists species that are in danger of **extinction**. It prohibits commercial trade of these plants and animals except in extraordinary situations for scientific or educational reasons.
- **Appendix II:** They are those that are **not threatened with extinction** but that might suffer a serious decline in number if the trade is not restricted. Their trade is regulated by permit.
- **Appendix III species:** They are protected in at least one country that is a CITES member states and that has petitioned others for help in controlling international trade in that species.

In News

- India has proposed to remove rosewood (*Dalbergiasissoo*) from Appendix II of CITES.
- India has also proposed to transfer small clawed otters (*Aonyxcinereus*), smooth coated otters (*Lutrogaleperspicillata*), Indian Star Tortoise (*Geocheloneelegans*) from Appendix II to Appendix I, thereby giving more protection to the species.
- The proposal also includes inclusion of Gekko gecko and Wedgefish (*Rhinidae*) in Appendix II of CITES.

4

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention)

- It is the only global and UN-based intergovernmental organization **established under the aegis of UNEP** exclusively for conservation and management of terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range.
- **Enforcement Year: November 1, 1983**
- **Parties:** As of 1st November 2019, there were **130 Parties** to the Convention– **129 countries plus the European Union. The Maldives** is the latest country to join it (November 2019).
- **Species Covered:** Convention has two Appendices:
 - **Appendix I** list migratory species that are **endangered** or **threatened with extinction**.
 - **Appendix II** list migratory species which have unfavourable conservation status and which **require international agreements** for their conservation and management.
- India has been a party to the Convention since 1983.
- India has signed a **non-legally binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CMS** on conservation and management of Siberian Cranes (1998), Marine Turtles (2007), Dugongs (2008), and Raptors (2016).

CMS- COP 13

- It was held in Gandhinagar Gujarat.
- The **Logo of COP 13** was inspired by '**Kolam**'- a traditional art form Southern India used to depict **key migratory species** in India like Amur Falcon, and Marine Turtles.

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- The mascot for CMS COP-13 is ‘**Gibi** – The Great Indian Bustard’.
- CMS has focused on the connectivity concept to be integrated into the new **Global Biodiversity Framework** (which will be adopted in 2021 in China).
- COP 13, proposes to **include ten new species for protection under CMS** viz.:
 - ▶ Three **Indian Species**: **Asian Elephant, Bengal Florican, Great Indian Bustard.**
 - ▶ Other 7 from around the world: **Jaguar** (proposed by Costa Rica, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay), **Whitetip shark** (Brazil), **Little Bustard** (EU Nations), **Urial** (Tajikistan, Iran, Uzbekistan), **Antipodean Albatross** (New Zealand, Australia, Chile), **Smooth Hammerhead Shark** (Brazil), and **Tope Shark** (EU Nations).

5 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- ▶ It is a **legally binding treaty** to conserve biodiversity has been in force since 1993.
- ▶ There are 196 parties and 168 signatories to the CBD, including India.
- ▶ Nearly all countries have ratified it (**notably, the US has signed but not ratified**).
- ▶ The **CBD Secretariat is based in Montreal, Canada** and it operates under the **United Nations Environment Programme**.
- ▶ On 29 January 2000, the COP 5 to the CBD adopted the **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety**. It came into force on 11 September 2003.
- ▶ The **Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS)** to the CBD was adopted on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan at COP10. It entered into force on 12 October 2014.
- ▶ The COP-10 also adopted a ten-year framework known as “**Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020**”, which provides a set of 20 ambitious yet achievable targets, collectively known as the **Aichi Targets for biodiversity**.
- ▶ **India enacted the Biological Diversity Act in 2002** for giving effect to the provisions of the CBD.

In News

- India submitted its **sixth national report (NR6) to the CBD** during the inaugural session of the meeting of the State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) organized by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA).
- The NR6 highlights the progress India has made in achieving the 12 National Biodiversity Targets (NBT) set under the convention process.

6 Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

- ▶ Established in 1994.
- ▶ **Secretariat:** It has been located in **Bonn, Germany** since January 1999.
- ▶ It is the sole **legally binding international agreement** linking environment and development to sustainable land management.
- ▶ It is the only convention stemming from a direct recommendation of the **Rio Conference's Agenda 21**.
- ▶ To help publicize the Convention, **2006 was declared "International Year of Deserts and Desertification"**.
- ▶ The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** is the nodal Ministry for this Convention.

In News

- The **COP-14 to the UNCCD** was hosted by India in **New Delhi**.
- The theme of the Conference was **'Restore land, Sustain future'**.
- **India took over the COP Presidency from China** for the next two years till 2021.
- India is among the select few countries to have hosted the COP of all three Rio conventions on climate change, biodiversity and land.

7 BRS Convention

- ▶ **The Basel Convention** came into force in 1992, intends to reduce trans-boundary movements of hazardous waste from developed to less developed countries (LDCs), and ensure their safe disposal as closely as possible to the source of generation.
 - **Secretariat location:** Basel, Switzerland
 - **Parties:** 187 (**Haiti and the United States have signed the Convention but not ratified it**).
 - It does **not address** the movement of radioactive waste.
- ▶ **Rotterdam Convention**
 - Entered into force on 24th February 2004.
 - It covers pesticides and industrial chemicals that have been banned or severely restricted for health or environmental reasons by Parties and which have been notified by Parties for inclusion in the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.
 - **The Convention creates legally binding obligations for the implementation of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.**
 - **Secretariat Location:** Rotterdam, the Netherlands
 - **Parties:** 161 parties, Non-member states include the United States.

- ▶ **The Stockholm Convention** is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs).
 - **Location:** Stockholm, Sweden
 - **Parties:** 184 parties to the Convention (183 states and the European Union). Notable non-ratifying states include the United States, Israel, Malaysia, and Italy.
 - The **Global Environmental Facility (GEF)** is the designated interim financial mechanism for the Stockholm Convention.

In News

- The “Triple COPs” meeting took place in Geneva,
 - ▶ Basel Convention (COP-14)
 - ▶ Rotterdam Convention (COP-9)
 - ▶ Stockholm Convention (COP-9)
- **Theme:** ‘Clean Planet, Healthy People: Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste’.
- **Outcomes:**
 - ▶ In Basel Convention two important issues were mainly discussed and decided i.e. technical guidelines on e-waste and inclusion of plastic waste in Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.
 - ▶ A proposal by India to prevent developed countries from dumping their electronic and plastic waste into developing countries was defeated.
 - ▶ **An amendment to the Convention that includes plastic waste in a legally-binding framework. However, it does not bar countries from exporting various categories of plastic waste.**
- In Stockholm Convention COP decided to list “Dicofol” in Annex A (Elimination) without any exemption. The “PFOA”, (Perfluorooctanoic acid) was also listed with some exemptions in Annex A of Stockholm Convention.
- In Rotterdam Convention two new chemicals named Phorate and HBCD (hexabromocyclododecane) were added in list for mandatory Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure in international trade.

9

Vienna Convention for Protection of the Ozone Layer

- ▶ It is a multilateral environmental agreement agreed upon at the 1985 Vienna Conference and entered into force in 1988.
- ▶ It has been **ratified by 197 states** (all UN members as well as Niue, Holy See, and the Cook Islands) as well as European Union.
- ▶ It acts as a framework for international efforts to protect the ozone layer. These are laid out in the **accompanying Montreal Protocol**. It **does not include legally binding** reduction goals for the use of CFCs, the main chemical agents causing ozone depletion.



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Montreal Protocol

- It is an international treaty designed to protect ozone layer by phasing out production of numerous Ozone Depleting Substances (ODSs) that are responsible for ozone depletion.
- It was agreed on 26 August 1987 in Montreal, Canada and entered into force on 26 August 1989.

Kigali Agreement

- It is an amendment to the Montreal Protocol.
- It happened during the 28th Meeting of Parties (2016) when the 197 member countries signed the agreement to amend the Montreal Protocol.
- It is a **legally binding agreement** between the signatories. And, there are non-compliance measures to ensure its implementation.
- It sets different targets for countries depending upon the states of development, different socio-economic constraints, and varying technological and scientific capacities.
- The Kigali Agreement upholds the principle of **Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities**.
- The agreement classifies the signatory parties into three as per the phase-down schedules to freeze and reduce the production of HFCs.

7

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

- It is a multilateral environmental agreement to control greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.
- The secretariat is located in **Bonn, Germany**.
- It was adopted on **9th May 1992**.
- The first conference was held in **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**.
- **Parties:** 197 countries
- **It is not legally binding.**
- **Classification of Parties:**
 - **Annex I:**
 - ◆ There are 43 including the European Union.
 - ◆ These Parties are classified as industrialized (developed) countries and “**economies in transition**” (EITs).
 - ◆ The 14 EITs are the former centrally-planned (Soviet) economies of Russia and Eastern Europe.
 - **Annex II:**
 - ◆ There are 24 Parties including the European Union.

- ◆ These Parties are made up of members of the **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**.
- ◆ Annex II Parties are **required to provide financial and technical support to the EITs and developing countries** to assist them in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions (climate change mitigation) and manage the impacts of climate change (climate change adaptation).
- **Annex B:**
 - ◆ Parties listed in Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol are Annex I Parties with first- or second-round Kyoto greenhouse gas emissions targets.
 - ◆ The first-round targets apply over the years 2008–2012. As part of the 2012 Doha climate change talks, an amendment to Annex B was agreed upon containing a list of Annex I Parties who have second-round Kyoto targets, which apply from 2013–2020. The amendments have not entered into force.
- Least-developed countries (LDCs):
 - ◆ 49 Parties are LDCs and are given special status under the treaty given their limited capacity to adapt to the effects of climate change.
- Non-Annex I:
 - Parties to the UNFCCC not listed in Annex I of the Convention are mostly low-income developing countries.
 - Developing countries may volunteer to become Annex I countries when they are sufficiently developed.

In News:

- COP25 to the UNFCCC was held in Madrid (Spain).
- **“Chile-Madrid Time for Action” declaration:**
 - To improve their current pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
 - To help poor countries that are suffering the effects of climate change, although any new funds were not allocated for the purpose.
 - It called on the “urgent need” to cut planet-heating greenhouse gases in line with the goals of the 2015 Paris climate change accord.
 - The Paris Accord established the common goal of avoiding a temperature increase of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century.

8

Nairtioniobi Declara

- It was first signed in 1985 and entered into force in 1996, is part of the **UN Environment’s Regional Seas Programme**.
- It is a partnership between governments, civil society, and the private sector, working towards a prosperous Western Indian Ocean Region with healthy rivers, coasts, and oceans.
- The programme aims to address the accelerating degradation of the world’s oceans and coastal areas through the sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal environment.

- It pursues its vision by providing a mechanism for regional cooperation, coordination, and collaborative actions; it enables the Contracting Parties to harness resources and expertise from a wide range of stakeholders and interest groups; and in this way, it helps solve inter-linked problems of the region's coastal and marine environment.

9 World Charter of Nature

- It was adopted by United Nations member nation-states on October 28, 1982.
- It sets forth "principles of conservation by which all human conduct affecting nature is to be guided and judged." The Charter recognizes the interaction between mankind and nature. It calls for member states to reflect the stated principles in their national legislation
- The Charter recognizes the interaction between mankind and nature.
- It proclaims **five principles of conservation** by which all human conduct affecting nature is to be guided and judged.
 - Nature shall be respected and its essential processes shall not be impaired.
 - The genetic viability on the earth shall not be compromised; the population levels of all life forms, wild and domesticated, must be at least sufficient for their survival, and to this end, necessary habitats shall be safeguarded.
 - All areas of the earth, both land, and sea, shall be subject to these principles of conservation; special protection shall be given to unique areas, to representative samples of all the different types of ecosystems and the habitats of rare or endangered species.
 - Ecosystems and organisms, as well as the land, marine, and atmospheric resources that are utilized by man, shall be managed to achieve and maintain optimum sustainable productivity, but not in such a way as to endanger the integrity of those other ecosystems or species with which they coexist.
 - Nature shall be secured against degradation caused by warfare or other hostile activities.

10

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992 (Earth Summit/Rio Summit)

- In continuation of the Stockholm Declaration, 1972, and the Nairobi Declaration, 1982 the third major Declaration was held in Rio-de-Janeiro in Brazil in the year 1992.
- **Objective:** The Rio Declaration was adopted in the conference recognizing the universal and integral nature of Earth and by establishing a global partnership among states and enlisting general rights and obligations on environmental protection.
- This summit led to the development of the following documents:
 - Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
 - Agenda 21
 - Forest Principles
- The first document called the Rio Declaration, in short, contained 27 principles that were supposed to guide countries in future sustainable development.

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- Agenda 21 is an action plan for sustainable development, but **it is non-binding**.
- The Forest Principles is formally called '**Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests**'. It makes many recommendations for conservation and sustainable development forestry and is non-binding.



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