A Handbook on
International Environment Conventions & Programmes












Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Environment Education Division



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भारत सरकार
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
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MESSAGE

The deterioration of natural resources is a major challenge for developing country like India that is exposed to effects of climate change, pollution, land degradation, industrial development etc. Ministry's motto is balancing development with environment protection; and mobilising people to adopt nature –friendly practises. Article 51-A(g) of the Constitution has also enshrined protection of natural environment as fundamental duty of every citizen.

UN Conference on Environment and Development, which took place in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, confirmed the central place that global environmental concerns over issues such as global warming and loss of biological diversity have on the world political agenda. The international community worldwide has responded to the need to regulate the activities which threaten the environment. A number of international legal instruments in form of Conventions/Agreements/Protocols governing environmental issues have been developed covering biodiversity conservation; climate change, protection of the marine environment; and regulation of transboundary environmental impacts.

India is committed to achieving the objectives of these International Environmental Conventions and Ministry is the nodal point for their implementation in the country. I am very pleased to present this booklet which shall be used as resource material for the students of Ecoclubs across India. The booklet documents the background and brief information on various conventions which Ministry has signed for protection of environment. Students will have insight on India's perspective on biodiversity, waste management, pollution, desertification, climate change, wetlands etc. I congratulate and compliment the team of ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION DIVISION for taking up the initiative of preparing this document.

(C.K. Mishra)

New Delhi, the 23rd October, 2019

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Message

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) is the nodal agency in the Central Government for the planning, promotion, co-ordination and overseeing the implementation of India's environmental & forestry policies and programmes. The mandate of the Ministry includes implementation of policies and programmes relating to conservation of the country's natural resources including its lakes and rivers, its biodiversity, forests and wildlife, ensuring the welfare of animals, prevention and abatement of pollution. MoEF&CC is also the nodal point for implementation of International Environmental Conventions.

While implementing these policies and programmes, the Ministry is guided by the principle of sustainable development and enhancement of human well-being. A number of international legal instruments in form of Conventions/Agreements/Protocols governing environmental issues have been developed by the international community for protecting natural resources covering biodiversity conservation; climate change, protection of marine environment; and regulation of transboundary environmental impacts.

India is a party to host of international conventions that assume significance in context of growing environmental concerns across countries. I am sure that the hand book, providing information on these conventions, would be a very useful resource material for the students of Ecoclubs across India. Students will have insight on India's perspective on biodiversity, waste management, pollution, desertification, climate change, wetlands etc. I congratulate the team of ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION DIVISION for this initiative and wish success of the Environment Education, Awareness and Training scheme.

(Ravi Agrawal)

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PREFACE

International environmental agreements reflect key government policies on important environmental issues. Because many environmental issues such as air pollution, deterioration of the ozone layer, climate change, and ocean pollution are transboundary or global in nature, countries cannot achieve desired results by acting alone. Wide range of international environmental agreements has been developed to enable countries worldwide to work together on global environmental issues.

In 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, marked the beginning of a comprehensive international effort to protect, preserve, and enhance the environment. Several important environmental agreements have been negotiated since then. India is a party to various international environmental conventions with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change as the nodal agency for the implementation in India.

This handbook aims to sensitize children participating in the Ecoclubs programme of Ministry on these important international legal instruments Conventions/Agreements/Protocols governing environmental issues. I express my appreciation for my team comprising of Dr. Ritesh Joshi, Scientist 'E', Ms. Kanchan Puri, Programme Coordinator and Mr. Vishant Yadav, Assistant Section Officer for their concerted efforts made in preparation of this booklet.

(Arvind Kumar Nautiyal)

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Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Year of Establishment: 1992
Headquarters: Canada
Number of participating countries: 196

Global concern about loss of species and ecosystems is expressed in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The CBD, one of the two key agreements adopted during the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, is the first comprehensive global agreement which addresses all aspects relating to biodiversity. The CBD, which has near universal membership 196 countries as its Parties, sets out commitments for maintaining the world's ecological underpinnings, while pursuing economic development.

The Convention, while reaffirming sovereign rights of nations over their biological resources, establishes three main goals: conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources. India is a Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is the nodal Ministry for implementation of CBD in India.

Two Protocols have been adopted so far under the aegis of CBD: the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2000); and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (2010).

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB), the first international regulatory framework for safe transfer, handling and use of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) was negotiated under the aegis of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The protocol was adopted on 29th January 2000.

A Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) was adopted in 2010 under the aegis of CBD. The objective of this Protocol is the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. The Protocol has entered into force on 12th October 2014. India signed the Protocol on 11th May 2011, and ratified it on 9th October, 2012.



United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

Year of Establishment: 1996
Headquarters: Germany
Number of participating countries: 197

Desertification, along with the climate change and the loss of biodiversity were identified as the greatest challenges to sustainable development during the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Adopted in 1994, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) entered into force in 1996 and became a legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.

The Convention's 197 parties work together to improve the living conditions for people in drylands, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought. The UNCCD is particularly committed to a bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification and land degradation.

As the dynamics of land, climate and biodiversity are intimately connected, the UNCCD collaborates closely with the other two Rio Conventions; the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to meet these complex challenges with an integrated approach and the best possible use of natural resources.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the nodal Ministry in the Government of India to co-ordinate all the issues pertaining to the Convention. As a party to the Convention, the Country Parties are obligated to submit the National reports to UNCCD periodically. Further India is hosting 14th conference of parties to UNCCD from 2nd-13th September 2019 in Greater Noida.



United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Year of Establishment: 1994
Headquarters: Germany
Number of participating countries: 197

The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994. Today, it has near-universal membership. The 197 countries that have ratified the Convention are called Parties to the Convention.

The UNFCCC is a "Rio Convention", one of the three adopted at the "Rio Earth Summit" in 1992. Its sister Rio Conventions are the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification. The three are intrinsically linked. It is in this context that the Joint Liaison Group was set up to boost cooperation among the three Conventions, with the ultimate aim of developing synergies in their activities on issues of mutual concern. It now also incorporates the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

MoEFCC is India's nodal agency for climate change cooperation and global negotiations.

The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement linked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which commits its Parties by setting internationally binding emission reduction targets.

Recognizing that developed countries are principally responsible for the current high levels of GHG emissions in the atmosphere as a result of more than 150 years of industrial activity, the Protocol places a heavier burden on these developed nations under the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities."

The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, on 11 December 1997 and entered into force on 16 February 2005. The detailed rules for the implementation of the Protocol were adopted at COP 7 in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 2001, and are referred to as the "Marrakesh Accords." Its first commitment period started in 2008 and ended in 2012.



Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Year of Establishment: 1973
Headquarters: Switzerland
Number of participating countries: 183

In order to regulate international trade in endangered species of Wild Life, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was signed in March 1973. The Government of India signed the Convention in July 1976, which was ratified in October 1976. Currently there are 183 Parties.

The Director, Wild Life Preservation has been designated as the CITES Management Authority for India. The enforcement of the provisions of CITES is carried out by the Regional Deputy Directors, Wild Life Crime Control Bureau, who have also been designated as the Assistant CITES Management Authority for India. Apart from the Regional Deputy Directors, the Customs Authorities, State Forest Departments are also involved in the enforcement of the Convention.

An amendment to the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 has been proposed for integrating the provisions of CITES in the national law for effective implementation of the Convention. India has taken several initiatives in the recent years at a national level to build capacity for better CITES implementation in the country.



World Heritage Convention (WHC)

Year of Establishment: 1972
Headquarters: France
Number of participating countries: 193

India is a member of World Heritage Convention responsible for listing of World Heritage Sites, which include both cultural and natural sites. The World Heritage Convention is a Convention under the aegis of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The most significant feature of the 1972 World Heritage Convention is that it links together in a single document the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties. The Convention recognizes the way in which people interact with the nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two. Wild Life wing of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is associated with the conservation of the Natural World Heritage sites.

Currently, six natural World Heritage Sites have been recognized by UNESCO in India, viz., Nanda Devi National Park, Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park, Keoladeo National Park and the Sundarbans National Park. Apart from these, the Valley of Flowers National Park has also been included in the list of World Heritage Sites as an extension of Nanda Devi National Park.



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

Year of Establishment: 1979
Headquarters: Germany
Number of participating countries: 127

The Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) or Bonn Convention aims to conserve migratory species throughout their range. The Convention came into force in 1979. India is a signatory to the convention since 1983. As of 1st December 2018, the Convention on Migratory Species has 127 Parties. During COP 10, India has also been nominated as a member of the Standing Committee of the Convention with the support from various countries in the Asia.

During the COP, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, WWF-India, Wetlands International and BNHS (Bombay Natural History Society) jointly organized a side event on Black-necked Crane urging the range States for regional cooperation for conservation of this unique species found in the Himalayan high altitude wetlands. Conference of Parties is held generally once in three years.



International Whaling Commission (IWC)

Year of Establishment: 1946
Headquarters: United Kingdom
Number of participating countries: 89

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) was set up under the International Commission for the Regulation of Whaling which was signed in Washington on 2nd December 1946. The purpose of the Convention is to provide for conservation of whale stocks. The IWC currently has 89 member governments from countries all over the world.

The main duty of the International Whaling Commission is to keep under review and revise as necessary the measures laid down in the schedule to the Convention which governs the conduct of whaling throughout the world. These measures, among other things, provide complete protection of certain species, designate specified areas as whale sanctuaries, limit the number of whales which may be taken, prescribe open and closed seasons and designate areas for whaling; prohibit the capture of suckling calves and female whales accompanied by calves.

India has been a member of the International Whaling Commission since 1981 and has played a pro-active and prominent role in bringing about a moratorium on commercial whaling and supporting the Commission in its efforts towards whale conservation.

All the Cetacean species (whales, dolphins, etc.) have been included in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby giving them the highest degree of protection. Apart from this, India has always been supporting the conservation of whales through the establishment of the South Pacific Sanctuary.



Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal

Year of Establishment: 1989
Headquarters: Switzerland
Number of participating countries: 180

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal was adopted on 22 March 1989 by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Basel, Switzerland. The Convention entered into force on 5 May 1992. The overarching objective of the Basel Convention is to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects of hazardous wastes. Its scope of application covers a wide range of wastes defined as "hazardous wastes" based on their origin and/or composition and their characteristics. India deposited its instrument of ratification on June 1992. Currently there are 180 Parties to the Convention.

During early 1980s, awakening environmental awareness and corresponding tightening of environmental regulations in the industrialized world in the 1970s and 1980s had led to increasing public resistance to the disposal of hazardous wastes – in accordance with what became known as the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) syndrome – and to an escalation of the disposal costs. This in turn led some operators to seek cheap disposal options for hazardous wastes in the developing world, where environmental awareness regulations and enforcement mechanisms were lacking. It was against this background that the Basel Convention was negotiated in the late 1980s, and its thrust at the time of its adoption was to combat the "toxic trade", as it was termed.

With respect to Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of hazardous waste, the Convention aims towards restricting transboundary movements of hazardous wastes except where it is perceived to be in accordance with the principle of ESM. The Ministry has notified the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules 2016 which addresses prevention, minimization, reuse, recycling, recovery, co-processing; and safe disposal of hazardous and other waste.



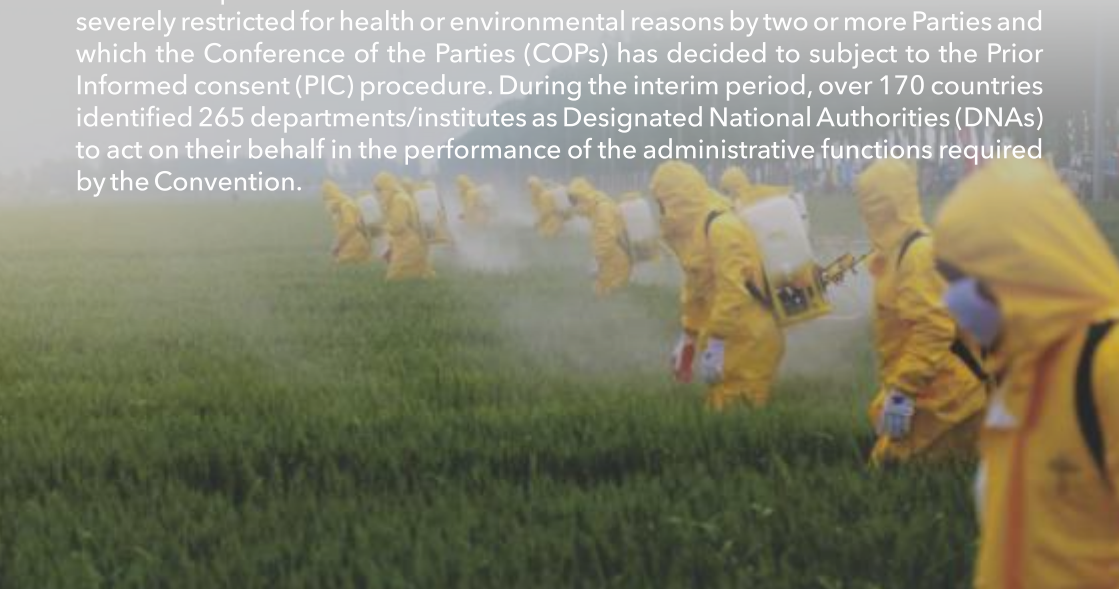
Rotterdam Convention on Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

Year of Establishment: 1998
Headquarters: Switzerland
Number of participating countries: 170

Rotterdam Convention (RC) is a multilateral environment agreement which prescribes obligations on the import and export of certain hazardous chemicals. Parties are empowered, through virtue of membership, to make informed decisions about the chemicals they want to receive, and to exclude those they believe they cannot manage safely. The convention's objective is to promote shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among parties in the international trade of these chemicals to protect human health and the environment, and contribute to the environmentally sound use of chemicals.

The Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure is a mechanism for formally obtaining and disseminating the decisions of importing Parties as to whether they wish to receive future shipments of those chemicals listed in Annex III of the Convention and for ensuring compliance with these decisions by exporting Parties. The Convention was adopted on 10th September 1998 and entered into force on 24 February 2004. India ratified the convention on 24 May 2005. The convention covers industrial chemicals and pesticides. The total number of chemicals listed under Rotterdam Convention is 50.

The Designated National Authorities (DNAs) for India are in Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation. The Official Contact Points (OCPs) are designated in Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. There are 47 chemicals listed in Annex III to this Convention, which include 33 pesticides and 14 industrial chemicals that have been banned or severely restricted for health or environmental reasons by two or more Parties and which the Conference of the Parties (COPs) has decided to subject to the Prior Informed consent (PIC) procedure. During the interim period, over 170 countries identified 265 departments/institutes as Designated National Authorities (DNAs) to act on their behalf in the performance of the administrative functions required by the Convention.



Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

Year of Establishment: 2001
Headquarters: Switzerland
Number of participating countries: 182

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from POPs. The Convention sought initially 12 chemicals, for restriction or elimination of the production and release. Now, the Convention covers 23 chemicals. The Convention was adopted in May, 2001 and came into force on 17th May, 2004. India ratified the Convention on 13th January, 2006 which came in to force on 12th April, 2006.

As per Article 7 of the Convention, Parties to the Convention were required to develop a National Implementation Plan (NIP) to demonstrate how their obligations to the Convention would be implemented and NIP has been developed through Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change serves as the focal point for GEF and Stockholm Convention in the country. Designated national authorities are in Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation and Ministry of Chemicals and Petrochemicals. India has ratified 12 initially listed chemicals.

Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods (persistent), become widely distributed geographically (long range transport), accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and wildlife (bioaccumulation), and have harmful impacts on human health or on the environment (toxic).



Minamata Convention on Mercury

Year of Establishment: 2013
Headquarters: Switzerland
Number of participating countries: 182

In February 2009, the Governing Council of UNEP adopted Decision 25/5 on the development of a global legally binding instrument on mercury. At the Conference of Plenipotentiaries held from 9th-11th October 2013 in Minamata and Kumamoto, Japan, the "Minamata Convention on Mercury", a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury, was formally adopted and opened for signature by States and regional economic integration organizations. The Convention has as of now received nine ratification and 128 signatures. India signed the Convention on 30th September 2014.

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is a multilateral environmental agreement that addresses specific human activities which are contributing to the widespread mercury pollution. Implementation of this agreement will help reduce global mercury pollution over the coming decades. Mercury is recognized as a substance producing significant adverse neurological and other health effects, with particular concerns expressed about its harmful effects on unborn children and infants.

The objective of the Convention is to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds and it sets out a range of measures to meet that objective. These include measures to control the supply and trade of mercury, including setting limitations on certain specific sources of mercury such as primary mining, and to control mercury-added products and manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used, as well as artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

The Government of India signed the Convention on 30 September 2014 and ratified it on 18 June 2018. The Convention came into force for the country from 16 September 2018.



Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer

Year of Establishment: 1985
Headquarters: United States of America
Number of participating countries: 197

The scientific confirmation of the depletion of the ozone layer prompted the international community to establish a mechanism for cooperation to take action to protect the ozone layer. This was formalized in the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, which was adopted and signed by 28 countries, on 22 March 1985. In September 1987, this led to the drafting of The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. 197 countries of the world are Parties to the Vienna Convention and its Montreal Protocol.

The principal aim of the Montreal Protocol is to protect the ozone layer by taking measures to control total global production and consumption of substances that deplete it, with the ultimate objective of their elimination on the basis of developments in scientific knowledge and technological information.

The Montreal Protocol is structured around several groups of ozone-depleting substances. The groups of chemicals are classified according to the chemical family and are listed in annexes to the Montreal Protocol text. The Montreal Protocol requires the control of nearly 100 chemicals, in several categories. For each group or annex of chemicals, the Treaty sets out a timetable for the phase-out of production and consumption of those substances, with the aim of eventually eliminating them completely.

The timetable set by the Montreal Protocol applies to the consumption of ozone depleting substances. Consumption is defined as the quantities produced plus imported, less those quantities exported in any given year. There is also a deduction for verified destruction. Percentage reductions relate to the designated base-line year for the substance.



Ramsar Convention

Year of Establishment: 1971
Headquarters: Switzerland
Number of participating countries: 158

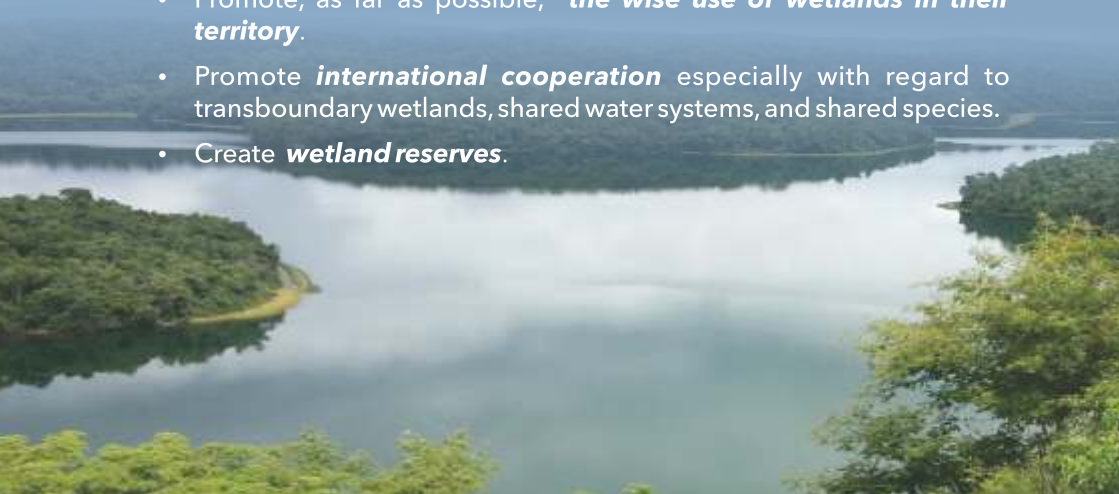
The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. There are presently 158 Contracting Parties to the Convention, with 1758 wetland sites, totalling 161 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. Ramsar Convention is the only global environment treaty dealing with a particular ecosystem.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was developed as a means to call international attention to the rate at which wetland habitats were disappearing, in part due to a lack of understanding of their important functions, values, goods and services. Governments that join the Convention are expressing their willingness to make a commitment to helping to reverse that history of wetland loss and degradation.

In addition, many wetlands are international systems lying across the boundaries of two or more countries, or are part of river basins that include more than one country. The health of these and other wetlands is dependent upon the quality and quantity of the transboundary water supply from rivers, streams, lakes, or underground aquifers. This requires framework for international discussion and cooperation toward mutual benefits.

Major obligations of countries which are party to the Convention are:

- Designate wetlands for inclusion in the ***List of Wetlands of International Importance***.
- Promote, as far as possible, ***the wise use of wetlands in their territory***.
- Promote ***international cooperation*** especially with regard to transboundary wetlands, shared water systems, and shared species.
- Create ***wetland reserves***.



Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment Program "GLOBE"

Year of Establishment: 1995
Headquarters: USA
Number of participating countries: 121

The Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) program is an international science and education program that provides students and the public worldwide with the opportunity to participate in data collection and the scientific process, and contribute meaningfully to our understanding of the earth system and global environment.

The program was announced by the US Government in 1994 on the occasion of Earth day and launched its implementation worldwide in 1995. The mission of the program is to promote the teaching and learning of science, enhance in environmental literacy and stewardship and promote scientific discovery. GLOBE provides grade level appropriate, in disciplinary activities and inventions about the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere and pedosphere, which have been developed by the scientific community and validated by teachers.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change is the Nodal Ministry for the subject and had signed a MoU with NASA in August, 2000. Since then the GLOBE program is being dealt by Environment Education Division of this Ministry and the divisional head (JS/Adviser level officer) is the country coordinator.

Goals of GLOBE:

- To enhance the environmental awareness of individuals throughout the world.
- To contribute to scientific understanding of the Earth
- To help all students reach higher levels of achievement in science and mathematics.



Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

Year of Establishment: 1997
Headquarters: Mauritius
Number of participating countries: 22

The Indian Ocean Rim Association is an inter-governmental organization which was established on 7 March 1997. It is a dynamic inter-governmental organization aimed at strengthening the regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region through its 22 Member States and 9 Dialogue Partners.

Since India became the IORA Chair for the period 2011-2013, there has been a growing direction and determination to strengthen institutions and capacities within IORA. India revitalized IORA during its chairmanship and six Priority and two Focus Areas were identified on the basis to promote sustained growth and balanced development in the Indian Ocean Region.



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