

## CHAPTER 9

### INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

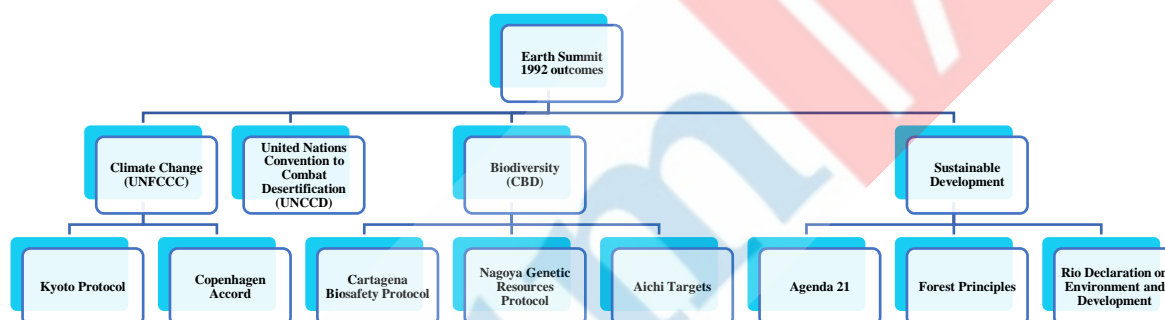
#### 9.1 International Conventions

##### 9.1.1 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) is also known as the Rio Summit, Rio Conference or Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.

The issues addressed included:

1. Systematic scrutiny of patterns of production- primarily the production of toxic components, such as lead in gasoline, or poisonous wastes including radioactive chemicals.
2. Alternative sources of energy to replace the use of fossil fuels which are linked to global climate change.
3. New reliance on public transportation systems in order to reduce vehicle emissions, congestion in cities and health problems caused by polluted air and smog.
4. The growing scarcity of water.



**Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** were the two legally binding agreements reached upon during the Earth Summit.

**Agenda 21** is a non-binding action plan of the United Nations related to sustainable development.

The number 21 signifies the agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It aims to achieve global sustainable development.

Since 2015, Sustainable Development Goals are included in the Agenda 2030.

**Forest Principle** is a 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 several recommendations for conservation and sustainable development forestry.

##### 9.1.1.1 UNFCCC

**UN Summit Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or Earth Summit** held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 adopted, by consensus, the first multilateral legal instrument on Climate Change, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change or the UNFCCC.

As a follow-up, the **World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio +10)** was held in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa. In 2012, the **United Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)** was held in Rio and is commonly known as Rio Earth Summit 2012.

UNFCCC provides a framework for negotiation of specific international treaties (called “protocols”) that aim to set binding limit on emission of Green House Gases (GHGs). As of March 2019, UNFCCC has 197 parties.

### 9.1.1.2 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

CBD is an international legally binding convention which recognized for the first time, the need for conservation of biological diversity for the welfare of humankind. The agreement covers all ecosystems, species as well as genetic resources.

Objectives of the Convention include:

1. Conservation of biological diversity
2. Sustainable use of its components
3. Fair and equitable sharing of benefits

In the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in 2010, in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, “Aichi Biodiversity Targets” were adopted for the period 2011-20.



Picture Credits: hpbiodiversity.gov.in

The year 2020 is referred to as “Super Year for Biodiversity” because the strategic plan for with 20 global Aichi targets adopted in 2010 ends in 2020 and all the countries together are in the process of preparation of post 2020 global biodiversity framework.

**COP 11** to the CBD was held in Hyderabad, India. One of the most important outcomes of the COP was the commitment of the parties to double the international financial flows for biodiversity by 2015.

India instituted together with the UNDP “Biodiversity Governance Awards” at the COP.

**Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety:** CBD covers the rapidly expanding field of biotechnology through its “Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety”. It addresses technology development and transfer, benefit-sharing and biosafety issues.

The biosafety protocol seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by “**Living Modified Organisms (LMOs)**” resulting from modern biotechnology.

There are two main sets of procedures under the Protocol, one for LMOs intended for direct introduction into the environment, known as “**Advance Informed Agreement (AIA)**” procedure and another for **LMOs intended for direct use as food or feed, or for processing (LMOs-FFP)**.

1. AIA: Under AIA procedure, a country intending to export LMO for intentional release into the environment must notify in writing the Party of import before the first processed export takes place.
2. LMOs-FFP: Under the procedure for LMOs-FFP, Parties that decide to approve and place such LMOs on the market are required to make their decision and relevant information, including risk assessment reports, publicly available through the Biosafety Clearing House (BCH).

**Nagoya Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress:** It reinforces the Cartagena Protocol.

The Supplementary Protocol specifies response measures which must be taken in the case of damage to biodiversity resulting from Living Modified Organisms.

**Nagoya Protocol** is a 2010 supplementary agreement to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The Nagoya Protocol is about “**Access to Genetic Resources**” and the “**Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefit**” arising from their utilization.

**Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)** is an independent intergovernmental body established by member states in 2012. The objective of IPBES is to strengthen the science policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development.

### 9.1.1.3 UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification)

Established in 1994, UNCCD is the sole legally binding international agreement which links environment and development to sustainable land management. UNCCD is one of the Rio Convention that focusses on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) in regions like Africa, Asia, Latin America and Caribbean.

Desertification is a type of land degradation in which the biological productivity of land is lost due to natural processes or by induced human activities whereby fertile areas become increasingly arid. UNCCD launched Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) to conserve, sustainably manage and restore land

**14<sup>th</sup> COP of UNCCD** held in New Delhi adopted the New Delhi Declaration. Several initiatives were launched at UNCCD COP 14:

1. International Coalition for action on Sand and Dust storms (SDS)
2. Initiative of sustainability, stability and security (3S)
3. Youth Caucus on desertification and land

## 9.1.2 Ramsar Convention

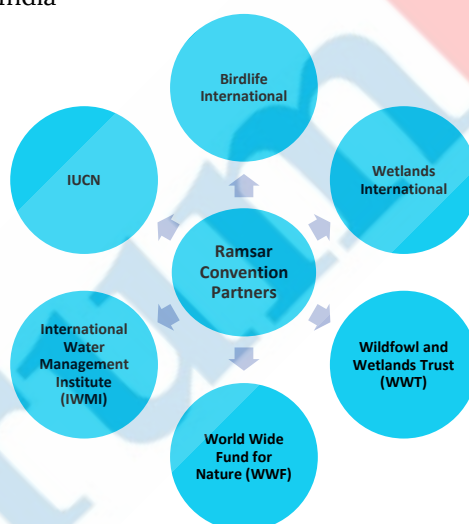
Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental treaty that provides framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation through ecosystem approach and simultaneous sustainable use of wetlands and their resources. However, it is to be noted that under Ramsar Convention, there is no binding provision related to conservation of wetlands.

It was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 but came into force in 1975. It is the only global environmental treaty dealing with a particular ecosystem. Ramsar is however not affiliated with the United Nations System, but it works very closely with it.

Parties to the Ramsar Convention commit to:

1. Working towards the “wise use” of wetlands
2. Identifying suitable wetlands to be listed under Wetlands of International Importance (the “Ramsar List”) and ensure their effective management
3. Ensuring international cooperation on transboundary wetlands, shared wetlands and shared species

**Montreux Record** is maintained as a part of the Ramsar List. It is a register of wetlands of international importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur as a result of human interference. Loktak lake, Manipur and Keoladeo National Park, Rajasthan are the two Montreux Record sites in India



**Changwon Declaration** on human well-being and wetlands highlights positive action for ensuring human well-being and security in the future.

## 9.1.3 CMS (Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species)

CMS, also known as the **Bonn Convention**, aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an intergovernmental treaty concluded under the aegis of UNEP, concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale.

CMS is the only global Convention specializing in the conservation of migratory species, their habitats and migration routes.



## APPENDICES OF CMS



### Appendix I of the convention

- Migratory species threatened with extinction
- CMS Parties strive towards strictly protecting these animals, conserving or restoring the places where they live, mitigating obstacles to migration and controlling other factors that might endanger them. Besides establishing obligations for each State joining the Convention, CMS promotes concerted action among the Range States of many of these species.

### Appendix II of the Convention

- Migratory species that need or would significantly benefit from international cooperation
- For this reason, the Convention encourages the Range States to conclude global or regional Agreements. In this respect, CMS acts as a framework Convention. The Agreements may range from legally binding treaties (called Agreements) to less formal instruments, such as Memoranda of Understanding, and can be adapted to the requirements of particular regions. The development of models tailored according to the conservation needs throughout the migratory range is a unique capacity to CMS.

Indian Government signed the “**Raptor MOU**” on Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia, with the CMS. However, the MOU is not legally binding.

**Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT)** is a unique voluntary public private coalition of like-minded governments and organizations sharing a common purpose, i.e. focussing public as well as political attention and resources on ending the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products.

The **13<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP)** concluded in Gandhinagar. India hosted the CMS COP for the first time.

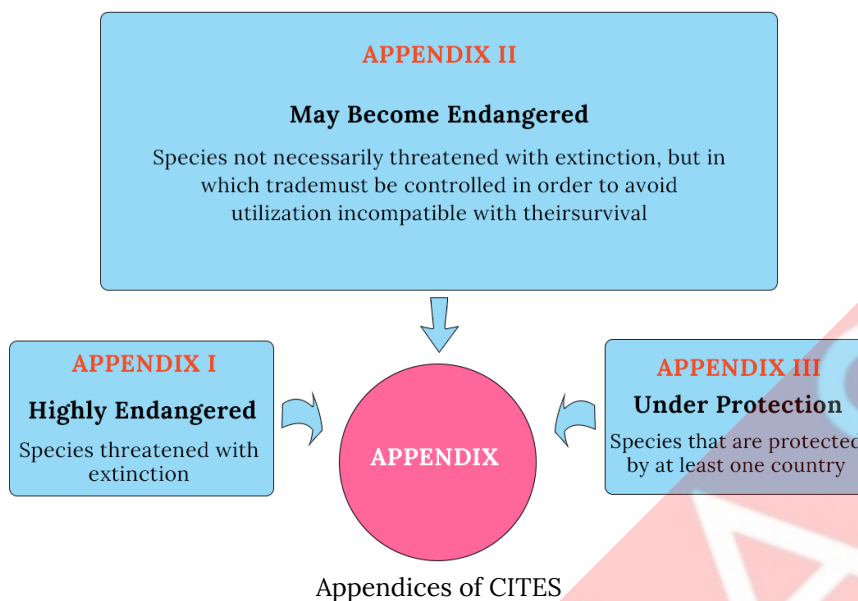
CMS COP 13 adopted the **Gandhinagar Declaration**, which calls for migratory species and the concept of ‘ecological connectivity’ to be integrated and prioritized in the new framework, which is expected to be adopted at the UN Biodiversity Conference in October.

The theme of the CMS COP 13 was “**Migratory species connect the planet and we welcome them home**”. Mascot for the COP was ‘**Gibi- The Great Indian Bustard**’.

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

CITES is an international agreement between governments entered into force in 1975, and became the only treaty to ensure that international trade in plants and animals does not threaten their survival in the wild. It is legally binding on states that have joined it.

CITES is administered through the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). A Secretariat located in Geneva, Switzerland oversees the implementation of the treaty.



### 9.1.5 Vienna Convention

Vienna Convention was adopted in the year 1985 and entered into force in 1988. It acts as a framework for international efforts to protect the ozone layer. However, it does not include legally binding goals for the use of CFCs. The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer are dedicated to the protection of the earth's ozone layer.

With 197 parties, they are the first and only global environmental treaties to achieve universal ratification.

MoEFCC established an Ozone Cell and a Steering Committee on the Montreal Protocol to facilitate implementation of the Indian Country Programme for phasing out ODS (ozone depleting substances) production by 2010.

**Kigali Amendment** to the Montreal Protocol is a legally binding agreement under which parties are expected to reduce the use and manufacture of Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by roughly 80–85% from their respective baselines, till 2045. HFCs, though a Greenhouse Gas, is not dealt with under the Paris Agreement but under the Montreal Protocol.

Kigali Agreement for HFC reduction is legally binding on countries from 2019. However, developed and developing countries have different targets regarding reduction in the use of HFCs.

### 9.1.6 Minamata Convention

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury and its compounds. It was agreed in the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in Geneva, Switzerland and entered into force on August 2017.

Controlling the anthropogenic release of mercury throughout its lifecycle is one of the key obligations under the Convention. The Convention also addresses the interim storage of mercury and its disposal once it becomes a waste, sites contaminated with mercury as well as health issues.

More than 140 countries including India have ratified the Convention.

### 9.1.7 Rotterdam Convention

It was adopted in September 1998 and came into force in 2004. The Convention is jointly administered by UNEP and FAO.

It creates legally binding obligation for the implementation of **Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure**.

Objectives of the Convention are:

1. To promote shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among parties in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals in order to protect human health and the environment from potential harm
2. To contribute to environmentally sound use of these hazardous chemicals, by facilitating information exchange about their characteristics, by providing for a national decision-making process on their import and export and by disseminating these decisions to parties.

The Convention 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 Annex III for the purpose of PIC procedure.

Recently, two chemicals, the **pesticide phorate** and the industrial chemical **hexabromocyclododecane (HBCD)** were added to Annex III of the Convention, making them subject to PIC procedure, through which countries can decide on future imports of these chemicals.

### 9.1.8 Basel Convention

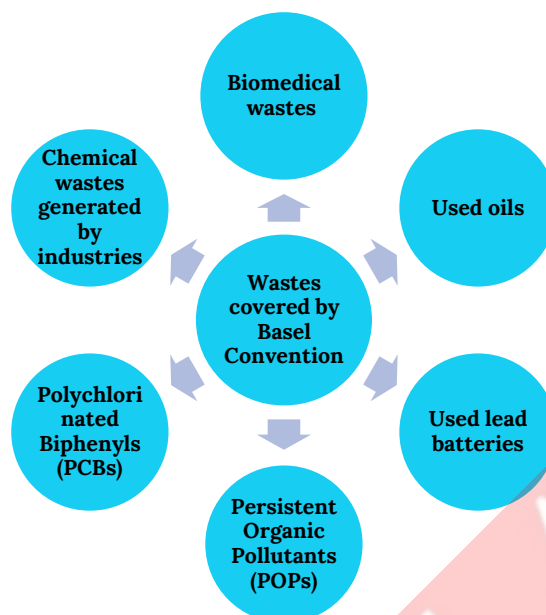
The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal was adopted in 1989 and came into force in 1992. The objective of the Convention is to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects of hazardous wastes.

Its scope of application covers a wide range of wastes defined as “hazardous wastes” based on their origin and/or composition and their characteristics, as well as two types of wastes defined as “other wastes”- household waste and incinerator ash.

The guiding principle of the Convention are that transboundary movements of hazardous wastes should be:

1. Reduced to a minimum
2. Minimized at the source
3. Managed in an environmentally sound manner
4. Treated and disposed of as close as possible to their source of generation

The regulatory system is the cornerstone of the Basel Convention. Based on the concept of Prior Informed Consent (PIC), it requires that, before an export may take place, the authorities of the State of export notify the authorities of the prospective State of import and transit, providing them with detailed information on the intended movement. The movement may only proceed when all States concerned have given their written consent.



The **Basel Ban Amendment** prohibits all export of hazardous wastes, including electronic wastes and obsolete ships from 29 wealthiest countries of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OCED) to non-OCED countries.

India is yet to ratify the ban.

During the **Conference of Parties to the Basel Convention (COP 14)**, following decisions were taken:

1. Adoption of an amendment to include unsorted, mixed and contaminated plastic waste under Prior Informed Consent (PIC) and improve the regulation of its transboundary movement.
  - a. Establishment of a **Partnership on Plastic Waste** to encourage member countries to manage plastic wastes in an environmentally sound manner.
2. Provisional adoption of Technical Guidelines on Transboundary Movement of E-Waste and Used Electrical and Electronic Equipment.

### 9.1.9 Stockholm Convention

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) was adopted in May 2001 and entered into force in 2004. It is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from chemicals (POP) that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in fatty tissues of humans and animals and have harmful impact on human health or environment.

It calls for international action on three categories of POPs: pesticides, industrial chemicals and unintentionally produced POPs.

1. POPs under Annex A of the Convention are to be eliminated.
2. POPs under Annex B of the Convention are to be restricted.
3. Unintentionally produced POPs under Annex C of the Convention are to be restricted or eliminated.

The Convention requires parties to prevent the development of new POPs and promote best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practices (BEP) for replacing existing POPs.

The Convention initially addressed 12 POPs (also known as “the dirty dozen”), but as of now, 30 chemicals of global concern are listed under it.



During the Conference of Parties to the Stockholm Convention (COP 9), it was decided to list **dicofol** (used as a miticide on a variety of field crops) and **perfluorooctanoic acid/PFOA** (used in the production of non-stick cookware), its salts and PFOA related compounds under Annex A of the Convention.

## 9.2 International Organizations

### 9.2.1 TRAFFIC

TRAFFIC is a wildlife trade monitoring network established in 1976 by WWF and IUCN. It was established principally as a response to the entry into force during the previous year of the CITES.

TRAFFIC serves as an international network, consisting of TRAFFIC International, based in Cambridge, UK with offices in five continents.

TRAFFIC undertakes its activities in close collaboration with governments and CITES.

### 9.2.2 International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

It is an intergovernmental organization under the UN, promoting the conservation and sustainable management, use and trade of tropical forest resources. Its members represent about 80% of the world's tropical forests and 90% of the global tropical timber trade.

**United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)** was established by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) with the objective of promoting “the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitments to this end”. UNFF was based on the outcome of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) established by the ECOSOC in 1997.

The Forum has universal membership and comprises all member states of the United Nations.

### 9.2.3 IUCN

IUCN was founded in 1948 as the International Union for the Protection of Nature (IUPN). The organization changed its name to IUCN in 1956 with its headquarters in Gland, Switzerland.

“Just world that values and conserves nature” is the vision of IUCN. Its members include both states and non-governmental organizations.

### 9.2.4 Global Tiger Forum (GTF)

GTF is an intergovernmental organization and international body working exclusively for the conservation of tigers in the wild. Members from willing countries embark on a worldwide campaign and develop common approach to save the remaining five sub-species of tigers in the wild distributed over 14 tiger range countries of the world.

The GTF was formed in 1994 with its secretariat at New Delhi. It is the only intergovernmental and international body campaigning to save tigers worldwide. The General Assembly of the GTF meets once in three years.

### 9.2.5 International Whaling Commission (IWC)

International Whaling Commission is the global intergovernmental body which works towards the conservation of whales and the management of whaling. IWC's headquarters are located in Cambridge, UK and India is a member.

It was established under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling signed in Washington DC in 1946. The Commission introduced zero catch limits for commercial whaling in 1986. Japan recently pulled out of the IWC.

### 9.3 Other Global Initiatives

**Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. It was established in 1988 by UNEP and WMO (World Meteorological Organization) to provide policymakers with regular scientific assessments related to climate change. India is also a member of IPCC. IPCC itself does not conduct any research nor does it monitor climate related data or parameters. Instead, thousands of scientists from all over the world contribute to the work of IPCC on a voluntary basis.

IPCC has so far published five Assessment Reports (AR) and will publish the sixth report (AR6) in 2021-22. IPCC also publishes special reports like "IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C". For its outstanding work, it has also received Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

IPCC established **National Green House Gas Inventories Program (NGGIP)** to provide methods for estimating national inventories of greenhouse gas emissions to and removals from the atmosphere. The guidance produced by the NGGIP is used by countries that are party to the UNFCCC to estimate the emissions and removals that they report to the UNFCCC.

The **Petersburg Climate Dialogue** series was launched in 2010, following the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference and has been hosted annually by Germany. The dialogue facilitates open discussions in small groups on key issues in international climate policy.

The XI Petersburg Climate Dialogue was held virtually for the first time in the wake of COVID-19. It was co-chaired by Germany and United Kingdom (UK). 30 countries including India attended the dialogue.

**Climate Action Summit** was convened in New York on the theme, 'Climate Action Summit 2019: A Race We Can Win, A Race We Must Win' by the UN Secretary General. The focus of the Summit was to accelerate the implementation of Paris Agreement by raising our ambitions.

Countries were asked to prepare realistic plans to enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions by 2020, and to achieve net zero emissions by 2030.

**3 percent club** was formed in this summit which is a coalition of countries, businesses and international organizations that have committed to achieve a 3 percent global increase in energy efficiency each year. India is a member of this club.

**C40 World Mayors' Summit** was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. C40 is a network of world's megacities started in 2005 and supports cities to collaborate effectively and share knowledge and experiences in their fight against climate change.

Indian cities like Delhi, Chennai and Jaipur are also a part of the network.

**Climate Vulnerability Forum** is an international partnership of countries highly vulnerable to a warming planet. The forum also serves as a South-South cooperation platform for participating governments to deal with global climate change.

**Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** is an international coalition of countries, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, private sectors and academic institutions to promote research and knowledge sharing in the field of disaster resilient infrastructure. CDRI was launched by the Indian Prime Minister at the 2019 UN Climate Action summit held in September 2019.

**South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)** is an international organization established in 1982 and headquartered at Colombo. Its member countries include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

SACEP aims to promote and support protection, management and enhancement of environment in the region.

SACEP also serves as the Secretariat for the **South Asia Seas Program (SASP)**, which comes under the purview of the UNEP Regional Seas Program.

During the Conference of the Parties (COP15) held in December 2009 in Copenhagen developed countries pledged to provide new and additional resources, including forestry and investments, approaching USD 30 billion for the period 2010 - 2012 and with balanced allocation between mitigation and adaptation. This collective commitment has come to be known as “**fast-start finance**”.

**REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation)** is the global endeavour to create an incentive for developing countries to protect, better manage and save their forest resources, thus contributing to the global fight against climate change. Three UN agencies- UNEP, UNDP and FAO have collaborated in the establishment of UN-REDD programme.

REDD+ goes beyond merely checking deforestation and forest degradation and includes incentives for positive elements of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

REDD+ incentivises developing countries to keep their forests conserved by offering result-based payments for actions to reduce and remove forest carbon emissions. Thus, it can play a big role in protection of biodiversity, strengthening the resilience of forest ecosystems and reducing poverty.

### Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS):

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) recognizes GIAHS as “remarkable land use systems and landscapes which are rich in globally significant biological diversity evolving from the co-adaptation of a community with its environment and its needs and aspirations for sustainable development”.

India has two GIAHS as recognized by FAO:

1. Traditional Agricultural System, Koraput, Odisha
2. Below Sea Level Farming System, Kuttanad, Kerala

### Pointers for prelims:

1. **One Trillion Trees Initiative (1t.org)**, an initiative by World Economic Forum (WEF) and led by UNEP and FAO, was launched to ensure the conservation and restoration of one trillion trees within this decade.
2. UN General Assembly declared the **United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-30** with an aim to massively scale-up the restoration of degraded and destroyed ecosystems in order to fight the climate crisis and enhance food security, water supply and biodiversity.
3. **Tropical Forest Alliance** was launched in Rio+20 as a global public-private partnership with the aim of halving deforestation by 2020 and ending it by 2030 in tropical rainforest countries. The secretariat of the Alliance is hosted by the World Economic Forum.
4. **Global Carbon Project**, established in 2001, is a Global Research Project of Future Earth and a research partner of the World Climate Research Programme. It seeks to quantify GHG emissions and their causes.
5. Recently, New Zealand passed the “**Zero Carbon Law**” which seeks to reduce GHG emissions to net zero by 2050.
  - a. Likewise, European Union launched “**Green Deal**”, which aims to achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2050 and increasing emission reduction by 2030 to at least 50%.
6. UNFCCC secretariat launched its “**Momentum for Change: Climate Neutral Now**”, an initiative aimed at encouraging and supporting all levels of the society to take climate action to achieve a climate neutral world by the mid-century, as enshrined in the Paris Agreement.