

BOX 3.4 | The biodiversity-related conventions

Five international conventions focus on biodiversity issues: the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the World Heritage Convention. The Convention on Biological Diversity is the most recent of these multilateral environmental agreements, arising out of the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, some twenty years after Ramsar (1971), WHC (1972) and CITES (1975) entered into force, and ten years after CMS did (1983).



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

aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Through its three appendices, the Convention accords varying degrees of protection to more than 30,000 plant and animal species.



The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS, or the Bonn Convention)

aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. Parties to the CMS work together to conserve migratory species and their habitats by providing strict protection for the most endangered migratory species, concluding regional multilateral agreements for the conservation and management of specific species or categories of species, and undertaking cooperative research and conservation activities.



The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

(popularly known as the Ramsar Convention) provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention covers all aspects of wetland conservation and wise use, recognizing wetlands as ecosystems that are extremely important for biodiversity conservation and for the well-being of human communities.



The primary mission of the **World Heritage Convention** (WHC) is to identify and conserve the world's cultural and natural heritage by drawing up a list of sites whose outstanding values should be preserved

for all humanity and ensuring their protection through closer cooperation among nations.

The governing bodies of each convention have set out specific mandates for cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions, and a number of joint work programmes have been established. To further enhance cooperation, a Biodiversity Liaison Group of biodiversity-related conventions comprising the executive heads of those five conventions was established in 2002.