



CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

CITES was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of IUCN (The World Conservation Union). The text of the Convention was finally agreed at a meeting of representatives of 80 countries in Washington DC., United States of America, on 3 March 1973 and on 1 July 1975 CITES entered in force. The original of the Convention was deposited with the Depository Government in the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish languages, each version being equally authentic.

CITES is an international agreement to which States (countries) adhere voluntarily. States that have agreed to be bound by the Convention ('joined' CITES) are known as Parties. Although CITES is legally binding on the Parties – in other words they have to implement the Convention – it does not take the place of national laws. Rather it provides a framework to be respected by each Party, which has to adopt its own domestic legislation to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level.

For many years CITES has been among the conservation agreements with the largest membership, with now 175 Parties.

India ratified CITES in 1976 and has played an active role since. The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties was hosted by the Government of India in 1981 at New Delhi. It was described then "as the best attended as well as hosted Conference of the Parties". It was for this meeting that the CITES logo was designed in India, which was then adopted unanimously by the Parties. India's role in the working of the Convention received further recognition when it was elected to chair the Standing Committee, the most important committee of CITES. In fact, from 1981 to 1987 India had the unique distinction of being elected for three consecutive terms in the same capacity; no other country has had this honor so far.

For further information on CITES visit www.cites.org