



CITES Standing Committee Meeting

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Why in News?

The recently concluded **77th meeting of the Standing Committee of the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora \(CITES\)](#)** in Geneva, Switzerland, brought promising developments for India's wildlife conservation efforts.

What are the Major Outcomes of the Meeting from India's Point of View?

- **Removal from Review of Significant Trade (RST) for Red Sanders:** India had been under the **Review of Significant Trade (RST) process for [Red Sanders](#) since 2004.**
 - This is a process through which the **CITES Standing Committee places increased scrutiny** on the exports of a species from a country to determine if the Convention is being properly implemented.
 - Owing to compliance and robust reporting, **India has been removed from this process**, marking a significant achievement for the country's Red Sanders growers.
 - The **Red Sanders** (*Pterocarpus santalinus*), **a tree species endemic to specific districts in Andhra Pradesh**, holds high market value and has faced threats due to illegal harvesting and smuggling.
- **India's Category in CITES National Legislation Program:** The recent meeting decided to **place India in Category 1 as it had fully complied with the requirements of CITES National Legislation programme.**
 - The CITES provides that every Party align its national legislation to accommodate CITES provisions. Previously, India was listed in **Category 2 for CITES National Legislation programme.**
 - The **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** was, therefore, amended in the year 2022, wherein the provisions of CITES were incorporated in the Act.
- **Call for Big Cat Conservation:** India advocated for stringent conservation measures for Big Cats, especially **Asian Big Cats**, urging other range countries and stakeholders to join the **[International Big Cat Alliance](#)** for their conservation, launched by the **Indian Prime Minister in April 2023.**

What is CITES?

- **About:**
 - **CITES** is an international agreement aimed to ensure that **international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants** does not threaten the survival of the species.
 - Currently there are **184 Parties** to CITES.
 - It entered into force in **1975** and **India became the 25th party**, a state that voluntarily agrees to be bound by the Convention, in 1976.
- **Enforceability:**
 - Although **CITES is legally binding on States it is generally not self-executing.**
 - This means that it cannot be fully implemented until specific domestic measures have been adopted for that purpose.
 - It is therefore essential that **CITES Parties have legislation in place** allowing

them to implement and enforce all aspects of the Convention.

▪ **CITES National Legislation Programme:**

- National laws must fulfill all these minimum requirements under **CITES National Legislation programme:**

- Designate a Management Authority and a Scientific Authority.
- Prohibit trade violating the Convention.
- Penalize such illicit trade.
- Confiscate illegally traded or possessed specimens.

- After consulting the concerned Party, the CITES Secretariat assesses the national legislation concerning these criteria and categorizes it into one of three categories:

- **Category 1:** Legislation generally meeting CITES implementation requirements.
- **Category 2:** Legislation generally not meeting all CITES implementation requirements.
- **Category 3:** Legislation generally not meeting CITES implementation requirements.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. With reference to 'Red Sanders', sometimes seen in the news, consider the following statements: **(2016)**

1. It is a tree species found in a part of South India.
2. It is one of the most important trees in the tropical rain forest areas of South India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a)** 1 only
- (b)** 2 only
- (c)** Both 1 and 2
- (d)** Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- Red Sanders has a highly restricted distribution in the southeastern portion of Indian peninsula to which it is endemic. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Red Sanders (*Pterocarpus santalinus*) occurs in the forest formation which is classified as Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

Q. With reference to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which of the following statements is/are correct? **(2015)**

1. IUCN is an organ of the United Nations and CITES is an international agreement between governments.
2. IUCN runs thousands of field projects around the world to better manage natural environments.
3. CITES is legally binding on the States that have joined it, but this Convention does not take the place of national laws.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a)** 1 only
- (b)** 2 and 3 only
- (c)** 1 and 3 only
- (d)** 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organizations. Created in 1948, it acts as the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. □ IUCN is not an organ of the UN but maintains a formally accredited permanent observer mission to the UN in New York. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- IUCN aims to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resource is equitable and economically sustainable.
- For this purpose, it runs thousands of field projects around the world to better manage natural environments. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- CITES (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.
- Although CITES is legally binding on its parties but 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. **Hence, statement 3 is correct. Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

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