

An Assessment of Multilateral Environmental Agreements in Relation to Sri Lanka

1. Introduction

Many global environmental problems such as global warming, depletion of ozone layer, loss of biodiversity and pollution of ocean and marine ecosystems cannot be solved by one country or by one region without global partnership. The causes of these problems spread across many political and geographical boundaries. Therefore Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) have been used by global community as vital instruments for ensuring global environmental sustainability through cohesive and collaborative approaches. Depending on the nature and magnitude of the problem, different types of MEAs are used. These include declarations, principles, conventions, protocols and bilateral agreements (Box 1).

The earliest MEA related to the environment dates back to 1868. Since then, the number of international treaties and other agreements related to the environment have risen to at least 504, of which 323 are regional. The period from year 1972 to date witnesses an accelerated increase of MEAs, and over 300 agreements have been negotiated during this period. Many of the earlier MEAs were restricted in scope to specific subject areas, and were regional in focus (www.unep.org).

The relationship between economic development and environmental degradation was first placed on the international agenda in 1972, at the **United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE)** in Stockholm. As an outcome of the Conference, Governments set up the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, which today continues to act as a global catalyst to protect the environment.

By 1983, when the UN setup the **World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)**, environmental degradation which had been seen as a side effect of industrial development with only a limited impact, was understood to be a matter of survival for developing nations.

In 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)** was held for the first time with the participation of 178 heads of states. It is commonly known as the Earth Summit. At

this Summit, world leaders discussed about the adverse impacts of development on the environment, and at the end of the summit, they adopted many important Conventions and Principles related environment.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development held in 2002 in Johannesburg South Africa was another landmark event in the global treaty making. This summit recognizes the importance of sustainable development, and adopted a Declaration on Sustainable Development.

Dr. B.M.S. Batagoda

*Director General,
Department of Public Enterprises.*

&

Anoja Herath

*Assistant Director,
Climate Change & Global
Affairs Division,
Ministry of Environment &
Natural Resources.*

Box 1 – Introduction to MEAs

Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are internationally agreed-upon measures to protect the environment and/or to promote sustainable development, and require the engagement of stakeholders at all levels to make them truly effective. They address the environmental issues of global importance.

Agreement is an international agreement concluded between two or more parties each possessing treaty making capacity.

Treaty is a generic term embracing all instruments binding under international law, regardless of their formal designation, concluded between two or more international judicial persons. There are two types of treaties, namely Bilateral and Multilateral. Multilateral treaty is an International agreement concluded between two or more parties, each possessing treaty making capacity. Bilateral treaty is an International agreement concluded between two parties, each possessing treaty making capacity.

Convention is an umbrella international law which provides a framework on common conceptions, rules as well as the working approaches of international parties and governments on environmental protections. Conventions are broad policies, and not specific. Often, time protocols are adopted to implement provisions of the conventions.

Protocol is a subsequent and separate agreement that adds to or modifies the existing convention only for the State that becomes Parties to it. Without a Convention, protocol cannot be adopted. A protocol, in the context of treaty law and practice, has the same legal characteristics as a treaty. A protocol is normally open to participation by the parties to the parent agreement. The advantage of a protocol is that, while it is linked to the parent agreement, it can focus on a specific aspect of that agreement in greater detail.

Declarations

There are different types of declarations.

Interpretative Declaration

An interpretative declaration is a declaration by a state as to its understanding of some matter covered by a treaty or its interpretation of a particular provision.

Mandatory declaration

A mandatory declaration is a declaration specifically required by the treaty itself. Unlike an interpretative declaration, a mandatory declaration is binding on the state making it.

Optional declaration

An optional declaration is a declaration that a treaty specially provides for, but does not require. Unlike an interpretative declaration, an optional declaration is binding on the state making it.

Sri Lanka has acceded or ratified around 40 MEAs (Conventions- 25, Protocols- 3, Treaties -2, Agreements-5 and Amendments-4). Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources and its line agencies such as Marine Protection Authority, Forest Department, Central Environmental Authority, and Department of Wild Life Conservation function as the National Focal Points for 12 of these MEAs (Annex 1).

This paper assesses the extent to which Sri Lanka has benefited from being member of form MEAs and highlights constraints for achieving anticipated benefits, and suggests suitable remedial measures for improving effectiveness.

2. Thematic Clustering of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

The core environmental conventions and related international agreements can be divided into

five clusters, namely the biodiversity-related conventions, the atmosphere conventions, the land conventions, the chemicals and hazardous wastes conventions, and the regional seas conventions and related agreements. The objectives and priorities of MEAs can vary significantly from one agreement to another, even within a cluster. However, there are common threads that link them together. While the sustainable development focus of the three Rio Conventions (The Convention on Biological Diversity- CBD, United Nations Convention on Combat Desertification-UNCCD and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change-UNFCCC) are well known, most other MEAs address the sustainable use of natural resources and the environment or the protection of the environment in such a way as to ensure its sustainable use.

2.1 Biodiversity-related conventions

The scope of the biodiversity-related conventions varies from one convention to another. The conservation of individual species is the focus of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1973) (CITES) while conservation of species, their migration routes and their habitats are the targets of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS). The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention, the World Heritage Convention and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) focus on the protection of ecosystems. The Cartagena Protocol of the CBD convention specifically aims at protecting both species and ecosystems by promoting safe transfer, handling and use of modified living organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. Five regional seas conventions (the Mediterranean, the North-East Atlantic, East Africa, the Wider Caribbean and the South-East Pacific) have protocols or annexes on specially protected areas and wildlife (SPAWs) that cover both individual species and ecosystems. While all these agreements aim at conserving species and/or ecosystems, several of them also promote their sustainable use (CBD, CITES, Ramsar and ICRI). The Cartagena Protocol promotes measures related to safeguarding the sustainable use of biodiversity against adverse effects that could be caused by modified living organisms. Likewise, the SPAWs, which are closely linked to CBD, CITES, Ramsar and ICRI, support the sustainable use of marine and coastal species and ecosystems.

2.2 Atmosphere-related conventions

The Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol are closely associated with protecting the environment by eliminating or stabilizing emissions of anthropogenic substances that interfere with the atmosphere.

2.3 Land-related conventions

This cluster comprises of only one major global convention, the United Nations Convention on Combat Desertification (UNCCD) which aims to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly those in Africa. Given the sustainable development focus and the strong substantive linkages between climate change, desertification and drought, and loss of biodiversity, the UNCCD is very much associated with the UNFCCC and the CBD.

2.4 Chemicals-related conventions

The overarching objective of the chemicals conventions is the protection of human from health hazards and the environment from pollution by specific chemicals and hazardous substances by controlling trade of selected dangerous chemicals through prior informed consent (Rotterdam Convention), phasing out, restricting and reducing the production and use of certain chemicals (The Stockholm Convention), and reducing production of hazardous wastes and their trans-boundary movements (Basel Convention).

2.5 Regional seas conventions and related agreements

There are seventeen regional seas conventions and action plans in a global mosaic of agreements with one over-arching objective, i.e. the protection and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. These multi-sectoral agreements have been evolved over the years to address issues in integrated coastal area management, including the management of contiguous freshwater basins, land-based sources of pollution, conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources, and impacts of offshore exploration and exploitation of oil and gas. Also included in this cluster are the Global Program of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). The regional seas conventions and action

plans are the regional building blocks and vehicles for the implementation of these two agreements.

3. Declarations

Major declarations in the field of environment include the Stockholm Declaration, Nairobi Declarations, the Rio-Declarations and the Washington Declaration on Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.

The **Stockholm Declaration** followed the UN Conference on Human Environment from 5th to 16th June 1972, and set the foundation for the international activities for protecting the global environment. It proclaims twenty six principles "to inspire and guide the peoples of the world in the preservation and enhancement of the human environment"

The 1982 **World Charter for Nature** proclaimed principles of conservation, the first of which is that "nature shall be respected and its essential processes shall not be impaired. The 1982 **Nairobi Declaration** reaffirmed the world community's commitment to the Stockholm Declaration and supported for strengthening UNEP as the major catalytic instrument for global environmental cooperation.

The **Rio Declaration** on Environment and Development adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), contains twenty seven principles built upon and consolidating the Stockholm Declaration.

4. Other Legal Instruments and International Laws Relevant to MEAs

In addition to the above declarations and treaties, there are soft-law instruments related to environmental MEAs. London Guidelines for the Exchange of Information on Chemicals in International Trade which provides a mechanism for importing countries to formally record and disseminate their decisions regarding the future importation of chemicals which have been banned or severely restricted in the exporting countries. The mechanism, known as the "prior informed consent" (PIC) procedure requires that exporting states notify importing states of an impending export of a banned or severely restricted chemical to enable the importing state to make decisions as to whether the import should proceed.

The Code of Ethics on the International trade in Chemicals sets out principles and guidelines governing the standards of conducts for the promotion of environmentally-sound management of chemicals in international trade. The Forest Principles were adopted at the UNCED conference in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. They are "non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests". These are considered as soft-law instruments applicable to environment.

The Charter of the United Nations establishes the United Nations Organization, and forms the bedrock of the contemporary international system. The Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which forms an integral part of the Charter stipulates the provisions under which the ICJ, the principle judicial organ of the UN shall function. It makes provision for the organization of the court, its competence and its procedures. The ICJ has recently established a chamber for environmental disputes.

The 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties may be described as the 'treaty of treaties'. The rapid development of international environmental law through the conclusion of treaties in the aftermath of the Stockholm and Rio Conference make this Convention of great significance for the international environmental law.

Finally, UN resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970 on the Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among states in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations declares a series of basic principles of the international law by which state shall be guided in their international conduct.

5. Implementation of MEAs in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka also has adopted major declarations in the field of environment that include the Stockholm Declaration, Nairobi Declaration, the Rio-Declarations, and the Washington Declaration on Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. Sri Lanka also recognizes the Charter of the United Nations, the Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), The 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the UN resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970 on the Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning

Friendly Relations and Co-operation among states in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Sri Lanka is an active member of the South Asian Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), and South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), South Asia Regional Seas Programme.

The Government gives top priority for implementation of international legal instruments in the country.

5.1 Measures taken to implement MEAs in Sri Lanka

5.1.1 Policies, strategies and action plans

Several policies, strategies and action plans have been developed to implement MEAs in Sri Lanka. The policies include: National Environment Policy, Rural Renewable Energy policy National Clean Development Mechanism Policy, National Forestry policy, National Policy on wild Life Conservation, Draft National Land Use policy and National Policy on Urban Air Quality Management.

Strategies /Action Plans adopted to implement MEAs include: A Framework for Action 1999 for Biodiversity Conservation, Coastal 2000 Action Plan, Clean Air 2000 Action Plan, Forestry Sector Master Plan 1995, Five Year development Plan of the Department of Wild Life 1993-1998, National Strategy for Solid Waste Management, Guidelines on safety measures to be adopted in handling hazardous waste, Guidelines for the establishment of hazardous waste disposal sites, Code of ethics for Biodiversity research; National Biosafety Guidelines, Biodiversity Legislation (draft stage), Invasive Plants Action Plan (draft stage), National Agriculture, Food and Nutrition strategy, National Conservation Strategy; First National Communication on Climate Change, National Climate Change Action Plan, National Action Plan for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land Based Activities and Sri Lanka Clean Development Mechanism Strategy.

5.1.2 Legislative measures

Although Sri Lanka has not developed much legislation to implement MEAs, the country has developed a strong legal framework which backs the country's national sustainable development strategies. More than 90 separate environment-related statutes have been enacted over the last 100 years, directly or indirectly for environmental protection and natural resource management. The pledge given in the 1978 Constitution to safeguard the environment was formally institutionalized with the enactment of the National Environmental Act

No.47 of 1980. Under this Act, the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) was established in 1981 as the premier state agency responsible for the "formulation and implementation of policies and strategies for the protection and management of the environment in Sri Lanka" (Batagoda, 2003).

Environmental policy in Sri Lanka has traditionally focused on government regulations that aim at controlling environmentally-harmful activities. This is reflected in the National Environmental Act (1980 and 1988), the Forest Ordinance (Amended 1988), the Coast Conservation Act (1988) and the Mine and Minerals Act (1992), regulations (2000) gazetted under the section 32 of National Environment Act No.47 of 1980 for Air Emission, Fuel, and Vehicle Importation standards, and other laws. In the mid nineties, emphasis was given to participatory environmental management. For example, the Forest Ordinance revision of 1998 contained provisions for participatory forestry. Revisions in 1996 to the Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Act looked into the setting up of fishery management committees. Public participation was also introduced to the Environmental Impact Assessment process by the National Environmental Amendment Act 1998.

This focus has now moved to a wide range of comprehensive framework for sustainable development. The new draft environmental bill presents a framework for national environmental policy, involving both the public and private sector. Section two of this draft bill states that "every person shall make every practicable effort to follow the path to sustainable development". However, this draft bill has not been finalized yet.

Under the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, each Provincial Council has the authority to enact and implement any statute related to their responsibilities. On the basis of these provisions, the North-Western Provincial Council passed its own environmental statute and created its own environmental Authority, the "Wayamba Environmental Authority". Other provincial councils so far have not enacted any such statute.

The decentralization process has helped the integration of different interests at regional levels with the central government. A decentralized administration, which creates more opportunities for the active participation of stakeholders at grass-roots level, is more conducive to the pursuit of sustainable development (Batagoda, 2003).

5.1.3 Institutional measures

The most common strategy that has been used for the implementation MEAs is the establishment of National Co-coordinating Committees and National Expert Committees to advice and monitor the implementation of the respective international conventions. Some of these committees include: National Co-coordinating Committee for the implementation of MEAs, National Co-ordination Committee for Climate Change, National Expert Committee on Biodiversity, CDM Expert Committee, Expert Committee on Land Degradation and Desertification, National Co-ordination Committee on Implementation of Montreal Protocol, Co-ordination Committee on Basal Convention, Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Steering Committee, and GEF Advisory Committee.

Establishment of a separate division named "Global Affairs Division", attached to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources is an important measure taken by the government to implement MEAs. This Division is the focal point for major environment and sustainable development-related international conventions and treaties for the co-ordination and implementation of MEAs in the Country. (Batagoda, B.M.S. and Perera, B.R.L. (2004) This Division has been given necessary resources including human and financial, to make sure that the MEAs are effectively implemented.

Other institutional measures adopted include establishment of a Biodiversity Secretariat which will coordinate the implementation of convention of bio diversity of Sri Lanka, a Climate Change Secretariat for the implementation of convention of climate change in Sri Lanka, a carbon fund to address issues related to Clean Development Mechanism projects, an Ozone Secretariat to coordinate and implement Montreal protocol and a GEF network to build the partnership for GEF project implementation, and development of institutional arrangement to adopt synergistic approach to implement CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD.

5.2 Benefits of MEAs to Sri Lanka

By becoming a party to the above MEAs Sri Lanka entered into mutual agreements with the global community, and it enabled the country to take appropriate actions at local level to ensure that the biophysical environment is sustainably managed for posterity. MEAs have given an

opportunity to solve our critical environmental issues such as land degradation, waste management, and conservation of biological diversity by providing financial, technical and legal assistance. Capacity building of local experts, information sharing including the best practices of the regions, transfer of scientific knowledge, assistance for participation in international negotiations, regional and international cooperation are some of other benefits gained by Sri Lanka. MEAs have assisted the country in the national decision making process of environment management in conducting education and training programs for making local people aware of environmental issues.

5.3 Problems of implementation of MEAs in Sri Lanka

There are several problems for implementation of MEAs (Batagoda, 2004). Some of these include: absence of accepted ratification procedures, a new or updated legislation to implement MEAs, a comprehensive enforcement approach and a systematic participation at MEA negotiations, inadequate awareness of MEAs of all levels resources allocations for MEAs and access to information on MEAs, donor driven project implementation and weak coordination among MEAs. The government should take actions to remove these barriers, if we are to benefit from MEAs.

6. Recommendations

Based on the foregoing analysis, the following recommendations are made to make the MEAs more effective and beneficial for Sri Lanka.

- ◆ Develop institutional and legal framework for maximizing benefits from MEAs recognizing that MEAs not only address the environmental issues, but they can influence other socio-economic and political problems as well.
- ◆ Build the capacity of the country for participating at the international law making processes, and provide more financial and technical assistance since MEAs are effective global fora for Sri Lanka to present its political and socio-economic positions. The participation should be handled by Foreign ministry and presidential secretariat level not by the Environment Ministry alone.
- ◆ Create awareness among local political leadership on the importance of effective participation at the international negotiations and law making to make use of the opportunity to present our case to the global community.
- ◆ Develop a system to have continuity of negotiation process by ensuring the same delegation to attend the meetings. Since international law making processes are so complicated, unless the same team attends continuously, new delegations may find it difficult to get into the process effectively. Such participation should not be ad. hoc, but should be linked to a national agenda.
- ◆ Establish a coordination mechanism with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant focal points for all international conventions
- ◆ Develop a system to get involved the civil society, NGOs and Private sector in the international law making processes.
- ◆ Formulate strategies/ policy measures and establish national and regional bodies to deal with any negative impacts on country's natural resources and economy from international involvement
- ◆ Exploit maximum benefits from regional trade agreements such as SAPTA.
- ◆ Develop mechanisms such as benefit sharing, bio-prospecting to achieve full benefit to the country.
- ◆ Prepare domestic legislations to benefit from MEAs ratified by Sri Lanka and to protect our resources.

12. References:

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Batagoda, B.M.S. and Perera, B.R.L. (2004). Environmental Treaties Reference Center (ETRC): A New Strategy for Information Management on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in Developing Countries.

www.unep.org
www.imo.org, www.unccd.int,
www.unccd.int, www.unfccc.int, www.cbd.int

Annex 1
MEAs Ratified by Sri Lanka
1. Atmosphere-Related Conventions

Name of Convention	Objective/s	Focal Point in Sri Lanka	No. of Countries
Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1985) www.ozone.unep.org	Protection of the Ozone Layer through international cooperation in the areas of scientific research, monitoring and exchange of information	National Ozone Unit, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	191
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC-1992) www.unfccc.int	To regulate levels of greenhouse gas concentration in the Atmosphere, so as to avoid the occurrence of Climate Change on a level that would impede sustainable economic development, or comprise initiatives in food production.	Climate Change Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	192
Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987) Amendments - London Amendment Acceded 16.06.1993 - Copenhagen Amendment Acceded 07.07.1997 - Montreal Amendment Acceded 20.08.1999 - Beijing Amendment Acceded 27.11.2002 www.ozone.unep.org	Reduction and the eventual elimination of the emission of anthropogenic Ozone Depleting Substances	National Ozone Unit, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	191 186 179 159 135
Kyoto Protocol www.unfccc.int/kyoto-Protocol	The Annex 1 parties (Developed Countries) to reduce their collective emissions of greenhouse gases by at least 5% of the 1990 level by the period 2008 -2012.	Climate Change Secretariat, Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources	176

2. Bio Diversity-Related Conventions

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD-1992) www.cbd.int	The conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources by appropriate access to genetic resources, transfer of relevant technologies, and funding.	Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	190
The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands www.ramsar.org	To stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands now and in the future, recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific and recreational value.	Department of Wild Life Conservation	157
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species Of Wild Fauna and Flora (1973)- CITES www.cites.org	To protect certain endangered species from over-exploitation by means of a system of import/export permits	Department of Wild Life Conservation	172
Convention on the conservation Of Migratory Species (CMS 1979) www.cms.int	To protect those species of wild animals that migrate across or outside national boundaries	Department of Wild Life Conservation	104
Convention on Fishing and Conservation of the living resources of the high seas	To solve the problems involved in the conservation of the living resources of the high seas, through international co-operation.	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources	38
International Plant Protection Convention www.ippc.int	To maintain and increase international co-operation in controlling pests and diseases of plants and plant products, and in preventing their introduction and spread across national boundaries.	Seed Certification & Plant Protection Centre, Department of Agriculture	166
Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) www.whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext www.unesco.org	To establish an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods	Ministry of Cultural Affaires & Natural Heritage	184
Plant Protection Agreement for Asia and Pacific Region www.fao.org www.ippc.int	To prevent the introduction into and spread within the region of destructive plants.	Ministry of Agriculture	

Agreement for the establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission www.iotc.org	To establish the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission with a view to ensuring the conservation and optimum utilization of tuna and tuna like species (stocks)	Ministry of Agriculture	24
Agreement on the network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia and the Pacific www.enaca.org www.fao.org	To assist the member States in their efforts to expand Aquaculture development	Ministry of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources	
Cortagena Protocol on Bio Safety www.cbd.int/biosafety/	To contribute to ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health, and specially focusing on transboundary movements To contribute to ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health, and specially focusing on transboundary movements	Ministry of Agriculture Biodiversity Secretariat, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.	143

3. Land-related conventions

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD-1994) www.unccd.int	To combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought, and the final aim is to prevent land degradation in the hyper arid, semi arid, dry sub humid areas in the relevant country parties of the Convention.	Natural Resource Management Division, Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources	191
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4. Chemical-related conventions

Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (1989) www.unccd.int	Toxic, poisonous, explosive, corrosive, flammable, ecotoxic & infectious waste types are covered by the Basel Convention and key objectives are to minimize the generation of hazardous waste in terms of quantity & hazardousness, to dispose of hazardous waste as close to the source of generation as possible and to reduce the movement of hazardous waste	Pollution Control Division, Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources	170
Convention on early notification of a Nuclear Accident www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Conventions	To provide relevant information about nuclear accidents as early as possible in order that transboundary radiological consequences can be minimized		101
Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and use of Chemical Weapons and their destruction	To develop , production, stockpiling and use of chemicals weapons, to destruct the existing chemical weapons and related facilities		183
Convention concerning the protection of workers against ionising radiations	To protect workers, as regards their health and safety, against ionizing radiations		47
Convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and on their destruction	To prohibit the development biological weapons and eliminate them as a step towards general disarmament for the sake of all man kind		155
Convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques	To prohibit the military or other hostile use of such techniques in order to consolidate world peace and trust among nations		36
Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water	To obtain an agreement on general and complete disarmament under strict international control in accordance with the objectives of the United Nations; to put an end to the armaments race and eliminate incentives to the production and testing of all kinds of weapons, including nuclear weapons.		113
Treaty on principles governing the activities of states in the exploration and use of outer space including the moon and other celestial bodies.	To establish an international legal regime for the exploration and use of outer space		
Stockholm Convention on Persistence Organic Pollutants (POPs-2001) www.pops.int	To protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants	Pollution Control Division, Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources	152
Rotterdam Convention www.pic.int	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; to contribute to the environmentally sound use of those 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	Ministry of Agriculture	119

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5. Marine & Coast-related conventions

The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from the ships (MARPOL-1973) www.imo.org/conventions	To preserve the marine environment by achieving the complete elimination of international pollution by oil and other harmful substances and the minimization of accidental discharge of such substances.	Marine Pollution Prevention Authority	90
International Convention Relating to intervention on the high seas in cases of oil pollution casualties www.imo.org/conventions	To enable countries to take action on the high seas in cases of a maritime casualty resulting in danger of oil pollution of sea and coastlines; to establish that such action would not affect the principle of freedom of the high seas.	Marine Pollution Prevention Authority	77
International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage www.imo.org/conventions	To ensure that adequate compensation is available to persons who suffer damage caused by pollution resulting from the escape or discharge of oil from ships. To standardize international rules and procedures for determining questions of liability and adequate compensation in such areas	Marine Pollution Prevention Authority	102
International Convention on the establishment of an international fund for compensation for oil pollution damage www.imo.org/conventions www.ipocfund.org	To supplement the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, 1969; to ensure that adequate compensation is available to persons who suffer damage caused by pollution resulting from the escape or by discharge of oil from ships; and to ensure that the oil cargo interests bear a part of the economic consequences of such oil pollution damage, to the relief of the shipping industry	Marine Pollution Prevention Authority	102
Convention on the Continental Shelf	To define and delimit the rights of States to explore and exploit the natural resources of the continental shelf	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
Convention on the High Seas	To codify the rules of international law relating to the high seas	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources	
Agreement relating to the implementation of part XI of the United Nations of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements	To provide for revised modalities of the implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982, in particular the International Seabed Authority	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	131
Agreement for the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements	To ensure long-term conservation and sustainable use of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks through effective implementation of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	67