**CITES**

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, signed on 3 March 1973 in Washington (‘CITES’) and entered into force on 1 July 1975. Its aim is to protect wild fauna and flora threatened with extinction, principally by limiting or regulating trade in those species.

The CITES is a trade and conservation agreement whose primary establishment aim is to control international trade of rare and endangered species as well as facilitating sustainable trade of listed species. It is thus both a conservation and trade agreement. The convention includes three categories of protection, that is, Appendix I, Appendix II, and Appendix III. Listed species number more than 34,000 species of wild animals and plants. [https://www.cites.org] It regulates the export, import and re-export of animals and plants, parts and derivatives through the use of a licenses, certificates and permits only issued upon satisfactory meeting of certain requirements. It plays a part in ensuring sustainable development by controlling trade, ensuring sustainable harvesting or exploitation hence protecting biodiversity.

Since joining CITES, Zimbabwe has autonomously adopted measures designed to implement the CITES obligations. The CITES compliance system is based on self-reporting by parties using standard reporting formats. Zimbabwe has always submitted its reports on time. CITES compels parties to prepare and implement domestic CITES enabling legislation. In compliance, the Parks and Wildlife Act [Chapter 20:14] is Zimbabwe’s framework legislation regarding wildlife protection. In order to implement and comply with CITES, Zimbabwe uses a number of different legislative provisions and has specific CITES enabling legislation, namely, Parks and Wildlife Regulations (Import and Export Control)- Statutory Instrument 76 of 1998. In addition to SI 76 of 1998, Zimbabwe’s existing laws prohibit illegal harvesting or killing and unregulated trading of wildlife species. Some of the distinct laws underpinning CITES implementation include: SI 362 of 1990, SI 76 of 1998, SI 11 of 1990, SI 114 of 1993, SI 26 of 1998, Traditional Leaders Act, the Rural District Councils Act, Firearms Act and the Communal Lands Act. Criminal Procedure and Evidence Amendment Act, 2016 (No. 2 of 2016) [Chapter 9:07], the Forest Act, Criminal Law Codification and Reform Act, and The Environmental Management Act and many more.

Article XIV of CITES requires members to adopt domestic measures to enforce and protect wild life according to rules set by the CITES. Zimparks is responsible for wildlife law enforcement, particularly anti-poaching operations and other Law Enforcement Agencies like ZRP -responsible for fighting crime, including wildlife crime. CITES also requires Membercountries’ to designate a management authority and a scientific authority. Zimparks houses both the management authority and a scientific authority hence is in full compliance with CITES. The International Conservation Affairs department is coordinates CITES implementation for the Authority.

Currently there are several meetings being held as the country prepares for the CITES CoP in Panama from 14 to 25 November 2022. Zimbabwe is cooperating with other SADC and African countries to come up with a common position with respect to proposals and interventions. Top of the list are the issues surrounding ivory and live elephant trade.

**The World Heritage Convention**

Zimbabwe plays its part in identifying and protecting its key natural and cultural sites as part of the heritage of humanity. The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention facilitate the implementation of the World Heritage Convention by describing the procedures for: the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger; the protection and conservation of World Heritage properties and the granting of International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund. There are 5 World Heritage Sites in Zimbabwe (1) Mosi - oa - Tunya/ Victoria Falls World Heritage Property, (2) Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas, (3) Matopos, (4) Khami Ruins and (5) Great Zimbabwe Ruins. Of the 5 the first 2 are under the management of Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and later 3 under National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe. The Middle Zambezi MAB Reserve has areas that are partly under the management of Zimparks, (1) Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas and (2) Matusadona National Park.

1. **Mosi oa Tunya/ Victoria Falls World Heritage Property**

Is a transboundary property managed jointly by Zimbabwe and Zambia and was inscribed onto the World Heritage Properties list in 1989. The property straddles between the two State Parties (SPs) and extents over 3 National Parks which are namely Victoria Falls and Zambezi National Parks in Zimbabwe and Mosi – oa – Tunya National Park in Zambia.

1. **The Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas and Middle Zambezi MAB Reserve**

This was inscribed as a WHP in 1984. The MAB Reserve was inscribed in 2010. Plans are underway to update the General Management Plan of the WH Site courtesy of the GEF 6/ UNDP. The blue print is expected to be out by end of September 2022. The Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas is another core area and part of the greater MAB Reserve that covers 6 Districts and 3 Provinces in 2010. The other core area for the same Reserve is centered around Matusadonha National Park.

1. **Proposed Chimanimani Man and Biosphere Reserve**

This was submitted to the World Heritage Committee for review and consideration in October 2021. Currently, we are waiting for consideration of the proposed Biosphere Reserve on the 34th MAB General Conference in Paris, France from the 1st to the 15th of June 2022.

**The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

The Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) is an international agreement adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and entered into force on 29 December 1993. It covers ecosystem, species and genetic biodiversity of organisms and microorganisms.

Zimbabwe signed the CBD in 1992 and ratified it in 1995.

The objectives of the CBD as provided for in its article 1 are: (i) The conservation of biological diversity, (ii) The sustainable use of its components and (iii) The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. Zimparks has several programmes and activities which directly implement oblogations and provisions of the convention, namely, Invasive alien Species control, park protection and anti poaching patrols, community focused conservation education programmes, fire management programmes especially veld fire management, vegetation, wildlife and fisheries research, wetlands management activities, park/estate management activities like land reclamation and anti-erosion measures.

More information can be obtained from the CBD website: [www.cbd.int]

**Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).**

Article II of the CMS convention states in its fundamental principles that members should promote, co-operate in and support research relating to migratory species; shall endeavour to provide immediate protection for migratory species included in Appendix I; and shall endeavour to conclude agreements covering the conservation and management of migratory species included in Appendix II. Article V of the treaty states that the object of each agreement shall be to restore the migratory species concerned to a favourable conservation status or to maintain it in such a status. All Range States of identified species can accede to the agreement whether or not they are Parties to CMS. AEWA is an intergovernmental treaty specifically dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, Greenland and the Canadian Archipelago and forma part of the family of agreements established within the framework of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).  Of particular interest is the AEWA action plan which has the obligations each party is supposed to meet. The obligations include a development of a clear species and habitat protection regime, management of human activities, research and monitoring, education, and capacity building activities.