



NOTIFICATION

**Technical Expert Meeting on
Global Strategy for Plant Conservation**

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity will consider at its sixth meeting, to be held from 8 to 19 April 2002, in The Hague, The Netherlands, the adoption of a global strategy for plant conservation, which would aim at reducing or halting the current and continuing loss of plant diversity in the world ([COP Decision V/10](#)).

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), at its seventh meeting in November 2001, adopted recommendation VII/8 "Global Strategy for Plant Conservation," which, *inter alia* recommends in paragraph (a) that the Conference of the Parties, at its sixth meeting, consider for adoption a global strategy for plant conservation, which should include outcome-oriented global targets for 2010, developed on the basis of proposals presented by SBSTTA, and taking into account the results of the inter-sessional work. Recommendation VII/8 is hereby attached as Annex 2.

SBSTTA *requests* the Executive Secretary to carry out the following tasks, during the inter-sessional period prior to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties,

- a) refine the quantitative elements of the targets in the draft strategy providing a scientific and technical rationale in each case, and clarifying terms as necessary, with the support of technical experts, in consultation with participants of the ongoing international initiatives referred to in the fourth preambular paragraph of decision VII/8, and on the basis of advice from Parties (recommendation VII/8, paragraph 2); and,
- b) prepare an analysis of the opportunities for implementation of the strategy through the thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work of the Convention, including in particular the Ecosystem Approach and the Global Taxonomy Initiative, as well as through existing relevant international, regional and national initiatives, and any gaps in these programmes and initiatives (recommendation VII/8, paragraph 3).

To: UN Organizations, UN Specialized Agencies and International Organizations



The ongoing international initiatives referred to in the fourth preambular paragraph of recommendation VII/8 are, *inter alia*, FAO Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the Strategic Plan and work of the Plants Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme, the International Agenda for Botanical Gardens in Conservation, the IUCN Species Survival Commission's Plant Conservation Programme, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), activities of the International Association of Botanic Gardens; and the WWF/UNESCO people and plants initiative.

In response to recommendation VII/8, you are invited to provide, at your earliest convenience, but no later than **15 January 2002**, any advice on the refinement of the quantitative elements of the targets in the draft strategy, so that it can be taken into account in refining the quantitative elements of the targets.

To consider this, a technical expert meeting will be held from 11 to 13 February 2002. The venue will be announced later. The two tasks of the experts will be to refine the quantitative elements of the targets contained in the annex to recommendation VII/8, taking into account the advice from Parties and international organizations, and to prepare an analysis of the opportunities for implementation of the strategy.

In this regard, I invite you to nominate, at your earliest convenience, but no later than **3 January 2002**, a technical expert who can participate in the technical expert meeting. Nominations should be made and be accompanied by a *Curriculum Vitae* that clearly indicates the areas of relevant expertise in accordance with the selection criteria listed in Annex 1.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Hamdallah Zedan
Executive Secretary

Attachments: Annex 1: Criteria for the nomination of technical experts
 Annex 2: Recommendation VII/8 "Global strategy for plant conservation"

Annex 1

**Technical Expert Meeting on
Global Strategy for Plant Conservation**

Selection criteria for the nomination of technical experts

Noting SBSTTA recommendation VII/8, “Global Strategy for Plant Conservation”, the Parties are invited to nominate technical experts who can participate in the technical expert meeting, to be held from 11 to 13 February 2002. The two tasks of the experts will be to refine the quantitative elements of the targets contained in the annex to recommendation VII/8, taking into account the advice from Parties and international organizations, and to prepare an analysis of the opportunities for implementation of the strategy.

Nominations should be made no later than **3 January 2002**. They have to be accompanied by a *Curriculum Vitae* that clearly indicates the areas of relevant expertise, and by a copy of this annex duly completed, highlighting specific areas of expertise related to the targets proposed at global level.

Name of expert: _____

Country: _____

Specific areas of expertise related to the targets proposed in recommendation VII/8 (please check areas of expertise)

- ☐ plant diversity conservation (*ex situ* and *in situ*)
- ☐ plant sustainable use
- ☐ education and awareness about plant diversity
- ☐ capacity building for plant diversity conservation
- ☐ plant taxonomy and related information database management
- ☐ assessment of status and trends of plant diversity (including threatened species)
- ☐ alien species that threaten plants, plant communities and associated habitats and ecosystems
- ☐ international trade of wild flora
- ☐ associated local indigenous knowledge that support sustainable livelihood
- ☐ certification
- ☐ botanists dealing with educational programmes
- ☐ management of botanic gardens and networking
- ☐ plant ecology
- ☐ farming/cropping systems or resource and crop management
- ☐ ecosystem approach

Annex 2

VII/8. Global strategy for plant conservation

The Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice,

Recalling decision V/10 of the Conference of the Parties,

Noting the call from the XVIth International Botanical Congress, in August 1999, for plant conservation to be recognized as an outstanding global priority in biodiversity conservation,

Further noting that the Gran Canaria Declaration of April 2000 called for the development of a Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the support for such a strategy by the second IUCN World Conservation Congress, in September 2000,

Recognizing ongoing international initiatives that contribute to plant conservation, such as the Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Strategic Plan and work of the Plants Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Man and Biosphere programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Agenda for Botanical Gardens in Conservation, the IUCN Species Survival Commission's Plant Conservation Programme, the International Plant Protection Convention, the Global Invasive Species Programme, activities of the International Association of Botanic Gardens; and the people and plants initiative of the World Wide Fund for Nature and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Recognizing also that the thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work of the Convention contain elements aimed at plant conservation,

Noting the importance of national actions, in accordance with national priorities, to the achievement of plant conservation, and the urgent need to strengthen national capacities,

Recognizing regional initiatives such as the European Plant Conservation Strategy developed by the Council of Europe and Planta Europa as valuable contributions to global plant conservation,

1. *Recommends* that the Conference of the Parties, at its sixth meeting:

(a) *Considers* for adoption a global strategy for plant conservation, which should include outcome-oriented global targets for 2010, developed on the basis of the proposals in annex I to the present recommendation and taking into account the results of the inter-sessional work described in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 below;

(b) *Invites* relevant international organizations to adopt these targets, in order to promote a common effort towards halting the loss of plant diversity;

(c) *Notes* that the targets provide a flexible framework within which national and/or regional targets may be developed, according to national priorities and capacities taking into account differences in plant diversity between countries;

(d) *Invites* Parties and Governments to develop national and/or regional targets, and, as appropriate, to incorporate them into relevant plans, programmes and initiatives, including national biodiversity strategies and action plans;

(e) *Emphasizes* the need for capacity building, particularly in developing countries, small island states, and countries with economies in transition, in order to enable them to implement the strategy;

(f) *Considers* the need to ensure financial support, for country driven activities and capacity building for the implementation of the strategy;

(g) *Reviews*, at its eighth and tenth meetings, the progress made in reaching the global targets, and provide additional guidance in light of those reviews;

(h) *Considers* the global strategy for plant conservation as a pilot approach for the use of outcome targets under the Convention within the context of the Strategic Plan and, also consider the wider application of this approach to other areas under the Convention, including other taxonomic groups;

(i) *Requests* the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice:

(i) To take the targets into consideration in its periodic reviews of the thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work of the Convention;

(ii) To develop ways and means, within the Convention's thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work, for promoting implementation of the global strategy for plant conservation, and for monitoring and assessing progress; and to report to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting;

(j) *Welcomes* the contribution of the "Gran Canaria Group" in developing this strategy, and invite the organizations involved, and other relevant organizations, in collaboration with the Executive Secretary, to contribute to the further development, implementation and monitoring of strategy;

[Inter-sessional work]

In preparation for consideration of the draft strategy by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting,

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, with the support of technical experts, in consultation with participants of the ongoing international initiatives referred to in the fourth preambular paragraph above and on the basis of advice from Parties, to refine the quantitative elements of the targets in the draft strategy providing a scientific and technical rationale in each case, and clarifying terms as necessary;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to prepare an analysis of the opportunities for implementation of the strategy through the thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work of the Convention, including in particular the Ecosystem Approach and the Global Taxonomy Initiative, as well as through existing relevant international, regional and national initiatives, and of any gaps in these programmes and initiatives;

4. *Invites* Parties, Governments and relevant organizations to provide information to the Executive Secretary on relevant international, regional and national initiatives.

*Annex I***GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR PLANT CONSERVATION****A. Objectives**

1. The ultimate and long-term objective of the strategy is to halt the current and continuing loss of plant diversity.
2. The strategy will provide a framework to facilitate harmony between existing initiatives aimed at plant conservation, to identify gaps where new initiatives are required, and to promote mobilization of the necessary resources.
3. The strategy will be a tool to enhance the ecosystem approach to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and focus on the vital role of plants in the structure and functioning of ecological systems and assure provision of the goods and services such systems provide
4. The strategy will also:
 - (a) Provide a pilot exercise under the Convention for the setting of targets that relate to ultimate objectives of the Convention;
 - (b) Act as a means to develop and implement the thematic programmes of work of the Convention.
5. Within the ultimate and long-term objective, a number of sub-objectives can be identified as follows:
 - (a) *Understanding and documenting plant diversity:*
 - (i) Document the plant diversity of the world, including its use and its distribution in the wild, in protected areas and in *ex situ* collections;
 - (ii) Monitor the status and trends in global plant diversity and its conservation, and threats to plant diversity, and identify plant species, plant communities, and associated habitats and ecosystems, at risk, including consideration of “red lists”;
 - (iii) Develop an integrated, distributed, interactive information system to manage and make accessible information on plant diversity;
 - (iv) Promote research on the genetic diversity, systematics, taxonomy, ecology and conservation biology of plants and plant communities, and associated habitats and ecosystems, and on social, cultural and economic factors that impact biodiversity, so that plant diversity, both in the wild and in the context of human activities, can be well understood and utilized to support conservation action;
 - (b) *Conserving plant diversity:* Improve long-term conservation, management and restoration of plant diversity, plant communities, and the associated habitats and ecosystems, *in situ* (both in more natural and in more managed environments), and, where necessary to complement in situ measures, *ex situ*, preferably in the country of origin. The strategy will pay special attention to the conservation of the world’s important areas of plant diversity, and to the conservation of plant species of direct importance to human societies

- (c) *Using plant diversity sustainably:*
 - (i) Strengthen measures to control unsustainable utilization of plant resources;
 - (ii) Support the development of livelihoods based on sustainable use of plants, and promote the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of plant diversity;
- (d) *Promoting education and awareness about plant diversity:* Articulate and emphasize the importance of plant diversity, the goods and services that it provides, and the need for its conservation and sustainable use, in order to mobilize necessary popular and political support for its conservation and sustainable use;
- (e) *Building capacity for the conservation of plant diversity:*
 - (i) Enhance the human resources, physical and technological infrastructure necessary, and necessary financial support for plant conservation.
 - (ii) Link and integrate actors to maximize action and potential synergies in support of plant conservation.

B. Rationale, scope and general principles

6. Plants are universally recognized as a vital part of the world's biological diversity and an essential resource for the planet. In addition to the small number of crop plants used for basic food and fibres, many thousands of wild plants have great economic and cultural importance and potential, providing food, medicine, fuel, clothing and shelter for vast numbers of people throughout the world. Plants play a key role in maintaining the planet's basic environmental balance and ecosystem stability and provide an important component of the habitats for the world's animal life. At present, a complete inventory of the plants of the world has not been assembled, but it is estimated that the total number of vascular plant species may be of the order of 300,000. Of particular concern is the fact that many are in danger of extinction, threatened by habitat transformation, over-exploitation, alien invasive species, pollution and climate change. The disappearance of such vital and large amounts of biodiversity sets one of the greatest challenges for the world community: to halt the destruction of the plant diversity that is so essential to meet the present and future needs of humankind. The global strategy for plant conservation is proposed to address this challenge. While the entry point for the strategy is conservation, aspects of sustainable use and benefit-sharing are also included.

7. The rationale for a strategy focusing on plants has two aspects:

- (a) Plants are primary producers and provide habitat infrastructure for many ecosystems;
- (b) Setting meaningful targets is feasible since scientific understanding of at least higher plants, though incomplete, is better than for most other groups.

8. Thus the proposed strategy addresses the Plant Kingdom with focus on higher plants, and other well-described groups such as Bryophytes and Pteridophytes. The setting of measurable targets for this set of taxa is more credible than for many lower plant groups. This does not imply that these groups do not have important ecological functions, nor that they are not threatened. However, effective action will be best achieved by focusing, in an initial phase at least, on achievable outcomes for known taxa. Parties may choose on a national basis to include lower taxa.

9. The strategy applies to plant genetic diversity, plant species and communities and their associated habitats and ecosystems.

10. The strategy would provide a framework for actions at global, regional, national and local levels. A global dimension to the strategy is important because it can:

- (a) Facilitate the development of a global consensus of key objectives, targets and actions;
- (b) Strengthen possibility of implementing necessary transnational actions (such as some recovery programmes);
- (c) Optimize availability and usefulness of information;
- (d) Be used to focus research on key generic issues (such as conservation methods);
- (e) Allow the identification of appropriate standards for plant conservation;
- (f) Mobilize support for globally significant actions (globally threatened species; “centres of plant diversity” and “hot spots”); and
- (g) Allow for collaboration between national, regional and international entities.

11. The global strategy for plant conservation will:

(a) Apply the provisions of the Convention on access and benefit sharing, drawing as appropriate on the Bonn Guidelines for access and benefit sharing, with a view to ensuring a fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, and consistent with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;

(b) Build upon the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities, with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices, and contribute to the implementation of Article 8(j) of the Convention;

(c) Apply the ecosystem approach adopted under the Convention, recognizing the interaction of plants and plant communities, with other components of ecosystems, at all scales, and their role in ecosystem functions and processes. The ecosystem approach also implies, *inter alia*, intersectoral cooperation, decentralization of management to the lowest level appropriate, equitable distribution of benefits, and the use of adaptive management policies that can deal with uncertainties and are modified in the light of experience and changing conditions;

(d) Adopt a multidisciplinary approach that takes into account scientific, social and economic issues;

(e) Strengthen initiatives on national inventories.

C. Targets

12. Proposed global targets for the year 2010 ^{1/} are as follows:

(a) *Understanding and documenting plant diversity:*

(i) A widely accessible working list of known plant species, as a step towards a complete world flora;

(ii) An assessment of the conservation status of [all] known plant species, at international, regional and national levels;

^{1/} The date of 2010 has been used to synchronize the strategy with the Convention’s draft Strategic Plan.

(iii) An understanding of basic conservation needs for threatened plant species and plant communities, with conservation protocols and/or techniques to assess and protect plant communities developed as necessary;

(b) *Conserving plant diversity:*

- (i) [10 per cent] of each of the world's ecological regions effectively conserved;
- (ii) Protection of [70 per cent] of the world's most important areas for plant diversity assured;
- (iii) At least [30 per cent] of production lands managed consistent with the conservation of plant diversity;
- (iv) [50 per cent] of the world's threatened species effectively conserved in situ;
- (v) [90 per cent] of threatened plant species in accessible ex situ collections, preferably in the country of origin, and [20 per cent] of them included in recovery and restoration programmes;
- (vi) [70 per cent] of the genetic diversity of crops and other major socio-economically valuable plant species conserved, and associated local and indigenous knowledge maintained;
- (vii) Management plans in place for [90 per cent] of major alien species that threaten plants, plant communities and associated habitats and ecosystems;

(c) *Using plant diversity sustainably:*

- (i) No species of wild flora subject to unsustainable exploitation because of international trade;
- (ii) [30 per cent] of plant-based products derived from sources that are sustainably managed;
- (iii) The decline of plant resources, and associated local and indigenous knowledge, that support sustainable livelihoods, local food security and health care, reversed;

(d) *Promoting education and awareness about plant diversity:*

- (i) The importance of plant diversity and the need for its conservation incorporated into educational programmes;

(e) *Building capacity for the conservation of plant diversity:*

- (i) The number of trained people working with adequate facilities in plant conservation and related activities [doubled]/[increased], according to national needs;
- (ii) Networks for plant conservation activities established or strengthened at international, regional, and national levels.

13. These targets provide a framework for policy formulation and a basis for monitoring. National targets developed within this framework may vary from country to country, according to national priorities and capacities taking into account differences in plant diversity.

D. The strategy as a framework

14. The strategy is not intended to be a “programme of work” analogous to existing thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work under the Convention. It does not, therefore, contain detailed activities, expected outputs etc. Rather, the strategy provides a framework by means of setting outcome-orientated targets (these differ from the “process” targets used so far under the Convention). It is envisaged that the activities necessary to reach those targets could be developed within this framework. In many cases, activities are already under way, or envisaged in existing initiatives. These include:

(a) Activities aimed at plant conservation within national biodiversity strategies and action plans and relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies. In this respect, Parties and Governments may wish to report on the incorporation of the strategy in their national plans, programmes and policies;

(b) Relevant activities under existing relevant initiatives, in particular: the Strategic Plan and work of the Plants Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC); the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources of the Food and Agriculture Organization; the FAO Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme; the GISP Global Strategy on Invasive Alien Species; the plant conservation programme of the IUCN Species Survival Commission; the International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation; activities of the International Association of Botanic Gardens; and the WWF-UNESCO people and plant programme; and

(c) Relevant activities under the programmes of work of the Convention on Biological Diversity, including those relating to agricultural biodiversity forest biological diversity, inland water biological diversity, marine and coastal biological diversity, and dry and sub-humid lands, as well as activities involving cross-cutting issues such as access and benefit-sharing, sustainable use, indicators, alien species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative, and issues related to Article 8(j).

15. The strategy and its 16 targets are intended to provide a framework for policy makers and public opinion and catalyse the reforms necessary to achieve plant conservation. Clear, stable, long-term targets that are adopted by the international community can help shape expectations and create the conditions in which all actors, whether Governments, the private sector, or civil society, have the confidence to develop solutions to address threats to plant diversity. For the targets to be widely understood, and appealing to public opinion, they need to be kept fairly simple and straightforward. They should be understood in a commonsensical rather than a literal way. In order that the number of targets be kept manageable, they need to focus on a set of activities that are strategic, rather than aiming to be comprehensive. Targets may be reviewed, and appropriate revised, as major new scientific evidence becomes available on important areas for plant diversity, threats to diversity, and major alien species that threaten plants, plant communities and associated habitats and ecosystems.

E. Further work required to develop and implement the strategy

16. Measures to implement the strategy will need to be put in place at international, national, and sub-national levels. This will include development of national targets and their incorporation into relevant plans, programmes and initiatives, including national biodiversity strategies and

action plans. National targets will vary from country to country according to differences in levels of plant diversity and national priorities. Multilateral and bilateral funding agencies should consider putting in place policies and procedures to ensure that their funding activities are supportive of and do not run counter to the strategy and its targets.

17. For each target, the scope of activities may need to be clarified and sub-targets, or milestones, developed. In order to monitor progress towards achieving the targets, baseline data and a series of indicators may need to be developed. This would draw upon relevant national and international data sets (such as national “red lists”), and make full use of the Clearing House Mechanism.

18. Regional components of the strategy might be developed, perhaps using a biogeographical approach.

19. As well as Parties to the Convention, the design, development and implementation of the strategy should involve a range of actors, including:

(a) International initiatives (e.g., intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, multilateral aid agencies);

(b) Conservation and research organizations (including protected-area management boards, botanic gardens, gene banks, universities, research institutes, non-governmental organizations and networks of non-governmental organizations);

(c) Communities and major groups (including local and indigenous communities, farmers, women, youth);

(d) Governments (central, regional, local authorities);

(e) The private sector.

20. In order to promote implementation of the strategy and facilitate cooperation between these initiatives, the Executive Secretary will collaborate with relevant stakeholders. To ensure full participation, the actors mentioned in paragraph 0 above should reflect not only United Nations geographical regions but also biogeographical regions. This collaboration will aim to avoid duplication of effort, promote collaboration and synergies among existing initiatives, and facilitate analysis of the status, trends, and effectiveness of different measures on the conservation and sustainable use of plant diversity. Consideration might also be given to the establishment of a flexible coordination mechanism.