



PRESS RELEASE

Global Strategy for Plant Conservation succeeds in aligning actions to protect plant diversity around the world

- *Success realised in aligning actions by world's botanist and plant protection community through shared set of principles and objectives.*
- *While unlikely that all targets will be achieved by 2020, clear that considerable progress has been made by countries.*
- *Successes include establishment of a World Flora Online and the Global Tree Assessment.*
- *Strategy has overall aim to halt loss of plant diversity, contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development, and promote the sharing of the benefits arising from the use of plant genetic resources.*

23 September 2020 – A new report on the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), suggests that while the 16 targets of the decades long plan to protect global plant are unlikely to be met, countries have made considerable progress towards achieving many of them.

Such progress is the result of actions under the strategy, with several new initiatives developed specifically to address GSPC targets. In the absence of the GSPC, these actions would not likely have taken place.

These include the establishment of a World Flora Online and a Global Tree Assessment. The World Flora Online, led by a Consortium of over 40 key institutions to create an open-access web-based compendium of the world's 350,000 species of vascular plants and mosses (Target 1 - online flora of all known plants) provides a comprehensive baseline of knowledge on the world's plants. The Global Tree Assessment, which aims to have completed Red List assessments for all the world's tree species by 2020 (Target 2 - assessment of the conservation status of all known plant species), is of fundamental importance in helping prioritize national actions. The Assessment aims to ensure that no tree species becomes extinct, despite showing that currently one in five tree species globally are known to be threatened with extinction.

“Plant diversity is crucial in the functioning of all ecosystems,” said Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity. “The decline of plant biodiversity is an illustration of a larger problem in our relationship with the natural world. As we work to



achieve the 2050 Vision of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, botanic gardens and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation play a crucial role in protecting biodiversity and fostering stewardship.”

“Like the assessment in the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation shows that while there has been important progress, we need greater efforts to achieve the GSPC targets. To reach these goals in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, we will need the engagement of all actors.”

Peter Wyse Jackson and Maïté Delmas, Co-Chairs of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation (GPPC), which has brought together over 60 of the world’s most important plant conservation organisations added: “Plant diversity is of fundamental importance to sustaining all life on Earth, providing the basis for human livelihoods and wellbeing. The Plant Conservation Report highlights the initiatives, actions and innovations carried out over the last 10 years to ensure the conservation of plants through the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. “

“Although the ambitious targets have not all been achieved, this report documents the commitment and considerable achievements of communities working together to address the challenges of safeguarding the world’s plant species and their habitats. It also highlights the necessity of continuing this work within the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.”

Importantly, many of the world’s most biodiverse countries (including China, Mexico and South Africa) have developed national plant conservation strategies in response to the GSPC to promote plant conservation and bring together stakeholders. Collectively, these countries are home to over 50 per cent of the world’s plant diversity and, in the case of Mexico and China, targets have been set that extend beyond 2020.

The aim of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation is to act as a catalyst for working together at all levels - local, national, regional and global - to understand, conserve and use sustainably the world’s immense wealth of plant diversity whilst promoting awareness and building the necessary capacities for its implementation.

The Strategy’s 16 targets, organized around five objectives, were first agreed in 2002 and were the first targets for biodiversity conservation to be adopted at the global level by the international community. Through the strategy, the plant conservation community has been able to engage with and contribute to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, to be agreed next year in China.

The plant strategy has also provided an important entry point for many non-governmental organisations support for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It has stimulated considerable growth in networks and partnerships at national and global levels and has resulted in the development of a broadly-based, multi-stakeholder, united community, committed to ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of plant diversity into the future.

Progress towards the 16 targets has been variable – among both the targets and Parties. However, most countries report some progress towards most of the targets. Apart from targets 1 and 2, Target 14 (public awareness of plant diversity) is the most likely target to be achieved at the national level, with targets 7 (*in situ* conservation), 10 (invasive species) and 12 (sustainable use), being those where least progress has been made. Other examples of progress on specific targets include national initiatives to identify and protect important areas of plant diversity in many countries and to conserve the threatened plant species within them.

Most progress was made with targets that were measurable (so-called SMART targets), and supported by a focused and committed community. A lesson learned is that it is critical for countries to have available and accessible data at national and global levels, as well as greater alignment, linkages and reporting between the GSPC and other CBD frameworks. Capacity building initiatives have made extensive contributions to GSPC implementation and many initiatives have been directly supported by Parties.

Countries have shown strong support for the continued inclusion and visibility of plants in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. This can be best achieved in the context of a continued Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, one that is updated and harmonised within the broader post-2020 framework, in addition to the inclusion of plant-specific milestones, components and supporting indicators within the post-2020 framework.

These could include species recovery plans, as a prerequisite for successful conservation; plant conservation and sustainable use clearly supporting poverty alleviation and economic development, including in urban areas; compliance with the Nagoya Protocol, but facilitating access to plants for conservation, science and sustainability; and, ecological restoration focusing on the use of appropriate native plant species in order ensure resilience and diversity in restored areas.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Plant Conservation Report 2020: www.cbd.int/gbo5/plant-conservation-report-2020

The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) with its 16 outcome-oriented targets aimed at achieving a series of measurable goals by 2010, was originally adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its sixth meeting (COP-6) in 2002. The GSPC targets were updated in 2010 and a set of revised targets for 2020 were agreed at COP-10 in 2010, with a decision that implementation of the GSPC should be pursued as part of the broader framework of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

In agreeing to the development of a specific strategy for plant conservation in the framework of the CBD, Parties acknowledged and recognised the special importance of plants as the basis of all life on earth and providing the building blocks of all terrestrial ecosystems.

The GSPC has played a pivotal role in ensuring significant progress in plant conservation in recent years. Implementation has stimulated collaboration and synergies and provided an entry point for governments, as well as many smaller, non-governmental organisations into plant conservation and the implementation of the CBD. The GSPC has also encouraged the development of target-specific support groups and champions, which are linked together through the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation (GPPC), which was established in 2004. www.cbd.int/gspc/ www.plants2020.net

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 173 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 128 Parties.

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