

# The Global Partnership for Plant Conservation

13<sup>th</sup> September, 2017

To: Dr Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity

**Re: Notification 2017-052 - development of the process for the post-2020 biodiversity framework.**

We are writing in response to Notification 2017-052 requesting input into the development of the process for the preparation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework.

We are writing on behalf of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation (GPPC), which represents over 50 institutions, organisations and networks with national, regional and international programmes in plant conservation (a list of the members of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation is provided in Table 1).

The GPPC was formed in 2004 to support the national implementation and the goals of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) adopted by the CBD in 2002 and its update in 2010 ([www.plants2020.net](http://www.plants2020.net)). In February 2004, in its Decision VII/10 on the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, the CBD Conference of the Parties welcomed the establishment of the global partnership for plant conservation and encouraged the participating organizations to continue to contribute to the implementation of the Strategy. It also invited other organizations to join the partnership, and encouraged Botanic Gardens Conservation International to continue its support for the partnership. Since then the GPPC has continued to provide active support for the implementation of the GSPC worldwide, and has contributed to monitoring and coordination of the GSPC, especially through its inclusion in the flexible coordination mechanism established by the CBD's Executive Secretary and which was welcomed by the CBD Conference of the Parties. Through this statement, we wish to highlight the importance of plants to all life on earth and emphasise that their conservation and sustainable use are fundamental to the achievement of a sustainable future for humankind.

As stated in the Gran Canaria Declaration (Blackmore et al., 1999) which promoted the establishment of a Global Strategy for Plant Conservation "*Plants are universally recognized as a vital part of the world's natural heritage and an essential resource for the planet. They are a vital component of global sustainability. In addition to the small number of crop plants we use for our basic food and fibres, many thousands of wild plants have great economic and cultural importance and potential, providing food, fuel, clothing and shelter for vast numbers of people throughout the world. Plants supply many important medicines, especially in developing countries where hundreds of millions depend on wild plants for their traditional health systems. Finally, 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.*" This statement holds as true today as it did in 1999. Despite their importance, we believe that plants are presently not being given the level of scientific attention that

they deserve and we are keen to explore how this might be addressed through the post-2020 biodiversity framework. Furthermore, we believe that, despite significant advances in plant conservation in many countries, they still face a growing and urgent crisis whereby as many as 100,000 plant species are currently threatened in the wild and the loss of their habitats continues, resulting in further erosion of their genetic diversity and the essential ecosystem services that they provide.

The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), and its 16 targets, has proved to be of fundamental importance in providing a focus for plants in the present Strategic Plan for Biodiversity - 2011-2020, and we believe that such a focus must be maintained in the future.

We would like to highlight the pivotal role the GSPC has played to date in allowing and facilitating many individuals and organisations from the botanical community to engage with the CBD and to contribute to the achievement of its objectives, targets and priorities. In focussing efforts around a set of easily understood, common targets, significant progress has been made in a number of areas, including the likely achievement of a World Flora on-line by 2020 (Target1) and accelerated progress in plant red listing (Target 2), issues that underpin and support the achievement of many other targets. The mid-term review on progress in the achievement of the GSPC conducted in 2014 ([https://www.bgci.org/files/Worldwide/News/2014/September\\_Oct/plantweb.pdf](https://www.bgci.org/files/Worldwide/News/2014/September_Oct/plantweb.pdf)) has also demonstrated that considerable progress has been made towards the achievement of the majority of the GSPC targets, much of which, arguably, would not have been achieved in the absence of such a strategic framework. The GSPC has therefore played a fundamental role in mobilising, guiding and helping to sustain the botanical community to support the CBD as well as biodiversity conservation in general and plant conservation in particular. At the national level, a number of countries (including some of the most biodiverse-rich countries, e.g. South Africa, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico and China) have developed national plant conservation strategies or responses to the GSPC that run in parallel with and support their NBSAPs.

The GSPC has also been adopted by many institutions (most notably by botanic gardens) as a guiding framework for institutional plant conservation strategies and has mobilised plant scientists around the world. The GSPC has also played an important role in helping to broaden the base of plant conservation activities worldwide, including increasingly sophisticated and effective responses to the growing threats to plant diversity and natural habitats. This has allowed and encouraged the development of new programmes related to plant conservation in such areas as conservation biology, conservation genetics, ecological restoration, climate change and mitigation, ex situ conservation, species recovery, the conservation of traditional knowledge relating to plants, conservation of genetic resources and crop wild relatives and in other areas.

The GSPC also helped to link the plant conservation community, and other organizations involved in biodiversity conservation with other processes, such as the wildlife trade (CITES).

In May, 2009, the CBD acknowledged that *“The new Strategic Plan should build upon the experience of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation”* and pointed out that *“Within the CBD, the GSPC was the first initiative under the Convention to include specific measurable targets to drive its implementation.... It is imperative that the existing targets within functioning frameworks and work programmes, such as the GSPC, are not lost in this process. They should remain the key delivery mechanisms however be linked directly to the focal area targets of the Strategic Plan.”* (UNEP/CBD/SP/PREP/1 5 June 2009). We believe that this holds as true today as it did in 2009 and

that the progress towards the achievement of GSPC goals has contributed not only to the Aichi Targets, but also provided a means to help monitor important progress in relation to their attainment.

In a message to the recent 6<sup>th</sup> Global Botanic Gardens Congress held in Geneva, Switzerland in June, 2017, the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity wrote: *“In 2010, the 10th CBD COP adopted an update of the GSPC until 2020. It also decided that the GSPC should be implemented within – and as part of – the broader framework of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.”* We note such implementation has significantly supported the mainstreaming of plant conservation into many more national policies and biodiversity conservation actions undertaken at all levels, including its incorporation into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans in many countries.

Furthermore, the Executive Secretary also wrote *“The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation has been truly mainstreamed. The idea of a flexible framework of outcome oriented targets has matured, and is now at the centre not only of the CBD but also many other intergovernmental processes, including the Sustainable Development Goals”*.

The GPPC therefore urges the CBD to consider the continued use of the GSPC as a mechanism and means to support the achievement of a post-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. The GPPC stands ready to contribute actively to the negotiations of this post-2020 Strategy and any targets adopted, including an update of the GSPC and its targets, as appropriate.

The Shenzhen Declaration on Plant Sciences ([www.abc2017.cn/Declaration/](http://www.abc2017.cn/Declaration/)), recently endorsed by over 7,000 scientists at the 19<sup>th</sup> International Botanical Congress (Shenzhen, China, July 2017) called for enhanced support for plant sciences and greater collaboration between nations and across disciplines to address common goals. We believe that a continued strategy for plants in the post-2020 biodiversity framework would be an appropriate response to this Declaration.

In 2016, in cooperation with the CBD, the GPPC held its most recent international conference in St Louis, U.S.A. to review progress on the GSPC. The conference included broadly-based participation from botanical institutions and organisations worldwide, many of whom are active in the implementation of plant conservation programmes in their own countries. An outcome of that meeting was an analysis of the links between the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and plant conservation (Sharrock and Wyse Jackson, 2017 – <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/Portals/0/Science%20and%20Conservation/PDFs/Plant%20Conservation%20and%20the%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals.pdf>). This review concluded that the plants and their conservation can make a significant global contribution towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals. We respectfully submit this review to the CBD, which we hope can provide useful perspectives and information that can help inform continuing discussions on the post-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its links with the SDGs.

The botanical community is already willingly contributing to the achievement of the GSPC and associated Aichi Targets and the SDGs. This community is now ready and eager to engage in discussions around the post-2020 biodiversity framework, including a post-2020 GSPC.

We believe, through the GPPC, we have a mechanism to ensure the engagement of plant conservation stakeholders in the development of the post-2020 strategic plan and that updated plant conservation targets will result in commitments and strengthened implementation by this sector.

However, we are also keen to ensure that post-2020 plant conservation targets are closely linked to relevant SDGs and CBD targets. Areas of particular concern include the need to address:

- The illegal trade in plants and plant products
- The need to incorporate botanic knowledge into in situ conservation such as large-scale forest restoration initiatives, as well many city-greening and green infrastructure efforts.
- Further evaluation of the potential impact of climate change on plant diversity and mitigation measures that can be implemented.

As highlighted in the CBD's Information Note of the 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 (Approaches for the preparation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework) (<https://www.cbd.int/post2020/doc/Approaches-Post2020Biodiversity.pdf>), we strongly agree that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals provide both an important enabling framework for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and for the follow-up to the Plan. We also hope that the GPPC can play a continued important role in ensuring full engagement of various stakeholders and sectors from amongst the botanical and plant genetic resources sectors in the development of the strategic plan. Amongst future GPPC plans is the organisation of the next in its series of international conferences, which have been held regularly since 2004. This conference has been tentatively scheduled for August 2018, when commitments to this process can be fostered, as well as strengthened implementation promoted of the GSPC, and through it, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and Aichi Targets.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information in relation to this Statement. The GPPC is willing and keen to provide further inputs as appropriate and helpful and looks forward to participating fully in the upcoming process for the preparation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Peter Wyse Jackson  
Chair, Global Partnership for Plant Conservation



Suzanne Sharrock  
Secretariat, Global Partnership for Plant  
Conservation at Botanic Gardens  
Conservation International

*References:*

Blackmore, S., Bramwell, D., Crane, P., Dias, B., Given, D., Hodgkin, T., Leiva, A., Morin, N.R., Pushpangadan, P., Raven, P.H., Samper, C., Sarukhán, J., Seyani, J., Simiyu, S., Smirnov, I. and Wyse Jackson, P.S. (2001). The Gran Canaria Declaration, BGCI, Richmond, U.K.

Sharrock, Suzanne and Wyse Jackson, Peter (2017). Plant Conservation and the Sustainable Development Goals: a policy paper prepared for the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation. Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden: 102: 290–302.

**Note** - We are grateful to the following members of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation for information and views that have been incorporated in this statement:

Australian Seed Bank Partnership; Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI); Chicago Botanic Garden; Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques de la Ville de Genève, Switzerland; Core Facility Botanical Garden of the University of Vienna, Austria; Instituto de Pesquisas Jardim Botânico do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Missouri Botanical Garden, St Louis, U.S.A; Plantlife International and Planta Europa; Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton & Burlington, Canada; Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, U.K;

**Table 1: Members of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation (September 2017)**

Asociación Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Jardines Botánicos  
Australian Seed Bank Partnership  
Bioversity International  
Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)  
Botanical Garden of Tver State University, Russia  
Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum, Berlin, Germany  
Centre for Plant Conservation, U.S.A.  
Chicago Botanic Garden, U.S.A.  
Council of the Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens  
Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques de la Ville de Genève, Switzerland  
Core Facility Botanical Garden of the University of Vienna, Austria  
Chinese Academy of Sciences – Botanic Garden Network, China  
Denver Botanic Gardens, U.S.A.  
The Earthwatch Institute  
The European Botanic Garden Consortium  
Fauna and Flora International (FFI)  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
Global Diversity Foundation  
Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)  
Indonesian Institute of Sciences - Bogor Botanic Gardens (LIPI), Indonesia  
Instituto de Pesquisas Jardim Botânico do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
IUCN - The World Conservation Union - Species Survival Commission  
Jardí Botànic de la Universitat de València, Spain  
Jardín Botánico Viera y Clavijo, Gran Canaria, Spain  
Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), U.K.  
King's Park and Botanic Gardens, Australia  
Missouri Botanical Garden, St Louis, U.S.A  
Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France  
National Botanic Gardens of Ireland, Glasnevin, Ireland  
New York Botanical Garden, U.S.A.  
New Zealand Plant Conservation Network, New Zealand  
The University of Oxford Botanic Garden, U.K.  
People and Plants International (PPI)  
Plantlife International and Planta Europa

PRONAPLAMED, University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica  
Red Latinoamericana de Botanica  
Rede Brasileira de Jardins Botânicos (RBJB), Brazil  
Red Nacional de Jardines Botánicos de Colombia  
Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton & Burlington, Canada  
Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, U.K  
Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, U.K.  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Australia  
Smithsonian Institution Natural History Museum, Washington D.C., U.S.A  
Society for Ecological Restoration  
Society for Economic Botany  
South African National Biodiversity Institute, South Africa (SANBI)  
Species2000  
The Morton Arboretum, U.S.A.  
TRAFFIC  
UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)  
Whitney R. Harris World Ecology Center, St Louis, U.S.A.  
World Agroforestry Centre, ICRAF  
WWF International (WWF)