

**Global Strategy for Plant Conservation – 2<sup>nd</sup> Informal Consultation  
Report and Conclusions of the meeting**

*May 17-18, 2001, London, UK*

**SUMMARY**

*A 2<sup>nd</sup> Informal Consultation for the proposed Global Strategy for Plant Conservation was held at The Royal Society, London on 17-18 May, 2001, convened by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, organised by Botanic Gardens Conservation International and held in association with the Gran Canaria Group. The participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Informal Consultation (IC-2) developed a set of targets for plant conservation that relate to the ultimate outcomes of identifying, conserving, and using sustainably plant diversity, as well as raising awareness of its importance and building capacity for these activities. This can be regarded as a pilot exercise under the Convention. The targets provide a framework for activities of existing CBD and other initiatives relevant to plant conservation.*

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1. The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in Nairobi in May 2000 addressed the issue of plant conservation and decided to consider the establishment of a global strategy for plant conservation at the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting in April 2002. Decision V/10 of COP5 noted the importance of plants for humankind, the threats they are facing, and a recent call for the development of a global strategy for plant conservation contained within the Gran Canaria Declaration. The Decision also recognized that there are ongoing international initiatives that should contribute to developing such a strategy. It requests the Executive Secretary to liaise with these existing initiatives and requests the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to examine the issue. SBSTTA will consider this issue at its 7<sup>th</sup> meeting due to be held in November 2001.

2. In furtherance of COP Decision V/10 of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity to consider the possible establishment of a global strategy for plant conservation, an Informal Consultation was convened by the Secretariat of the CBD in Montreal on 11 March, 2001. The meeting was attended by representatives of inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations of relevance to plant conservation. The report of this meeting is available at <http://www.biodiv.org/cross-cutting/plant>. At the meeting consideration was given to proposals for further action towards the elaboration of a draft strategy. The meeting concluded that there is a need for the preparation of a draft strategy document for consideration by SBSTTA 7 in November, 2001 and participants offered their support to the CBD Secretariat to help elaborate and draft this document. They concluded that it

must be bold, imaginative and innovative, in order to stem the continued unacceptable loss of plant diversity worldwide.

3. At the 1<sup>st</sup> Informal Consultation the Botanic Gardens Conservation International proposed to host a 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the ad hoc Gran Canaria Group at the Royal Society in London on 17-18 May, 2001 and invited the participation of those bodies represented at the Informal Consultation. Subsequently, it was agreed by the Executive Secretary that the proposed London meeting would be constituted as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Informal Consultation, organised in collaboration with Botanic Gardens Conservation International on behalf of the Gran Canaria Group.

4. The purpose of the meeting was to further develop the ground-work for a proposed "Global Strategy for Plant Conservation" and consider and elaborate its strategic, targets and start to enumerate linkages with other initiatives and programmes.

5. The proposal for this strategy arose in 1999 at the International Botanical Congress and was further developed by an ad-hoc working group informally being called the "Gran Canaria Group" after the meeting held in Gran Canaria, Spain, in April, 2000. The Gran Canaria Declaration was made available as an information document to COP V (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/INF/32) and is available as a Document File on the CBD Web site (<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/cop/cop-05/information/cop-05-inf-32-en.pdf>). Further information on this process is available on the Web site of the Convention on Biological Diversity as a Cross-Cutting Issue (<http://www.biodiv.org/cross-cutting/plant/>).

6. Twenty-six people participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Informal Consultation. The participants represented a wide cross-section of sectors as well as nationalities and were from Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Malawi, New Zealand, Panama, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States of America. Among the agencies represented were United Nations organizations (FAO - Sustainable Development Department, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, UNESCO Division of Ecological Sciences), international treaties secretariats (CITES Plants Committee, CBD), government agencies (The Commonwealth Secretariat, Indonesian Biodiversity Foundation, Ministerio do Meio Ambiente - Brazil, National Botanical Institute of South Africa, National Museums of Kenya, Royal Botanic Gardens - Kew, Smithsonian Institution: NMNH Botany Department and Panama Tropical Research Institute), non-governmental organizations (AABGA Plant Conservation Committee, Australian Network for Plant Conservation, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, Canadian Botanical Conservation Network, International Association of Botanic Gardens, International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, IUCN Plants Programme and SSC Plant Conservation Committee, Planta Europa, and World-Wide Fund for Nature) and botanic gardens (Botanischer Garten der Universitat Bonn, Germany, Jardín Botánico Viera y Clavijo, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain). The participants in this meeting included most of the "Gran Canaria Group" plus others interested in participating in this process.

7. The meeting was opened by Sir Robert May, President of the Royal Society. The meeting was co-chaired by Peter Wyse Jackson (BGCI), Braulio Dias (Brazil) and David Cooper (CBD Secretariat). During the first day, participants introduced themselves, and presented brief overviews of the Gran Canaria Declaration, and subsequent process involving the CBD,. Participants reviewed the scope of the present extinction crisis and the various programmes in place to combat it. The participants were in full agreement on the need for a strategy for plant conservation and that the Gran Canaria Declaration provided a useful starting point for the further elaboration of goals and targets for the strategy.

8. A general discussion addressed such questions as: who the strategy would be for; what it hopes to achieve and what would its scope be ? Participants considered that the strategy should be to conserve the diversity of all plants, with some elements focused on certain groups, such as higher plants, which are better described than some lower plant groups. This would allow meaningful quantitative targets to be set.

9. The need to set targets for the strategy was considered to be a top priority for the meeting. Discussion focused on how to set such targets. It was considered that targets should relate to the ultimate outcome of the strategy and act as indicators of the objectives of the strategy. Ten years was considered a realistic time period within which to set and achieve bold but realistic targets. Participants noted that targets of this nature had not been set within the CBD and that this could provide a valuable model for other activities within the CBD. It was hoped that targets set for global achievements could be reached through actions undertaken at national and local levels, as well as including appropriate global dimensions. It was suggested that where full agreement on targets could not be reached over the two days that the draft discussion document and strategy could present the various opinions expressed with a view to further consultations.

10. It was agreed that although this would be a strategy for plant conservation it would also include components of sustainable use of plants and the sharing of benefits derived from the use of plant diversity, which are both intrinsic parts of successful conservation, as well as being primary goals of the CBD.

11. The importance of the strategy being linked with other initiatives was stressed, both those being undertaken by the CBD and other bodies. The participants considered that the strategy should be global in scope but guide actions at international, national and local levels. They recognised that current plant conservation activities worldwide vary in scope, scale, effectiveness and in the resources available to them in different parts of the world. It was considered that the ultimate outcome of the strategy must be to impact plant conservation at all levels, from village communities to globally, within a framework that the strategy could provide. Participants recognised the need to achieve added value in plant conservation by combining and enhancing the plant conservation activities of governments, international agencies, NGOs and the private sector. Participants agreed that the strategy could provide an extremely important framework for actions at global, regional, national and local levels. A *global* dimension to the strategy is important because it:

- Develops a global consensus of key objectives, targets and actions (as in Climate Change etc);
- Allows identification of appropriate standards for plant conservation;
- Strengthens possibility of implementing necessary trans-national actions (re-populations, species, ecosystems);
- Mobilizes support for globally significant actions (globally threatened species; “centers of plant diversity”, or “hot spots”);
- Optimizes availability and usefulness of information;
- Can be used to focus research on key generic issues (conservation methods); and
- Allows collaboration between national and international entities – hence greater action and realization of economies of scale.

12. The need for the strategy to address funding and other resource requirements for plant conservation and for the achievement of the targets set was stressed. It was suggested that the strategy could help to mobilise resources at all levels and identify priorities where additional resources were needed to achieve the plant conservation targets included in the strategy.

13. The meeting reviewed the main goals of the strategy, noting that its ultimate objective would be to halt the loss of plant diversity, not just to reduce loss, no matter how difficult this object may be to achieve. Participants considered that in broad terms the Gran Canaria Declaration had identified the major elements for the strategy, as follows:

- Understanding and documenting plant diversity;
- Conserving plant diversity;
- Using plant diversity sustainably;
- Promoting education and awareness about plant diversity, and
- Capacity building for plant diversity.

14. During break-out sessions, the goals for each of these elements were considered by five working groups. Agreement was reached to base discussion on the goals outlined in the Gran Canaria Declaration, subject to various amendments considered and agreed by the meeting. In general, goals included direct reference to the need to conserve plant diversity, strengthen capacity to document and to conserve plants in the wild, enhance global and local educational programmes, ensure sustainable use and the sharing of benefits, as indicated by the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It was recognized repeatedly by participants that better coordination among existing programmes along could go a considerable way to achieving the overall goal of bringing the extinction crisis to an end.

15. The goals were defined as follows:

- UNDERSTANDING PLANT DIVERSITY - Research, monitoring and management of information on plants and plant conservation;

- Document the plant diversity of the world, including up-to-date information on its distribution in the wild, its conservation status and trends, and its use and preservation in protected areas and ex situ collections;
  - Develop an integrated, distributed, interactive information system to manage and make accessible information on plant diversity;
  - Monitor the status and trends in global plant diversity and its conservation and identify plant species at risk;
  - Undertake an ongoing international program of research on plant biology and interactions with social, cultural and economic factors that impact biodiversity, so that the genetics and ecology of plants, both in the wild and in the context of human activities, can be well understood and utilised to support conservation action.
- **CONSERVING PLANT DIVERSITY** - *In situ* and *ex situ* conservation, and integrated approaches to plant conservation;
    - Improve long-term conservation and management of plant diversity in the wild;
    - Support the maintenance and use of genetically diverse and accessible samples of the world's plant species in botanical collections throughout the world;
    - Give special attention to the conservation of the world's important areas of plant diversity, including the ecosystems and the species they contain;
    - Control invasive alien plants and animals, which pose one of the greatest threats to plant diversity in natural habitats;
    - Pay special attention to the conservation of plant species of direct economic importance to human societies, especially crops and their wild relatives, forage plant species, agroforestry and forest species, medicinal plants and species used in other ways;
    - Develop and implement best practices in plant conservation which will ensure the fullest community and institutional participation at all levels.
- **USING PLANT DIVERSITY** - Social and economic benefit of plant diversity;
    - Strengthen measures to control unsustainable utilization of plant resources.
    - Support development of livelihoods based on sustainable use of plants.
    - Ensure that benefits arising from the use of plants are shared fairly and equitably.
- **AWARENESS OF PLANT DIVERSITY** - Education and public awareness about plant diversity and the threats it faces.
    - Articulate and consistently emphasize the benefits of plant diversity, and encourage active public participation in their conservation and sustainable use.
- **CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CONSERVATION OF PLANT DIVERSITY;**
    - Enhance the human resources working for plant conservation;
    - Enhance the physical and technological infrastructure for plant conservation;

- Identify and apply new financial resources for plant conservation and enhance effectiveness of existing resources;
- Link, integrate & identify gaps, weaknesses to promote cross cutting activities to be undertaken by a diversity of organisations, institutions & communities at all levels for plant conservation.

16. The working groups also considered the development of measurable targets for each of the goals. Progress made and the conclusions reached by each working group was subsequently reported to the full meeting and goals and targets further refined. Most of the targets proposed were very specific, with completion dates within a 6-10 year time frame. A variety of proposed goals and targets were reviewed, and every effort was made to record all ideas being discussed.

17. Draft Targets for the year [2012] were defined as follows:

*Understanding and Documenting Plant Diversity:*

- (1) A complete and widely accessible working list of known plant species, as a step towards a complete world flora.
- (2) An assessment of the conservation status of [the world's flora] [all known plant species], including an inventory of plant species in protected areas.
- (3) An understanding of the conservation needs for [20]% of plant species.

*Conserving Plant Diversity:*

- (4) [10]% of each of the world's [ecoregions] and [50]% of world's endangered species conserved in effective [protected areas].
- (5) [90] % endangered plants in accessible *ex situ* collections, and [20]% of them included in recovery programmes.
- (6) [30]% of production lands managed consistent with plant conservation needs.
- (7) {threats from invasive alien species}.
- (8) 70% of the genetic diversity of all socio-economically valuable plant species conserved.

*Using Plant Diversity Sustainably:*

- (9) Reduce by [60]%, illegal international trade in plants and plant products.
- (10) [50%] of plant based products to be derived from sustainable sources.
- (11) Reverse the decline of plant resources to support sustainable livelihoods, local food security and health care.

*Promoting Education and Awareness about Plant Diversity:*

- (12) Every child aware of the importance of plant diversity.

*Capacity Building for Plant Diversity:*

- (13) [Double ] the number of trained people working with adequate facilities in plant conservation and related activities.
- (14) Establish networks for plant conservation activities at international, regional, and national levels.

\* Notes on these targets are provided in Annex 1 which should be read in conjunction with each draft target.

18. Participants at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Informal Consultation emphasized that there was no intention to develop a “programme of work” analogous to existing CBD thematic and cross cutting programmes of work with detailed activities, expected outputs etc. Rather the intention was to provide a framework for activities, by means of “ultimate”, “impact”, or “outcome” targets (as opposed to “output” targets or “process” targets). They suggested that the activities necessary to reach those targets could be developed within this framework. However, they pointed out that in many cases activities are already underway, or envisaged in existing initiatives, but where gaps are identified, new activities or programmes may need to be proposed.

19. It was proposed and agreed that following the meeting a matrix would be generated, indicating for each of the targets, (i) the overall issue of “goal”; (ii) supplementary notes; (iii) a list of activities under existing relevant initiatives, including CBD programmes of work and other initiatives; and (iv) identification of gaps, and where appropriate, proposals to address such gaps. They recognised however that all quantitative targets presented above would need to be reviewed and many of them redefined through wider consultation.

20. The participants recognised that there are already many organizations and institutions engaged in advancing the basic objectives of conservation, sustainable use and sharing of benefits. Preliminary lists of linkages among existing initiatives and the present proposal for a global strategy were prepared, but it was recognised that this task could not be completed in a few hours within such a meeting and that further elaboration of linkages would need to take place.

21. The next stages in the development of the strategy were considered. A report on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Informal Consultation would be prepared and a discussion paper including the draft Global Strategy for Plant Conservation would be prepared and made available for comment on the web, to get more input from parties, governments and other organisations. A final draft would be prepared for consideration at the SBSTTA meeting in November 2001. It was also proposed that the CBD Secretariat would continue to use the current group to provide comments, suggestions and advice for the process in the run up to SBSTTA. The need for the preparation of a review of plant conservation activities and priorities included in national biodiversity conservation strategies, action plans and reports was outlined. The organizers of the meeting asked that participants make every effort to inform interested individuals and organizations, including national delegations to

SBSTTA, of this initiative to develop the global strategy for the conservation of plant diversity.

22. The need for a co-ordination and monitoring mechanism for the strategy was considered. Participants stressed that it is critical to have a means to draw together existing plant conservation initiatives worldwide and to have an effective means to monitor the achievement of the targets proposed. They suggested that many of those involved in the Informal Consultations could be called on by the Executive Secretary to provide guidance and expert advice, perhaps in the form of an advisory committee. Ideas discussed including the development of task forces to consider particular plant conservation issues and the establishment of national plant conservation focal points.

23. The meeting ended with Peter Wyse Jackson expressing thanks on behalf of the group to all those who had supported and sponsored the meeting, in particular British Airways, the CBD Secretariat, the Board and staff of Botanic Gardens Conservation International, The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and The Royal Society. He also thanked the participants for their excellent and thoughtful contributions, and expressed his gratitude to BGCi staff, Barbara Bridge, Fiona Dennis and Lucy Sutherland for their work leading up to and during the meeting. On behalf of the Executive Secretary, David Cooper extended his thanks to BGCi for organising the meeting.

**Annex 1. NOTES on the targets listed in paragraph (17) above.**

**The following draft targets were subsequently developed based on comments and suggestions received by the Secretariat in the period following the meeting and are included as revised in the Note by the Executive Secretary “A Proposal for a Global Strategy for Plant Conservation”, document UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/7/10.**

Target (1): This should include an inventory of specimen in herbaria. An important part of the efforts to reach this target is to promote field surveys of plants especially in developing countries.

Target (3): This is a target for research support. It could, perhaps, be replaced by a target under capacity building such as: **“Double research funding for plant conservation”**.

Target (4): The terms in brackets need to be defined. “ecoregions” is used in a general sense, not, for example, the particular sense of the WWF Global 200 programme.

Target (5): As formulated, this highlights one link between ex situ and in situ conservation.

Target (6): This applies to *in situ* conservation in wider landscape, including private and community lands.

Target (7): It was suggested that there should be a separate target related to the threat from invasive alien species. Either an outcome target should be formulated, or else, this might be dropped. In any case, addressing the threat from invasive alien species will need to be tackled in order to address targets (4) and (6).

Target (8): The term: “socio-economically” needs to be defined, or, the target needs to be reformulated, since a 70% target as formulated would be feasible for crop plants and their gene pools (including wild relatives), but would not be feasible for the wider range of socio-economically important plants such as non cultivated medicinal plants.

Target (9): the quantitative target should be set in the light of the CITES strategic plan and CITES targets.

Target (10): The scope of “plant based products” would have to be clarified and the term “sustainable sources” would have to be defined at least as part of the monitoring exercise.

Target (11): This is consistent with, and a special case of one of the International Development Targets, already agreed: “...ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015”. A alternative formulation would be **“Reverse the decline of plant resources**

*that support sustainable livelihoods, local food security and health care*”, which could be achieved also by providing alternative livelihoods. If the term “plant diversity”, rather than “plant resources” is used, then “reverse the decline” is no longer feasible. Instead “reduce the decline” would be used. In view of the focus on livelihoods, reference to plant resources would seem appropriate for this target.

Target (12): An alternative formulation might be “[X]% of the population aware of the importance of plant diversity. Other alternatives were proposed and these could, perhaps, be possible elements of a strategy to address the overall target. Eg: “5 % of the population visiting institutes or sites that promote awareness of plant diversity” or “1% of population engaged in plant conversation”. However, it was suggested the first of these suggestions is too narrow in focus and might, in fact, be counterproductive for some sites, and that there are problems with interpretation of the second suggestion.

Target (13): This formulation includes people, physical and technological infrastructure, and financial resources. “Double” represents growth at some 7% per year. This might be insufficient to achieve the other targets.

## **Annex 2. Participants at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Informal Consultation on the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.**

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