



## The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) 2011-2020 .....and what it means for you

This fact sheet is designed to be a straight forward guide to the updated Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, particularly for members of IUCN's Plant Specialist groups. At the end of the fact sheet there are some suggestions on how the GSPC can be used to improve support and action for the conservation of wild plants.

### ❖ Recent developments with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation

At the Convention on Biological Diversity meeting in Nagoya in October 2010 (CBD COP10) an amended and updated Global Strategy for Plant Conservation was endorsed by the world's governments. This follows eight years of the first Global Strategy for Plants (endorsed in 2002), which has brought plant conservationists together throughout the world and is seen by the Convention and many governments as a great success. For plant conservationists this decision to endorse an updated Plant Strategy means we have:

1. A continued global political framework for our work in plant conservation up until 2020
  2. Sixteen updated global targets for plant conservation against which governments will be obliged to report
  3. Achieved recognition of the importance of plants and their conservation during the first eight years of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, by politicians and governments around the world.
- .....it's VERY good news.

### ❖ Summary of the updated Strategy

The strategy now has a vision: "*Without plants there is no life. The functioning of the planet and our survival depends on plants. This strategy seeks to halt the continuing loss of plant diversity.*" The updated Strategy still contains sixteen targets under 5 objectives - these objectives have been updated to:

- I: Plant diversity is well *understood* documented and recognised;
- II: Plant diversity is urgently and effectively *conserved*;
- III: Plant diversity is *used* in a sustainable and equitable manner;
- IV: *Education and awareness* about plant diversity, its role in sustainable livelihoods and importance to all life on Earth is promoted;
- V: The *capacities and public engagement* necessary to implement the Strategy have been developed.

A list of the updated targets and what they mean can be found in table 1 on page 3 of this fact sheet, with brief explanations of what they aim to achieve. The full text of the COP 10 decision (no. X/17) can be found at <http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=12283>

### ❖ How can the new GSPC help plant conservation in my country?

The targets are essentially global level targets, but each government has committed to undertake activities to complete them as far as they are able to. Some countries have already chosen to develop national versions of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, which set out what they need to do achieve the targets in their country. For example China, South Africa, Mexico, the Seychelles and the UK - some of these national strategies can be found at <http://www.plants2010.org/>. These often have national targets *guided* by, but not necessarily identical to, global targets. In Europe there is a regional strategy for plant conservation ([www.plantaeuropa.org](http://www.plantaeuropa.org)).

National strategies can be very useful for raising awareness and promoting specific actions for plants. Ideally their development must involve all the people/organisations who could (and should) be involved with plant conservation. This means organisations from outside the traditional plant conservationist community (for example farmers, foresters, those who produce plant-based products...) must be involved; and most importantly government administrations. Gaining *commitments* to the strategy from all these stakeholders is an important part of the process.

#### ❖ Linking the GSPC to other conservation programmes

Capacity for plant conservation is limited in many countries around the world, and there are many international conventions to which governments must respond. This situation can be used by government administrations as an excuse to ignore the GSPC and not to invest in specific actions that are need to conserve plants. However, the *GSPC can also be delivered through national biodiversity strategies and action plans, AND through the major outcome from the Nagoya meeting - the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity*. The CBD Strategic Plan (2011-2020) also has targets, 20 in all, relating to all the programmes of the CBD. Governments will be required to report against this too. Many GSPC targets are similar to those in the CBD Strategic Plan and so virtually all activities carried out under the GSPC also deliver Strategic Plan targets. There is a table on page 6 of this document that shows the connections between the GSPC and the Strategic plan. Governments are being asked NOW to update national biodiversity strategies and actions plans (NBSAPs) to take account of the CBD strategic plan so now is also a good time to persuade them to incorporate GSPC targets into NBSAPS during this process. There is funding available from GEF for countries to do this work, see <http://www.cbd.int/nbsap/>. Applications should be made through GEF focal points.

#### ❖ How to we begin to work on these targets? What help is available?

It is very likely that you are already contributing to some of these targets, if you are involved in Red List assessments this is a contribution to target 2, if you are involved in identifying Important Plant Areas or in protected area management - this contributes to target 5, if you are working on species recovery this contributes to target 7 and 8.

If you are interested in developing your work on the GSPC, the IUCN Plant Conservation Sub-committee can help by putting you in touch with others who have developed national plant strategies or with those organisations who are leading NGO contributions on particular targets. IUCN is recognised as a lead organisation with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew for target 2 (conservation assessments for plant species), and with Plantlife for target 5 (conserving important areas for plants). IUCN is also a member of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation; a network of organisations actively working on the GSPC. The Partnership (led by Botanic Gardens Conservation International) is working on the development of an *on-line toolkit* for the GSPC, to assist anyone who wants to start working on GSPC targets. To find out more contact [info@bgci.org](mailto:info@bgci.org).

#### *Possible actions for specialist group members and/or their organisations:*

- *Write to your CBD focal point and ask them what they are doing about the GSPC - each country should have a GSPC focal point, see <http://www.cbd.int/doc/lists/nfp-cbd-GSPC.pdf>*
- *Raise awareness of the GSPC in your organisation - show how your work is contributing GSPC targets (use the table 1 below to help with this)*
- *Ensure the GSPC is recognised as a contribution to the national biodiversity strategy and action plan in your country. Note the funding available to update this plan above!*
- *Show your government how the GSPC contributes to the CBD strategic plan (table 2).*
- *Use the IUCN Plant Conservation SC, its contacts and your collaborators to help you take the GSPC forward in your country/region. Initial contact: [andrew.rodriques@iucn.org](mailto:andrew.rodriques@iucn.org)*

**Table1: The targets in the updated Global Strategy for Plant Conservation 2011-2020**

| No. | Old target text  | New target text  | Commentary   |
|-----|--|--|--|
| 1   | A widely accessible working list of known plant species, as a step towards a complete world flora                              | <b>An online flora of all known plants</b>   | Using the 2010 world checklist as a basis, include a more complete synonymy and geographic distributions to country level drawing on national floras and checklists and international initiatives.   |
| 2   | A preliminary assessment of the conservation status of all known plant species, at national, regional and international levels | <b>An assessment of the conservation status of all known plant species, as far as possible, to guide conservation action</b>   | Assessment of status through country-level processes and/or through international initiatives - conservation action can proceed following <b>any</b> relevant assessment. Linkage to action through prioritisation is emphasised. The IUCN Red List Criteria provide a robust framework for full assessments of all known plant species to a consistent international standard. The Sampled Red List Index for plants provides a global overview and a baseline against which global trends can be tracked.  |
| 3   | Development of models with protocols for plant conservation and sustainable use, based on research and practical experience    | <b>Information, research and associated outputs, and methods necessary to implement the Strategy developed and shared</b>  | Key areas methodologies required include: the integration of in situ and ex situ conservation; maintenance of threatened plants within ecosystems; applying the ecosystem approach; balancing sustainable use with conservation; and methodologies for setting conservation priorities; and methodologies for monitoring conservation and sustainable use activities.  |
| 4   | At least 10 per cent of each of the world's ecological regions effectively conserved   | <b>At least 15 per cent of each ecological region or vegetation type secured through effective management and/or restoration</b>   | Ecological regions= large areas of land or water that contain a geographically distinct assemblage of natural communities. Effective management means that the area is managed to ensure the persistence of the vegetation, and biotic and abiotic components. The target aims to: (i) increase the representation of different ecological regions in ecological networks, (ii) increase the integrity and effective management of ecological networks. Useful mechanisms could be REDD (Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation), ecological networks/corridors, Indigenous/Community Conserved Areas                                |
| 5   | Protection of 50 per cent of the most important areas for plant diversity assured  | <b>At least 75 per cent of the most important areas for plant diversity of each ecological region protected with effective management in place for conserving plants and their genetic diversity</b> | The most important areas for plant diversity can be identified according to a set of criteria including endemism, species richness, and/or uniqueness of habitats, taking into account the provision of ecosystem services. Protection can be assured through effective conservation measures, including, but not limited to, protected areas, measures must be taken to maintain and enhance the plant diversity. Target links to ecological networks (target 4) and invasive alien species (target 10). Long term aim to enlarge and connect areas to combat threats.  |
| 6   | At least 30 per cent of production lands managed consistent with the conservation of plant diversity                           | <b>At least 75 per cent of production lands in each sector managed sustainably, consistent with the conservation of plant diversity</b>  | Production lands refer to lands where the primary purpose is agriculture (including horticulture), grazing, or wood production. Important objectives : Conservation of the plant diversity which is an integral part of the production system itself (i.e., crop, pasture or tree species and genetic diversity); Protection of other plant species in the production landscape that are unique, threatened, or of particular socio-economic value; Use of management practices that avoid significant adverse impacts on plant diversity in surrounding ecosystems. Higher targets may be appropriate for natural or semi-natural forests and grasslands. |

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| 7  | 60 per cent of the world's threatened species conserved <i>in situ</i>   | <b>At least 75 per cent of known threatened species conserved <i>in situ</i></b>  | Biologically viable populations of these species should occur in at least one protected area or the species is effectively managed outside the protected area network. Effective conservation needs to consider (i) the genetic diversity of the species and (ii) climate change, for example by determining whether the protected area network includes corridors, altitudinal gradients, or the presence of multiple habitats to facilitate species movement. The target should allow for habitat and ecological restoration to enable its achievement. Many vulnerable endemic species should be treated as a priority . |
| 8  | 60 per cent of threatened plant species in accessible <i>ex situ</i> collections, preferably in the country of origin, and 10 per cent of them included in recovery and restoration programmes | <b>At least 75 per cent of threatened plant species in <i>ex-situ</i> collections, preferably in the country of origin, and at least 20 per cent available for recovery and restoration programmes</b>                                    | Shows how <i>ex situ</i> conservation can support <i>in situ</i> recovery and restoration. <i>The ex situ collections should be accessible and should preferably be in the country of origin.</i> Suggests that priority be given to developing genetically representative collections of the most critically threatened species. Assessments of a representative sample of plant species in collections could provide a baseline for measuring this target. Toolkits under this target need to include protocols for genetic management of <i>ex situ</i> collections, and reintroductions.                                |
| 9  | 70 per cent of the genetic diversity of crops and other major socio-economically valuable plant species conserved, and associated indigenous and local knowledge maintained                    | <b>70 per cent of the genetic diversity of crops including their wild relatives and other socio-economically valuable plant species conserved, while respecting, preserving and maintaining associated indigenous and local knowledge</b> | The focus of this target is crops, their wild relatives and other socio-economically important species, including those of local importance. By working with local communities, associated indigenous and local knowledge can be maintained. Combining genebank, on farm, and other <i>in situ</i> approaches, the target could be reached for all crops in production, as well as major forage and tree species. Other major socio-economically important species, such as medicinal plants, could be selected on a case-by-case basis, according to national priorities.  |
| 10 | Management plans in place for at least 100 major alien species that threaten plants, plant communities and associated habitats and ecosystems  | <b>Effective management plans in place to prevent new biological invasions and to manage important areas for plant diversity that are invaded</b>   | A combination of prevention and management within critical areas and the development of management plans for all types of major biological invasions that threaten plants, plant communities and associated habitats and ecosystems. NB that the alien species could be plants, animals or micro-organisms and the management plans should be designed (using the ecosystem approach) to redress damage done to plants and/or their communities and to restore ecosystem functions, goods and services.   |
| 11 | No species of wild flora endangered by international trade   | <b>No species of wild flora endangered by international trade</b>   | The target focuses on those species that are actually threatened by international trade. Includes but not limited to species listed on appendix 1 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). It is consistent with the main purpose of the CITES Strategic Plan: "No species of wild flora subject to unsustainable exploitation because of international trade".  |
| 12 | 30 per cent of plant-based products derived from sources that are sustainably managed  | <b>All wild harvested plant-based products sourced sustainably</b>  | Plant-based products include food products, timber, paper and other wood-based products, other fibre products, and ornamental, medicinal and other plants for direct use, including non-timber forest products, local land races, wild relatives of crops, and neglected and underutilised plant resources. Sustainably managed sources include sustainably managed natural or semi-natural ecosystems and sustainably managed plantation forests and agricultural lands. Sustainable management integrates social and environmental considerations.  |
| 13 | The decline of plant   | <b>Indigenous and local</b>   | Both plant resources and methods to address their decline are largely site specific and so implementation   |

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|    | resources, and associated indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices that support sustainable livelihoods, local food security and health care, halted  | <b>knowledge, innovations and practices associated with plant resources, maintained or increased, as appropriate, to support customary use, sustainable livelihoods, local food security and health care</b> | must be locally driven. The scope of the target encompasses plant resources and associated ethnobotanical knowledge. Specific indicators being formulated by ILO (on traditional occupations, some of which related to plants and plant-derived materials) and UNESCO (culture and language loss) could be assessed for possible inclusion.                                 |
| 14 | The importance of plant diversity and the need for its conservation incorporated into communication, educational and public-awareness programmes                       | <b>The importance of plant diversity and the need for its conservation incorporated into communication, education and public awareness programmes</b>  | Refers to both informal and formal education at all levels, including primary, secondary and tertiary education. Key target audiences include policy-makers and the public in general. Materials [indicators] should be developed for specific target audiences. Should also be included in broader areas of mainstream education policy.                                   |
| 15 | The number of trained people working with appropriate facilities in plant conservation increased, according to national needs, to achieve the targets of this Strategy | <b>The number of trained people working with appropriate facilities sufficient according to national needs, to achieve the targets of this Strategy</b>  | Capacity-building to address the need for conservation practitioners trained in a range of disciplines, with access to adequate facilities. Should be based on national needs assessments. Increased capacity should be understood to include not only in-service training, but also the training of stakeholders and decision makers, particularly at the community level. |
| 16 | Networks for plant conservation activities established or strengthened at national, regional and international levels  | <b>Institutions, networks and partnerships for plant conservation established or strengthened at national, regional and international levels to achieve the targets of this Strategy</b>                     | This target is understood to include the broadening of participation in existing networks, as well as the establishment, where necessary, of new networks.  |

**Table 2: Links between the GSPC ( 2011- 2020) and the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011- 2020)**

| Summarised GSPC target<br>(for full target text see previous table)   | Summarised CBD Strategic Plan headline target -By 2020.... ( for the percentage a applied to each target see the VOP decision (no. x/2 at <a href="http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=12268">http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=12268</a> )  |
|---|--|
| T1:....online flora   | No similar target  |
| T2:....assessment of the conservation status  | No similar target  |
| T3:.... Information, research ....methods   | T19: knowledge, (science base and technologies) relating to biodiversity, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied   |
| T4:..... conservation of ecological regions   | T5: the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved...degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced T15: ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, including restoration of degraded ecosystems, to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification |
| T5: ....important areas for plant diversity protected with effective management                                       | T11: terrestrial and inland water areas, and coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effective and well connected systems of protected areas and area-based conservation measures   |
| T6: ... production lands managed sustainably  | T7: areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity   |
| T7: ..... known threatened plant species conserved <i>in situ</i>   | T12: the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, has been improved and sustained  |
| T8: .... <i>ex situ</i> , recovery and restoration  | No similar target, but linked to T12   |
| T9: .... genetic diversity of crops, wild relatives and other socio-economically valuable plant species conserved.... | T13: the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, for safeguarding their genetic diversity  |
| T10: .... biological invasions  | T9: invasive alien species are identified, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to prevent their introduction and establishment  |
| T11: .... international trade   | No similar target, but some linkages to T4 and T6  |
| T12: ...plant-based products  | T4:, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption T6: all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans /measures are in place   |
| T13: ....Indigenous and local knowledge   | T18: the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention  |
| T14: ... communication, education and public awareness programmes   | T1:, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably   |
| T15: .. trained people with appropriate facilities sufficient   | T20: the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity  |
| T16:... partnerships for plant conservation   | T17: each Party has developed, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan   |