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**SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AICHI TARGET 12**

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

1. The Executive Secretary is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention and in the eighteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, an information document submitted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature entitled "Supporting the implementation of Aichi Target 12".
2. The document is being circulated in the form and language in which it was provided to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

## Supporting the implementation of Aichi Target 12

***The extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.***

### Introduction

The aim of this short paper is to provide information which will assist Parties in achievement of Target 12. It includes suggestions for how the forthcoming WGRI-5, SBSTTA-18 and COP12 meetings in 2014 can be used to further the implementation of Target 12 (T12). As there is no CBD Programme of Work on species conservation, special attention needs to be given to facilitating the necessary discussion and decision-making by the Parties on this topic. The recommendations in this short paper could also be incorporated into the 'PyeongChang Roadmap'.

Target 12 effectively breaks down into two components:

- The knowledge about what is threatened, for which the most obvious tool is the global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the various national red lists (or equivalent) in many countries;
- Targeted and coordinated conservation action to bring about the recovery of species utilising species action plans as well as ensuring threatened species are included in protected areas.

In relation to both of these components, IUCN highlights tools and resources to help facilitate the achievement of this target. These are discussed in relation to knowledge about what is threatened; species action planning; action on the ground; links between Target 12 and the other Aichi targets and Friends of Target 12.

### Knowledge about what is threatened

1. Parties are encouraged to support work to assess species for [The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#), noting that the speed of the assessment process and the comprehensiveness of its coverage are both resource-dependent. The global Red List enables countries to see those species for which they have global responsibility (single country endemics, as in many tropical countries) or for which they have particularly important roles to play in preventing extinction and bringing about recovery. It also provides information on the threats that each species faces and the priority actions required in order to address these, improve the status of threatened species, and prevent extinctions. The IUCN Red List provides information that is essential to enable Parties to identify the most important sites for conserving species, including [Alliance for Zero Extinction](#) (AZE) sites, Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, and other Key Biodiversity Areas (see point 18 below). Parties should take note of IUCN's campaign, The Barometer of Life<sup>1</sup>, which aims to assess 160,000 species by 2020. This will make The IUCN Red List much more representative of currently under represented taxa including plants, fungi and invertebrates, as well as an increased focus on the marine and freshwater realms. Good progress is being made, with 73,686 species already assessed (as of June 2014), and at least 25,000 in the pipeline, but more resources are needed if the 160,000 target is to be reached by 2020. Taxonomic expansion of The

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<sup>1</sup> Stuart, S.N., Wilson, E.O., McNeely, J.A., Mittermeier, R.A. and Rodríguez, J.P. 2010. Response to comments on "The barometer of life". *Science* 329: 141-142.

IUCN Red List is critical for the identification of additional AZE sites and other KBAs, in particular for fungi, plants and invertebrates. In 2014 The IUCN Red List celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

2. Parties should further enhance their work on national red lists, or start national red lists if they have not already done so. IUCN has a programme to provide [training in the use of Red List methodology](#). If Parties wish to be able to compare the findings of their national red lists, then it is important to standardize the methodology, and IUCN provides the [most commonly used global standard](#) for this.
3. National Red Lists (NRLs), if developed appropriately, have the potential to provide information to measure progress towards 13 of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Coupled with land-use planning tools they can also help countries understand development impacts on species and ecosystems and in the production of responsible Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA).

Parties are also encouraged to participate in IUCN's National Red List Working Group (also known as the National Red List Alliance), and to share their data on the [National Red List website](#), a centralised online and searchable database which contains local, national and regional Red Lists from around the world as well as any resulting conservation action plans. It also includes training materials.

4. Through repeating national red list assessments, Parties can calculate national Red List Indices to track progress towards achieving Target 11 at a national scale. The Group's Coordinating Body, with representatives covering each of the world's regions, maintains the database for each region; collates all NRLs; updates national level maps of relevant species; collates and uploads national species and ecosystem action plans and co-ordinates national and regional workshops. Currently, a total of 850 national red lists have been recorded spanning 114 countries. 18% of those have been conducted since 2005 (Figure 1 illustrates the taxonomic spread of these data). These figures are likely to increase following the CBD Secretariat request to Parties for national red list data. The aim is to ensure that NRLs cover 70% of countries by 2016 with 75% of countries using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria.

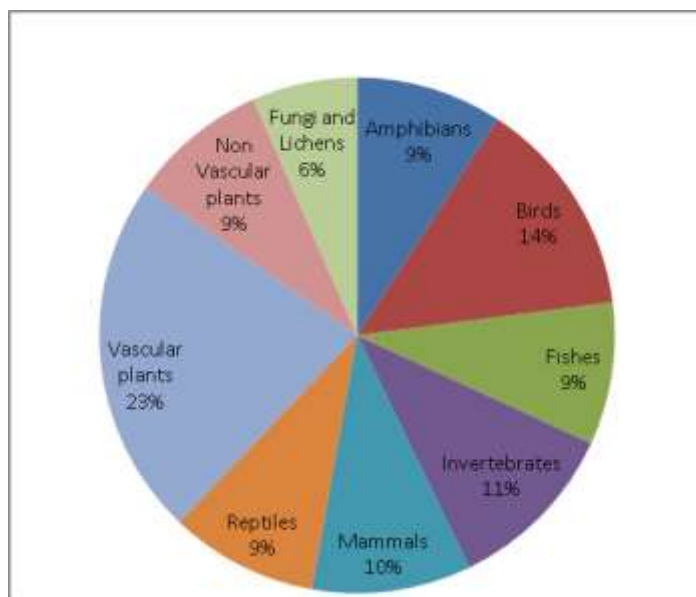


Figure 1. Taxonomic representation of National Red Lists

5. Parties should move towards basing the T12-related components of their NBSAPs to their national red lists and to the global IUCN Red List so as to ensure that all activities relating to T12 are drawing on the strongest possible evidence base.
6. Parties from developed countries should consider supporting national Red List training courses, as IUCN's available funding for this work is extremely limited, to help facilitate the achievement of Target 12.
7. With regard to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), Parties should utilise and support the global IUCN Red List and their national red lists as a means to achieve GSPC Target 2 (calling for an assessment of the status of all plant species). In this regard, it should be noted that IUCN has prioritized its plant assessment work, through the [IUCN Red List Strategic Plan](#) 2013-2020, to contribute to GSPC Target 2 by focusing on particular groups of plant species.

### Species action planning

8. Parties should undertake to achieve T12 by developing and implementing multi-stakeholder species conservation recovery plans, taking note of the methodology that has been developed by IUCN called "[Strategic Planning for Species Conservation](#)". In particular, such plans should focus on the species most at risk of extinction, as identified in the global IUCN Red List and in national red lists.
9. Strong partnerships are required to act decisively for the natural world and for those whose livelihoods depend on it. The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) encourages the development of conservation plans for species based on cumulative experience, contemporary pressures on species and the need for conservation solutions that reflect not just the biological situation but also the relevant political, social and economic conditions. The IUCN SSC approach to conservation planning is based on several key components, including: (1) a comprehensive and current status review of the species (2) a thorough analysis of threats (3) objectives, that are specific and time-bound (4) actions that are specific, measureable, assigned, realistic and time-bound, (5) a robust logic thread between Threats-Objectives-Actions, (6) representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups and a (7) commitment to review and evaluation. A more detailed description is found in the handbook: [Strategic Planning for Species Conservation](#). Examples of conservation strategies produced using the IUCN SSC handbooks are available on the IUCN website.
10. Parties should consider establishing a global registry of national and regional species action plans, perhaps in collaboration with IUCN and species-related MEAs such as CITES and CMS.
11. Parties should redouble their efforts to address the most pressing extinction crises that are currently ongoing and ensure that support is provided to those working in the front line of conservation. One of these relates to the particularly rapid declines and extinctions of amphibians; Parties should work in the context of the new IUCN-convened [Amphibian Survival Alliance](#) (ASA) to save these species before it is too late.
12. IUCN has also convened a new [Asian Species Action Partnership](#) (ASAP) in view of the recent dramatic declines in Critically Endangered South East Asian terrestrial and freshwater vertebrates. These are examples of especially serious ongoing extinction crises around which the Parties need to rally for effective action if T12 is to be achieved.

### Conservation action 'on the ground'

13. Target 12 is first and foremost about addressing concretely the loss of threatened species and supporting those in the front line of conservation. Parties should redouble their efforts to address the most pressing extinction crises that are currently ongoing and consider making a call to the GEF and others to support the implementation of T12 at a greater scale than is currently the case. The GEF currently supports [Save Our Species \(SOS\)](#). It is clear that the huge over-subscription of high-quality proposals to SOS, the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund and other funds shows that the funding available to achieve T12 is particularly limited. In addition to increased support to the GEF, Parties should be encouraged to ramp up their own financial support to T12 through funding existing mechanisms such as SOS. A recent study estimated that down listing (improving the status) of 1115 globally threatened birds by one category on the Red List would cost US\$1.23 billion annually over the next decade (McCarthy et al. Science, 2012).
14. Parties should also note that the success of species action plan implementation depends to a large extent on the implementation of appropriate policies and guidelines. Over the years, IUCN has developed a [wide-array species-related policies and guidelines](#) through global multi-stakeholder consultation processes, covering topics such as ex situ conservation, invasive species, reintroductions, sustainable use, disease risk analysis and many more.
15. Parties should also take steps to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of their action plans to implement T12. In relation to this, Parties should note that IUCN is starting a global consultation process to develop an approach to develop Green Lists of species, ecosystems and protected areas. The Green List of species will provide an objective and consistent means of monitoring the effectiveness of conservation actions in achieving defined species-related goals. Parties are invited to participate in this consultation process.

### Links between the achievement of Target 12 and other Aichi targets

16. Clearly, all 20 Aichi Targets are interdependent and the CBD Strategic Plan requires the achievement of them all.
17. However, it is worth emphasizing that the achievement of Target 12 is particularly dependent on Target 11. The primary threat to most threatened species is the conversion of natural habitats in the sites where they live, and so the primary response necessary to prevent their extinctions must be to safeguard these places. A key step to halting species decline is to ensuring that Parties utilise information on the location of threatened species to inform national land use decision making processes. The establishment and effective management of protected areas is also an important response to many other threats, including unsustainable harvest, invasive species, and climate change adaptation. It has been documented that increased protected area coverage reduces the rate at which species are sliding towards extinction. Specifically, poorly-protected species (those with less than half of their important sites protected) are sliding towards extinction twice as fast as well-protected species (those with more than half of their important sites protected). However, around 20% of known threatened species remain wholly unrepresented in protected areas. To date, only approximately one-third of key biodiversity areas, sites which contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity (such as Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas and Alliance for

Zero Extinction sites), have been protected. For further discussion of the interconnections between Targets 12 and 11, see Butchart et al. (2012) [Protecting important sites for biodiversity contributes to global conservation targets](#). In consideration of the implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas it would be helpful for Parties to make clear the links between the need to conserve species *in situ* and the establishment of protected areas.

18. Another link between T11 and T12 relates to the global imperative to safeguard [Alliance for Zero Extinction](#) (AZE) sites (these are sites that contain the sole populations of at least one Endangered or Critically Endangered species, as listed on The IUCN Red List). Unless these AZE sites are conserved, T12 cannot be achieved, as the species they support will become globally extinct and there is an urgent need to prioritize conservation attention on these places. Of the 587 Alliance for Zero Extinction sites harbouring the last remaining population of an Endangered or Critically Endangered species, nearly half have some level of protection ([www.zeroextinction.org](http://www.zeroextinction.org)). Meanwhile, 230 sites in 39 countries do not overlap any protected areas, and should be prioritized for immediate protection. Safeguarding these small areas that collectively span only 93,000 km<sup>2</sup> is an effective strategy to halt the extinction for hundreds of threatened species (Hsu et al, 2014).
19. Parties should also note that preventing extinctions and improving the status of known threatened species also requires the conservation of sites of global significance for biodiversity – [Key Biodiversity Areas](#) (KBAs). A new IUCN standard for identifying such sites is nearing completion. Parties are encouraged to ensure all endemic threatened species are accurately mapped and thereafter that a process to identify KBAs nationally is implemented. KBAs that have already been identified, in addition to AZE sites, include the 12,000 Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs). Parties are encouraged to engage in the KBA consultation, use data on IBAs (available at [www.birdlife.org/datazone](http://www.birdlife.org/datazone)) and AZEs ([www.zeroextinction.org](http://www.zeroextinction.org)) to inform protected area network expansion and management, and be ready to apply the KBA standard to identify sites for other taxa to help ensure implementation of T11 and T12.
20. Parties should note that the AZE and KBA processes outlined make it possible for some of the species-oriented action plans necessary to achieve T12 to be developed with a site or geographic focus, thus covering several threatened species in a single plan.
21. T12 can in part be achieved through the rigorous implementation of other Aichi Targets, especially T5 (habitat loss), T6 (sustainable use), T9 (invasive species), T10 (coral reefs), and T15 (climate change).
22. The recent dramatic increase in illegal wildlife trade poses a serious challenge to the achievement of T12. Parties should reinforce their commitments to implement the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) with regard to all illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade, and undertake to develop and implement joint action plans for the most threatened species.
23. The achievement of T12 is also being compromised by the decline in many species of migratory animals, including both marine and freshwater species, as well as terrestrial species. For species that migrate across international boundaries, cooperation between Parties is essential for achieving T12. Parties should undertake to develop and implement joint action plans for threatened and declining migratory species in line with their obligations under the Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

24. Parties should also make fuller use of the CBD Life Web process for drawing attention to funding priorities and needs, especially for the implementation of T12. Particular attention should be given to initiatives that seek to combat species extinctions that cannot be prevented through a protected areas approach alone, as it is these species that are hardest to support through existing funding mechanisms. The CBD High-Level Panel on Global Assessment of Resources for Implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 should pay particular attention to critical shortage of funding relating to T12, noting that many existing funding mechanisms do not prioritize species conservation.

### **Friends of Target 12**

25. The Friends of Target 12 are organisations who have pledged to support the implementation of target 12. The 'Friends' have agreed to do this through synthesising practical support and guidance; sharing information on initiatives and programmes; promoting collaborative efforts and synergies; and identifying key challenges and solutions. For an update of recent achievements see [www.iucn.org/friendsoftarget12](http://www.iucn.org/friendsoftarget12)