



IUCN
Rue Mauverney 28
1196 Gland
Switzerland

Tel. +41 22 999 0000
Fax +41 22 999 0002
mail@iucn.org
www.iucn.org

Ahmed Djoghlaif
Executive Secretary
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological
Diversity
United Nations Environment Programme
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
H2y 1N9
Fax: +1 5142886588

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Dear Ahmed,

I am pleased to send you, on behalf of IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, a second submission with inputs to the updating and revision of the Strategic Plan of the Convention, this time specifically referring to the Global Strategy for Plants Conservation (GSPC). IUCN would also like to express its endorsement and support for the recommendations for the revision of the Strategic Plan as outlined in the letter sent by Plantlife International and Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI).

Best wishes,

William J. Jackson
Deputy Director General

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IUCN's contribution to the updating and revision of the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity

The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation: a model that should be upheld for plants and replicated for other areas of the Convention

The GSPC approach is one of the more successful components of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is a framework of 16 global targets covering all possible aspects of plant conservation; almost any plant conservation activity could fit under at least one of the 16 targets. Having a comprehensive, outcome-oriented framework has galvanized work on plant conservation, and although the targets have not been met, significantly more has been done for plants than would have been achieved without the GSPC. IUCN hopes that all the Parties will contribute to updating the GSPC and adopt a new version for the post 2010 period.

In addition to the good design of the GSPC framework, several features of the multi-pronged approach to implementing the GSPC should be studied and replicated in other aspects of the CBD. Four main implementation strategies to note are: the assigning of at least one lead institution facilitating implementation per target, the encouragement of national GSPC focal points, the encouragement of regional and national plant strategies based on the global GSPC framework (e.g. the European Plant Conservation Strategy), and the international group of plant conservation organizations that joined together for this purpose: the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation (of which IUCN is a member).

A strategy that features ownership and responsibility for the achievement of each of its targets increases the likelihood that its implementers will make their best effort to succeed in order to report their own success. Lead institutions for each target have proven to be a good catalyst for action by the international environmental community, but may have led to lower engagement and implementation by Parties. It may be both a strength and a weakness that the institutions engaged in implementing the GSPC come under pressure to report on achievement of 'their' Target, with one unintended consequence being a lack of direct and active engagement from the Parties themselves. The GSPC and other areas of the CBD should find ways to assign leadership and responsibility for delivery of specific targets to both international organizations and Parties. A better mechanism or incentive to ensure that each Party nominates a GSPC focal point needs to be included in the next GSPC.

In conclusion, IUCN welcomes the mandate from CoP 9 (Decision IX/3) to develop a new strategy for plants beyond 2010 and will be actively engaged in this process. IUCN will strive to facilitate the process to generate a new GSPC that will hopefully remain similar to the current one but with updated targets to reflect progress to date and the current global situation, including the need to incorporate climate change within the existing 16 targets. Furthermore, the CBD Strategic Plan and other programmes of work and strategies within the Convention should use the GSPC as a good model for designing other comprehensive, outcome-oriented frameworks with implementation closely linked to named responsibilities on the part of Parties and conservation organizations.