**Plant Conservation Strategy Adopted**

*By IUCN*

Delegates at the sixth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP6 - CBD) have adopted the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. The decision is a landmark in the history of the CBD. It is the first time that plant conservation issues have received such detailed scrutiny by the governments of the world (183 countries are parties to the Convention). It is also the first time that targets, albeit voluntary, have been set to guide, as well as monitor, progress by the Convention.

Parties noted that countries vary greatly in their wealth of plant diversity and capacity to conserve this diversity. They felt that accepting global targets was useful, as it allowed national conservation strategies and priorities to feed into an overall global target. They noted that capacity-building to increase plant conservation was necessary for biodiversity-rich countries to contribute to the targets.

While all of the 41 countries and regional blocks welcomed and supported the Strategy, they also noted the need for additional funding for its implementation. As a first gesture, Botanical Gardens Conservation International offered to second a staff member to the CBD Secretariat for two years to shepherd the Strategy and ensure action is undertaken. This gracious offer was warmly greeted by CBD Parties and opened up a new phase of private and governmental collaboration.

It is clear, however, that increased financial resources to implement the Strategy are needed. Ethiopia, speaking for the African group, called for Global Environment Facility funding for the strategy’s implementation. It was also noted that donors should focus on the critical link between poverty alleviation and rural livelihoods, and the conservation of plant diversity.

If the Strategy is to reach its targets by 2010, every country will need to contribute whatever it can to promote plant conservation. As the delegation from New Zealand noted, plants are often overlooked compared to animals. If necessary, the targets will be reviewed and amended at future COPs. For now, they form the basis for improving the situation of more than 34,000 plant species identified as threatened in the 1997 IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants.

IUCN has strongly supported this Strategy since its inception following the XVIth International Botanical Congress at St. Louis, Missouri, USA, in August 1999. Members of the IUCN/SSC Plant Conservation Committee (PCC), chaired by David Given, have been closely involved in the development of the Strategy and its targets.

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**Future Meetings**

The International Society of Ethnobiology will hold its 8th International Congress in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia between 16 and 20 September 2002. The theme is **People and Biodiversity.** The Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization and Institute of Biodiversity Conservation and Research, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia will jointly host the Congress. In addition a two-day pre-congress workshop will focus on traditional technical knowledge ownership and access, and post-congress workshops will discuss quantitative methods of ethnobiology and culture and biological diversity. The meeting will address the following topics: ethnobiology and food security, sustainable development, access and benefit sharing, ethnomedicine and drug development, ethnobiology and the “reconstruction of Afghanistan,” ethnobiology and regional development, intellectual property rights and ethnobiological research, long-term research and training on biocultural diversity, traditional knowledge protecting the values of indigenous and traditional peoples and local communities, and medicinal plant ethnoecology. Registration is $300US and $150US for students. For further information please visit the Web site <http://guallart.dac.uga.edu/ISE/>.

Send requests for the pre-registration form to Local Organizing Committee, 8th International Congress of the International


Villard, M.A. 2002. Habitat fragmentation: major conservation...