5 . SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TOWARDS THE GSPC TARGETS

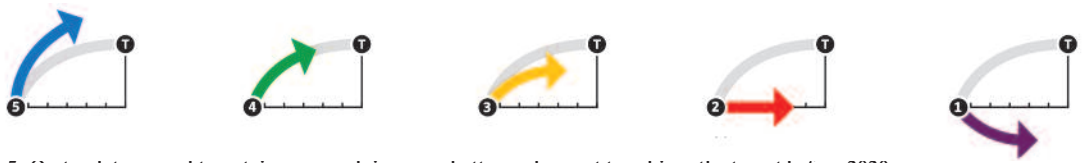
The conservation of plant diversity is of fundamental importance in addressing the challenges of climate change, sustainability of natural resources, food security, fuel security and preservation of ecosystem services. The Aichi Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 will not be met unless plant diversity is effectively conserved. The GSPC has galvanized action in plant conservation and significant progress is being made towards certain targets. Overall, however, progress is constrained by lack of recognition of the importance of plants and allocation of resources for their effective conservation. It is important to demonstrate that not only is plant conservation essential but also achievable and affordable.

The table below provides an assessment of progress made towards each of the GSPC targets and notes which corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target this contributes to. To increase the pace of action in global plant conservation, information needs to be assembled as a matter of urgency in support of GSPC Targets 1, 2 and 5 to inform the biodiversity debate and action more broadly. Information on the distribution and conservation status of plant species is fundamental for planning *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at the landscape level as required by GSPC Targets 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10.

With increasing impacts of climate change, at the same time information on the conservation status of species is urgently required to plan effective *ex situ* conservation strategies. Storing and growing genetically representative material of threatened plant species is of great value for research, for example in support of sustainable production, and for ecological restoration. *Ex situ* collections can and should also be used more effectively to convey to broad audiences the need for plant conservation as called for in GSPC Target 14.

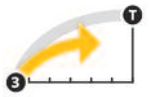
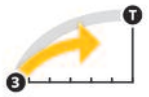
As the threats to plant conservation increase, botanical capacity and funding for plant conservation are decreasing in many parts of the world and this impacts on the ability to implement the GSPC. CBD Parties and other Governments should further engage with partner organizations, including members of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation (GPPC), to make the best use of available expertise and find ways to fully involve indigenous and local communities and the widest range of stakeholders, to enhance implementation of the Strategy. It is important to build on the successes of the Strategy and to continue sharing relevant tools, methodologies and successful case studies, through regional collaboration, through the GSPC toolkit[75] and through the clearing-house mechanism of the CBD.

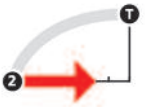
The table below aims to provide summary information on whether or not we are on track to achieve the GSPC targets by 2020. The assessment uses a five-point scale:

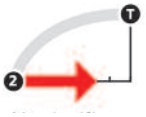


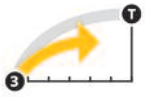
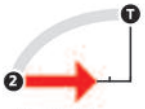
5. On track to exceed target, i.e. we are doing even better and expect to achieve the target before 2020;
4. On track to achieve target, i.e. if we continue our efforts we expect to achieve the target by 2020;
3. Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate, i.e. unless we step up our efforts we will have missed the target in 2020;
2. No significant change, i.e. we are neither moving towards the target nor away from it;
1. Moving away from target, i.e. things are getting worse rather than better.

This assessment is based on the information provided for the mid-term review of the GSPC, largely by GPPC members and the level of confidence, based on the available evidence, is indicated for each target.

GSPC Target	Current status (and level of confidence for ranking)	Comments
Target 1. An online flora of all known plants	 **high** On track to achieve target	The establishment of the World Flora Online Consortium is an important step towards this target. Good progress has been made at the national level in many countries, including several mega-diverse countries. Concerns about declining taxonomic capacity and levels of funding may be constraints to the achievement of this target. **Relates to Aichi Target 19: Knowledge improved, shared and applied**
Target 2. An assessment of the conservation status of all known plants as far as possible, to guide conservation action	 **high** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	This Target is essential to provide a baseline for setting priorities and measuring conservation progress. So far progress at the global level has been slow. IUCN is, however, on track to achieve its target of assessing 10% of the world's plants for the Red List by 2020. Progress at the national level is generally good and particularly encouraging in some mega-diverse countries. The Target may be achievable if information from the IUCN Red List and national sources were to be combined. **Relates Aichi Target 19: Knowledge improved, shared and applied**
Target 3 : Information, research and associated outputs and methods necessary to implement the Strategy developed and shared	 **medium** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	An on-line GSPC toolkit has been developed and is available in all UN languages. However, much relevant and practical 'how to' information continues to lie in unpublished reports, not easily accessible to plant conservation practitioners. Greater efforts are needed to promote the use of the toolkit and evaluate its use. **Relates to Aichi Target 19: Knowledge improved, shared and applied**
Target 4. At least 15% of each ecological region or vegetation type secured through effective management and/or restoration	 **high** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	This target is achieved mainly by actions taken to implement Aichi Targets 11 and 15. A report on Aichi Target 11 notes that 55% of terrestrial ecosystems have at least 10% coverage by protected areas and 7% have at least 75%. **Relates to Aichi Target 11: Protected areas**

GSPC Target	Current status (and level of confidence for ranking)	Comments
Target 5: At least 75 % 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	 **high** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	This is a particularly important target to inform *in situ* plant conservation worldwide. A significant number of countries have identified important areas for plant diversity. However, it is not clear how many of these are incorporated into protected area systems, are being effectively managed or how well these are distributed across ecological regions. More support is needed for consolidation of national information at the global level. **Relates to Aichi Target 11: Protected areas**
Target 6: At least 75% of production lands in each sector managed sustainably, consistent with the conservation of plant diversity	 **medium** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	This Target is achieved mainly through broader land-use initiatives. Increasingly, sustainable production methods are being applied in agriculture. Similarly, sustainable forest management practices are being more broadly applied. However, there are questions concerning the extent to which plant conservation specifications are incorporated into such schemes and there needs to be more cross-sectoral collaboration. **Relates to Aichi Target 7: Sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and forestry**
Target 7: At least 75% of known threatened plant species conserved *in situ*	 **medium** No progress	At the global level it difficult to measure progress because of slow progress with Target 2 and lack of protected area inventories for plants. Despite encouraging progress in some countries, overall the continuing loss of natural habitat means that the *in situ* conservation status of many species is getting worse. Furthermore, many species that occur within protected areas are not effectively conserved and are affected by factors such as invasive species, climate change and unregulated harvesting. **Relates to Aichi Target 12: Extinction prevented**
Target 8: At least 75% of threatened plant species in *ex situ* collections, preferably in the country of origin, and at least 20% available for recovery and restoration programmes	 **medium** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	At the global level, 29% of the species listed on the 2013 IUCN Red List are known to be in *ex situ* collections but this is only a limited representation of globally threatened plants. Higher percentages are recorded at the regional and national levels. The first part of the target (*ex situ* collections) has already been achieved by some countries, but it remains challenging for mega-diverse countries. For use in recovery and restoration programmes, more effort is needed to ensure that *ex situ* collections are genetically representative of species populations. Greater emphasis should be given to seed conservation to enhance restoration potential, with research needed to address species that cannot be seed banked. **Relates to Aichi Target 12: Extinction prevented**

GSPC Target	Current status (and level of confidence for ranking)	Comments
Target 9: 70% 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	 **low** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	The Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture addresses this Target. It is likely that the Target has already been met for major crops that are important globally. However the challenge is to meet this target for the many thousands of other species that are of socio-economic importance at the national or local level. There is a need for a global inventory of such species to guide conservation and sustainable use priorities. **Relates to Aichi Target 13: Genetic diversity maintained**
Target 10: Effective management plans in place to prevent new biological invasions and to manage important areas for plant diversity that are invaded	 **medium** No progress	Increasing global trade and the multiple pathways of introduction represent a major challenge to preventing new invasions. Although some encouraging activities are on-going in managing areas already affected, the evidence suggests that progress is insufficient to meet the target. **Relates to Aichi Target 9: Invasive alien species prevented and controlled**
Target 11 No species of wild flora endangered by international trade	 **high** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	This target is implemented through the action of CITES and a resolution on Cooperation with the GSPC was adopted in 2013 by CITES COP 16. Significant progress has been made in developing Guidelines for determining Non-Detriment Findings for perennial species and these are now starting to be applied. **Relates to Aichi Target 4: Sustainable consumption and production**
Target 12: All wild harvested plant-based products sourced sustainably	 **low** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	The introduction of the FairWild Standard provides a necessary tool to measure future progress towards this target. Although there are a number of interesting initiatives taking place at the national level, involving both the public and private sectors, it is unlikely that the target will be met at the global level. Sustainable sourcing is difficult to promote as information on species that are harvested and levels of exploitation is generally not available. **Relates to Aichi Target 4: Sustainable consumption and production**

GSPC Target	Current status (and level of confidence for ranking)	Comments
Target 13: Indigenous and local 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	 **low** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	Although a wide range of initiatives to conserve traditional knowledge have been developed at national and local levels, progress towards this target is difficult to measure as baselines have not been quantified. This Target can be considered an 'enabling' target, supporting the achievement of other targets. **Relates to Aichi Target 18: Traditional knowledge respected**
Target 14: The importance of plant diversity and the need for its conservation incorporated into communication, education and public awareness programmes	 **high** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	Plants are often neglected in the conservation debate because of lack of information but also more fundamentally lack of popular interest and concern. Significant progress in Targets 1, 2 and 5 will help to make a stronger case for action. Increasing participation in citizen science programmes, which are often focused on plants, is helping to raise awareness amongst a broader community but additional innovative approaches are needed. **Relates to Aichi Target Target 1: Awareness increased**
Target 15: The number of trained people working with appropriate facilities sufficient according to national needs, to achieve the targets of this Strategy	 **medium** No progress	The broad scope of the GSPC requires considerable capacity building across a range of disciplines. Botanical capacity generally is concentrated outside areas of high plant diversity and skill-sharing needs to be strengthened. There is a worrying decline in the teaching of botany at University level and much capacity building is being undertaken within the informal education sector, for example through botanic garden training courses. **Relates to Aichi Target 19: Knowledge improved, shared and applied**
Target 16: Institutions, networks and partnerships for plant conservation established or strengthened at national, regional and international levels to achieve the targets of this Strategy	 **medium** Progress towards target but not to achieve it	At the global level, the establishment of the GPPC has made a good start at bringing together the plant conservation community, but engagement needs to be further developed and sustained. Greater efforts are also needed to engage with the many other sectors that have a vital role to play. **Relates to Aichi Target 19: Knowledge improved, shared and applied**