

THE XISHUANGBANNA DECLARATION ON PLANT CONSERVATION

THE PARTICIPANTS in the

Fourth Xishuangbanna International Symposium, Saving all the Plants in a Changing World,
held at the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Yunnan, China,
on January 3-5th, 2019

1. **Recognizing** that plant diversity forms the essential basis for natural ecosystems and human well-being.
2. **Recognizing** that the maintenance of plant diversity is essential for the achievement of important international objectives, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, and the objectives of the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as well as National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
3. **Noting** in particular the contributions of plant diversity to the achievement of the following SDGs: eradicating poverty (SDG 1); preventing hunger (SDG 2); human health (SDG 3); clean water (SDG 6); affordable, clean energy (SDG 7); sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11); climate action (SDG 13); and life on land (SDG 15).
4. **Acknowledging** that there are continued and growing threats to plant diversity worldwide from many factors including habitat loss and degradation, unsustainable exploitation, pollution, invasive species, and climate change.
5. **Noting** that there are no technical reasons why any plant species should go extinct, since *in situ* conservation in protected areas and other sustainably managed habitats, complemented by *ex situ* conservation in seed banks, cryostorage, and living collections, is sufficient to conserve every known rare and threatened species.
6. **Consider**, therefore, that the extinction of any known plant species is inexcusable.
7. **Recognizing also** that the unique combination of expertise, experience, skills, and resources of the world's botanical gardens are available to undertake effective plant conservation, and represent the interface between scientific research, horticulture, conservation and public education.
8. **Acknowledge** that many botanical gardens are already making significant contributions to plant conservation, but accept that there is an urgent need to scale up existing activities both individually and through joint actions with partner networks, agencies, and other organisations.
9. **Pointing out** that the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, adopted by the CBD in 2002 and updated in 2011, has provided an essential framework for plant conservation worldwide and achieved considerable progress towards the achievement of its objectives.

Therefore, the **participants of the Xishuangbanna International Symposium 2019:**

10. **Urge** botanical gardens and all other institutions involved in botanical research and plant conservation to use their individual and collective capabilities and resources to:
 - a. **accelerate** completion of the global plant species inventory, since it is not possible to target conservation of unknown or undescribed species;
 - b. **support** development of effective species identification tools to improve the protection of species threatened by illegal or unregulated trade;
 - c. **complete** assessments of the risk of extinction for all known plant species, so that conservation efforts can be efficiently targeted towards those that are most in need of conservation action;
 - d. **design, designate, protect, and manage** more protected areas and other sustainably managed habitats, especially those that represent important areas for plant diversity, in order to conserve

threatened plant species in nature, *in situ*, where they can continue to evolve as resilient populations and continue to support associated species;

- e. **research and monitor** wild populations of rare, threatened, and declining species and ensure that they are subject to active conservation programmes aimed at achieving self-sustaining and viable populations in the wild;
 - f. **continue to develop** complementary measures to support the safeguarding and recovery of rare and threatened plant species, including *ex situ* measures such as genetically-diverse and complementary collections held in seed banks, cryobanks, and living collections;
 - g. **determine** seed storage capabilities and propagation methods for all known rare and threatened species in order to provide the most effective and efficient methods of *ex situ* conservation;
 - h. **undertake** new initiatives in conservation translocations and expand the scale of ecological restoration to support the recovery of threatened plants and their habitats;
 - i. **educate** the general public, decision-makers, and students of all ages about the importance of plants and their essential value for human wellbeing, as well as the need for plant conservation and the means by which this can be achieved;
 - j. **engage** local, regional, and global leaders in the development of policies and practices that secure the continued survival of all plant species;
 - k. **participate** in the development of active and collaborative plant conservation networks aimed at ensuring that gaps are filled in plant conservation and in the supporting research knowledge needed;
11. **Call for** all botanical gardens to place plant conservation as a top priority in their missions, and to engage with their management authorities, funding agencies, sponsors, visitors, local communities, and other stakeholders to increase the scale and effectiveness of plant conservation actions to ensure that no plant species goes extinct.
 12. **Further call** for the establishment of new botanical gardens and greater support for existing botanical gardens in areas of high plant diversity and with climatic and biogeographical characteristics that are under-represented in the existing network as safehouses for plant biodiversity.
 13. **Finally, the participants urge** the Parties to the CBD to give urgent attention to the development of an updated Global Strategy for Plant Conservation for the post-2020 period, containing agreed measurable outcome targets that contribute towards the proposed post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.