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LIAISON GROUP MEETING OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR PLANT CONSERVATION

Third meeting
Dublin, 26 - 28 May 2009

DEFINING THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND UPDATE OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR PLANT CONSERVATION BEYOND 2010:

A SUMMARY OF THE ONLINE CONSULTATION ON THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND UPDATE OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR PLANT CONSERVATION BEYOND 2010 - PART 1

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation was adopted in 2002 (annex to decision VI/9) with the ultimate goal to halt the current and continuing loss of plant diversity. The sixteen outcome-oriented targets of the Strategy provide a commonly agreed framework with interdependent targets for actions by a wide range of actors, hence the need to view the Strategy as a whole. In considering the elaboration of the targets, it was noted that available baseline information and indicators, while not perfect, were not a limitation to the implementation or monitoring of most of the targets.

2. In order to enhance national implementation of the Strategy, the Conference of the Parties, at its seventh meeting, encouraged Parties to nominate national focal points for the Strategy, or designate from among existing focal points, in order to: (a) promote and facilitate implementation and monitoring of the Strategy at national level, including the identification of national targets and their integration in national biodiversity strategies and action plans and sectoral and cross-sectoral plans programmes and activities; (b) promote the participation of national stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy at national level; and (c) facilitate communication between national stakeholders and the Secretariat and Global Partnership for Plant Conservation.

3. Further, in decision VII/10, the Conference of the Parties welcomed the establishment, by the Executive Secretary, of a flexible coordination mechanism for the Strategy, comprising: liaison groups to be convened as necessary according to established procedures; national focal points, as determined by Parties; the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation; and the Secretariat, including the Programme Officer supported by Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

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4. Also, in decision VI/9 and VII/10, the Conference of the Parties called on Parties to promote and facilitate implementation and monitoring of the Strategy at national level, including the identification of national targets and their integration in national biodiversity strategies and action plans and sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes and activities.

5. In decision VI/9, the Conference of Parties decided to review, at its eighth and tenth meetings, the progress made in reaching the global targets, and to provide additional guidance in light of those reviews, including, as necessary, refinement of the targets. Further, in line with the multi-year programme of work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010, adopted through decision VII/31, an in-depth review of the Global Strategy was been carried out, based on (i) information compiled from the third national reports, additional information submitted by Parties and other stakeholders and partners; (ii) input from the meeting of a liaison group convened by the Executive Secretary in collaboration with the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation, in Glasnevin, Dublin, from 23 to 25 October 2006; and (iii) additional comments received.

6. The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties considered the outcomes of the in-depth review of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation conducted by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the key messages resulting from the review as transmitted to the Conference of the Parties by the Subsidiary Body in paragraph 1 of its recommendation XII/2 (UNEP/CBD/COP/9/2, annex).

7. It was noted that the Global Strategy has provided a useful framework to harmonize and bring together various initiatives and programmes in plant conservation at both the national and regional levels. Indeed, the Strategy had been notably successful in stimulating the engagement of the botanical and plant conservation communities in the work of the Convention, through, *inter alia*, the establishment of national, regional and global networks, including in particular the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation, launched at the seventh meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention. Also, the national implementation of the Strategy provides opportunities for addressing the Millennium Development Goals especially poverty reduction (goal 1), the health crisis (goal 6) and environmental sustainability (goal 7).

8. However, the constraints to the national implementation of the Global Strategy included limited institutional integration, lack of mainstreaming, and inadequate policies and legal frameworks at the planning stage; and at the operational level, lack of taxonomic capacity, lack of data (taxonomy, biology and conservation), tools and technologies, limited sectoral collaboration and coordination, and limited financial and human resources.

9. Overall, while the emerging global environmental challenges, namely, the impact of climate change and nutrient loading, were not addressed during the formulation of the Strategy, there was ample opportunity to address these further during the implementation of targeted activities under the existing targets.

10. Parties were urged to (a) further implement activities for achieving enhanced implementation of the Strategy, in particular its targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12 and 15, including by reaching other relevant sectors beyond the botanical and conservation communities; and (b) provide as appropriate, additional information on the progress made towards achieving the targets of the Strategy, including quantitative data and information from other sectors and processes such as in forestry and agriculture, in order to strengthen future reviews of the implementation of the Strategy.

11. In Decision IX/3, the Conference of the Parties decided to consider the further development and implementation of the Strategy beyond 2010, taking into account current and emerging environmental challenges on plant diversity, including an update of the current targets within the broader context of and

consistent with the new Strategic Plan beyond 2010, taking into account national priorities and circumstances, capacities and differences in plant diversity between countries.

12. The Conference of the Parties further requested the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to provide, prior to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, proposals for a consolidated update of the Global Strategy, taking into account the Plant Conservation Report, the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, the fourth national reports and additional inputs from the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation and other relevant organizations.

13. In response to these decisions, the Executive Secretary has convened a Liaison Group Meeting of the GSPC to consider options for development and update of the Strategy beyond 2010, make recommendations for a framework to update and or revise the targets of the Strategy, prepare preliminary proposals for presentation to SBSTTA 14 and provide guidance on how these proposals should link to the overall process of the 2010 target review.

14. In order to prepare for the Liaison Group Meeting, the Executive Secretary invited Parties, partners and relevant stakeholders to provide their input, contributions and proposals for the further development and implementation of the Strategy through an online consultation on the GSPC conducted from 1 to 30 April 2009. The aim was to develop a broader stakeholder involvement, engage all sectors and provide opportunity for all segments of stakeholders who traditionally would not have access to meetings and fora organised by the Secretariat and the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation, to provide their input. The consultation gathered a broad range of responses from stakeholders and Parties with respect to effectiveness of the Strategy and additional input as a basis for defining the next steps for the GSPC. (http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=BJFk1G7NAU8trnDpwwDQJA_3d_3d)

II. OUTCOMES OF THE ONLINE CONSULTATION

2.1. Rationale for the online consultation

15. The in depth review undertaken by the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the inputs under the section of the Strategy of the third national reports submitted by the Parties in 2007 provided some perspective on the status of implementation. However, limited information on the change (effectiveness) and impact of the Strategy was received.

16. In order to define the basis for proposals for further development and implementation of the Strategy, it was deemed necessary to determine (a) whether the current strategy had served its purpose in achieving the 16 outcome oriented targets (products, services and systems) (b) if these outputs had led to desired effect on reducing the continuing loss of plant diversity (changes in status of knowledge, skills, responses and actions) and (c) if the strategy had led to impacts beyond reducing the loss of plant diversity (change in status leading to sector specific contributions). The consultation therefore addressed all the components of the Strategy with the aspiration to better understand the outcomes, change and impact the Strategy in order to provide the basis for deliberations by the Liaison Group Meeting.

17. The online consultation was presented in two sections: Section A comprised of general questions, targeting all stakeholders, with a view to define the basis for a framework for further development and update of the Strategy. The questions here addressed (i) the effectiveness and relevance of the Strategy; (ii) effectiveness of the Strategy in responding to its objectives; (ii) the effectiveness of the Strategy in responding to the 3 objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity; (iii) relevance of the Strategy in responding to pertinent issues as well as an opportunity for respondents to provide any additional information.

18. Section B of the online consultation targeted technical experts who have been involved in the implementation of the current Strategy, with an aim to garner more insight on proposals for the update/review and/or further development of the existing sixteen outcome targets.

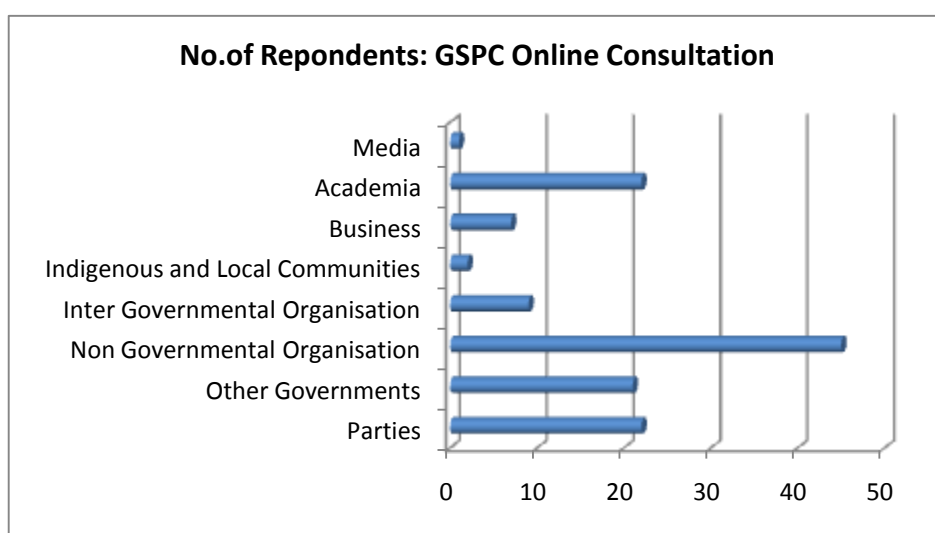
19. All stakeholders were invited to provide responses to section A while experts were invited to provide input to both sections. It was indicated that none of the questions were mandatory.

2.2. Results from the online consultation: Section A

2.2.1 – Response to the online consultation

20. A total of 166 respondents provided input for the online consultation. Of these, 46.4 % (77 respondents) completed both sections of the survey.

21. The respondents included 22 Parties, 21 other governments, 45 non governmental organisations and 22 from academia, who provided their affiliation, while 37 respondents did not provide their affiliation. Low numbers of respondents were noted from the following sectors: intergovernmental organisations (9), indigenous and local communities (2), business representatives (7) and only 1 media respondent. Four GSPC national focal points also responded to the survey. The range of respondents is provided in the table below for Section A of the online consultation.



22. It may be concluded from these observations that there has been limited awareness and engagement of the indigenous and local communities, business sector and media during the implementation of the GSPC. This creates a challenge and opportunity for further development and update of the Strategy given the importance of the Strategy to these key sectors.

2.2.2 Proposals for the time frame for the Strategy beyond 2010

23. In order to get a preliminary understanding as to whether the time frame of the current strategy was appropriate and therefore develop a rationale for the new time frame for the update of the Strategy beyond 2010, three separate but linked questions were posed to the stakeholders: (a) Was the time for the current Strategy sufficient? (b) In considering further development and implementation of the Strategy, what time line do you recommend?, and (c) Is it useful to define short, medium and long term objectives for the Strategy post 2010?

24. In general, the consultation indicated that the time frame (2002-2010) was not sufficient to achieve the overall aim of the GSPC, but sufficient to begin galvanising action as indicated by 60% of the respondents. While the short time frame was effective in creating a sense of urgency, simplifying the process for implementing bodies to engage with the CBD programmes of work and raising awareness on the need for plant conservation, the Strategy only provided clear and concise framework for those stakeholders already with resources and/or already involved in plant conservation. For the majority of the

agencies and partners, especially Parties, awareness creation was the main focus and even to date, limited uptake of the Strategy by national and State governments has meant that the few interested and aware stakeholders have had to initiate the effort at national level. Compounded by the fact that the Strategy was in itself ambitious, but did not have resources to match the task, commitments and manpower needed to fast track implementation, especially for countries with high levels of plant diversity, compromised the ability of Parties, other governments and other stakeholders to get on board in time. Thus, stakeholders have pursued one of the two tracks during this period – either awareness creation or implementation.

25. The respondents were requested to make recommendation on preferred time lines should a proposal be made to further develop and/or update the Strategy post 2010. From the responses summarised below; it is clear that most respondents prefer a new time frame of 10 years.

In considering further development and implementation of the Strategy, what timeline do you recommend?		
Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
5 yrs	20.5%	24
10 yrs	47.0%	55
15 yrs	15.4%	18
more than 15 yrs	17.1%	20
Any comment?		42
<i>answered question</i>		117
<i>skipped question</i>		49

26. It was noted that while political mandates are often limited to 5 years, given that the current Strategy has provided an avenue for awareness creation, a 10 year time frame should be sufficient to allow stakeholders to build on gains made this far..

27. A longer time frame could be disadvantageous as it will need regular and stricter monitoring, require periodical update of targets to effectively respond to the rapid changes in the ecosystems and address new threats/challenges and targets may lose focus and significance. While some national strategies in response to the GSPC have been developed for longer periods in order to cope with the scope and complexity of the work required to achieve the targets (e.g. until 2030 for Mexico), a 15 year time frame may be too long for regions with low diversity but still short for those with high levels of diversity.

28. Of the 112 respondents, 97% recommended that we have short, medium and long term goals for the Strategy beyond 2010. Noting that halting the loss of plant diversity is a long term challenge, it is critical to define a long term vision, from which medium term goals can be derived and short term objectives prioritised. The long term vision should provide the context at national, regional and global level; the medium term goals should be high level and unlikely to change with time; while the objectives should provide immediate priorities for implementation by governments, industry and civil society.

29. Overall, the Strategy should be kept simple and focused. The implementation process should effectively engage all key stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, business and media, and effort should be intensified to address challenges of research and knowledge gaps, limited resources, tools and capacities.

2.2.3 The Framework of the Strategy beyond 2010

30. The Strategy had five sub-objectives, (a) understanding and documenting plant diversity, (b) conserving plant diversity, (c) using plant diversity sustainably, (d) promoting education and awareness about plant diversity and (e) building capacity for the conservation of plant diversity.

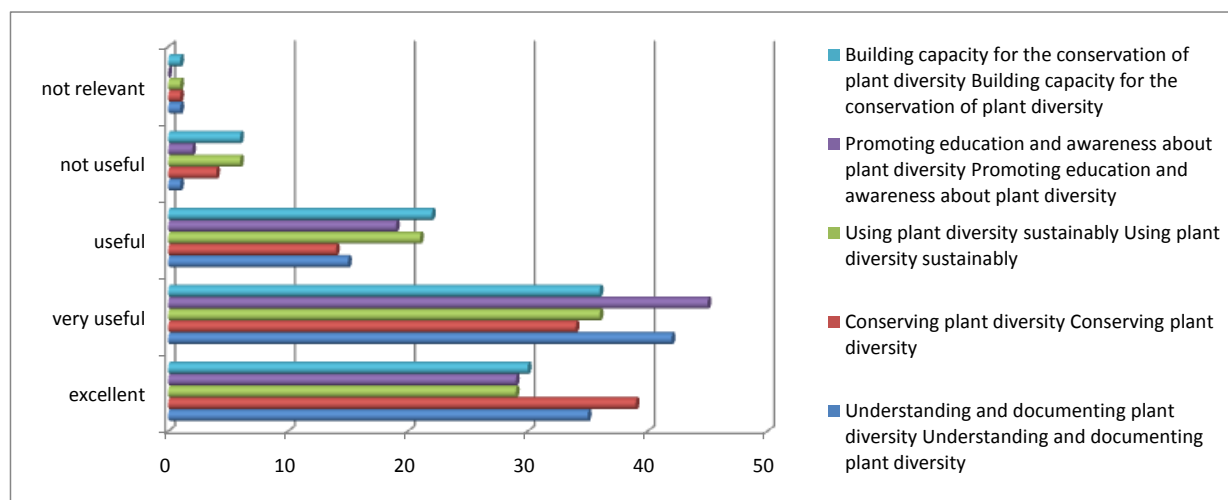
31. In order to establish the effectiveness of the Strategy in achieving its goal, the respondents were asked (i) if these sub-objectives were useful and robust enough to achieve the overall goal of reducing the continuing loss of plant diversity, (ii) if it was useful to have measurable and time bound targets and (iii) if the global targets were robust enough for developing national and/or regional targets.

32. Further, the respondents were requested to (iv) recommend which option would deliver the best approach to enable the Convention to maximise outcomes and impact of further development and implementation of the Strategy, either by further implementing the current 16 targets only, updating /revising these targets only or updating/revising the current targets but also include new and additional targets, and (v) to comment as whether the implementation of the current strategy had the desired effect of achieving other enabling objectives of the Convention..

33. The responses to these five questions are summarised in the section below, providing a basis for developing new proposals related to the framework and objectives of the Strategy beyond 2010.

(i) – Robustness of the five sub-objectives

34. The general perception was that the objectives were robust and very useful as indicated in the diagram below.



35. However, it was noted that there are gaps in the current framework, for example, with regard to incentives to promote plant conservation through sustainable use, the need for both learning and action objectives, to generate new knowledge and also promote evidence based research. It was also indicted that there was a need to go beyond building awareness in communities and address economic and social dimensions related to plant conservation activities.

36. In order to maintain momentum, there was an indication that effort should be made not to increase complexity to the current framework which has been adopted and mainstreamed, but enrich and refine it to enhance contribution to ecosystem health, function, economics and health, as well as addressing new and emerging challenges.

(ii) Usefulness of measurable and time bound targets

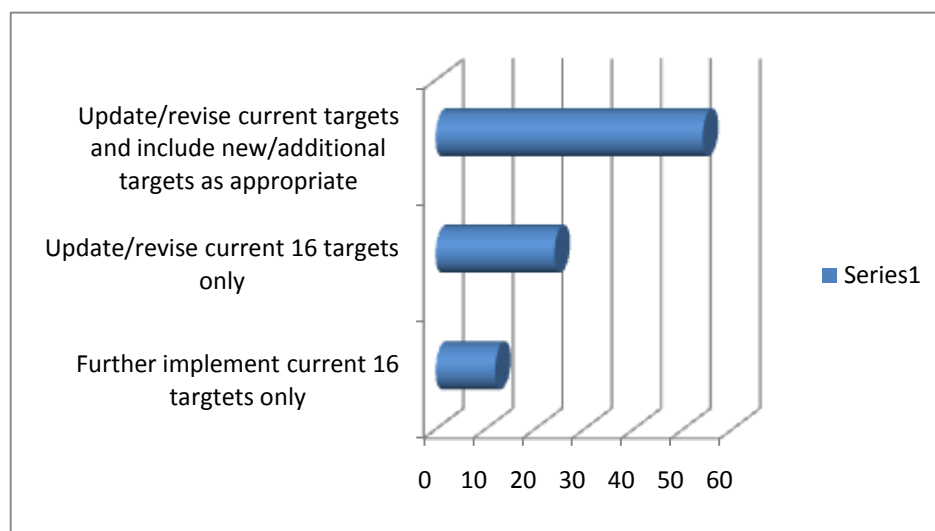
37. Out of 95 respondents, only 2 indicated that it was not useful to have measurable and time bound targets. However, it was recommended that focus should be on targets that are important for impact and not just measurable. The current targets only measure status and trends but not the effectiveness of outcomes resulting from achieving the targets. It was observed that the lack of baselines for the current strategy constrained effective monitoring and evaluation of the current targets, hence the need at this time to determine baselines that would be used for the time frame beyond 2010. It would be prudent to understand why some targets were achievable and not others, identify gaps and ensure that those targets that were not developed with the SMART criteria are refined, especially targets 6,9 and 13.

(iii) Robustness of global targets as a basis for developing national and regional frameworks for implementation

38. 65% of the respondents indicated that the global targets were robust enough for developing national and regional targets and frameworks for implementation. It was noted that the reason why there was limited implementation at national and regional level was due to lack of resources (human, technical and financial) rather than lack of a robust framework. Further, it was indicated that the global targets should be developed in such a way they can be adopted at any geographical level without any need for further modification other than prioritisation, given that some targets may be more relevant to some countries than others. While grass root consultation would be necessary to reflect needs at local environments and landscapes, the Strategy post 2010 should aim to strengthen national and regional implementation.

(iv) Approaches to enable the Convention to maximise outcomes and impact of the Strategy post 2010

39. There was support from the online consultation for the update and or revision of the 16 targets of the Strategy, with consideration of new and additional targets as appropriate as indicated by the chart below (n=86).



40. Some gaps identified within the current framework of 16 outcome targets include (i) sustainable use to improve conservation and provide incentives at local level, (ii) new challenges related to climate change such as promoting old growth forest and extending forest cover, (iii) marine species, (iv) demand and marketing trade chains, (v) measures to promote and enable links between sustainable use and human well-being, (vi) links to access and benefit-sharing (ABS) and Article 8(j); and (vii) diversity of lower plants.

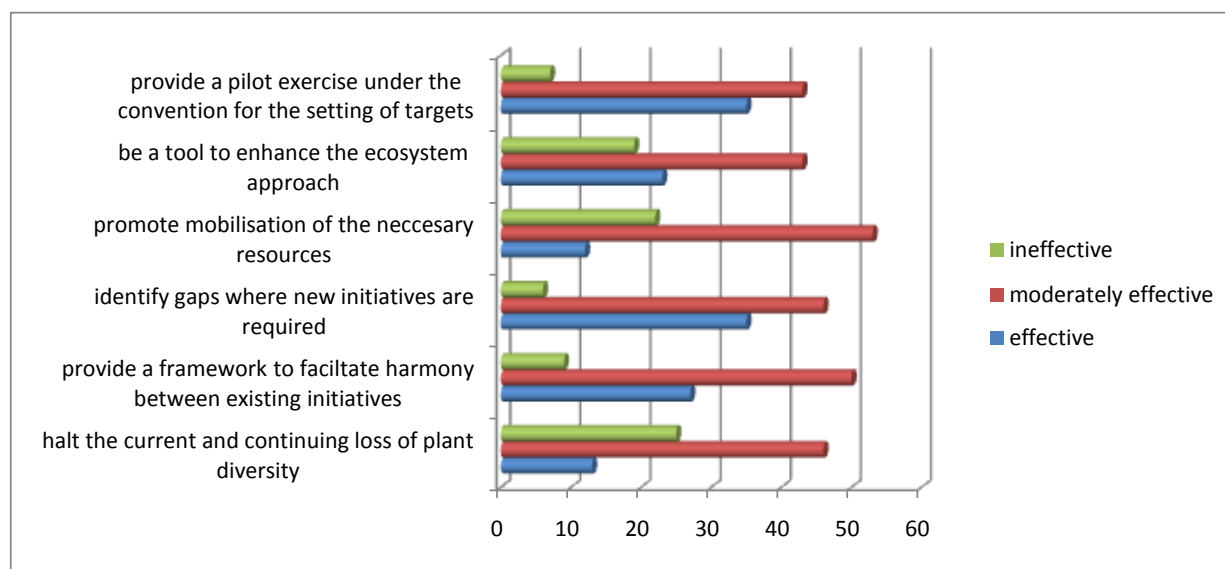
41. There was a recommendation to not open the current targets for debate, but revise them as appropriate based on achievements made this far, and where relevant, rephrase targets to address current challenges.

42. There was also a recommendation that enabling targets such as targets 13, 14, 15 and 16 be separated from the key targets, target 12 revised and clarified. Where key targets are broad and complex, sub targets could be developed as appropriate.

(v) Effectiveness of the Strategy in addressing other objectives of the Convention stated in decision VI/9

43. In adopting the Strategy, the Conference of the Parties noted this was a pilot exercise under the Convention on the use of measurable targets. In addition to the 16 targets, the Strategy also aimed at assisting the Convention to address its other objectives related to the programmes of work and aspirations of the CBD Strategic Plan. The consultation sought to establish a basis for addressing these aspects within the proposals for the Strategy post 2010.

44. Overall, the response was that the Strategy had been moderately effective in addressing the other objectives and aspiration of the Convention and Strategic Plan as indicated by the Chart below.



45. The Strategy was less effective in mobilising new resources at national and regional level, but effective in helping institutions and agencies already involved in plant conservation to realign their resources in response to the Strategy. In some cases, the Strategy was seen as an additional burden yet with no additional resources for implementation. However, it was useful as a pilot exercise under the Convention for setting outcome orientated targets.

(vi) Effectiveness of the Strategy in addressing other priorities of the Convention

46. The Strategy was also expected to address other priorities of the Convention related to enhancing implementation at all levels, applying the provisions on Access and Benefit Sharing, facilitating implementation of article 8j, applying the ecosystem approach, employing *in situ* measures as the primary approach for conservation, adopting a multi disciplinary approach and strengthening initiatives on national inventories.

47. The table below highlights the key responses related to these issues. Overall, the Strategy was effective in providing a framework for implementation at the global, regional and international level;

supporting the ecosystem approach, employing *in-situ* conservation as the primary approach for conservation and supporting national inventories.

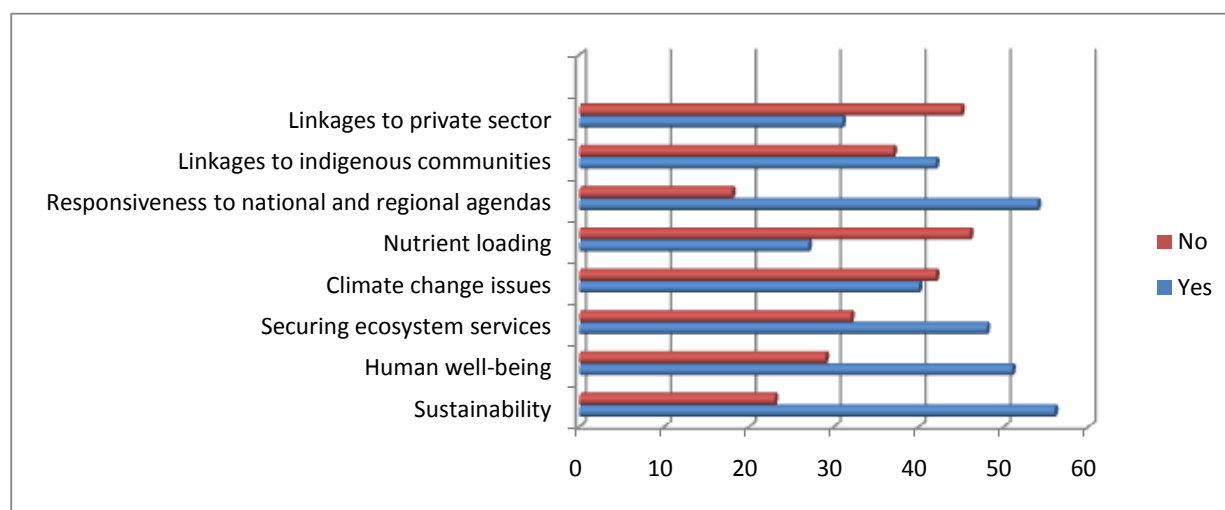
48. However, the Strategy was less effective in applying the provisions on Access and Benefit Sharing and implementing Article 8(j). This was partly because not all stakeholders are well versed with the broader priorities of the Convention and that the Strategy was not effectively mainstreamed at national level. In addition, there was limited engagement with local indigenous and local communities in some instances during implementation of some targets. An apparent deficiency of the Strategy lay in the fact that it did not provide specific guidance to address the issues related to access and benefit sharing, Article 8(j) and the application of the ecosystem approach.

Has the Strategy been effective in responding to the broader objectives of the Convention as outlined below? Please tick as appropriate.			
Answer Options	Yes	No	Response Count
(a) Provide a framework for actions at global, regional, national and local levels	77	9	86
(b) Apply the Convention provisions on access and benefit-sharing, drawing as appropriate on the Bonn Guidelines for access and benefit-sharing, with a view to ensuring a fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, and consistent with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	47	33	80
(c) Build upon the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities, with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices, and contribute to the implementation of Article 8(j) of the Convention	49	31	80
(d) Apply the ecosystem approach adopted under the Convention, recognizing the interaction of plants and plant communities, with other components of ecosystems, at all scales, and their role in ecosystem functions and processes	55	28	83
(e) Employ in situ conservation measures as the primary approach for conservation, complementing them where necessary with ex situ measures. The Strategy provides an opportunity to explore linkages between in situ and ex situ conservation, including in restoration programmes	63	18	81
(f) Adopt a multidisciplinary approach that takes into account scientific, social and economic issues	56	27	83
(g) Strengthen initiatives on national inventories	65	15	80
Comment			30
answered question			86
skipped question			80

(vii) *Effectiveness of the Strategy in addressing the key issues relevant to the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention*

49. The seventh, eighth and ninth meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, in addressing issues related to the Strategic Plan of the Convention, noted the need for the programmes of work of the Convention and cross cutting issues to effectively respond to emerging issues and challenges related to the implementation of the Convention. These include key global issues such as sustainability, human well being, securing ecosystem services, climate change, nutrient loading, emerging regional and national agendas as well as engagement of indigenous and local communities and the private sector. The online consultation sought to generate some input from the stakeholders as to how well the Strategy has been responsive to these issues and some of the proposals for consideration in the further development and update of the Strategy post 2010.

50. Overall, it is apparent that the current strategy was designed to address issues of sustainability, emerging national and regional agendas, securing ecosystem services and to some extent human well being. However, the Strategy was deficient in addressing climate change issues, nutrient loading, engagement of indigenous and local communities as well as the private sector as indicated below.



51. While these observations are very useful for setting new priorities for the Strategy post 2010, it was emphasized that there was need for caution when developing proposals for further development and update beyond 2010, to ensure that the new Strategy does not become too complex and ambitious to manage. Even though the concepts of sustainability and human well being are still very abstract and difficult to address, it is important that the Strategy addresses issues of livelihood resilience and ecosystem management. It was also noted that the current Strategy focused more on the ecological systems rather than the socio-ecological systems, and this need to be adjusted.

52. It was also noted that private sector who should be key partners have not been effectively engaged this far and should be a priority and that climate change should be addressed as a cross-cutting issue.

(viii) *Measures to ensure improved implementation at national and regional levels*

53. The last question of section A of the online consultation was open ended and requested input from respondents on measures to improve implementation of the Strategy at regional and national levels. The key recommendation was the critical need to mobilise resources to implement the Strategy at regional and national levels and make commitments for technology transfer.

54. Other recommendations included the need to recognise cultural difference between regions, as well in interest, capability and needs, noting that national and regional strategies would provide a useful means to address these differences yet contribute effectively to the global framework. The need to engage indigenous and local communities, the youth and private sector, in order to enhance implementation and achievement of targets was emphasized.

55. The toolkit requested for by Parties would help Parties to move from awareness creation to development of Strategies at appropriate levels and implementation. Further, the benefits arising from the implementation of the Strategy at these levels need to be clearly defined in order to provide the incentive for investment by partners, especially in developing nations where resources are limited.

2.3 *Concluding remarks*

56. The online consultation provided a useful avenue to gather input from a wide range of stakeholders on proposals for further development and update of the Strategy beyond 2010. The outcomes of the consultations has provided a situation analysis and defined the draft parameters that would be useful in defining the framework, context, some priorities and timelines for the Strategy post 2010.
