

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, NATURE CONSERVATION AND LANDSCAPE

Wawelska 52/54, 00-922 Warsaw, POLAND

phone : +48 22 5792 249

fax: +48 22 5792 555

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Mr Hamdallah Zedan
Executive Secretary
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
World Trade Centre
393 St. Jacques Street West, suite 300
Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1N9 Canada

Global Strategy for Plant Conservation

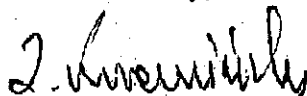
Dear Mr. Zedan,

In reply to your letter of 22 January 2001 I would like to submit views on Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and The Gran Canaria Declaration.

Please find enclosed text.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Zygmunt Krzemiński
Deputy Director

Encls. 2 pages

GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR PLANT CONSERVATION

The Polish Party has carefully analyzed the document "The Gran Canaria Declaration". Having managed the consultations with the representatives of scientific circles and practitioners from the botanic gardens and museums of Nature, we may state, that we warmly support the assumptions of the Gran Canaria Declaration, as well as Global Strategy for Plant Conservation included in the decision V/10 made during the Conference of the Parties Convention on Biological Diversity.

"The Gran Canaria Declaration" is a key important document to undertake new actions in the framework of plant diversity protection, since it treats these issues in a complex manner regarding the tendencies undergoing at the turn of XX-th. and XXI-st. centuries.

The Declaration was prepared by the world society of botanic gardens within the circles of the most outstanding representatives of this society led by professor Peter H. Raven. The botanic gardens, also including the Polish gardens, played a very important role in the range of protection of the plants threatened with extinction in natural environment, simultaneously undertaking many actions in the field of so-called ex situ protection. The advantage of the Declaration is to indicate 5 (five) major areas of activities, especially pointing out 6 (six) principles of the integrated plant protection under in situ and ex situ conditions. Among these principles the most unique is the conception concerning the protection of biological usable plants diversity having an economical significance. Until now the botanic gardens focused their main attention to the wild plants grown in the natural environment, but little attention was paid to crop and usable plants. Of course, there were some exceptions. For example, one of the Polish botanic gardens has been conducting the parallel activities aiming at the protection of typical and genetic diversity of the plants belonging to natural and usable flora. In this garden, there is the most numerous collection of *Secale* genus, numbering about 2000 specimens and covering all accessible grown in wild *Secale* genera (perennial and one-year), so-called local forms and old variety of rye. The second very precious collection is the *Malus* collection covering about 200 varieties of apple-trees cultivated in the historical Polish lands from the end of XVI-th century to the 30-ties of XX-th century. The collection of wild species including all corn plants has a great researching and educational significance.

The second field of activities determined in the Declaration covering researches, monitoring and collecting information from the scope of plant diversity is considered as very important. All these four principles of this field are significant for a complex approach to researching sphere of plant diversity. The activities in this field are conducted in the Polish territory for a long time, especially in the field of researching the plants threatened with extinction, or the documentation of floral diversity both in the areas distinguished with high natural values as well as in those with the flora strongly distorted with human activity. The cooperation with neighboring countries mainly with Germany, the Czech and Slovak Republic is made on the borderline areas, e.g. Polish-German works in the Park of Lower Oder Valley.

The third area of declaration covering the social and economical advantages was less investigated in Poland until now. That is why it would be necessary to focus attention to this area and four formulated principles, since undoubtedly this region deserves attention and support. Interesting is the conception concerning identification

and utilization of existing potential products, which can be offered due to biological diversity. There is a possibility of conducting activities in favor of less known or forgotten plants – curative, decorative or horticultural, so-called alternative.

The fourth area is also important, since it is devoted to education and rising ecological awareness of the society. In Poland different activities are conducted in this field (e.g. exhibitions, publishing, radio and TV broadcasts, conferences, workshops, lectures, demonstration, didactic paths). The botanic gardens and museums of Nature, national park and state forest workers play an important role.

The last, fifth area of activities is also important. This area concerns the global conditions of strategy implementation. It is necessary to cooperate with all nations to protect the global nature heritage of the entire humanity. Poland according to its potential measures will do its best in order to carry out the resolutions of the Declaration.