

XVI International Botanical Congress – 1999
St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Resolutions

Resolution I

The XVI International Botanical Congress, in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, August 1999, resolves that the decisions of its Nomenclature Section with regard to the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, as well as the appointment of officers and members of the nomenclature committees, made by that Section during its meetings on July 26 – 30, 1999, be accepted.

Resolution II

Noting that the VII International Botanical Congress, in Stockholm, Sweden, 1950, resolved that “in principle, the International Botanical Congresses be held alternatively in Europe and outside Europe;”

Recognizing that this resolution was intended at the time to extend the geographical scope of Congresses, but could today actually limit their scope; and

Recognizing the large number of botanists and vigorous botanical activity in all continents of the world;

The XVI International Botanical Congress, in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, in August 1999, rescinds the resolution of the VII Congress and resolves that the sites for future congresses should be selected to facilitate a balance in attendance of botanists from all regions of the world.

Resolution III

The botanists of the world, convened at the XVI International Botanical Congress, St. Louis, Missouri, USA, August 1999, noting that as many as two-thirds of the world's 300,000 plant species are in danger of extinction in nature during the course of the 21st century, and in view of the dependence of human beings on plants for almost every aspect of life, and our expectations for using them to build more sustainable, healthier, and better lives in the future, call for

- the establishment of a new coordinating body associated with the United Nations to monitor the status of plants throughout the world, detect those in most danger, and take steps to conserve them in nature, in botanic gardens, or in gene banks, and preferably a combination of these strategies;
- securing additional funds for the study of plants throughout the world both by strengthening the major museums and other institutions that have holdings of specimens and literature and are thus of global importance, and by building capacity to deal with plants in every country of the world;
- supporting the maintenance of genetically adequate and generally available samples of the world's plant species in botanic gardens and gene banks throughout the world, and thus building on the 30 percent of plant species already estimated to be in cultivation;
- making all of the information about plants generally available on the Internet;
- placing additional emphasis on the importance of controlling alien introduced plants and animals to help ensure the survival of biodiversity throughout the world;
- maintaining, at the national level, an active census of the status of each country's plants, so that it will always be obvious which are well protected in nature, which are so abundant as not to cause concern, and which are rare, threatened, or endangered;
- actively developing and implementing plans to conserve the world's economic plants, paying special attention to crops and their wild relatives;
- devoting special attention to the conservation of medicinal plants, which are fundamentally important to the livelihood and traditions of the great majority of the world's people, and to the development and implementation of means for their sustainable use;
- funding internationally an ongoing program of research on plant population biology and reproductive characteristics, so that the genetics and ecology of plants can be well understood and used as elements in conservation schemes generally; and

- supporting the program of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), which will identify the world's "hot spots," areas to which large numbers of unique species are restricted, and will conserve their plants, a key strategy in protecting the world's flora.

Resolution IV

Recognizing that plants are the essential basis of human existence on Earth; and that plants provide our food, most of our energy and medicines, maintain the atmosphere we breathe, give essentials for life to all other organisms, and are a source of beauty and inspiration in our environments; and yet recognizing that human actions are resulting in the widespread extinction of species of plants and other organisms, rivaling the mass extinction events of the past;

Botanists of 85 nations meeting at the XVI International Botanical Congress in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, August 1999, therefore call on governments and policy makers to:

- recognize the importance of developing and maintaining scientific expertise, provide resources for the education and training of scientists, and maintain career opportunities, so that young people will enter scientific fields, especially in the biological sciences;
- ensure that knowledge of sustainable processes is fully developed, disseminated, and shared throughout the world;
- actively develop floras and detailed accounts of the plants of all regions, which provide the basic information used to protect plants and utilize them sustainably;
- support collaborative programs between and among developed and developing countries;
- ensure high priority be given to the maintenance of botanical museums, herbaria, libraries, archives, gardens, living plant collections and gene banks, to ensure the long-term survival and ongoing accessibility of these hard-won collections for present and future researchers; and
- provide for the wide dissemination of information throughout the world by facilitating universal access to the increasingly powerful tools of electronic information management and communication.

Resolution V

In view of the importance of plants to human life, botanists from 85 countries meeting at the XVI International Botanical Congress in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, in August 1999 confirm their resolve to:

- increase our knowledge of the diversity and relationships of plants, the processes and requirements of their growth, their reproductive characteristics, their habitats, and all other aspects of their biology, and to make that knowledge accessible to all;
- advocate to policy-makers the relevance of the plant sciences to decisions in the use of resources and to seek ways to foster sustainable processes for the preservation of plants, and thus maintain the quality of human life on earth;
- exhort all plant scientists to bring Resolution IV and all of its elements to the attention of policy makers and of the general public; and
- cooperate within the botanical community to secure the future for a broad and integrated field of plant sciences.

Resolution VI

Whereas plans are now underway to launch the DIVERSITAS-International Biodiversity Observation Year (IBOY) for 2001-2002, sponsored by the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), The Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE), the United National Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), The International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS), the International Council for Science (ICSU), the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) and endorsed by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB), and

Whereas the success of the DIVERSITAS-IBOY depends on the commitment from the scientific community at the international and national level to support existing projects, propose new ones, and strengthen and integrate efforts of scientists, educators and policy-makers as well as the general public,

Therefore, the assemblage of botanists at the XVI International Botanical Congress, St. Louis, Missouri, USA, August 1999 resolves to:

- recognize the importance and timeliness of the DIVERSITAS-IBOY initiative and endorse further development of the activities of the program by proposing projects and supporting development of national and international DIVERSITAS-IBOY committees.