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From words to action – key organizations team up to stop the extinction crisis

Gland, Switzerland, 28 May 2013 – With unprecedented species declines and more than 20,000 of the species assessed on The IUCN Red List threatened with extinction, IUCN and other organizations come together to support the achievement of a global biodiversity target to prevent further species loss.

The partnership – *Friends of Target 12* – will guide countries in their efforts to prevent further extinctions of threatened species and improve the conservation status of those disappearing most rapidly. This will help them achieve the so-called ‘Target 12’ – one of 20 ‘Aichi Biodiversity Targets’ adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Japan in 2010.

“Today, species are disappearing at unprecedented rates,” says Jane Smart, Global Director of IUCN’s Biodiversity Conservation Group. “However, we know that conservation works. We need to do much more of it and at a much larger scale. We hope that this partnership will provide the concerted action that we urgently need to secure the long term survival of species.”

The initiative aims to bring together the knowledge and experience of government institutions, intergovernmental, non-governmental and community-based organizations, academic and professional networks and private sector companies working to conserve species and ensure their sustainable use. It will offer practical advice to countries on how to better protect species, providing a common space for its partners to share and build on their previous conservation successes. Partners include key international conventions on biodiversity such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Out of 65,518 species currently assessed by The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, 1,173 are Extinct or Possibly Extinct and 20,219 are threatened. However, past conservation action led by some of the organizations that are now joining the initiative has brought many species back from the brink of extinction. Examples include the Nepal’s Greater One-horned Rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), Brazil’s Lear’s Macaw (*Anodorhynchus leari*), the Arabian Oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*), the California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) and the Przewalski’s Horse (*Equus ferus*) in Mongolia.

Some *Friends of Target 12* partners have already made specific commitments as part of the initiative and more are soon to be announced.

IUCN, through The IUCN Red List and Species Survival Commission – a science-based network of almost 8,000 volunteer experts – will continue to provide information and analyses on the status, trends and threats to biodiversity in order to catalyze species conservation action.

The global species conservation fund SOS – Save Our Species, initiated by IUCN, Global Environment Facility and the World Bank will help governments and other institutions channel resources towards conserving threatened species.

“Many organizations and institutions around the world are contributing to the protection of species and are supporting the implementation of Target 12,” says Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, CBD Executive Secretary. “This partnership brings them together and enhances the support that we can provide to CBD Parties to finally move from words to implementation of the Aichi biodiversity targets.”

The partnership is officially supported by the CBD and currently has 21 partners.

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Editor's notes:**About Friends of Target 12**

The purpose of this partnership is to support Government Parties to the CBD and others to achieve Aichi biodiversity Target 12 by providing practical guidance and raising awareness of initiatives and programmes that contribute to the implementation of the activities needed to bring about the recovery of threatened species and stem the tide of species' extinctions.

Current Friends of Target 12 partners:

- Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE)
- BirdLife International
- Bern Convention
- Conservation International (CI)
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- Chico Mendes Institute for Conservation of Biodiversity, Ministry of the Environment of Brazil (ICMBio)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)
- IUCN SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG)
- IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG)
- IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)
- IUCN SSC Primates Specialist Group (PSG)
- Island Conservation
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar)
- SOS - Save Our Species (SOS)
- TRAFFIC International
- United Nations Environment Programme - World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- Zoological Society of London (ZSL)
- Zoo Outreach Organization (India)

More information about the commitments of other partners to Friends of Target 12 can be found here:

www.iucn.org/friendsoftarget12

About the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

The Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in 2010 in Nagoya, Japan, adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 with the purpose of inspiring broad-based action in support of biodiversity over the next decade by all countries and stakeholders. The Strategic Plan is comprised of a shared vision, a mission, strategic goals and 20 ambitious yet achievable targets, collectively known as the Aichi Targets. The Strategic Plan serves as a flexible framework for the establishment of national and regional targets and it promotes the coherent and effective implementation of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Aichi Biodiversity Target 12:

By 2020, the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.

Though some extinctions are the result of natural processes, human actions have greatly increased current extinction rates. Reducing the threat of human-induced extinction requires action to address the direct and indirect drivers of change (see the Aichi Targets under Goals A and B of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020) and can belong term processes. However, imminent extinctions of known threatened species can in many cases be prevented by protecting important habitats (such as Alliance for Zero Extinction sites) or by addressing the specific direct causes of the decline of these species (such as overexploitation, invasive alien species, pollution and disease).

This target has two components:

- **Preventing extinction** – Preventing further extinction entails that those species which are currently threatened do not move into the extinct category. Of the more 19,000 species known to be threatened globally, more than 3,900 are classified as Critically Endangered. Critically Endangered species are considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.



• **Improving the conservation status of threatened species** - An improvement in conservation status would entail a species increasing in population to a point where it moves into a lower threat status. Using the IUCN criteria a species would no longer be considered as threatened once it moved into the Near Threatened category. For more information: www.cbd.int/sp

Global figures for the 2012.2 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species:

TOTAL SPECIES ASSESSED = 65,518
(Total threatened species = 20,219)
Extinct = 795
Extinct in the Wild = 63
Critically Endangered = 4,088
Endangered = 5,919
Vulnerable = 10,212
Near Threatened = 4,574
Lower Risk/conservation dependent = 254 (this is an old category that is gradually being phased out of the Red List)
Data Deficient = 10,673
Least Concern = 28,940

The figures presented above are only for those species that have been assessed for The IUCN Red List to date. Although not all of the world's species have been assessed, The IUCN Red List provides a useful snapshot of what is happening to species today and highlights the urgent need for conservation action.

Relative percentages for threatened species cannot be provided for many taxonomic groups on The IUCN Red List because they have not been comprehensively assessed. For many of these groups, assessment efforts have focused on threatened species; therefore, the percentage of threatened species for these groups would be heavily biased.

For those groups that have been comprehensively assessed, the percentage of threatened species can be calculated, but the actual number of threatened species is often uncertain because it is not known whether Data Deficient (DD) species are actually threatened or not. Therefore, the percentages presented above provide the best estimate of extinction risk for those groups that have been comprehensively assessed (excluding Extinct species), based on the assumption that Data Deficient species are equally threatened as data sufficient species. In other words, this is a mid-point figure within a range from x% threatened species (if all DD species are not threatened) to y% threatened species (if all DD species are threatened). Available evidence indicates that this is a best estimate.

37% of species assessed for the IUCN Red List are listed as threatened (this is the best estimate for % threatened within the range 31-48%)

About IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world, and brings governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice. IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, with more than 1,000 government and NGO members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. www.iucn.org; [IUCN on Facebook](#); [IUCN on Twitter](#)

About CBD

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a subsidiary agreement to the Convention. It seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 163 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal. For more information visit: www.cbd.int