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### Executive Summary

The project *Coordination and Development of Plant Red list Assessments for the Caucasus Biodiversity Hotspot* was implemented by IUCN in collaboration with Missouri Botanical Garden, USA, and botanists from six countries of the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, Turkey and Iran). The project aimed to provide a series of Red List training and validation workshops specifically tailored to the Caucasus region so that local botanists could use internationally accepted methods for plant conservation assessment and monitoring (IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria) and the Species Information Service Data Entry Module (SIS DEM) as tools for data management and analysis. The work has resulted in a comprehensive overview of the distribution and conservation status of the endemic plant species of the Caucasus region based on current knowledge.

The Caucasus Plant Red List Authority was established under the IUCN Species Survival Commission and the series of three Red List training and validation workshops successfully introduced participants to the IUCN Red List process during the first workshop, then reinforced proper practices and in some instances corrected mistaken concepts during the second workshop, and finally highlighted the use and relevance of assessments for conservation planning and the development of a regional Plant Conservation Strategy during the third workshop. Targets listed in the draft of the Plant Conservation Strategy for the Caucasus correspond to the targets of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. BGCI and the IUCN Caucasus office will be solicited for support of publication in 2010 of the Strategy, to be titled the “Caucasus Plant Conservation Initiative.”

Data collected for the species assessments resulted in a comprehensive list of Caucasus endemic plant taxa containing *ca.* 2,950 species/subspecies/varieties and Red List assessments of *ca.* 1,160 taxa were made with *ca.* 60% assessed as threatened, i.e., Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Vulnerable. The final product of the project “The Red List of Endemic Plants of the Caucasus Region” with the full list of endemic plant taxa of the region and species assessments is currently being finalized for issue in 2010 (Fig. 1).

### Scope of the Work and Methodology

The Caucasus hotspot, historically interpreted as the isthmus between the Black and Caspian seas covers a total area of 580,000 km<sup>2</sup>; including Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the North Caucasus portion of the Russian Federation, northeastern Turkey and part of northwestern Iran (CEPF 2004). The flora of the Caucasus hotspot is extremely rich owing to geographical conditions and the ecological history of the region. According to preliminary assessments, the number of vascular plant species of the Caucasus was estimated to be *ca.* 6,300 and the approximate number of species endemic to the region *ca.* 1,600. However, the comprehensive list of the Caucasus endemic plant taxa (species/subspecies/varieties) developed