

The use of plants as medicine is important to health care worldwide, but many medicinal plant species are threatened with extinction through habitat loss, competition with alien invasive species, climate change, and over collection. More than 60 international medicinal plant experts met in Toyama, the centre of traditional medicine and pharmaceutical production in Japan to reach a consensus on conservation of medicinal plants guidelines. The meeting was held from 15 to 18 of October 2011 and was organized and supported by Toyama Prefecture, University of Toyama, and the World Health Organization (WHO).

A team from the WHO International Union for Conservation of Nature, the World Wildlife Fund and the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network, also known as TRAFFIC, were consulted to revise international guidelines on the conservation of medicinal plants. The Toyama consultation brought together medicinal plant experts including WHO traditional medicine advisers and collaborating centres, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and herbal medicine industry representatives to review the draft guidelines.

The guidelines will be useful for Member States, as well as various stakeholders involved in medicinal plants, such as botanists, communities, consumers, policy makers, industry and traditional health practitioners.

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