

DAVIS DECLARATION

*Workshop on Development of Regional Invasive Alien Species Information Hubs,
Including Requisite Taxonomic Services, In North America and Southern Africa*

14–15 February 2001, Davis, California

We the participants in the aforementioned scientific workshop:

RECOGNIZE

The negative impacts of invasive alien species (IAS) on native biodiversity; ecosystem functions and services; the productivity of agriculture, forestry, wildlife, and fisheries; and human health are very costly to society. These costs are measured not just in economic terms, but also in damaged goods and equipment, food and water shortages, environmental degradation, loss of native species, increased rates and severity of natural disasters, disease epidemics, and harm to human welfare.

Every country has been impacted by IAS. Unless coordinated efforts involving the cooperation of all stakeholders are implemented to minimize the movement of IAS, invasions will become more frequent and their impacts more severe as the globalization of trade, transport and human travel increase.

Coordinated efforts to restrict the movement of IAS require that all nations have access to taxonomic capabilities, information services, and useful tools to support and implement prevention policies and develop effective response strategies.

Invasions of non-native species are greatly increasing the need for taxonomic services, while the number of taxonomists and resources for taxonomic capacity building are decreasing worldwide.

Initiatives relevant to strengthening IAS information services are proliferating, with agencies and organizations providing information for many purposes and on many geographic scales. These initiatives are not well coordinated. Some are overlapping or duplicative. Major gaps remain in coverage for some taxonomic groups and regions of the world.

Therefore, we

CONCLUDE THAT

There is an urgent need to develop a comprehensive global strategy to strengthen and coordinate IAS taxonomic and information services.

Thus, we:

ENCOURAGE

Establishment of a global information system based on a network of regional information hubs for providing information services and tools relating to IAS and building wherever possible on existing efforts.¹

Support of IAS information services by strengthening of the infrastructure for information tech-

¹ Each hub would develop a core set of information products, coordinate existing information systems and encourage new initiatives to meet regional needs, facilitate synthesis and integration of information from many countries and sources, ensure application of appropriate data standards and vocabularies, and provide quality control and documentation.

nology and management, taxonomic identification, systematics research, vouchering and collections management worldwide.

Development of tools to increase taxonomic capacity worldwide. These tools, which should be made available wherever possible in hard copy, on CD, and on the Internet, include, *inter alia*, a guide to taxonomic services for IAS; common nomenclatural standards; identification aids; searchable lists of floras and faunas; and training programs for new taxonomists and parataxonomists.

Establishment of partnerships with key stakeholder groups, including industry, non-governmental organizations, and the general public, for developing and applying taxonomic services and information to combat IAS.

NOTE WITH APPROVAL

The Global Invasive Species Programme's plans to promote taxonomy as a key component of national capacity in IAS prevention and management, encourage research to address taxonomic needs, and help coordinate a distributed IAS information network to include early warning and predictive functions.

CALL UPON

The Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS), the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), BIONet International, and the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) to make IAS a priority, establish global standards for IAS taxonomic classification, and improve the availability of accurate IAS taxonomic information.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), and other relevant bodies to recognize the need and encourage support for better coordination, additional tools, and immediate capacity building in IAS information and taxonomic services.

National, regional and international research and development agencies to make resources available to better coordinate and increase the capacity of IAS information and taxonomic services, in order to meet the immediate needs of both developing and developed countries.

APPENDIX

Background

The workshop brought together scientists from Africa, North America, and international organizations who are participating in national, regional and global efforts to develop taxonomic services and/or information networks to better inform work on invasive alien species (IAS). The objectives of the workshop were to share experience in developing distributed information networks relevant to IAS and to provide recommendations on concepts and criteria for developing and coordinating IAS regional information hubs and requisite taxonomic services in order to facilitate identification, assessment, and rapid response to IAS. The workshop was sponsored by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in cooperation with the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP). It was hosted by the University of California at Davis, which is providing technical support to various domestic and international efforts for developing and coordinating IAS information services. Workshop presentations assessed the need for a distributed IAS information system, supported by essential taxonomic services, and provided overviews of initiatives at the global level, in eastern and southern Africa, and in the Western Hemisphere. Working sessions focused on IAS information management and technical issues, and on issues at the interface between IAS taxonomic services and information systems.

The workshop produced the Davis Declaration to focus international attention and resources on development and coordination of IAS information and taxonomic services, and a report (in preparation) containing specific recommendations for strengthening IAS-related taxonomic capacity and for implementing a global network of regional information hubs. The workshop products will provide important support for ongoing taxonomic initiatives (e.g., ITIS, GTI, BIONet International) and for GISP plans to develop a global IAS information network. They will also provide guidance for

planning pilot regional invasive species hubs in Mexico and South Africa, for which seed grants are being provided through the Environmental Diplomacy Fund of the U.S. Department of State.

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