



28 July 2005

To Whom it may concern

Re: Priority project for the IUCN Cycad Specialist Group

The spread of the cycad aulacaspis scale, *Aulacaspis yasumatsui*, to wild cycad populations outside of its original range (Thailand) was identified as a critical issue for cycad conservation at an IUCN Cycad Specialist Group meeting held in January 2005 (Xalapa, Mexico) to update the Cycad Action Plan (2003). Since then, we have received reports of devastating mortality in cycad populations on Guam and Taiwan as a result of scale infestations. The scale appears to be spreading rapidly and increasing the threat to species that are already listed on the IUCN Red List for other reasons (53% of the ca. 300 cycad species are globally threatened). The Cycad SG is therefore trying to mobilize resources to study the extent of spread, identify the most vulnerable populations, alert customs officials to the potential spread, ensure that affected populations are included in genebanks, and develop more effective control strategies. Financial support from various granting agencies would be invaluable in achieving these objectives.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Donaldson', written in a cursive style.

John Donaldson (Dr)
Chairman: IUCN Cycad Specialist Group
Director: Kirstenbosch Research Centre
South African National Biodiversity Institute
Private Bag X7, Claremont 7735
South Africa

Tel. +27 21 799-8672
Fax. +27 21 762-5834
Email: Donaldson@sanbi.org