

CENTURION LAKE AFRICAN MEDICINAL PLANTS STANDARDS MEETING LAUNCHES NEW ASSOCIATION TO PREPARE AFRICAN PHARMACOPOEIA

28 experts on African herbal medicines from 14 different countries gathered at the Centurion Lake Hotel in South Africa from May 13th to 15th 2005 to review the problems and prospects of developing internationally acceptable African medicinal plant standards and to select 53 of the most important African medicinal plant species.

The AMPS meeting was hosted by the Phytomedicine Programme of the University of Pretoria (http://www.up.ac.za/academic/veterinary/depts_paracl_phyto.htm) with financial support from the ACP-EU Centre for Development of Enterprise (www.cde.int) and the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation (www.cta.int).

In a historic decision, delegates at the meeting signed a declaration pledging Africa-wide support for the preparation of African quality assurance and trading standards and the establishment of an association to help promote these standards and to develop an African Herbal Pharmacopoeia (cf Centurion Lake Declaration). The Association for African Medicinal Plants Standards (AAMPS) will initially draw its membership from those attending the Centurion Lake meeting but will also welcome others committed to the cause of African quality standards and the development of an African Herbal Pharmacopoeia.

Two delegates each pledged ZAR 20,000 to finance the registration of the association and drafting of an appropriate constitution. AAMPS will have its first registered office in Mauritius. An *ad hoc* committee of volunteers has begun drafting a constitution and examining alternative legal and financial structures. Formal elections for the board of AAMPS will probably take place in autumn 2005.

The associations' most immediate concern is to raise funds to complete Phase Two of the AMPS project. In Phase One 23 herbal profiles have been completed, Phase Two will include the preparation of a further thirty herbal profiles to make a total of 53 available for use by farmers, traders, scientists and government health regulators throughout Africa and importers from the rest of the world. They will form the foundation for a new African pharmacopoeia. AAMPS will ensure maximum access to these standards and aim to prepare an interactive database and web site as well as publish CD-ROM and print versions of the profiles.

A list of the delegates attending the Centurion Lake workshop is attached to this press release along with the names of the first 23 plant profiles under preparation. A further list of 30 plants provisionally selected by the delegates to form the basis of Phase Two of the standards project is also enclosed. For more information please contact

Prof Kobus Eloff,
Phytomedicine Programme, University of Pretoria
Email: kobus.eloff@up.ac.za

Denzil Phillips
CDE Associate Expert Herbs and Pharmaceuticals
Email: denzil@denzil.com