

The group in Pretoria



The signatories to the declaration (not in order):

Prof Berhanu Abegaz, Botswana
Prof Marian Addy, Ghana
Ms Ngozi Aligwekwe, Nigeria
Mr Victor Attafua, Ghana
Mr Thomas Brendler, Germany
Mr Simon Byanyuma, Tanzania
Mr Tom Chapman, England
Prof Ermias Dagne, Ethiopia
Prof Drissa Diallo, Mali
Mr Pierre Du Plessis, Namibia
Prof Kobus Eloff, South Africa
Dr Mohamed H Farah, UMC
Mr Ulrich Feiter, South Africa
Dr Nigel Gericke, South Africa
Dr Jack Githae, Kenya
Prof Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, Mauritius
Prof Peter Houghton, UK
Mr Lawrence Denzil Phillips, England
Prof Philippe Rasoanaivo, Madagascar
Dr Archibald A Sittie, Ghana
Dr Elzabe Stoffberg, South Africa
Prof Gerry Swan, South Africa
Dr Diane Robertson, Jamaica
Dr Gilbertha St Rose, St Lucia
Prof Roy Van Brummelen, South Africa
Prof Ben-Erik Van Wyk, South Africa
Prof Arnold J Vlietinck, Belgium
Prof Charles Wambebe, Nigeria.



Part of a herbal products market in Johannesburg. The herbals are labelled in local languages, eg *Isibhala* (Zulu) – scientific name, *Warburgia salutaris* (Bertol.f.) Chiov., the bark of which is used as an expectorant and natural anti biotic.

African medicinal plants standards

New association to prepare African pharmacopoeia launched

Experts on African herbal medicines from 14 different countries met from 13th to 15th May 2005 to examine the problems and prospects of developing internationally-acceptable African medicinal plant standards and to select the 53 most important African medicinal plant species.

The meeting, at the Centurion Lake Hotel, Pretoria, South Africa, was hosted by the Phytomedicine Programme of the University of Pretoria, with financial support from the ACP-EU Centre for Development of Enterprise and the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation.

Need for quality standards

One of the major constraints identified in 2000 at a Medicinal Plants Forum for Commonwealth Africa held in Cape Town, was the lack of suitable technical specifications and quality control standards for African medicinal plants and herbal medicines. The lack of such standards was considered to be a major barrier to integrating traditional medicine into African public health services.

Preparing herbal profiles

In an attempt to overcome this problem the ACP-EU Centre for the Development of Enterprise (CDE) in collaboration the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Co-operation (CTA) agreed to part finance a two phase project to prepare 50 herbal product profiles/standards for key African Medicinal Plants. These profiles will include most of the important African plants presently traded as well as others of sustainable long-term importance. The profiles combine information normally contained in drug monographs with data usually found in medicinal plant trade specifications and quality control sheets.

Declaration signed

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. 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.

Foundation of African pharmacopoeia

The association's most immediate concern is to raise funds to complete 29 additional herbal profiles to

make a total of fifty available for use by farmers, traders, scientists and government health regulators throughout Africa and importers from the rest of the world. Together they represent the fifty most important medicinal plants used in African herbal medicine and international trade. 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 website as well as publish CD-rom and print versions of the profiles.

The organisers of the meeting were Prof Kobus Eloff, Phytomedicine Programme, University of Pretoria (contact e-mail: kobus.eloff@up.ac.za) and Denzil Phillips, CDE Associate Expert Herbals and Pharmaceuticals (e-mail: denzil@denzil.com)

Declaration

We the undersigned with a view to improving the health, safety, welfare and livelihood of the people of Africa hereby declare the intention:

To establish an Association with a registered office in Mauritius to support the African herbal industry and regulatory authorities by developing quality control and quality assurance standards for African medicinal plants and herbal medicines

To offer membership of the newly formed association to any individual or organisations dedicated to the establishment of such standards and to the creation of an African Herbal Pharmacopoeia

To jointly review and promote the 23 African herbal profiles currently being prepared by the Department of Phytomedicine, University of Pretoria. These herbal profiles include plants of African origin which are considered of regional and international importance and which can be sustainably sourced in Africa

To raise funds to prepare and disseminate a further 30 African herbal profiles selected by the founding members of the association at the meeting in May 2005

To prepare and publish an African herbal pharmacopoeia as a living database drawn initially from the 53 herbal profiles and to promote its use nationally and internationally

To help obtain international acceptance of these herbal standards and the subsequent herbal pharmacopoeia and to lobby health authorities throughout Africa to use such standards to facilitate licensing safe and effective herbal medicines in Africa

To promote capacity-building in Africa for the establishment of regional training centres for certification, compliance and quality control of herbal medicines

To promote the safe, sustainable national and international trade in the fifty profiled African medicinal plants

To carry out any other activities deemed by the members of the association as required to further the objectives of the Association.