

## RESOLUTION OF THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL FLORA MALESIANA SYMPOSIUM

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Considering the continuing threats to biodiversity and the urgent need to base the conservation and sustainable use of plants on a complete inventory of their species, 140 delegates from 17 countries and the Council of the International Association for Plant Taxonomy (IAPT), representing the global plant taxonomic community, meeting at the University of the Philippines at Los Baños, call on international, national, provincial, and local authorities and legislators to give active support to the inventory of plant species diversity in the Malesian region (comprising the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, and East Timor), and therefore to relax the current complicated regulations for fieldwork, collecting permits, and the transboundary movement (from district to district, inter-island, or from country to country) of plant collections for non-commercial motivated scientific research.

### Rationale

Malesia is one of the most species-rich tropical regions of the world. Plant distribution do not match national or political borders. The scientific inventory of the botanical diversity of Malesia is far from complete: only c. 11.000 of an estimated 41.000 species of flowering plants have been well documented. This inventory, coordinated by the Flora Malesiana Foundation, is a truly international effort that can not be completed by regional or local taxonomist, ecologist, or conservationist in isolation. The need for an international, concerted effort to remove the "taxonomic impediment" has been recognized by the UN Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD).

The CBD, in recognition of the sovereign rights of nations and indigenous peoples to the biodiversity

within their lands, has inspired protocols for the collecting and transboundary movement of plant genetic resources for commercial and scientific purposes.

In meeting the goal of the CBD, plant taxonomists wish to work within the legislative framework to undertake field studies, plant-collecting, and the transboundary movement of plant collections crucial to the scientific study needed to achieve the conservation objectives of the CBD. Plant taxonomists recognize that any of this research that might lead to commercial outcomes would be developed collaborative beforehand with benefit-sharing agreements with the country concerned.

Such agreements would facilitate the completion of critical plant inventories such as the Flora of the Philippines, Flora Malesiana, and many other floristic projects in the region in accordance with the Global Taxonomy Initiative, and as part of Global Conservation Strategy of the CBD, that requires a complete checklist of the world's plant species to be completed by 2010.

The Flora Malesiana Symposium delegates and IAPT therefore call on all implementing institutes and agencies in the Malesian region to:

- ❖ Fast track approval of permits (including the process getting prior consent from indigenous people) for field work and plant collecting for collaborative scientific research project
- ❖ To permit the export of duplicate materials of herbarium specimens and samples for scientific research such as molecular analysis, anatomy, palynology, etc.

Los Baños, 24 September 2004.