



FOREWORD [Rodriguésia volume 80]

It is with great pleasure and admiration that I write this foreword to the 80th anniversary volume of the Rio de Janeiro Botanic Garden in-house journal *Rodriguésia*, which was chosen to become the vehicle for a series of articles in English setting the individual role of Brazil and other biodiverse countries and regions in relation with the Flora of the World project. In particular, this volume commemorates and assess the progress made since the launching in 2010 of the 'Lista de Plantas e Fungos do Brasil'. During the last 5 years, 574 contributors have been responsible for the list that culminated this year with 45,352 species recorded, a number over 10% higher than what was published in the first edition, in 2010. The 'Lista do Brasil' is fully established as the main reference point for Brazilian plant (both vascular and non-vascular) and fungal names and is widely used. As it continues to be available for the wide public, behind the scenes Brazilian botanists are organizing an even more ambitious endeavour, the launch of the 'Flora do Brasil' online.

In my previous role as Director for Biodiversity Conservation and later National Secretary for Biodiversity and Forests at the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment, I had the privilege to represent Brazil in many negotiations under the Convention on Biological Diversity, among which I would like to mention the role I played as coordinator of the negotiations at the Jardín Botánico Canario Viera y Clavijo in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and at the Linnean Society in London that led to the establishment of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation at COP 6, in the Hague, in 2002, which included as its first target to establish by 2010 "a widely accessible working list of known plant species, as a step towards a complete world flora". In 2008 I led internal negotiations within the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment and its five institutes which led to the creation that year of the "Centro Nacional de Conservação da Flora (CNCFlora)" as part of the structure of the Rio de Janeiro Botanic Garden Research Institute and the transfer to this new center of resources from the National Biodiversity Mainstreaming Project (PROBIO II) funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Financial Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The 'Lista do Brasil List' was the first project which benefited from this funding through the CNCFlora.

The launch in 2010 of the 'Lista de Plantas e Fungos do Brasil' was a great satisfaction to all Brazilians as for the first time in a century we had access to a consolidated and updated list of all Brazilian plants, partially replacing the old 'Flora Brasiliensis' published between 1840 and 1906 at the initiative of the great Bavarian botanist Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius, who collected extensively in Brazil between 1817 and 1820! Given the richness of the Brazilian flora and the lack before 2010 of a consolidated list of Brazilian plants, this 'Lista do Brasil' also represented a significant contribution for the achievement of GSPC initial target 1 at global level in 2010.

Shortly after, in October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan, the Parties to the CBD adopted at COP 10 the current Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 with its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets which has been recognized as the overarching agenda and framework for biodiversity for all the United Nations, all the biodiversity-related conventions and all major international organizations such as IUCN. An updated GSPC was also adopted at COP10 and recognized as part of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

The updated GSPC has as its revised target 1 the commitment to establish by 2020 "an online flora of all known plants". I am proud to confess that I was one of those that pushed for more ambitious targets in the revised GSPC, including this one, despite the disbelief of some botanists. Targets have to be ambitious and help mobilize efforts and support to achieve results which we would not normally achieve under business-as-usual scenarios.

This volume is introduced by Peter Wyse-Jackson's contribution about the World Flora online Project, followed by invited contributions from different countries and regions of the world, such as Malaysia, Cameroon, North America, Argentina and Southern Cone to share their experience regarding the organization of their checklists and floras. An essay further exposing the challenge to the Brazilian botanists regarding the size of their task still to come is followed by papers originated from data collected by the 'Lista do Brasil' 2015. These papers analyse our current knowledge regarding the fungi and all plant groups in Brazil, stating the progress attained in five years of the project and the areas where more studies are still needed in order to have a complete snapshot of our fungal and plant biodiversity.

I would like to end this foreword with a call to the Brazilian Government and its partners to continue to provide political and financial support to the continuous updating of the 'Lista de Plantas e Fungos do Brasil' and to the ongoing efforts towards the 'Flora do Brasil' online. Additionally, I would like to strongly recommend that Brazil takes the lead to discover the rich and mostly untapped flora of the Amazon Region, certainly the least studied and potentially the richest flora of the world – such endeavour will require significant increase in field work beyond the relatively well known floras around Belém and Manaus and the training of many new botanists, specially taxonomists, to dedicate their lives to unravel the flora of the Amazon Region. I believe this is an endeavour worth the highest priorities in Brazil and in the world which will certainly require the support of a consortium of the most capable botanical institutions in the world. The recent adoption by the Brazilian National Congress of the new Brazilian ABS Law (known in Brazil as the "Biodiversity Law") has removed the prior barriers and hurdles that impeded or delayed access to the rich Brazilian biodiversity. What Brazil needs now is an ambitious research program to discover its rich Amazonian biodiversity and transform it through research and technology into a major contributor to generate jobs and wealth for the country and its people.

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