

STATEMENT TO THE WSSD FROM THE 3RD GLOBAL TAXONOMY WORKSHOP*, PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA, 8-12 JULY, 2002

Taxonomy is the science of discovery, identification, naming and classification of life on earth. Taxonomy thus allows for the documentation, understanding and knowledge dissemination of the Earth's estimated 10 million-plus species and provides the scientific basis for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, forestry and all other forms of natural resource use. Taxonomy is therefore essential for sustainable human livelihoods, for example through maintaining water supply from protected landscapes, pollination, control of pests and diseases, trade quarantine, and innumerable other services which contribute to food security and human welfare.

Recognising that taxonomy is the science of documenting all plant, animal and microbial life-forms which comprise the biological diversity on Earth, on which humanity depends and which can positively or adversely affect human health and livelihoods;

Further recognising that the diverse life-forms referred to are becoming extinct at an unprecedented rate, threatening the integrity of all life on Earth, and that we have so far only managed to document some 10 percent of estimated biodiversity, and the urgent need to document the unknown portion;

Recalling that the majority of the world's governments have signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Agenda 21 at the Rio 'Earth Summit' in 1992 to better conserve, sustainably use, and equitably share the benefits arising from the use of biological resources;

Noting that the Parties to the CBD have adopted as a Programme of Work the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) to build the necessary taxonomic capacity to support, amongst other things, sustainable development and poverty reduction:

Members of the world's taxonomic institutions and other interested parties, from 95 countries and representing all regions, met at the 3rd Global Taxonomy Workshop in Pretoria, 8-12 July 2002, and committed themselves to working with governments and civil society to help provide this essential basis for sustainable development.

The participants of the 3rd Global Taxonomy Workshop, through the WSSD, request world governments and relevant international organisations to:

- *Recognise* the essential role and contribution of taxonomy to sustainable development;
- *Support* taxonomic institutions to rapidly document the biodiversity which forms the basis of sustainable human livelihoods;
- *Promote* the necessary linkages between taxonomic centres and civil society; and
- *Build* adequate capacity in all regions for taxonomy to play this essential role.

Furthermore, recognising the Special Programme for Africa at WSSD and the recent creation of NEPAD, the participants urge African governments to ensure that these recommendations are fully incorporated in the future work programmes of these new initiatives.

* The 3rd Global Taxonomy Workshop was organised by BioNET-INTERNATIONAL: the Global Network for Taxonomy (www.bionet-intl.org; bionet@bionet-intl.org) in collaboration with the Secretariat of the CBD and UNESCO-MAB and in association with the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention.