

**SYMPOSIUM ON MEDICINAL PLANTS: STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF
HERBAL DRUGS IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES,
CSIR SCIENCE CENTRE, NEW DELHI (INDIA),
OCTOBER 19, 2002**

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES : 6 (INCLUDING 5 MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE CENTRE)

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS : >35

A one-day symposium on Medicinal Plants with the theme 'Strategies for Development of the Herbal Drugs in Third World Countries' was organized at the CSIR Science Centre, New Delhi on 19th October 2002 by the National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI), Lucknow jointly with the NAM S&T Centre. The event had the support of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). It was a select gathering of about 35 subject experts from third world countries, including the Fellows of the Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) from Iran (Prof. A. Shafiee, Medicinal University of Tehran), Lebanon (Prof. Elias Baydoun, American University of Beirut), Mauritius (Prof. Abed Peerally, Vice President, Universite Scientifique et Medicale, Louis Pasteur), Nepal (Prof. Dayananda Bajracharya, Vice Chancellor, Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology), and Pakistan (Prof. Bina Siddiqui, Director HEJ Research Institute of Chemistry, University of Karachi), industrialists such as Dr. Ashok Vaidya, Medicinal and Research Director, SPARC, Mumbai and Dr. G.G. Parikh, Jandu Pharmaceuticals Limited, Mumbai, eminent experts such as Dr. B.N. Dhawan, former Director, Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI), Lucknow, Dr. C.K. Atal, former Director, Regional Research Laboratory (RRL), Jammu, Dr. S.S. Handa, former Director, RRL, Jammu, Prof. C.R. Bhatia, Former Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Government of India and Dr. P. Pushpangadan, Director, National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI), Lucknow and senior Indian government officials from the Department of Biotechnology and Indian Council of Medical Research, Government of India.

The symposium was inaugurated by Prof. M.S. Valiathan, President, Indian National Science Academy and was presided over by Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, Director General, Council of Scientific & Industrial Research and Secretary to the Government of India. Dr. P. Pushpangadan, Director, National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow welcomed the participants and highlighted the intrinsic value and strength of traditional herbal medicine in providing affordable health care to the people of Third World and emphasized the need for evolving collaborative efforts by the third world nations in strengthening the herbal medicine. Dr. Valiathan in his inaugural address spoke about the great heritage of the traditional medicine in India. He said that a well-focused scientific research in traditional medicine in the light of the modern scientific knowledge

could immensely contribute in providing primary health care to the people of the third world countries. It can also offer new therapeutic aids to those diseases, for which no satisfactory care exists at present. Dr. R.A. Mashelkar in his presidential address spoke about various R&D efforts launched by CSIR in medicinal plants/herbal medicine in value addition and protection of the IPR of the indigenous knowledge, particularly the written traditions like Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani by establishing the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) with the cooperation of the Department of Indian System of Medicine and Health. He mentioned about the turmeric patent fought and won by CSIR and also spoke about the inter-laboratory collaborative research programme launched in medicinal plants, wherein about 19 CSIR laboratories and many private herbal drugs and pharmaceutical industries were actively participating. These efforts made in last four years were yielding highly rewarding results.

The scientific sessions were all highly interactive wherein the experts from the third world countries including India, discussed various aspects of herbal drugs and medicinal plants. The participants unanimously felt the urgent need for the close collaboration of the third world nations to bring about a renaissance in herbal drugs. These discussions echoed the call given by WHO in 1978 for utilizing and promoting traditional medicine in national health care systems. The participants also discussed various impediments/problems confronted by third world countries, such as establishing appropriate references for fixing standards, specifications, identification, safety, purity, strength, documentation in clinical data and protecting the IPRs etc of the traditional herbal remedies. The participants also remembered the international conferences in medicinal plants held in Chiang Mai (Thailand) in 1998 and Bangalore and the declarations made thereof, which had focused attention on evolving strategies for conservation, cultivation, sustainable utilization of medicinal plants and also on a need to ensure appropriate benefit sharing with local communities.

After a very detailed deliberation during the Symposium, the participants arrived at the following tentative declaration.

New Delhi Declaration on Herbal Drug Development in the Third World Countries

We the scientists, industrialists and academicians of the third world interested in the herbal drug development, call upon the third world countries to take urgent actions to the following:

1. Share and network information in inventory, documentation and databasing of medicinal plants and traditional remedies.
2. Call upon the third world nations for concerted action in conservation (both *in situ* and *ex situ*) of medicinal plants and develop agro-techniques and cultivation practices of those medicinal plants that are required in bulk.

3. Emphasize the need for integrated research that combines the best of traditional and modern scientific knowledge and technology/tools.
4. Formulate policy guidelines for establishing parameters and references that suit best to the herbal remedies for fixing standards of raw drug and finished herbal remedies. The WHO guidelines issued may be taken for guidance.
5. Call upon to create mechanisms for a common certification of standards and specification of herbal drugs in third world countries.
6. Evolve protocols and regulatory guidelines for pharmacological and clinical investigations to ensure safety, efficacy and consistency in batch-to-batch product quality of herbal remedies (herbal formulations).
7. Facilitate inter-institutional interaction/collaboration among the various countries of the third world for protecting their common interest on matters related to IPR, geographical appellation, patents and equitable benefit sharing by all stakeholders including the local people/indigenous communities.

Indian scientists expressed their willingness to share with the member countries their expertise in establishing Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), which is expected to give legitimacy to the existing traditional knowledge and ensure ease in retrieval by patent examiners so as to prevent granting patents to such traditional knowledge of the third world countries.