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DIVERSITAS - AN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME OF BIODIVERSITY SCIENCE

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MOTS-CLES:

BIODIVERSITE, RESSOURCES NATURELLES, CONSERVATION DE LA NATURE, ENVIRONNEMENT, PROJECT DE RECHERCHE

DIVERSITAS is an international programme of biodiversity science. DIVERSITAS is a partnership of inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations to promote, facilitate and catalyse science scientific research on biological diversity -its origin, composition, functioning, maintenance, and conservation. Its goal is to provide accurate information and predictive models on the status of biodiversity and the sustainability of the use of the Earth's biotic resources and to build biodiversity science world-wide.

DIVERSITAS addresses nine fundamental research themes within biodiversity science. Five Core Programme Elements focusing on key areas of biodiversity research have been established: (1) The effect of biodiversity on ecosystem functioning, (2) Origins, maintenance and change, (3) Systematics: inventorying and classification, (4) Monitoring, and (5) Conservation, restoration, and sustainable use. Five cross-cutting programme elements known as STARs (Special Target Areas of Research) are also included because of their critical importance and needs: (6) Soil and sediment biodiversity, Marine biodiversity, (8) Microbial diversity, (9) Freshwater biodiversity and (10) Human dimensions.

In the conservation Programme Element of the DIVERSITAS programme, one of the activities is concerned with the conservation of the genetic variability of wild species, especially those used in human activities (V Heywood, Convenor). Associated with this is the work of a European group, initially supported by the Council of Europe, on the conservation of the wild relatives of European cultivated plants, a catalogue of which has been published (Heywood & Zohary 1996),

In addition to the broad spectrum of research activities, DIVERSITAS sponsors workshops and symposia designed to develop and communicate the results of its scientific programme and will place particular emphasis on programmatic activities that promote the building of scientific infrastructure and human resources, especially in the developing regions of the world lacking such capacity.

DIVERSITAS partners are: IUBS (International Union of Biological Sciences), SCOPE (Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment), UNESCO (United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organisation), ICSU (International Council of Scientific Unions), IGBP/GCTE (Global Change and Terrestrial Ecosystems), IUNS (International Union of Microbiological Societies).

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