

## **Medicinal Plant Research in Africa**

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### **23 - Legislation on Medicinal Plants in Africa**

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#### **Abstract**

Africa is endowed with rich and high endemicity of plant biological diversity, and a number of species are used as traditional medicines. Many African countries, working within the guidelines of the Convention for Biological Diversity and the Global Strategy for Plants Conservation, have developed legislation for the management of plant biodiversity, covering forestry, environment, food, agriculture, access and benefit sharing, intellectual property rights, registration of herbal medicines, and other areas. Many countries have signed the Convention on Biological Diversity, though some have not. However, enforcement of these laws in almost all countries is very weak; there is a lack of harmonization at the national level, coupled with high border porosity, which leaves openings for biopiracy. The Kyoto Protocol 2010 provides a good opportunity for African countries to harmonize legislation governing the exploitation of medicinal plant biodiversity in a manner that is beneficial to their countries. This chapter reviews the status of some of the legislation in African countries, highlighting some specific country plant biodiversity situations; for each of the countries mentioned an attempt has been made to give information on the available capabilities for the evaluation of the safety, efficacy, and quality of herbal medicines and regulations on registration of herbal and traditional medicines. It is recommended that African countries continue to strengthen legislation related to medicinal plants; strengthen their capacity for safety, efficacy, and quality evaluation; and embark on commercial cultivation of medicinal plants to benefit from the expanding global market of herbal medicines.

#### **Keywords**

Medicinal plants,herbal medicines,registration,legislation,conservation,biodiversity,CBD,CITES