

PREFACE

This book reports the proceedings of an international panel of specialists that explored the agricultural, commercial, ecological, legal, pharmacological and social future of medicinal and aromatic plants at a conference organized by Frontis – Wageningen International Nucleus for Strategic Expertise in Wageningen, The Netherlands. During the three-day conference, members of the panel presented and discussed a variety of facts, thoughts and opinions on research needs and potential importance of medicinal and aromatic plants among developed and developing societies. Hopefully, the information and particulars brought forth during presentations and discussions by panel members and summarized in these proceedings will initiate continued dialogue about the role and prospect of growing, collecting and processing medicinal and aromatic plants with pharmacological and industrial applications.

As the reader will note, these proceedings represent a wide collection of views, reflecting the diversity of disciplines and interests of panel members that enabled thoughtful deliberations from a range of perspectives. The panel highlighted the necessity of continued and integrated research on plant sources, conservation, bioactivity, analysis and marketing in examining future scenarios for application and sale of medicinal and aromatic plants. Of special concern was the need for proof of efficacy and safety in drug development and the need to recognize societies contributing plant materials.

These proceedings can be viewed as the opening of on-going talks and hopeful collaboration among specialists from various scientific disciplines that have an interest in medicinal and aromatic plants. The development of safe and effective medicinal and aromatic plant products will undoubtedly depend upon the collaborative efforts of growers, collectors, conservationists, processors and businesses along with those of educators, sociologists, researchers and investors in developed and developing societies. Members of the panel trust that future conferences will further develop this collaboration in efforts to enhance the discovery, production and use of medicinal and aromatic plants.

The editors give special thanks to Ms. Petra van Boetzelaer of Frontis for her excellent organizational and logistic support, to Ms. Jos Smelik of Wageningen University Library for her technical editing of this volume, and to Wageningen University and Research Centre for the generous financial support that enabled this conference to be held.

The editors:

Robert J. Bogers, Lyle E. Craker and Dagmar Lange