



Collection of Various Medicinal and Spice Crops from Wild Genetic Diversity in Albania

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Abstract. This paper will present the findings of a four-year period program related to the collection of germplasm funded by the World Bank and the Albania Government. This project is implemented during 2006-2010 by team Albanian experts. The selection & collecting process was implemented in close collaboration among different specialists and experts and other interested actors in medicinal & spice crops chain in Albania, information on the economic importance of medicinal & spice crops clarified in details which of these plants are mostly demanded, which are the trends of their export, etc. Based on the information and opinions obtained from the implementation of these activities, in different areas of Albania, were identified around 182 types of the most important/common medicinal & spice crops. Around 68 of them are the most endangered plants, from which 50 types of have higher economic value. It is of crucial importance that their protection be taken in close consideration. The number of species collected and evaluated within the framework of this program, is very small compared to the great number of species that present economic value and are highly endangered. The species were selected based on their economic importance, on their rates of danger and identification of the causes that are most likely threatening the existence some species in their present locations, etc. These species are: *oregano, sage, basil, winter savory, chamomile, peppermint, rosemary, thyme, Albanian mountain tea, juniper, and bilberry and Aegilops sp.* During mentioned period, extensive field research was conducted in a great number of locations where were identified the spices/aromatic and/or medicinal species, planned for collection. Field research visits were conducted in more than 210 sites and in total were collected 421 samples of 12 aromatic/medicinal & spice crops.

Key words: *World Bank, MADA, collection, germplasm, medical/spice herbs, genetic erosion, etc.*

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