

Flore du Gabon, progress and inventoriesMarc S. M. Sosef¹, Jacques Florence² and Jan J. Wieringa¹

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The production of the “Flore du Gabon” was taken up by the National Herbarium of The Netherlands, Wageningen branch (WAG), back in 2005. A new editorial team was formed and a more concise format adopted. A large number of specialists was invited to contribute and their response was overwhelming. The goal to finish this series within ten years seems feasible. Meanwhile, the first three new volumes have appeared, dealing with 22 families, 30 genera and 95 species, and manuscripts for two more volumes are in an advanced stage of preparation. It is promising to note that several of the family treatments were prepared for the first time by Gabonese authors. Specific funding has been obtained from Total Gabon and the Fondation Total to prepare the treatments of the Cyperaceae and half of the Euphorbiaceae, the Moabi Foundation for the Oxalidaceae and Hyacinthaceae, and the Alberta Mennega Foundation for that of part of the Rubiaceae. The publication of the Checklist of Gabonese vascular plants (Sosef et al., 2006, *Scripta Botanica Belgica* 35), based on a BRAHMS database containing some 95% of all collections ever made in Gabon, proves of great help for the authors, in particular in tracing their material in various herbaria. The database also provided insight in the location of botanically lesser or completely unknown areas. These ‘gaps’ have directed several expeditions, such as those to Plateau Batéké, Waka National Park, Birougou National Park, the Okondja region and the Mayombe region, to try and fill these gaps. Up to half 2009, probably some 200-250 species could already be added to the Checklist, showing the still relatively poor state of our knowledge of the flora of this country, and the need to start revising older volumes of the Flore du Gabon after its ‘completion’.

Key words – botanical exploration, checklist, database, Flora, Gabon