

# Minutes of the meeting on the structure of the African Pollen Database held on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1996 at Bierville, France



## I. General agreements

The rationales of forming the database were justified as follows: the database will help homogenize data, making the comparison of results possible. It will give an easy access to information and data exchange preventing repetition of works. It will be part of the Global Pollen Database.

Based on the above justifications participants unanimously agreed to organize an African Pollen Database. It has been suggested that data contributors should provide as much details as possible; such as who prepared the material as well as when and where it was prepared. The necessity of a careful storage of pollen samples was emphasized to make further analysis and dating possible. The idea of a common storage of cores was found to be premature.

### 1. Users of the Database

The following could be users of the database : Palynologists working at local, regional or global scales, archaeologists, etc.

### 2. Data Entry Format

After a long discussion on the kind of format to be applied for the entry of data in the bank the European style was accepted with slight modifications such as : including water depth for marine cores, and information on who, where and when data were collected. The EPDB format makes provision for the entry of fossil and modern pollen data including those from surface soils, airborne pollen and honey. Data from plant macro remains will also be integrated.

### 3. Type of Data

The type of data to be entered in the bank is mainly pollen data. Complementary data such as plant macrofossils will be accepted. Others such as dinoflagellates have to be treated by corresponding scientific community.

#### **4. Time span of Data**

It has been agreed that no restriction should be made on the time span or age of the material from which data has been collected, provided that botanical affinity can be assigned to the pollen types.

#### **5. Geographic Domain**

The geographic domain of the APDB will include the whole of the African continent and Madagascar. Data from the northern part of Africa, already included in the EPDB will be transferred to the APDB.

## **II. Protocols for the APD**

The following protocols for the database was discussed and agreed upon by the participants. In the event that additional changes become necessary, all data base contributors and users will be notified through the Newsletter. This protocol will be distributed with any data sent from the APDB to a user.

### **A. Data**

1 - Data must consist of the original counts, not percentages or digitized data.

2 - The data base must contain the original taxonomic identifications, with the exception of exact nomenclature synonymy. As primary entries, taxa will not be lumped into higher taxonomic groups in the database. For practical reasons, higher level hierarchies will exist within the database in two ways: the first will be according to pollen morphology, the second according to plant taxonomy.

3 - Data will be accepted only as non-restricted and will be available for all users.

### **B - Contributors**

1 - Can request for a verification of the data in the bank. As a matter of general policy, the central data base should routinely return to the originator of the data a hard copy printout of the data as entered in the database for optional verification by the originator.

2 - Can obtain copies of application software and the database itself for use on his/her own computer.

3 - Should receive a periodic, bilingual (FrenchEnglish) Newsletter or report concerning the data base.

### **C - Users**

1 - Should cite, in any publication using data from the database, the contributors' original publications and/or APD sources.

2 - Should acknowledge the contributors of unpublished data used and any advice such contributors might have provided.

3 - Normal ethics pertaining to co-authorship of publications applies. The contributor should be invited to be a co-author if a user makes significant use of a single contributor's site, or if a single contributor's data comprise a substantial portion of a larger data set analyzed, or if a contributor makes a significant contribution to the analysis of the data or to the interpretation of the results.

4 - The data will be available only to non-profit-making organizations and for research. Profit-making organizations may use the data for legitimate purposes, only with the written consent of the majority of the members of the Advisory board, who will determine or negotiate the payment of any fee required. Such payment will be credited to the APD.

### **III - Location of the Data bank**

The data bank is located in the "Laboratoire de Géologie du Quaternaire" at CEREGE, Aix-en-Provence, because of the availability of expertise on African pollen data analysis; furthermore, it is the operational base of the data manager.