



Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
Instituto Smithsonian de Investigaciones Tropicales

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my strong support for the new project "Towards a Census of Rainforest Life", which is being organized by Doctors Maurice LePonce and Yves Basset.

This new project builds on the IBISCA project to **I**nvestigate the **B**iodiversity of **S**oil and **C**anopy **A**rthropods. Doctor Basset organized this massive effort to understand the seasonal, horizontal (between sites) and vertical (between forest strata) dimensions of the biodiversity of insects, spiders and mites in the rain forests of Panama. The IBISCA project has brought together more than 100 expert entomologists to collect more than 500,000 specimens representing several thousands of species. This ongoing and unprecedented collaboration among entomologists from more than 25 countries is making possible a great leap forward in our understanding of the most biodiverse groups of organisms in tropical rain forests. The IBISCA project has been supported by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the European Science Foundation.

The new project "Towards a Census of Rainforest Life" will focus the tremendous resources that the science community of the European Union can bring to bear on the systematics and biodiversity of tropical organisms. The core group formed during the IBISCA project and will be augmented during a series of workshops designed to capitalize on the particular scientific strengths present throughout Europe. The possibility is truly exciting. I am confident the new project "Towards a Census of Rainforest Life" will be implemented with the same success, efficiency and scientific rigor which characterized the IBISCA project in Panama.

Best Regards,

S. Joseph Wright