**Ricardo Sousa Couto**

Post Doctorate

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Dear IAPT Commission Board,

I am writing to state my support for the science project about the Systematics of Marantaceae, led by the Ph.D. Student Fernanda Fraga. As former co-advisor of Miss Fraga, I am familiar with her following steps, which include her Doctorate Thesis.

In this context, the project concerns a very significant part of Marantaceae, not only in the number of species and genera but also due to the big range of diversity they represent. The clade Maranta seems to include species of very big distribution, within different domains. As her ongoing studies showed, some species exhibit variations in all key characters formerly used in identification keys, which advocate for accurate taxonomic treatment. Thus, I believe the present project has great scientific merit.

The scientist responsible for this project has also her merit. As a talented student, Fernanda was awarded by the German Government a scholarship of a 6-weeks german course, during which she managed to consult important European collections. Additionally, her expressive skills as collector ensure a satisfactory sampling of species, leading to a very comprehensive phylogeny. It is very opportune to have such a commited young scientist working in the center of diversity of Marantaceae. In this scenario, the IAPT Grant would be very helpful to allow the student to collaborate with foreign researchers and ameliorate the phylogeny. Since this project aims to solve the final gap of Marantaceae, I believe it will bring broader impacts to the understanding of Marantaceae, aiding further studies on systematics and biogeography.

Rio de Janeiro, January 14th, 2020

 

Ricardo Sousa Couto.