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**LETTERS**

Brazil's biodiversity researchers need help

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Brazil's political –financial crisis and the threat to Biological Collections

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environment have been occupying the front pages of international newspapers. Particularly, the cuts in the funds for the maintenance of Public Universities, independent of ideology or need, is threatening our biodiversity knowledge. The major part of Brazilian biological collections is hosted by Public Universities. Without basic maintenance there is an imminent potential of a catastrophic deterioration on such collections, leading to the loss of decades of knowledge and millions of dollars in Scientific Investment. Brazilian and international communities need to mobilize themselves against such a policy.

Letter: Brazil's political crisis is bringing attention and concern around the world (1). The Brazilian Academy is being affected by an ideological crusade against areas associated by the present government to the left-wing. Therefore, several cuts in governmental spending are being carried out in the name of balancing the economy (1-2). Although such cuts hypothetically are effective on the financial balance, in the short term they bring harmful consequences once will affect research fellowships, grants, water and energy supplies, security and cleaning services in Federal Public Universities (2).

Usually, the major part of Biological Collections is maintained by University funds. Biological collections are priceless to a nation by hosting tissues, genetic material and representants of the fauna and flora collected and studied over decades by hundreds of Scientists from all over the world. Particularly in the tropics the curatorial maintenance is critical, as the high temperature and humidity can rapidly destroy samples (3-4). Even being unsustainable in long term, few collections have power generators and the associated researchers potentially can raise money to keep same functioning. However, there is an imminent risk of losing the material preserved in collection of small universities, including those situated close to deforestation areas (3), where several species are not even known by science. Another predicable consequence of the cuts is the inevitable decrease in the number of molecular biologists, geneticists, taxonomists and systematist professionals formed in Brazilian Universities. This means the loss of one generation of scientists describing, studying, preserving specimens and supporting Conservation of the massive Brazilian Biodiversity (5). To avoid a predictable disaster, such was the fire in the National Museum in Rio (6), Brazilian and international scientists should impose pressure on government to avoid such loss of the biodiversity knowledge, which should be considered as a crime against humanity.

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