



PRESS RELEASE

Frank Taylor receives lifetime membership of PhytoTrade Africa

Frank Taylor, the renowned non-timber forest product expert has been awarded an honorary lifetime membership of PhytoTrade Africa, the Southern African Natural Products Trade Association. At a formal dinner held in Livingstone, Zambia on Thursday 17th June attended by PhytoTrade Africa members and key commercial partners of the Association, Taylor was formally honoured for the contribution he has made to the development of the natural products industry in the region.

Born in 1935 in the Cape, Frank Taylor lead expeditions to Ngamiland and Rishtersveld to collect botanical, ethnological and archaeological material for the South African Museum. In 1965, Frank settled in Maun, starting Botswana Game Industries, and becoming involved in the "Brigades" system of vocational training. In 1975 he set up Pelegano Village Industries (PVI), a rural non-profit company. In 1981, as a result of PVI's success, the Botswana government contracted Frank to survey the commercial potential of all the indigenous plants and insects in Botswana. It was at this time that Veld Products Research (VPR) was born. Frank says "Many people thought that I was a crank to think that rural people could make a living from wild natural resources".

In 1984, Frank established Thusano Lefatsheng, an NGO involved in the commercialisation of veld products while continuing his research into indigenous fruit tree domestication; developing methods for harvesting devils claw; the processing of wild foods; and investigations into traditional medicines. In 1994, Frank became a Director of VPR until he retired in 1999. He now works as a consultant, much of it free of charge for Batswana.

Gus le Breton, Chief Executive of PhytoTrade Africa presented Frank Taylor with a bound copy of his original 1981 report on the potential of veld products with commercial potential in Botswana. In his acceptance speech, Frank remarked that PhytoTrade's progress in developing the natural products industry in the region had been "beyond his wildest dreams" and commended the PhytoTrade Africa's Board and Executive Office for their vision and energy.

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