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## Preface

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This special issue presents a number of manuscripts derived from research carried out in the framework of Preduza (El Proyecto de Resistencia Duradera en la Zone Andina). This programme was initiated in 1997, and directed at breeding for durable disease resistance in food crops in the Andean region. Preduza is a cooperative programme between the Laboratory of Plant Breeding (PBR) of Wageningen University and the National Agricultural Research organizations (NARs) of Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. The objectives were to develop improved cultivars of major food crops that combine durable resistance to the important diseases with a high level of adaptation to the marginal conditions in the Andean highlands and with good quality to meet the needs and preferences of the Andean farmers. This project was initiated on the basis of earlier research on durable resistance of wheat and barley to yellow rust carried out in the highlands of Mexico and Ecuador in the early 1990s.

The major food crops in the Andes differ strongly in their reproduction systems, from cross-fertilization (maize) to partial cross-fertilization (quinoa) to self-fertilization (beans,

barley, wheat) and vegetative reproduction (potato). The emphasis of the project was on the breeding of improved cultivars with a strong participation of farmers in the selection process. To support these breeding efforts, additional research was often needed. This special issue of *Euphytica* reports about the results of several of these research projects. In the introduction, several relevant issues about the Andean region and agricultural practices relevant for this research and breeding programme are outlined.

I would like to thank our collaborating partners in the Andean zone, especially el Instituto Nacional Autónomo de Investigación Agropecuarias (INIAP) in Ecuador, El Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Extensión Agraria (INIEA) in Peru and Fundación Para Promoción de Investigación en Productos Andinos (PROINPA) in Bolivia for their support and their collaboration in Preduza. I am also grateful to all authors and referees who have helped us in realizing this special issue of *Euphytica*.

Also I would like to thank Dr. Riens Niks who did a great job as editor of this special issue. With his critical and sharp judgement he has managed to bring the quality of the papers in this issue to a very high level, that is rarely seen in papers on research in such complex marginal regions like the Andes.

In addition, thanks to the never ending enthusiasm and leadership of the Preduza coordinator

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Dr. Daniel Danial, all Preduza breeding projects have made tremendous improvements and have been very successful indeed. We are also very grateful to Mrs. Angela Machacilla for her continuous support to Preduza during the last 10 years and to all Preduza steering committee members.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge Prof. Jan Parlevliet, who paved the scientific way for the studies in durable breeding described in this issue. He also visited the breeding projects in the Andes

a dozen times and advised and stimulated the breeders in their daily work and he supported and stimulated the authors of the papers of this issue to publish their research results. In this respect, he behaved like a counsellor, nestor, father, teacher and well respected colleague that has greatly contributed to the success of Preduza.

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