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Publisher's note

Elsevier announces participation in AGORA

UN/FAO initiative to deliver agricultural information to developing world

Amsterdam, 14 October 2003 – Elsevier, in cooperation with a group of international scientific publishers, UN agencies, and other private and public sector organizations, today signed an agreement with the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organizations (FAO), which will allow students, researchers and academics in developing countries to access a wealth of scientific information.

The AGORA (Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture) initiative will provide free or very low cost access to journals in the agriculture, biological, environmental and social sciences. The AGORA initiative will initially offer a collection of literature via the Internet to 69 eligible countries with per capita annual income of less than US\$1000. The AGORA website will provide access to more than 400 key scientific journals in agriculture and related fields, more than 180 of them from Elsevier.

The inspiration for the AGORA initiative is the UN WHO Health Internetwork ACCESS to Research Initiative (HINARI), which provides information on biomedical research to institutions in developing countries. "Given the success of HINARI and the value it has provided to researchers, we felt that this would be an excellent program supporting developing countries in a discipline where it is most needed. Elsevier is proud to be part of AGORA, and we hope that it will become a valuable resource in the countries that are part of the initiative" said Arie Jongejan, CEO Science & Technology, Elsevier.

About Elsevier

Elsevier is a world-leading publisher of scientific, technical and medical information products and services. Working in partnership within the global science and health communities, the company publishes more than 1,800 journals and 2,200 new books per year, in addition to offering a suite of innovative electronic products, such as ScienceDirect® (www.sciencedirect.com) and MD Consult (<http://www.mdconsult.com/>) bibliographic databases, online references works and subject specific portals.

Elsevier (www.elsevier.com) is a global company headquartered in Amsterdam, The Netherlands and has offices worldwide. The company is part of Reed Elsevier Group plc (www.reedelsevier.com), a world-leading publisher and information provider. Operating in the science and medical, legal, education and business-to-business sector, Reed Elsevier provides high-quality and flexible information solutions to users, with increasing emphasis on the Internet as a means of delivery. Reed Elsevier's ticker symbols are REN (Euronext Amsterdam), REL (London Stock Exchange), RUK and ENL (New York Stock Exchange).

About AGORA

The long-term goal of the AGORA program is to increase the quality and effectiveness of agricultural research and training in low-income countries, and in turn, to improve food security. AGORA will provide access over the world-wide-web to a collection of key journals in agriculture and related biological, environmental and social sciences. It will offer to researchers, policy-makers, educators, students, technical workers and extension specialist a collection of literature available to their peers in the developed world.

Founding publishers of AGORA are: Blackwell Publishing; CABI Publishing; Elsevier; Kluwer Academic Publishers; Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins; Nature Publishing Group; Oxford University Press; Springer Verlag; and John Wiley and Sons.

Funding and support is also provided by Cornell University Mann Library, Rockefeller Foundation, the United Kingdom Department for International Development and the United States Agency for International Development.

For more information, visit <http://www.aginternetwork.org/>, or contact the AGORA program team at the FAO on **AGORA@fao.org**

About HINARI

AGORA takes its inspiration from HINARI, the Health Internetwork Access to Research Initiative project (see <http://www.healthinternetwork.net>) which provides free or very low cost access to biomedical research articles for researchers in the developing countries. In its first full year of existence, HINARI has met with impressive success.

Around 1000 institutions in 99 countries now enjoy access to the offering of almost 40 publishers in the life sciences area. Access is typically via a dedicated IP address within their library which can dial up to a WHO site where the user can log in. In practice, the HINARI offering consists of well over 2,000 scholarly journals, databases, electronic books and other media. The five founding publishers (Elsevier, Blackwell, Springer and Kluwer) jointly represent the biggest share of the offering.