

## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

### **Key Survey of International Journal Access Programmes Released**

**London, UK – 16 June 2008.** UK learned society participation in international journal access programmes could benefit from increased awareness and greater coordination, according to a report released today by the UK National Commission for UNESCO. The report, *Improving Access to Scientific Information for Developing Countries: UK Learned Societies and Journal Access Programmes*, bases its findings on a survey of 40 scientific learned societies in the UK.

The report assesses UK learned societies' participation in international journal access programmes for developing countries (providing free or low cost access to scholarly literature) and sets out recommendations for learned societies and for journal access programme providers to strengthen the provision of scientific information to developing country institutions and readers.

The report urges all scientific learned societies and organisations to participate in journal access programmes. Further awareness raising of journals access programmes among scientific learned societies, potential journal users and among developed world supporters, is a key step towards maximising the impact of these crucially important programmes.

“Journal access programmes play a hugely important role in providing researchers, practitioners and students in developing countries with essential access to up-to-date scientific literature,” says Professor Sir Roger Elliott, Chair of the Working Group which produced the report. “The sizable number of UK learned societies and their third party publishers who make scientific material available to developing countries free or at a reduced rate should be applauded for their ongoing efforts. We believe that this report can be an impetus for further coordinated action towards enhancing and strengthening scientific capacities in developing countries.”

While based on UK survey findings, the report has an international significance and its recommendations are applicable globally.

This report is one component of the work of the UK National Commission for UNESCO's Natural Sciences Committee through its Improving Access to Scientific Information Working Group, which considers issues surrounding access to scientific information in developing countries and seeks to expand access to knowledge and data. Areas of discussion include access to research output (literature and data) and science communication, including science journalism.

To download a copy of the report please visit [www.unesco.org.uk](http://www.unesco.org.uk).

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#### **Notes to Editors**

**For further information or to request a copy of the report, please contact Natasha Bevan at the UK National Commission for UNESCO on +44 (0)20 7766 3468 or [nbevan@unesco.org.uk](mailto:nbevan@unesco.org.uk).**

- **The UK National Commission for UNESCO** is the focal point in the UK for UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)-related policies and activities. As an independent body, the UK National Commission brings together a network of over 200 experts from across the UK in the fields of education, culture, sciences and communication. Working closely in partnership with HM Government and UK civil society, the UK National Commission aims to provide expert advice to the Government on UNESCO related matters, develop UK input into UNESCO policy-making, promote reforms within UNESCO, and encourage support in the UK for UNESCO's ideals and work.
- Learned societies exist in order to foster and disseminate knowledge about academic subject areas. They play a major role in scholarly publishing and society journals are extremely important, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to scientific research. The Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP) estimates that about one third of all journals are published by learned societies and associations.