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Statement by the Working Group on  
Scientific Information

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by Francis Muguet [muguet@ensta.fr](mailto:muguet@ensta.fr)

On behalf of the working group on scientific information, I wish to convey in a few minutes some key elements which are the bases of our past and future recommendation drafts concerning paragraphs "Access to information and knowledge" and "Intellectual property rights" in the Declaration of Principles and in the Action Plan. Because of lack of time, we are going to limit ourselves to scientific publishing, and we are not going to deal with repositories and databases issues. Except for the very peculiar case of the Russian Federation; awareness must be raised concerning the following facts : Scientific authors are unpaid for their submissions and they wish it to be that way. Their colleagues that perform peer reviewing of submissions are not paid either. Scientific Editors are not or barely compensated.

The cost to bring scientific information online is thus quite low and may be dealt with by the scientific community itself, which already possesses powerful servers and high bandwidth in developed countries.

As for the definition of **Open Access**: it may be characterized by free online access, with the right to redistribute. A printed edition, of course, can be available at a cost. Therefore, there are no economic obstacles to Open Access to information included in scientific publications. The right to "Open Access" to scientific information must be considered as a **principle**. This right respects and stems from the **very intent** of scientists that wish **to donate** their accounts of their own research.

In reality, subscription costs to scientific journals are very high, and are ever increasing within the framework of a market that is becoming more and more oligopolistic. Journals are now unaffordable to medium-sized North American and Japanese Universities libraries and to most European libraries. The origins of such a seemingly insane behavior by scientists that donate content to journals that then resell it at very high prices, are mostly historical. Consequences are absolutely disastrous. In the biomedical area, medical personnel cannot access to journals that are needed. This is an indirect cause for the loss of human lives. In developed countries, it must be noticed the decreasing interest of youth towards science that stays unreachable. In transition countries; it quenches from the start, scientific and technical development.

The remedy however is quite simple. It suffices that scientists submit their works to Open Access journals. Some Open Access journals have been created by the scientists themselves (MDPI, PLoS, etc.). A comprehensive strategy has been outlined in the Budapest Open Access Initiative. An effort by the Association of Research Libraries (USA) tries to get existing journals into "declaring independence" from their publishers. Progress are however much too slow.

UN action may come as a reinforcement to the activities of lawmaking national bodies and vice-versa. For example, in the USA, works published by government agencies are not protected by copyright. A bill (HR 2613) has been proposed that wish to enlarge the scope of exclusion from copyright protection to scientific papers published following research substantially funded by the federal government.

We do not call neither to your good heart, or your good will but simply to your cold reason. One state has already had the foresight to include verbatim one of our recommendations in its own contribution.