



Civil Society Scientific Information Working Group
<http://www.wsis-si.org>

Att: InterAcademy Panel
Executive Committee

C/C Conference Secretariat

IAP Conference "Science for Society"
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Respected Academicians,

On behalf of the Civil Society working group on Scientific Information at the World Summit on the Information Society, an ongoing process till 2005, your kind attention is drawn on the opportunity that the Academies should elaborate a declaration or statement in favour of Open Access to Scientific Information during the current IAP meeting

Open Access is a win/win approach that would benefit both to industrialized nations as well as transition countries. We stress also that Open Access may benefit to Science Academies because it would allow their journals to better known and considered, especially in transition countries. A major and quite recent breakthrough has been the [Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities](#) that has been signed on October 22. Recently after very intense and difficult negotiations, we managed on November 13, that support to Open Access is now included in the current draft of the declaration of principles under negotiation before the representatives of 134 states.

3) Access to information and knowledge

*We strive to promote universal access with equal opportunities for all to scientific knowledge and the creation and dissemination of scientific and technical information, **including open access initiatives for scientific publishing***

There is still much work left for the drafting of the "Plan of Action" where practical measures are decided. Negotiations are going to start again soon on Friday 5 December and the Summit itself is going to be held from December 10 to 12. Some of you have been contacted by Professor Arunchalam Subbiah or myself in order to raise awareness of this issue.

There is also an opportunity for the Academies of Science during this IAP meeting to draft a recommendation underlining the role of the Sciences Academies in relationship to the creation and dissemination of Scientific Knowledge that our group would be happy to relay to the Summit. To that effect, we would need that your declaration be sent to us so that this important document be submitted as soon as possible, to the UN in the same way as we proceeded for the Berlin declaration with the strong support of the Max Planck Society and INIST & CNRS. We cannot not guarantee that a language underlining the central role of Science Academies could be included at such a late stage of the negotiations of the Geneva phase (ending in December 2003) of the Summit, but it could be useful for the Tunis phase ending in 2005, and we would certainly suggest that the Interacademy Panel becomes an accredited NGO in order to participate in the next stage of the Summit. We would be glad to be of assistance.

We are perfectly aware of the very short time frame of our suggestion. Even one month ago, we did not expect that such a strong dynamics towards Open Access could be set in motion. Political and development considerations are now bringing Open Access at the forefront, at the highest international level. Therefore our letter is a call both to support Open Access and to become involved in the WSIS process.

Best Regards

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