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PRESS RELEASE

**Support needed to include developing countries in the research cycle, publishers urged**

Publishers need to coordinate support across their editorial, IT, sales, and marketing teams – and ultimately at board level – to help ensure that developing country researchers are included in the research cycle.

This was the main message emerging from the third annual Publishers for Development conference, held in London on 2 December. The conference, which brought together representatives from 24 publishing houses, encouraged delegates to recognise that they have more to offer to developing country libraries than just the availability of journals.

The conference also called upon publishers to:

- support sustainable and equitable availability
- encourage the inclusion of developing country research in their journals
- think low-bandwidth – and provide options to increase accessibility
- use their networks to promote awareness
- provide promotional materials and cooperate with local outreach and agencies where possible
- recognise the role of 'local' publishers and publishing

Publishers for Development – a joint initiative of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) – aims to address the critical issues facing researchers and librarians in developing countries by bringing publishers into conversation with them and providing a forum to debate and share experiences.

Jonathan Harle, Programme Officer at the ACU, said 'Researchers from developing countries often report poorer access to essential academic literature, and that they struggle to get their own research published in leading journals. As a result, they are often underrepresented in global research and disconnected from international scientific communities. Publishers can provide an important contribution to making the vision of a global research cycle a reality'.

The conference – titled 'Getting Research to Researchers in Developing Countries: The Complex Picture of Availability, Access and Use' – focused particularly on east and southern Africa. Speakers included librarians from universities in Uganda, Kenya, and Malawi, as well as representatives from major access initiatives, society publishers, and the open access movement.

Presentations covered topics such as innovative approaches to teaching search skills and how best to develop low-bandwidth sites and entry points to improve the user experience where internet connectivity is poor. Publishers also heard about how librarians are working with each other and with academic colleagues to deliver more effective library services and enhance research.

First-hand experience of the challenges faced when working in developing country libraries was also presented. The need for stronger relationships between librarians, academics, and vice-chancellors was emphasised.

Lucy Browse, Head of Information Delivery at INASP said 'Publishers for Development is gaining momentum – there seems to be a growing commitment from the publishing community to put the needs of developing country researchers, libraries, and institutions on their agendas. We are already seeing how discussions and actions are encouraging positive change'.

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## Notes:

1. Publishers for Development (PfD) was launched in 2008 and is a joint initiative of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP). It was established as a forum for information and discussion around the importance of access to information for development. Through PfD, the ACU and INASP aim to explore with our colleagues in publishing and from other access and research support initiatives some of the unique challenges that developing country libraries, researchers, and publishers experience. PfD also offers an opportunity for publishers to keep up to date and to share experiences of their own initiatives to support developing country research. For further information, visit [www.pubs-for-dev.info](http://www.pubs-for-dev.info)
2. The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) was established in 1913 and is the oldest international inter-university network in the world, with over 500 members in six continents. Its mission is to strengthen the higher education institutions within its membership through international cooperation and understanding. The ACU operates a series of professional networks for staff in key roles, undertakes research and policy analysis on key issues in international higher education, and has active programmes in libraries and information, research management, gender, and university governance. For further information, visit [www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk)
3. The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) works with partners to support global research communication through innovation, networking, and capacity strengthening. Focusing on the needs of developing and emerging countries, INASP works with them to address their national priorities to increase access to national and international scholarly information; support the use, creation, management and uptake of scholarly information via ICTs; and enable national, regional and international cooperation, networking, and knowledge exchange. INASP also advises and advocates for improved policy and practice in achieving sustainable and equitable development through effective communication, knowledge and networks. For further information, visit [www.inasp.info](http://www.inasp.info)
4. The 2011 PfD conference drew on the ACU's 2010 report *Growing Knowledge: Access to research in east and southern Africa*, which emphasised that, while journal availability may be good, researchers are often unaware of this and still struggle to gain access. For further information and to access the report, visit [www.acu.ac.uk/growing\\_knowledge](http://www.acu.ac.uk/growing_knowledge)
5. Cambridge University Press has developed a parallel version of their CJOmobile site that acts as a low bandwidth access point for researchers in developing countries. For further information, visit <http://jnls.cup.org>
6. Aptivate has written a set of web design guidelines for low bandwidth, intended primarily for web developers and online publishers. For further information, visit [www.aptivate.org/webguidelines](http://www.aptivate.org/webguidelines)
7. For further information, please contact:  
Lucy Browse  
+44 (0)1865 249909  
[lbrowse@inasp.info](mailto:lbrowse@inasp.info)  
  
Jonathan Harle  
+44 (0)20 7380 6769  
[j.harle@acu.ac.uk](mailto:j.harle@acu.ac.uk)