

# CSE Board Statement on the Task Force on Science Journals, Poverty, and Human Development

In January 2005, CSE appointed a task force to engage science journals of all disciplines in the effort to combat worldwide poverty and disease and to establish sustainable paths for human development. The science community has much to offer to antipoverty strategies, such as resources, training, advocacy, information access, and other means of building research capacity (fostering a research culture) and supporting sustainable development. The CSE Task Force on Science Journals, Poverty, and Human Development was organized by Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of *The Lancet*, and chaired by Paul Bozuwa, president of Dartmouth Journal Services.

The initial activities of the task force took place during the CSE annual meeting and half-day symposium in Atlanta in May 2005 and included the following:

1. Fostering research and publishing capacity in the developing world.
2. Raising awareness of poverty and the role that scientific journals can play in combating its consequences.
3. Identifying existing programs involving the scientific publishing community and issues pertaining to poverty.

Since the inception of the task force, its more than 50 dedicated members have achieved the following:

1. Inventoried task force-related efforts and reported them on the task force

Web pages ([www.councilscienceeditors.org/services/taskforce.cfm](http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/services/taskforce.cfm)).

2. In conjunction with the Program Committee, developed sessions for the 2006 annual meeting, which was devoted to the theme of "Working Toward a Sustainable, Equitable World", and developed a follow-up session for the 2007 annual meeting that addresses issues of poverty, development, and journals.
3. Participated in the Global Theme Issue on Poverty and Human Development initiative ([www.councilscienceeditors.org/globalthemeissue.cfm](http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/globalthemeissue.cfm)). More than 170 journals have agreed to publish new original research, review articles, editorials, perspectives, news stories, and other types of articles on the subject of poverty and human development with a common publication or release date of 22 October 2007.
4. Supported the National Institutes of Health-funded African Journals Partnership Project. Several members of this project are task force members and have participated as speakers in the annual-meeting sessions that address issues of poverty, development, and journals.
5. Began a collaboration with AuthorAID ([www.jphp.umb.edu/documents/Authoraid.pdf](http://www.jphp.umb.edu/documents/Authoraid.pdf)), an initiative to mentor authors in the developing world in preparing manuscripts for local or international publication.
6. Developed a statement of principles on

journal editors' responsibilities to the developing world.

The CSE Board gratefully acknowledges the influential work of the task force and supports the major themes of the Statement on Science Journals, Poverty, and Human Development, specifically,

- Making content globally relevant.
- Fostering cooperation between journals from developed and developing countries.
- Overcoming the global publishing gap.
- Diversifying editorial board, reviewer, and author communities.

The Board recommends that editors address the role that science journals can play in reducing poverty and improving human development by thinking globally and acting locally. CSE will follow the ideas put forth by the task force in the statement by incorporating these principles into the work of the organization and of its committees. The term of duty for the task force has come to an end, and task force members are strongly encouraged to join CSE committees to ensure that the goals and principles of the task force are carried forth in the broad array of CSE activities.

The Board also decided to establish a Task Force on AuthorAID to continue and focus the work that the task force has begun on this important initiative to bridge the global publishing gap.

# CSE Statement on Science Journals, Poverty, and Human Development

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## Background

At the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, a set of measurable and achievable targets was established to help meet the needs of the world's poorest people by 2015 ([www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm](http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm)). Nearly 190 countries have agreed on these eight targets, called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs; [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/index.html](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/index.html)), which are as follows:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Although many of the MDGs are focused on health and disease, application of scientific knowledge from all scientific disciplines and journals will play a crucial role in achieving these goals. The Council of Science Editors recognizes that its diverse members have a responsibility to ensure that journals help, in what might be a

small but significant way, in the attainment of the MDGs.

## The CSE Statement on Science Journals, Poverty, and Human Development

Scientific, technical, and medical (STM) journals should aid in achieving the MDGs through the following.

### Making content globally relevant

- Editors should consider publishing articles that discuss the MDGs. For example, they should consider publishing
  - Editorials and opinion pieces to explain how the goals affect readers' work and practice,
  - Editorials and opinion pieces advocating for the importance of the MDGs and critiquing progress,
  - Review articles that include information relevant to people working in resource-poor settings,
  - Theme issues that contain articles about the MDGs.

### Fostering cooperation between journals from developed and developing countries

- Universal access to STM information should be a goal for editors and publishers, who should work with their stakeholders to investigate realistic methods

of achieving and advocating for this.

- Editors and publishers should foster collaboration among journals to increase the visibility of research from low- and middle-income countries.

### Overcoming the global publishing gap

- Editors should investigate ways of assisting authors who may have difficulty writing a paper in the journal's language, for example, by offering to provide help (in-house or externally) with editing of articles prior to submission to the journal.
- Editors should investigate ways of providing language assistance to ensure that author and reviewer guidelines can be clearly understood.
- Editors should strive to make articles in their journals understandable by those not proficient in the journal's language.
- Editors should investigate ways to inform authors about their editorial conventions and policies.

### Diversifying editorial board, reviewer, and author communities

- Journals should seek well-qualified editors, reviewers, and authors, regardless of where they live and work.
- Editorial boards should reflect the global community of journal authors and readers.

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