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PRESS RELEASE:

DEVELOPING WORLD TO RECEIVE ACCESS TO CRITICAL GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

United Nations Environment Programme, Yale University and Leading Publishers Launch “Online Access to Research in the Environment” (OARE)

NEW YORK CITY/NAIROBI, – In an effort to help reduce great disparities in scientific capital between developed and developing nations, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Yale University, and leading science and technology publishers launched today a new collaborative initiative to make global scientific research in the environmental sciences available online to tens of thousands of environmental scientists, researchers, and policy makers in the developing world for free or at nominal cost.

Through Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE), more than 200 prestigious publishers, societies and associations will offer one of the world’s largest collections of scholarly, peer-reviewed environmental science journals to over 1200 public and non-profit environmental institutions in more than 100 developing nations of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe. Each and every institution enrolled in OARE will receive resources with an annual retail subscription value in the many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Over 1000 scholarly scientific and technical journal titles in such fields as biotechnology, botany, climate change, ecology, energy, environmental chemistry, environmental economics, environmental engineering and planning, environmental law and policy, environmental toxicology and pollution, geography, geology, hydrology, meteorology, oceanography, urban planning, and zoology will be provided through a portal presented in English, Spanish and French. OARE will also provide important Abstract and Index Research Databases (A&I Databases) -- intellectual tools the scientific and professional community use to search for information within thousands of scholarly publications.

“OARE is a new and inspiring example of international cooperation that can contribute to the reduction of the North-South scientific gap and digital divide, objectives that are both at the top of the UN agenda and the UN Millennium Development Goals”, said Achim Steiner, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director.

“Thanks to advances in information and communication technologies and the great generosity of many leading scientific publishers and foundations, we have an unprecedented opportunity to provide environmental institutions in developing countries with intellectual resources we in the developed world so often take for granted”, said James Gustave Speth, dean of Yale’s Environment School.

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"Scientific publishers welcome this opportunity to provide access to the latest published research in environmental and related sciences to researchers and other professionals in 106 developing countries, in the expectation that, in turn, higher quality research will emerge from those countries, to the benefit of all of us", said Michael Mabe, CEO of the International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM).

"The Hewlett Foundation is committed to providing high quality educational materials to students and scholars in the developing world. We are extremely pleased to join with Yale, UNEP and the many participating publishers, societies and associations to make scientific resources available in developing countries, where the need is so great.", stated Paul Brest, president of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

OARE aims to contribute to the development of expert professional and academic communities and an informed public, encourage scientific creativity and productivity, and facilitate the development of progressive science-based national policies. It will help enable countries to build their own higher education programs in the environmental sciences, educate their own leaders, conduct their own research, publish their own scientific findings, and disseminate information to policy makers and the public.

Organizations providing scientific content through OARE include leading scientific publishers (e.g. Annual Reviews, Blackwell, Cambridge, Elsevier, John Wiley, Nature Publishing Group, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Oxford and many others) and more than 200 scientific societies and associations (e.g. Académie des Sciences de France, American Association for the Advancement of Science, National Academy of Sciences, Nordic Society OIKOS, Oceanographic Society of Japan, Real Sociedad Española de Química, Royal Geographical Society, Royal Meteorological Society of Great Britain, Società Botanica Italiana, Zoological Society of London, etc). A complete listing of collaborating institutions is available at www.oaresciences.org.

Eligible institutions include universities and colleges, research institutes, ministries of the environment and other government agencies, libraries, and national NGOs. Access for institutions in the 70 poorest countries will be free. Access for institutions in 38 lower middle income countries will be at a nominal charge, which will be reinvested to support continued training and outreach activities in eligible countries.

OARE will be coordinated by UNEP and Yale University in association with STM and 30 leading science and technology publishing houses. Support is provided by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. OARE will be managed in close cooperation with the Health Internetwork Access to Research Initiative (HINARI), launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2001 to provide research to the medical community in developing nations, and Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), launched by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Cornell University in 2003 to provide research to the agricultural community.

For more information, please visit the newly launched OARE website at www.oaresciences.org. The official launch event will be held today in New York City, 4:30PM, at The University Club, One West 54th Street.