



16 September 2013

10th Anniversary of the AGORA Programme

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me welcome you to FAO. Thank you for being here today.

As you know, knowledge is a very important public good that plays an important role in agricultural development and food security.

Unfortunately, not everyone has the same access to it. And this lack of access is a major bottleneck for many countries to develop their agricultural sector and ensure food security.

I remember in my university days in Brazil and how hard it was to research and to access the knowledge available in other places.

Many times, we simply could not get the information we needed.

This difficulty has an evident impact in the quality of the research and how we can develop it. I am sure that many of those here, especially those that come from developing countries, lived through similar situations.

So, I am really happy to celebrate with you the 10th anniversary of the AGORA partnership.

Knowledge is only valuable to the extent that those who need it can reach it. And through AGORA we are making that happen, helping to break an important barrier that hinders development.

AGORA opens the door to vast collections of technical knowledge for 116 of the least developed of FAO's member countries.

Individual scientists, academics and students from over 2500 institutions have downloaded millions of articles from AGORA since it was launched in 2003.



And, today, it has over 3500 key journals and 3300 books.

These are impressive numbers.

Ladies and gentlemen,

AGORA shows the strength in partnership.

By coming together, FAO, publishers and the scientific community have been able to facilitate the access to knowledge of hundreds of thousands of people worldwide.

AGORA is a reality thanks to the Research4Life partnership.

Nearly 200 commercial and not-for-profit publishers support this initiative. They generously provide content and in-kind resources to support essential activities.

Within the UN, besides FAO the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) have also contributed to AGORA.

I also want to acknowledge the key role of Cornell University, and especially the Mann Library.

From the private sector, not just publishers are participating, but also companies like Microsoft, SWETS, and Serials Solutions. They have contributed to the technology and service platform on which the Research4Life programmes run.

As you can see, this is a truly global multi-stakeholder partnership.

And we are extremely pleased that the partners have pledged their continued support to Research4Life, including AGORA, until 2020.

The success of this partnership shows that, by working together, the impact of our work significantly increases.

Strengthening partnerships with the private sector, civil society, and research and scientific organizations has been one of my priorities at FAO.

And I am pleased that we have been able to make important advances in this direction, by approving new strategies for partnership with civil society and the private sector. And by engaging much more pro-actively with different actors.



Ladies and gentlemen,

To end, I want to acknowledge AGORA users, many of whom have written to express their appreciation for the program.

One of them is with us today: Mr. Onan Mulumba from Makerere University, in Uganda.

As an agricultural librarian, he won the recent Research4Life “Unsung Heroes” competition.

I ask him to come forward to receive this award.

Thank you very much.