



## The University Global Compact

Higher education for a sustainable future

### Mission:

A collaborative platform of globally engaged universities and higher education associations working in partnership with the UN and other stakeholders to create a more sustainable future for all

### Commitments

1. Increasing students' **understanding of the most pressing challenges** facing the world today as articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals, and inspiring students to play an active role in driving change and finding new solutions
2. Developing the **global competence** and leadership skills students need to effectively collaborate across cultural and national boundaries and across disciplines and sectors in creating a more sustainable future
3. Engaging in **actionable research**, knowledge sharing, and innovation in collaboration with other local and international organizations in pursuit of novel approaches to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals
4. **Engaging with private and public actors** in leading, guiding and supporting local, national and global responses to the Sustainable Development Goals
5. Recognizing the impact that our own operations have on important sustainable development issues and **acting responsibly** to address them and serve as an example to others
6. Communicating publicly our progress and being **accountable** for our outcomes

### Call to Action

Inspired by the [Declaration on University Global Engagement](#), which has been endorsed by more than 100 universities and higher education associations from around the world, and with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, a group of fifteen university presidents and higher education leaders from Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America met in the Bellagio Center in Italy between May 20 and 24 of 2019 with representatives from the United Nations (UN Institute for Training and Research UNITAR) and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), to discuss the viability and advisability of establishing a University Global Compact.

The idea behind the University Global Compact is to form a global platform of universities and other higher education organizations committed to working together and in partnership with the United Nations (through UNITAR), SDSN, and other relevant organizations, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals both locally and globally through our education, research and service missions.

The consensus of the participants in the Bellagio Conference was that universities not only have an opportunity, but an obligation, to do whatever is in their power to educate and inspire students to play an active role in addressing the most pressing issues confronting our world today, produce new ideas that can lead to new solutions, and collaborate with other organizations to create awareness, support and even lead local and global efforts.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals, adopted unanimously by world leaders in September 2015, constitute the most ambitious global agreement ever reached as to what the world's most pressing issues are and what specific, shared targets should be achieved by 2030. These goals, from eliminating poverty to creating economic opportunity and social inclusion, to achieving peace and environmental sustainability, call out the existential risks we face as a species and a planet. The goals are both local and global. They affect the north and the south alike, the rich and the poor. They highlight our shared destiny and interdependency, and they cut across political, national and cultural boundaries.

Because issues underpinning the Sustainable Development Goals are so complex, lasting solutions will only be achieved through multidisciplinary, cross-sectorial, collaborative approaches, which require new ways of thinking, new talent, and new ideas. Indeed, Goal 17 specifically calls for multi-stakeholder partnerships at the local, national and international levels.

Universities have long worked across borders, helping expose students to different cultural, social and economic realities, and conducting research in distant locations. The Sustainable Development Goals make it clear that global engagement in higher education is not just desirable but necessary. The world needs new knowledge, new ideas and new approaches to solving complex problems. The world needs people with new capabilities, global outlook and leadership skills who can find and implement new solutions. Because of their unique missions and resources, universities are essential to deliver the new ideas and talent. And because of their trusted place in society, universities are ideally positioned to create social awareness and to call on other stakeholders to collaborate and take action.

Some universities have already adopted the Sustainable Development Goals as an overarching framework for their global and local engagement activities or have even embedded them into their strategic plans. Yet the efforts remain mostly isolated and far from widespread, and the voice of universities as critical institutions in shaping and implementing the global development agenda has been notoriously absent from critical discussions, summits and conferences.

The University Global Compact will be a call to action to universities around the world to engage, to lead and to collaborate. It will be a movement, a platform for collective action, and a mechanism to amplify the voice of higher education and bring it to the table in the most relevant global efforts.

The participants in the Bellagio conference are committed to making the University Global Compact a reality and call on leaders of universities around the world to join the effort.

The following actions were agreed to as next steps:

- A constitutional meeting in New York City on September 22, 2019, to formally adopt the University Global Compact plus a working session to identify short-term commitments for each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- A meeting at Yonsei University in South Korea on February 27, 2020, as part of the Global Engagement & Empowerment Forum, to highlight and share university best practices and plan the First Global Summit
- A first University Global Compact Summit in New York City in September of 2020
- The establishment of a steering committee with representatives of all continents and the United Nations, that will coordinate activities and will propose a more permanent governance mechanism. Initial members will include Juan Romo, Guillermo Cisneros Pérez, Yong-Hak Kim, Feridun Hamdullahpur, Arturo Condo, Joanna Newman, Pablo Navas, Kader Kaneye, Yves Flueckiger (TBC), Nikhil Seth, and Ángel Cabrera (initial Chairman). The committee will be supported by Gbemi Disu and Jonas Haertle
- The creation of an online platform to publicly register universities' ongoing activities and commitments for the future
- A communication effort to spread the idea of the University Global Compact and start galvanizing support
- An effort to recruit a group of leading universities from all continents by the constitutional meeting that will adopt the Compact and will encourage others to follow

Adopted in Bellagio, Italy, on May 24, 2019

Ángel Cabrera	President, George Mason University
Guillermo Cisneros Perez	Rector, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
Arturo Condo	President, Earth University
Yves Flückiger	President, University of Geneva
Feridun Hamdullahpur	President & Vice-Chancellor, University of Waterloo
Kader Kaneye	Founder & President, African Development University
Yong-Hak Kim	President, Yonsei University
Pablo Navas	President, Universidad de Los Andes
Joanna Newman	Secretary General, Association of Commonwealth Universities
Juan Romo	Rector, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
Nikhil Seth	Executive Director, UNITAR
Shinki An	Yonsei University
Sally Crimmins Villela	State University of New York
Gbemisola Disu	George Mason University, Korea
Jonas Haertle	UNITAR
John McArthur	Brookings Institution
José Páez Borrillo	Tecnológico de Monterrey (ITESM)