


[IAU Homepage](#)
[Contact us](#)
[SD Home page](#)

Ubuntu Declaration

Seeks global educational alliance for sustainable development

There is a need to integrate a sustainable development focus into the curriculum at every level of education, starting in primary school. So states a Declaration issued this week by 11 of the world's foremost global educational organizations and scientific academies.

The "Ubuntu Declaration" says greater global emphasis on education is essential to reaching sustainable development goals, and creates a major global alliance to promote science and technology courses and teaching throughout educational systems worldwide.

The Declaration was issued at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg by:

- United Nations University;
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;
- International Association of Universities;
- Third World Academy of Sciences;
- African Academy of Science;
- Science Council of Asia;
- International Council for Science;
- World Federation of Engineering Organizations;
- Copernicus-Campus;
- Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership; and
- University Leaders for a Sustainable Future.

The goals of the effort are:

- Curriculum development;
- North-South networking;
- Strategic educational planning and policy-making; and
- Capacity building in scientific research and learning.

Hans van Ginkel, UNU Rector and President of the International Association of Universities, said additional members will be sought for the alliance of policy makers, educators, professionals and researchers at international academies of science and institutions of higher education.

"Sustainable development is not a one-day tutorial," he emphasized. "Education means much more than simply pre-employment training. Integrating sustainable development into the curriculum at all education levels and sectors is needed to ensure that students from primary to post-secondary are aware of its imperatives and respect its principles and values in their professions and as habits of everyday life."

Walter Erdelen, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, said the alliance also

looks to education ministries at the national level to reevaluate and relate school programs to sustainable development, and to ensure the appropriate training and retraining of teachers. "This effort helps to respond to the critical necessity to resolve tension between growth and development, on the one hand, and conservation and environmental protection on the other," he added. "Expanding the educational base, and in particular the scientific-technological base, is also essential for reversing the growing inequity among nations."

Also participating in the announcement were Mohamed Hassan, Executive Director, Third World Academy of Sciences; Dato Lee Yee Cheong, President-elect, World Federation of Engineering Organizations; Thomas Rosswall, Executive Director, International Council for Science; and Richard Clugston, President, University Leaders for a Sustainable Future.

* * *

For more information, please contact:

Mr. Terry Collins, Tel: +1-416-538-8712
Ms. Amy Otchet, UNESCO, Tel: +33-1-4568-1704
Mr. W. Bradnee Chambers, UNU Institute of Advanced Studies, Tel: +81-3-5467-2323, Fax: +81-3-5467-2324,
Chambers@ias.unu.edu; <http://www.ias.unu.edu/>
UNU Public Affairs Section, Tel.: +81-3-5467-1243 or -1246; fax: +81-3-3406-7346

UBUNTUDECLARATION

On Education and Science and Technology for Sustainable Development

In an effort to make integrated solutions work for sustainable development and to mobilize the education sector to contribute to sustainable development;

We, the education and scientific organizations of the world,

United Nations University United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization African Academy of Science International Council for Science International Association of Universities Copernicus-Campus Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership Science Council of Asia Third World Academy of Sciences University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, and World Federation of Engineering Organizations,

call for an initiative to strengthen science and technology education for sustainable development.

Cognizant that integrated solutions for sustainable development depend on the continued and effective application of science and technology, and that education is critical in galvanizing the approach to the challenges of sustainable development.

Endorsing the Earth Charter as the inspiring, fundamental and balanced set of principles and guidelines for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21st century, which should permeate all levels and sectors of education.

Noting that science is all science - natural, social and human.

Recognizing the necessity to bridge the knowledge gap between the nations of the world through a fundamental redress of the distribution of education for sustainability.

Acknowledging that the ultimate goal of education in all its forms is to impart knowledge,

skills and values to empower people to bring about changes.

Concerned that education has not been utilized as a vehicle for attaining sustainable development.

Reaffirming the indispensable role of education in achieving sustainable development, and the important role education plays in the mobilization of science and technology for sustainability as contained in Chapter 36 of Agenda 21.

Recalling the Lüneburg Declaration on Higher Education for Sustainable Development of 10 October 2001, and its emphasis on the indispensable role of higher education informing and supporting all education in addressing the critical challenges of sustainable development.

And recognizing that the Scientific and Technological community, as represented by the International Council for Science, Third World Academy of Sciences, and World Federation of Engineering Organizations in the WSSD process has called for a new social contract between science and technology and society for sustainable development.

Determined to work towards the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration, Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Development Declaration.

Call on Governments of the World Summit for Sustainable Development and the Post-Summit agenda to:

Designate educators as the tenth stakeholder group in the WSSD process.

Call on educators, Government and all relevant stakeholders to:

Review the programmes and curricula of schools and universities, in order to better address the challenges and opportunities of sustainable development, with a focus on:

- Plans at the local, regional and national country levels;
- Creating learning modules which bring skills, knowledge, reflections, ethics and values together in a balanced way;
- Problem-based education at primary and secondary levels in order to develop integrated and non-instrumental approaches to problem solving at an early stage in the education cycle;
- Problem-based scientific research in tertiary education, both as a pedagogical approach and as a research function;

Promote efforts to attract young people to the teacher profession both to meet the Millennium Development goals of universal access to primary education as well as to further strengthen primary, secondary and tertiary education. In developed countries the major challenge in the coming years will be to offset the high outflows of experienced teachers reaching retirement age or taking up other challenges.

Develop mechanisms to continuously inform teachers and update programmes on major progress in scientific and technological knowledge relevant for sustainable development.

Promote knowledge transfers in innovative ways in order to speed up the process of bridging gaps and inequalities in knowledge. This is the shared responsibility of teachers, schools, research and education institutions and governments.

To achieve these challenges and objectives, we are resolved to work towards a new global learning space on education and sustainability that promotes cooperation and exchange between institutions at all levels and in all sectors of education around the

world. This space must be developed on the basis of international networks of institutions and the creation of regional centers of excellence, which bring together universities, polytechnics, and institutions of secondary education and primary schools. We invite all other responsible stakeholders to join us in this endeavour.

 [Back to SD homepage](#)