United Nations E/2017/51

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 February 2017

Original: English

2017 session
28 July 2016-27 July 2017
Agenda item 20
United Nations research and training institutes

Report of the Council of the United Nations University on the work of the University

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Overview	2
III.	Institutional highlights	5
IV.	Institutional priorities	10
V.	Research projects	12
VI.	Policy process linkages	16
VII.	Education and capacity development	18
VIII.	Events	20
IX.	Communication and dissemination	21
X.	Financial and human resources	22
Annex		
	Members of the Council of the United Nations University	24

17-02084 (E) 170217

I. Introduction

1. Since 1975, the United Nations University (UNU) has been conducting evidence-based research that addresses real-world concerns. The aim of the research is to provide credible, objective guidance towards solving the current and emerging challenges facing humankind.

2. In its operations, UNU balances three related identities: The University functions as a problem-focused research institution, as a think tank for the United Nations system and as a postgraduate training and capacity development organization.

3. The identity of UNU as a knowledge-seeking rather than a politically driven institution brings credibility to its work, while the policy focus of its research enables the University to serve as a bridge between academic and policy communities. UNU is uniquely positioned to mobilize interdisciplinary academic networks to examine the challenges that are, or may one day be, the subject of debate at the United Nations.

4. In its role as a specialized think tank for the United Nations system, UNU conducts impartial analyses to shed new light on pressing global issues. The UNU research programme integrates projects that deliver insights on current policy challenges with medium-term horizon studies that examine emergent issues. UNU provides policymakers and practitioners with fresh, critical perspectives on complex issues by translating science-based research findings into comprehensible, policy-relevant analyses and recommendations.

5. The world has been changing at unprecedented speed in terms of technological advances, demographic shifts, economic conditions, political complexities and human impacts on the environment. Even as some chronic problems are mitigated, new challenges emerge. These changes are often interconnected in ways that remain poorly understood.

6. Reflecting the evolving state of the world, UNU has been implementing institutional and operational changes under its strategic plan 2015-2019 to ensure that the University remains responsive to the current needs of the United Nations and its Member States and that UNU research findings can have a tangible and positive impact on intergovernmental policy deliberations.

7. The present report provides an overview of the global UNU system in 2016. It outlines institutional developments and highlights and presents a snapshot of selected research projects, activities and achievements.

II. Overview

8. UNU is a solution-focused think tank and research arm for the United Nations system. Its mission is to provide the United Nations and its Member States with relevant and reliable evidence that contributes to the debate and development of policy regarding pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare.

9. UNU operates as an autonomous organ of the General Assembly, under the joint sponsorship of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The University carries out its work in collaboration with other United Nations system entities (agencies, programmes, commissions, funds and convention secretariats) and with leading universities, research institutes and think tanks worldwide. In doing so, it acts as a bridge between United Nations policy circles and global academic communities.

10. UNU seeks to:

- Influence policymaking within the United Nations system and at the national, regional and international levels
- Contribute to United Nations assessments and to the work of other United Nations system entities and civil society organizations
- Raise awareness about pressing global issues and contribute to the rethinking/revisiting of existing policies and perspectives
- Help developing countries to enhance their institutional and individual research and teaching capacities and support academic communities in developing countries
- Provide specialized postgraduate-level training, develop relevant interdisciplinary curriculums and further the advancement of science-based knowledge

Leadership

11. The UNU Council serves as the governing body of the University. Its responsibilities include devising and adopting the principles and policies that govern UNU operations and approving the UNU budget and work programme. The Council, which comprises 12 appointed members, 3 ex officio members (the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Director-General of UNESCO and the Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research) and the UNU Rector, normally convenes two regular sessions each year.

12. The Rector, who holds the rank of Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, serves as the chief academic and administrative officer of UNU. Based at UNU headquarters in Tokyo, the Rector is responsible for the direction, organization, administration, programming and coordination of the University, in accordance with the general policies and criteria formulated by the UNU Council. The Rector is assisted by a management group comprising the Vice-Rectors, the Director of Administration and the Executive Officer.

13. The UNU Administration provides human resources, financial and procurement services to the global UNU system.

14. UNU institutes and programmes benefit from the guidance and oversight of, respectively, international advisory boards and advisory committees.

15. The directors of the UNU institutes and programmes have direct oversight over the formulation of their institute/programme's budget, human resources and research and programme development. The Conference of Directors of UNU Research and Training Centres and Programmes provides an opportunity for the directors to meet and discuss matters of policy and the coordination of research programming.

Institutional structure

16. Through a global network of academic institutes and programmes, coordinated by the UNU Centre in Tokyo, UNU conducts objective, policy-relevant research aimed at providing unbiased perspectives on current and emerging global challenges.

17. The **UNU Centre** serves as the administrative, coordination and services unit of the global UNU system. Although it is located primarily in Tokyo, the UNU Centre has a number of adjunct offices in Asia, Europe and North America. The UNU Centre comprises:

- Headquarters unit in Tokyo (housing the Office of the Rector, an Administration and Finance Services unit, the Office of Communications and the Campus Computing Centre)
- UNU Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR) in Tokyo
- UNU Vice-Rectorate in Europe (UNU-ViE) in Bonn, Germany; UNU-ViE hosts the new Sustainable Cycles (SCYCLE) Programme
- UNU Operating Unit on Policy-driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV) in Guimarães, Portugal
- Administration and Finance Services adjunct office in Kuala Lumpur
- Liaison Office at the United Nations in New York, United States of America (UNU-ONY)

18. The main research and academic work of the University is carried out by a global network of 11 UNU research and training institutes:

- UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS, Bonn, Germany)
- UNU Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources (UNU-FLORES, Dresden, Germany)
- UNU Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA, Accra)
- UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS, Tokyo)
- UNU Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH, Hamilton, Canada)
- UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS, Bruges, Belgium)
- UNU Institute on Computing and Society (UNU-CS, Macau, China)
- UNU Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility (UNU-GCM, Barcelona, Spain)
- UNU International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH, Kuala Lumpur)
- UNU Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT, Maastricht, Netherlands)
- UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER, Helsinki)

19. A twelfth UNU institute, the UNU Institute for Sustainable Development (UNU-IRADDA, Algiers) remains in a start-up phase.

20. UNU programmes are smaller research operations. These include:

- UNU Programme for Biotechnology in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNU-BIOLAC, Caracas)
- Four Iceland-based training programmes that focus on fisheries resources (UNU-FTP), gender equality studies (UNU-GEST), geothermal energy (UNU-GTP) and land restoration (UNU-LRT)

III. Institutional highlights

Council sessions

21. The sixty-fifth session of the UNU Council, held in Vienna on 3 and 4 May, served as an orientation for the 12 new Council members who joined in 2016 (see the annex for a list of UNU Council members). The topics covered at the sixty-fifth session included, inter alia:

- Overview of UNU and its governance
- Functioning of the UNU Council and responsibilities of Council members
- Institutional development and quality control
- UNU strategic plan 2015-2019
- Challenge of ensuring that UNU research is policy-relevant
- UNU finances, human resources, fundraising and gender dimensions
- Communications and outreach efforts
- Ongoing and new institutional development initiatives

22. The agenda of the sixty-sixth session of the UNU Council, held at UNU headquarters in Tokyo on 13 and 14 December, included, inter alia:

- Oral report by the Rector on the state of the University
- 2016-2017 biennium financial overview
- Progress reports on ongoing and new institutional development initiatives
- Progress report on the implementation of the UNU strategic plan 2015-2019 and the recommendations of the 40-year evaluation
- Proposed amendments to UNU rules and statutes and adoption of a new policy on gender equality
- Brief annual reports of the UNU institutes, programmes and operating units
- Adoption of the draft report of the Council of the University for 2016
- Designation of the nominating committee for the UNU rectorship recruitment process

Meeting of the Conference of Directors of UNU Research and Training Centres and Programmes

23. The forty-eighth session of the Conference of Directors of UNU Research and Training Centres and Programmes was convened at UNU headquarters in Tokyo on 12 December. Following a summary by the Rector of developments since the forty-seventh session, the directors considered such topics as the roles and responsibilities of board members, improvements to the project management guidelines, communications, a revised gender equality policy and the University's approach to migration research.

24. Given that the sixty-sixth session of the UNU Council took place alongside the meeting of the Conference of Directors, the members of the UNU Council had the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with the directors of UNU research and training centres and programmes, which both sides perceived as useful.

Relaunching of UNU-CRIS

25. As a result of austerity measures enacted by the government of Flanders, Belgium, the funding of UNU-CRIS was cut by a third in 2015. In early 2016, however, the Free University of Brussels and Ghent University were selected to serve as host universities for UNU-CRIS and, in June, UNU, the government of Flanders and the two host universities reached agreement on future annual funding for UNU-CRIS. The agreement, approved by the government of Flanders in October, was signed in November 2016. This will enable UNU-CRIS to be relaunched in early 2017.

Establishment of a UNU-FLORES operating unit in Africa

26. After UNU and the Government of Mozambique were unable to come to an agreement on the establishment of a UNU-FLORES operating unit in Maputo, the Institute opened discussions with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania (Ministry of Water and Irrigation) about a possible operating unit in Dar es Salaam in September 2016. This entity would build upon the drought risk monitoring consortium cooperation agreement signed in February 2015 with Ethiopia, Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania.

New lease of life for UNU-GCM

27. Owing to an ongoing financial crisis, in 2013, the Government of Spain suspended its payments to UNU-GCM and the proposed renegotiation of the bilateral agreement. In 2014, UNU and the Government of Spain negotiated an addendum to the host country and bilateral agreements. Although agreement was reached in July 2015 among Spain, Catalonia and Barcelona to ensure the continuity of UNU-GCM operations, the Government of Spain was unable to approve the agreement until July 2016. UNU and the Government have signed the addendum, which assures Spain's annual contribution for the activities of UNU-GCM at least through the end of 2018.

Establishment of UNU-IESR

28. Building on a long-standing partnership between UNU-MERIT and the Consortium pour la recherche économique et sociale (CRES), in 2011, it was proposed that a new UNU institute be established in Senegal. In March 2014, UNU signed a host country agreement with the Government of Senegal as a step towards establishing the UNU Institute for Economic and Social Research (UNU-IESR) in Dakar. Based on the most recent discussions between UNU and the Government in May and August 2016 and subsequent informal exchanges, it is anticipated that the bilateral funding agreement will be signed in 2017.

Establishment of UNU-IRADDA

29. The launch of the UNU Institute for Sustainable Development (L'Institut de recherche d'Alger pour le développement durable de l'Afrique (UNU-IRADDA)) in Algiers, originally planned for 2015, has been delayed. Talks are set to take place in Tokyo between UNU and the Government of Algeria in 2017 to revisit the funding arrangement for the institute. When established, the institute will focus its work on the social, economic, cultural and governance dimensions of sustainable development, with a specific focus on the African continent.

Institute status for the Iceland programmes

30. Efforts to bring the University's four programmes in Iceland together into one institutional structure continued in 2016. The Government of Iceland has indicated that it will pledge an endowment fund contribution and operational support for the institute; the host country agreement and bilateral funding agreement have been negotiated. Legislation that would make it possible for the UNU institute to be created in Reykjavik is under consideration by the Parliament of Iceland.

Changes in leadership

31. Senior-level personnel changes in 2016 included the following:

(a) In January, Dr. Iván Galindo-Castro was appointed interim coordinator of UNU-BIOLAC, following the retirement of former programme coordinator Dr. José Luis Ramírez;

(b) In May, 12 new members were appointed to the governing UNU Council, replacing the retiring 2010-2016 cohort of Council members;

(c) In July, Dr. Vladimir Smakhtin joined UNU as Director of UNU-INWEH. He succeeds Dr. Zafar Adeel, who had served as the Director of UNU-INWEH since 2006;

(d) In September 2016, Dr. Obijiofor Aginam assumed the position of Acting Director of UNU-IIGH;

(e) In October, Professor Taikan Oki (University of Tokyo) joined UNU as Senior Vice-Rector and Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations. He succeeds Professor Kazuhiko Takeuchi, who served as UNU Senior Vice-Rector from July 2008 through to June 2016;

(f) In October, David Passarelli (previously Chief of Staff) assumed the role of UNU Executive Officer;

(g) At the end of December, Max Bond retired from UNU after 34 years of service. Among his various roles, he served as Executive Officer from 2003 to September 2016 and, concurrently, as Vice-Rector from August 2014 until his retirement.

Other selected highlights

32. On 1 January, the Bonn-based Sustainable Cycles (SCYCLE) unit, previously an operating unit of UNU-IAS, was relaunched as a programme hosted by UNU-ViE. The activities of SCYCLE remain focused on the development of sustainable production, consumption and disposal patterns of ubiquitous goods, with a focus on electrical and electronic equipment. The unit also leads the issue management on e-waste in the Environment Management Group.

33. In February, UNU made a presentation at the meeting on building synergy and coherence in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the context of the 2030 Development Agenda held at United Nations Headquarters. The event, organized under the auspices of the General Assembly, provided input to the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the Programme of Action.

34. Also in February, UNU co-hosted a workshop in New York on the *World Risk Report*, with participation by more than 100 United Nations officials, diplomats and scientists.

35. In the wake of the corruption scandal surrounding the former President of the General Assembly John Ashe, UNU played a significant role in instigating and influencing discussion among Member States on the ethical responsibilities of the President of the Assembly and prepared a working paper on the subject. That effort led to the adoption by the Assembly in September of a UNU-drafted oath of office and code of ethics for the President and his office.

36. UNU played a notable convening and research role in support of the debate on illicit drugs policy in the lead-up to the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, held in April 2016.

37. UNU began preparations for the Rector to assume the Chair of the Global Migration Group from 1 January 2017. This high-level United Nations inter-agency mechanism comprises 21 entities involved in migration-related activities. In 2016, UNU led the drafting of one of the concept notes prepared for round tables at the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants, held on 19 September. Ahead of the Summit, members of the UNU Migration Network collaborated on the publication of a series of blog posts to draw attention to the topic of migration.

38. The conference on the theme “Strengthening the UN’s Research Uptake”, co-organized by UNU and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (25-26 April, Geneva, Switzerland) was attended by some 40 heads of research and policy units from within the United Nations system and representatives of more than 50 leading international think tanks and research organizations.

A post-conference report highlighted a broad range of recommendations on how to bridge the chronic research-policy gap at the United Nations.

39. UNU co-organized an event at UNESCO headquarters in Paris with the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme on the theme "Achieving the SDGs: A Nexus Approach to Managing Environmental Resources". The event was attended by more than 100 officials and representatives from some 75 permanent delegations and numerous UNESCO secretariat offices.

40. UNU made a significant contribution to the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (27-28 August, Nairobi), organizing four side events.

41. UNU was active at, and during the preparations for, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III, 17-20 October, Quito) and convened a side event.

42. UNU made significant contributions to the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (7-18 November, Morocco), including organizing and participating in several side events and press conferences.

43. UNU played an active role at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (4-17 December, Cancun, Mexico), including organizing and co-organizing several side events and contributing to a high-level discussion.

44. UNU has been an important voice in United Nations responses to modern slavery, human trafficking and forced labour. The University's efforts led to the publication of a 2016 report that shaped debates in the Security Council. UNU has also strengthened its collaboration with the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

45. UNU contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on agriculture development, food security and nutrition (A/71/283) presented to the General Assembly in 2016. The University's input drew attention to how Sustainable Development Goal 2 interconnects with many of the other Goals and outlined the importance of applying a nexus approach to achieve sustainable solutions to food production.

46. In November, UNU and the Munich Climate Insurance Initiative published a policy report entitled *Making Climate Risk Insurance Work for the Most Vulnerable: Seven Guiding Principles* to inform and advise the Group of Seven initiative on climate risk insurance (InsuResilience).

47. The UNU publication *Safeguarding the Future of the Global Seaweed Aquaculture Industry* highlighted the magnitude of the industry (which represents almost 50 per cent of global mariculture production), its importance for livelihoods in developing countries and emerging environmental impacts.

IV. Institutional priorities

48. Cognizant of its limited human and financial resources, UNU focuses its work on areas in which it deems that it can make a significant contribution, based on such criteria as:

- Relevance of the issue to United Nations priorities and to the needs of policymakers and developing countries, in particular
- Potential to develop new insights and policy recommendations
- Extent and severity of the problem
- Identification of a critical gap in knowledge or capacity
- Perceived potential for developing replicable solutions

UNU strategic plan 2015-2019

49. The UNU strategic plan 2015-2019 places a renewed focus on the first two of the above criteria. It calls for the University's expertise and resources to be focused on topics that are of particular relevance to the United Nations and Member States and for UNU research findings and UNU researchers to be more visible and accessible to policymakers and United Nations officials.

50. The success of this push to be more responsive to the needs of the United Nations and its Member States and to have a tangible impact on deliberations and policy formation has led to a growing awareness within the United Nations system of the University's potential contributions. In particular, through the work of the Tokyo-based UNU Centre for Policy Research and the UNU Office at the United Nations in New York, the University has successfully contributed to a number of ongoing policy discussions and reviews within the United Nations Secretariat and has achieved engagement with several of its functional units and with the permanent delegations of various Member States.

51. The UNU strategic plan 2015-2019 outlines the University's mission and focus for the specified period, summarizes the main elements of ongoing institutional reform, explores the University's research, thematic programme and education/capacity development priorities and elucidates the plan's implementation and monitoring mechanisms. It sets out three key organizational priorities, as follows:

52. **Strengthening management.** The role of the Rectorate has been refined to focus on the provision of strategic guidance, thereby encouraging greater autonomy in management and planning at the institute level. Institute advisory boards have been empowered to take a more active role in oversight and strategic orientation. An effort is being made to ensure that board membership (as well as senior leadership system-wide) represents an appropriate geographic, age and gender balance.

53. **Ensuring sustainable growth.** A new benchmark financing model has been introduced to ensure the medium- and long-term financial stability of all new and existing UNU institutes. This includes requiring at least five years of core operational funding as well as a capital contribution to the UNU Endowment Fund by host Governments. For any future expansion, particular attention will be given to regions that remain underrepresented within the UNU system.

54. **Streamlining partnerships.** New research and capacity development partnerships will be limited to those that are of clear strategic advantage to UNU. Ongoing partnerships that are judged to be either financially unstable or not sufficiently meaningful for UNU are being phased out.

Other prioritized initiatives

55. **Restructuring capacity development activities.** Existing Master of Science programmes will continue to receive support, but preference will be given to developing new PhD-level programmes, given that they have more potential to contribute to UNU research activities and to help to build capacity in developing countries. Outside the formal degree programmes, UNU capacity development activities will be measured against new, stricter standards of relevance and impact, with preference given to initiatives that take place in developing countries.

56. **Setting research priorities.** The strategic plan stipulates that, going forward, UNU research activities will: (a) eschew quantity (numerous small, opportunistic research projects) in favour of quality (fewer but more ambitious, high-impact research efforts); and (b) prioritize policy-relevant research and advice (over academic-focused studies). As part of that effort, increased collaboration across UNU institutes is encouraged to leverage the University's varied in-house expertise and thereby increase the likelihood of providing an innovative, interdisciplinary perspective.

57. **Promoting gender equality.** In early 2016, a working group was established to develop a new UNU policy on gender equality to replace the 2011 policy on gender mainstreaming. Based on input from gender focal points at each institute, the revised policy and an accompanying action plan were submitted to the UNU Council session in December. The UNU Council underlined the importance of further pursuing and implementing the policy and will closely follow progress on this topic. UNU has made a particular commitment to fostering a better gender balance at the senior management level; an initial success in that regard is that more than half (7 of 12) of current appointed UNU Council members are women.

58. **Sustaining host country relationships.** Maintaining close cooperative interactions with the governmental, academic and scientific communities of its main host country, Japan, remains a priority for UNU, as does giving back to the local populace. For the general public, UNU maintains two Japanese-language websites and offers a continuing variety of events, including the Conversation Series, Sustainable Development Goals Dialogue, UNU Library Talk, and UNU CAFÉ events; an annual UNU Global Seminar; and numerous topical seminars, symposiums and conferences.

59. In its research activities, UNU works with a number of Japanese partners, including universities, specialized government agencies, city and prefectural governments, scientific and research institutions and societies, and civil society and private sector entities. Several recent and ongoing UNU research projects have been conducted, partly or wholly, in Japan. On the academic front, UNU serves as an important link between scholars in Japan and those in other countries. The University's Japan-based postgraduate degree programmes offer joint instruction with selected leading Japanese universities and are accredited by the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation of Japan. The Global

Environment Outreach Centre is a joint initiative of UNU and the Ministry of the Environment of Japan.

V. Research projects

60. UNU research employs an interdisciplinary, problem-solving approach that integrates the quantitative rigour of the natural and physical sciences with the qualitative insights of the social sciences and humanities.

61. Given its relatively small size, UNU strives to maintain a high level of quality and impact by focusing its research activities into specified thematic areas. In order to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world, the focus of UNU research constantly evolves in response to the changing state of global ecosystems, the social impact of scientific discoveries and the challenges facing the United Nations and its Member States, with a particular focus on the needs of developing countries.

62. The three overarching thematic clusters prescribed by the UNU strategic plan 2015-2019 are:

- Peace and governance
- Global development and inclusion
- Environment, climate and energy

63. The research work of UNU is carried out by a decentralized network of institutes and programmes. Much of the research is conducted in collaboration with partners — including leading universities, research institutes and think tanks worldwide, as well as other United Nations system entities — and/or is funded by external donors.

64. In 2016, UNU researchers worked on more than 200 projects, some of which comprised multiple subprojects). The following is a representative sample, with a particular focus on projects that were initiated or completed in 2016.

Peace and governance

65. **Changing Nature of Violence.** The project produced a series of policy research papers on different aspects of the changing nature of violence to inform United Nations thinking on the issue.

66. **Crime-Conflict Nexus.** The aims of the Crime-Conflict Nexus project are to fill major knowledge gaps on the interlinkages between crime and conflict and thereby help the United Nations to assess, adapt and develop effective policy tools and interventions.

67. **Digital Technology, Digital Media for Political Party Regulations.** The project addressed how digital technologies and media are redefining political parties' decision-making processes, communication strategies funding mechanisms and so forth.

68. **European Leadership in Cultural, Science and Innovation Diplomacy.** Within this European Union-funded project, UNU leads a work package focused on

exploring the European Union's promotion of regional and interregional processes in the global South through science, cultural and economic diplomacy.

69. **Identifying Common Ground for UNGASS 2016.** The project collected evidence that could inform policy discussions ahead of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

70. **Measuring Institutions in Africa.** The project proposed new objective indicators to clarify the development paths of several African countries from the early days of colonization to the present.

71. **Policy Monitoring on Digital Technology for Inclusive Education.** The project developed a web-based monitoring tool for the UNESCO publication *Model Policy for Inclusive ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities*.

72. **Resilience and the Fragile City.** The project analysed vulnerability and resilience in disaster- and violence-prone cities and identified options to reduce the vulnerability and enhance the resilience of at-risk urban populations.

73. **Strengthening the Multilateral Response to Modern Slavery.** The project analyses the roles of international criminal justice and the United Nations system in responding to modern slavery from the perspectives of normative development and institutional practice.

Global development and inclusion

74. **Biodiversity and Community Health Initiative.** The project focuses on the human health consequences of disturbances to nature-human linkages and our capacity to take appropriate actions relative to health and health-care delivery.

75. **Climate Risk Adaptation and Insurance in the Caribbean.** The project seeks to extend a financial safety net to previously excluded low-income persons in three countries and to scale up its efforts in two others.

76. **Demand for Manufacturing, Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Consumption in a Globalized Economy.** The project will contribute to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization *Industrial Development Report 2018*.

77. **Developing a Disaster Risk Insurance Framework for Pakistan.** The project provided design options on how to operationalize a national insurance fund for extreme weather events for the poor and vulnerable.

78. **Earth Observation-based Information Products for Drought Risk Reduction on the National Level.** The project is developing methods and means of communication for responding to the goals, targets and indicators of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

79. **Extractives for Development.** The project is focused on sharing knowledge about how natural resource wealth, such as oil, gas and mineral revenues, can be managed to achieve inclusive growth in low-income and middle-income countries.

80. **Hopeful Journeys.** The project examines the role of "hope", at individual and collective levels, as a strategy of survival and progress in the context of displacement in the Mediterranean.

81. **Inclusive Growth in Mozambique: Scaling up Research and Capacity.** The project addresses current development challenges in the country by generating evidence necessary for effective policy formulation, designing policies and building capacity inside ministries and universities.

82. **Psychosocial Well-being Initiative.** The initiative explores how information and communication technologies impact social and psychological well-being. Research is currently being conducted in Myanmar.

83. **Role of Structural Transformation in the Potential of Asian Economic Growth.** The project was a contribution to the annual Asian Development Bank publication *Asian Development Outlook*.

84. **SOUTHMOD: Simulating Tax and Benefit Policies for Development.** This is a major research initiative that will build tax-benefit microsimulation models for seven selected developing countries to analyse the impacts of different tax and benefit policy scenarios.

85. **Un/masking Narratives: An Alternative Account of Horn of Africa Migration.** The project analyses how the European Union and its African partners focus on people smugglers and how this masks the complex historical and contemporary social and political dynamics and points out ways of better reflecting migrants' realities.

86. **Urban Displacement in Contemporary Asia.** The project explores the role of civil society and grass-roots organizations in contexts where State-level humanitarian responses are almost entirely absent and States are not party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

87. **World Humanitarian Summit.** The project supported preparations for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit by channelling innovative ideas and policy recommendations into the process; it provided input into the Secretary-General's agenda-setting report for the Summit (A/70/709).

Environment, climate and energy

88. **Africa's Energy Futures.** The project examines upstream hydropower development in the Eastern Nile region to evaluate whether regional economic benefits from upstream development can be shared in a win-win fashion among the region's riparian nations.

89. **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service Scenarios Network.** The project is aimed at strengthening researcher collaboration on future scenarios for the benefits that we obtain from ecosystems and contributing to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Future Earth.

90. **Country Analysis for Civil Security.** The project is aimed at identifying and examining potential hotspot and priority countries for international research on civil protection and disaster risk reduction.

91. **DeltAdapt.** The project assesses the socioecological sustainability of differing agricultural adaptation pathways in deltaic agroecosystems exposed to salinity intrusion and market challenges.

92. **DOTCOM Waste.** The project seeks to help law enforcement agencies, customs and port authorities and environmental agencies fight cross-border waste-related crime in a more cost-effective manner.

93. **Engaging the Private Sector for Inclusive Extractive Industries and Sustainable Value Chains in Africa.** The project examines and prioritizes backward linkages in Africa's mineral extraction and natural resources sectors, with the aim of enabling those industries to contribute to broad-based, sustainable economic growth and development.

94. **Food Security Impacts of Industrial Crop Expansion in Sub-Saharan Africa.** The project examines the competition between industrial and food crops and how it can affect food security.

95. **Governance for Sustainable Development.** The project is aimed at contributing to international discussions and processes of the Sustainable Development Goals. The current focus is on implementing regional frameworks, including mechanisms to link national and global target attainment.

96. **Low-Carbon Technology Transfer.** The project seeks to advance strategies and build partnerships for the diffusion of low-carbon technology to developing countries, with a particular focus on Asia.

97. **Mining, Game of Powers and Sustainable Development in Burkina Faso.** The project investigated how mining interacts with the environment at the local and national levels.

98. **Pacific Climate Change and Migration.** The project produced three country case study reports highlighting past and projected future movements, with the aim of contributing to regional and international frameworks on climate change and migration.

99. **Potential for Phosphorus Retrieval in Zambia.** The project is aimed at establishing a symbiotic relationship between animal husbandry and crop farming through subsistence-level phosphate retrieval/recycling to improve food security.

100. **Remote Sensing of Water Use and Water Stress in the African Savanna Ecosystem.** The project is aimed at supporting decision-making by developing a modelling framework to quantify savanna water use/stress and determining where and how invasive species are affecting water resources.

101. **Safe Use of Wastewater in Agriculture Initiative.** The second phase of this initiative supports and facilitates the sharing of information between countries/regions on good practice examples of safe water reuse in agriculture.

102. **Water in the World We Want.** In cooperation with champions from several countries, this project promotes more comprehensive and effective evidence-based policymaking and decision-making on the water-related Sustainable Development Goals.

VI. Policy process linkages

103. UNU maintains close cooperative relationships with many other United Nations system organizations. In addition, through the Rector, who holds the rank of Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, UNU participates in the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and its three committees.

Contributions to United Nations policy processes

104. UNU interacts with United Nations policy processes in three ways. The most common means of interaction is through indirect analytical influence, namely, by generating evidence and ideas that can serve to shape policy discourse and debate, particularly on issues that involve new or interdisciplinary scientific inquiry. This is the traditional manner by which academic and scientific communities influence policy.

105. Another vector is direct engagement with United Nations policy actors. The University's identity as a United Nations entity endows it with a level of trust and "comfort" that some United Nations actors often do not feel in respect of non-United Nations organizations. Access to the CEB deliberations also affords UNU a strategic opportunity to identify emerging policy trends in the operational arms of the United Nations and positions it as a reliable partner for generating, synthesizing and translating knowledge relevant to United Nations policy processes.

106. UNU also influences United Nations policy processes through collaborative knowledge generation. By working in direct partnership with other United Nations entities, UNU can help to fill the knowledge gaps that they have identified in United Nations policy processes and develop outputs tailored to be fed directly into those processes.

107. However, the extent to which UNU and other research organizations and think tanks can inform and influence United Nations policy processes faces a number of constraints. These include:

- Dispersal of United Nations policy processes across multiple agencies, geographic locations and levels (national, regional and international, as well as in civil society)
- Chronic undervaluing of knowledge and of knowledge-related skills within the United Nations system
- Financial restraints, in that research funding tends to be skewed towards large, multi-year projects while United Nations policy processes often require a very short-term turnaround
- "Translation problems" (linguistic, epistemic, organizational and political) that impede scholars and scientists from influencing the thinking of policy actors

108. Nevertheless, UNU is an active contributor to numerous United Nations and international policy processes and debates, such as those related to biodiversity, climate change, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action, migration, peace and security, sustainable development, urban development and urbanization, and water.

UNU research touches, to some degree, on all of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Collaborations

109. In 2016, UNU collaborated with more than 40 other United Nations entities and United Nations-related organizations and with numerous international and regional organizations as well as private sector institutions and leading think tanks. UNU also works directly with Member States to help them to develop and implement effective policies and contributed to some official United Nations country missions.

110. Major United Nations entities with whom UNU collaborated in 2016 included:

- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- Global Migration Group
- International Labour Organization
- International Maritime Organization
- International Monetary Fund
- International Organization for Migration
- International Telecommunication Union
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- United Nations Children's Fund
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat
- Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat
- Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat
- Department of Public Information of the Secretariat
- United Nations Development Programme
- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
- Economic and Social Council
- Economic Commission for Africa
- Economic Commission for Europe
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- United Nations Environment Programme
- Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research
- United Nations Inter-agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases
- United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat
- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
- United Nations Office for Sustainable Development
- United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network
- UN-Water
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
- World Bank
- World Food Programme
- World Health Organization
- World Meteorological Organization
- World Trade Organization

VII. Education and capacity development

111. The objective of the education and capacity development efforts of UNU is to help individuals to enhance their aptitude for self-sustained learning and, by doing so, augment the group and institutional educational and research capabilities of developing countries.

Postgraduate degree programmes

112. Since 2010, UNU has offered postgraduate degree programmes. These currently consist of three Master of Science (MSc) degree programmes and two doctoral (PhD) degree programmes.

113. **Master's degree programmes**

- MSc in Sustainability (Japan; 14 students)
- Joint MSc in the Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security (Germany, in collaboration with the University of Bonn; 98 students)
- Double MSc in Public Policy and Human Development (the Netherlands, in collaboration with Maastricht University; 128 students)

114. **Doctoral degree programmes**

- PhD in Sustainability Science (Japan; nine students)
- Joint PhD in Integrated Management of Water, Soil and Waste (Germany, in collaboration with the Technical University of Dresden; nine students)

115. The 258 students enrolled in these five programmes are, by gender, 58 per cent female and 42 per cent male; 29 per cent of the students are from developing countries.

116. UNU also collaborates with several universities to help to support developing country students enrolled in specialized master's and doctoral degree programmes.

Non-degree study opportunities

117. In addition to the above degree programmes, in 2016, UNU offered 15 long-duration (lasting more than two months) and 83 short-duration training programmes and courses, which were attended by more than 3,150 students (56 per cent male, 44 per cent female). Some UNU training opportunities enable students to earn credit towards a degree, while others confer a certificate or diploma upon completion.

118. Notable among the long-duration programmes offered annually by UNU are the five- and six-month training programmes of the University's Iceland units:

- Fisheries Training Programme (September-February)
- Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (January-May)
- Geothermal Training Programme (April-October)
- Land Restoration Training Programme (March-September)

119. Other long-duration study opportunities organized or co-organized by UNU in 2016 included a development economics course and an evidence-based policy research methods course and programmes on migration management, integrated drylands management and "Water without borders".

120. The short-duration courses and programmes organized or co-organized by UNU in 2016 covered the breadth of the University's research themes and were conducted around the world (68 per cent in developing countries). They included courses on advancing disaster risk reduction to enhance sustainable development in a changing world; vulnerability and risk assessment; vulnerability and resilience in disaster risk management; global health diplomacy/governance; gender-responsive budgeting; leadership for sustainability; quality management and value addition in fisheries; value chain analysis in the Caribbean fisheries; sustainable use and management of marine ecosystems and their resources; management of sanitary and phytosanitary procedures for the Caribbean; exploration, development and utilization of geothermal resources; role of geothermal energy in combating climate change; geospatial technologies for natural resources management; mangrove ecosystems; and the UNU intensive core courses.

121. Other short-duration training opportunities included workshops on the design and evaluation of innovation policies and safe use of wastewater in agriculture; a training course entitled "Third Resilience Academy: Enhancing Resilience to

Minimize Loss and Damage — Providing Knowledge for the UNFCCC"; the initiatives "E-waste Academy — Managers Edition" and "E-waste Academy — Scientists Edition"; a doctoral course on Latin American, European and Comparative regionalism; and the UNU global seminar: Shonan session.

Capacity development

122. Although it is not a central priority of the University at the present time, UNU continues to implement a number of capacity development initiatives. Through such initiatives, UNU seeks to:

- Educate policymakers and practitioners in the design and implementation of sustainable and equitable development strategies
- Enhance the growth of vigorous academic communities in developing countries
- Improve the capacity of institutions, particularly those in developing countries, to deal with pressing global issues
- Support the work of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations

123. The capacity development efforts of UNU encompass the concept of integrated capacity development. An important component of this effort is project-based capacity development; of 207 projects implemented by UNU in 2016, 11 per cent were focused on capacity development, while another 52 per cent incorporated both research and capacity development components.

124. Many institutes also offer opportunities for young scholars to work alongside UNU research staff through a variety of PhD internship/fellowship programmes, postdoctoral fellowship programmes and research internship/fellowship programmes as well as traineeship and visiting scholar opportunities.

125. UNU strives to ensure that its capacity development opportunities have a distinct added value rather than merely duplicating the efforts of other national or international entities.

VIII. Events

126. To maximize the impact and broaden the reach of its work, UNU convenes specialized conferences and workshops as well as a wide variety of public seminars, symposiums, lectures and other events. As well as providing a convenient venue for sharing knowledge and offering valuable networking opportunities for scholars and practitioners, these events help to put a personal "face" on UNU for the general public. Events of special note in 2016 include the following:

127. **UNU Conversation Series.** During the year, 17 events were held in Tokyo. At such events, UNU Rector David Malone speaks one-on-one with influential experts, world leaders and respected scholars about contemporary global issues. Participants in 2016 included Professor Kiichi Fujiwara (Japan), Irina Bokova (Director-General of UNESCO), former Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations

Kishore Mahbubani, Susana Malcorra (Argentina) and Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

128. **Other ongoing series events.** Other ongoing series events included six UNU Library Talks and seven Sustainable Development Goals Dialogue events (all in Tokyo); 10 UNU-INRA academic and research seminars (in four African countries); nine Nexus Seminars (Dresden, Germany); five "Another Drop" lectures (Hamilton, Ontario); and seven UNU-GEST spring lecture series events (Reykjavík).

129. **Annual events.** Annual events of particular note included the twentieth UNU-WIDER annual lecture ("Direct interventions against poverty in poor places" by Professor Martin Ravallion; 24 March, Sweden) and the UNU-GCM annual guest lecture ("Crises of immigration" by Professor Noam Chomsky; 5 November, Spain).

130. **UNU-WIDER Development Conferences.** Two such conferences were held in Helsinki: "Human capital and growth" (6-7 June) and "Responding to crises" (23-24 September).

131. **Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development** (27-28 August, Nairobi). UNU organized four side events at the conference.

132. **United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)** (17-20 October, Quito). Several UNU institutes participated actively in Habitat III. The University's participation included the organization of two events that addressed the role and management of water in urban environments, the presentation of initiatives on health in an urban context and the launch of a fragile cities data visualization platform. The UNU Office of Communications also collaborated with UNU researchers to publish several expert commentaries about the New Urban Agenda on the main UNU website.

133. The G7-United Nations Partnership to Meet Global Challenges (19 May) was a public conference co-organized by UNU and the G7 Research Group, preceding the Group of Seven Summit in Ise-Shima, Japan, to discuss the prospects of the Summit in addressing climate change, economic governance and security threats.

134. During the year, UNU organized or co-organized more than 600 public events around the world, including 159 lectures, 134 seminars and 113 conferences/ symposiums. The topics covered the full gamut of UNU research work (see the unu.edu website or the public *2016 UNU Annual Report)*.

IX. Communication and dissemination

135. The communications efforts of UNU are steered by the Office of Communications in Tokyo in cooperation with the communications staff of each institute. The overall goals of the University's communications and dissemination activities are to:

- Increase impact: Ensure that UNU research and knowledge outputs reflect target audience needs and that the audiences can quickly and easily access them
- Expand visibility: Develop and implement media strategies that showcase UNU research findings through major initiatives and campaigns

- Promote UNU expertise: Raise the profile of UNU personnel as global experts and opinion leaders, within relevant academic and policymaking communities and in the media
- Present a consistent brand: Ensure that UNU is recognized for its development focus, policy relevance, objectivity, scientific integrity, high quality and global perspective.

136. As a fundamental part of this effort, UNU strives to make its research findings available in a timely manner and to package its research in an appropriate form: as in-depth, evidence-based reports for academics and practitioners; as tailored, policy-relevant advice in the context of social and political acceptability for decision makers; and in "plain-language" form for general audiences.

137. UNU disseminates information about its research and activities through both print and electronic media. In 2016, UNU researchers published, inter alia, 44 books and 128 chapters in edited volumes, 241 articles in peer-reviewed journals and 117 other articles, 10 special journal issues, 72 policy and research briefs, 299 working and discussion papers, and numerous proceedings and conference papers, website articles and other publications.

138. More than 5,100 UNU documents, including 256 published in 2016, can be downloaded free of charge through "Collections at UNU" (http://collections.unu.edu/), an online institutional repository that offers open access to UNU academic publications, reports and other research outputs. Thousands of other documents are accessible through the websites of the individual UNU institutes.

139. The Internet (websites and social media platforms) is a vital communication and dissemination platform for UNU. In 2016:

- UNU websites received more than 6.90 million pageviews by more than 2.55 million users
- On Facebook, UNU had 72,000 followers [1] (a 33 per cent year-on-year increase), achieved an engagement of 29,400 and had a reach of 13.1 million
- On Twitter, UNU had 95,200 followers (a 32 per cent year-on-year increase), achieved an engagement of 56,100 and had a reach of 462 million
- UNU YouTube channels have more than 10,600 subscribers (a 23 per cent increase from the previous year); new videos posted during the year were viewed more than 48,000 times

X. Financial and human resources

Budget

140. UNU receives no funds from the regular United Nations budget. It is financed solely by voluntary contributions from host Governments of the University's institutes, foundations, agencies, international organizations and other sources and

[1] Common social media metrics include "followers" (number of subscribers), "engagement" (number of unique individuals who interacted (liked, commented on, clicked on, or shared a post/tweet)) and "reach" (potential readership).

by investment income derived from the UNU Endowment Fund, which, as at November, had a market value of $331.4 million.

141. The approved UNU budget for the 2016-2017 biennium is $117.6 million, of which it is anticipated that some 70 per cent will be derived from core funding[2] and 30 per cent from special project contributions income. UNU expenditures for the biennium are expected to be 19 per cent academic programme costs (core-funded), 30 per cent specific projects (funded through special project contributions), 35 per cent staffing and personnel costs and 16 per cent general expenses.

Personnel

142. The University's unique blend of human resources is by far its most important asset. UNU staff, personnel and contractors have expertise in research that spans a wide range of vital issues and in effective analysis, "knowledge translation" and communication.

143. UNU strives to maintain a gender balance and to ensure that developing countries are properly represented. As at year-end 2016, the global UNU system had a personnel complement of 725 (51 per cent male, 49 per cent female); 38 per cent of UNU personnel were developing country nationals.

[2] Core funding = interest income derived from the UNU Endowment Fund (42 per cent), operating contributions (41 per cent), cumulative surplus carried forward (13 per cent) and other income (4 per cent).

Annex

Members of the Council of the United Nations University

2016-2019

Ernest Aryeetey (Ghana), Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Ghana

Simon Chesterman (Australia), Dean, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore

Elizabeth Cousens (United States of America), Deputy Chief Executive Officer, United Nations Foundation

Bassma Kodmani (Syrian Arab Republic), Executive Director, Arab Reform Initiative

Irena Lipowicz (Poland), Professor, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw

Lan Xue (China), Dean, School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University; Director, China Institute for S&T Policy

2016-2022

Carlos Henrique de Brito Cruz (Brazil), Scientific Director, São Paulo Research Foundation; Professor, Gleb Wataghin Physics Institute, State University of Campinas

Isabel Guerrero Pulgar (Chile), Director, IMAGO Global Grassroots; Lecturer at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Angela Kane (Germany), Senior Fellow, Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-proliferation; Professor, Political Science

Segenet Kelemu (Ethiopia), Director General and Chief Executive Officer, International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology

Radha Kumar (India) (UNU Council Chair), Former Director-General, Delhi Policy Group

Tsuneo Nishida (Japan), Director, Institute for Peace Science, Hiroshima University; Director, Toho Zinc Co., Ltd