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5 November, 2012

Dear Esteemed Colleague:

On behalf of the United Nations partners supporting the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI), we write to acknowledge and thank you for your institution's commitment to sustainable development. Your commitment to HESI contributed to the success of Rio+20 – the UN Conference on Sustainable Development which took place 20-22 June in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Close to one-third of all voluntary commitments collected at the time of the conference's closing were made by Higher Education Institutions through HESI. UN Secretary Ban Ki-moon acknowledged the contributions of academic institutions in his reflections about Rio+20 to the UN General Assembly, which you can read about here:

http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/statments_full.asp?statID=1588

You can also find a news item about the HESI launch event at Rio+20 on the following website:

<http://www.unglobalcompact.org/news/248-06-20-2012>.

By signing the HESI declaration, you committed your institution to take concrete actions in support of sustainable development by 2015. Looking ahead, we back you in this pursuit and would like to provide you with information on next steps. The UN partners involved in HESI have agreed to support your efforts by providing engagement opportunities in their existing initiatives and programmes.

Please find attached a brief and non-exhaustive overview of these opportunities.

In closing, we would also like to inform you that we are exploring a conference of all signatories of the HESI in advance of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (10-12 November 2014, Aichi-Nagoya, Japan), which marks the end of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development. The purpose of this meeting will be to report

on the implementation of the commitments made when signing the HESI and to plan ahead for higher education for sustainable development after 2014.

We look forward to your institution's progress on implementing your commitments.

Kind regards,



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Programme Director, ESD
UNU-IAS



Georg Kell
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Overview of Program and Opportunities

The **UN Global Compact** and the UN-supported **Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)** initiative offer HESI signatories the opportunity to participate actively in the ongoing work streams, such as PRME [working groups](#) and regional learning [meetings](#). All HESI signatories are welcome - if not already signatories to the UN Global Compact or PRME respectively - to join the UN Global Compact and/or PRME, which enables your institution to use the regular reporting framework (Communication on Progress (UN Global Compact) and/or Sharing Information on Progress reports (PRME)) to inform others of your ongoing work in the area of sustainable development. These reports, which are similar to sustainability reports by companies, provide your institution with an effective mechanism to communicate to your stakeholders progress on implementing your HESI commitments. *For more information, please contact Jonas Haertle, Head, PRME Secretariat, UN Global Compact Office (prmesecretariat@unglobalcompact.org).*

As lead agency for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), **UNESCO** advocates for the integration of sustainable development into education at all levels and makes available a wide range of materials to that effect. Furthermore, UNESCO provides quick access to relevant expertise in Education for Sustainable Development and higher education. This includes the network of 750 UNESCO Chairs who work in areas relevant to UNESCO's mandate; over 50 of them work specifically in sustainable development. It also includes a network of more than 100 teacher education institutions from 70 countries that are committed to integrating sustainable development into their programmes and that is coordinated by UNESCO and York University, Toronto, Canada. UNESCO's climate change education clearinghouse website (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/>) provides access to hundreds of materials in this field. A teacher education course on climate change will be launched shortly. On the basis of the Rio+20 outcome document, UNESCO is currently preparing the framework for activities in Education for Sustainable Development after 2014, when the UN Decade ends. *For more information, please contact Alexander Leicht, Chief, Section of Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO (a.leicht@unesco.org).*

The **Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)** is the operational arm of the UN Secretariat that supports governments in developing and implementing policies to accelerate the achievement of sustainable development. UN DESA is responsible for implementing the 1992 Earth Summit and its follow-up processes: the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Rio+20 Conference. Its Division for Sustainable Development is entrusted with a strong mandate to engage a broad range of stakeholders toward providing policymakers with the most relevant scientific guidance needed to drive national and regional implementation of sustainable development. The global academic community must play an important role in contributing state-of-the-art science and tools, as well as training for future practitioners.

Rio+20 placed sustainable development at the top of the UN human development agenda, as well as for national development strategies all over the world. The immediate follow-up to Rio+20

includes developing a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reviewing financing mechanisms, and developing alternative measures of progress that go beyond GDP. UN DESA wishes to invite interested partners from the global academic community to come forward with their expertise to support the scientific and knowledge of communities and other non-state actors in the preparation for this critical follow-up phase of Rio+20. *For more information, please contact Mr. Nikhil Chandavarkar, Chief for Outreach and Communications of the Division for Sustainable Development, UN DESA (chandavarkar@un.org).*

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the voice for the environment in the United Nations system. It is an advocate, educator, catalyst and facilitator, promoting the wise use of the planet's natural assets for sustainable development. HESI signatories are encouraged to participate in the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES). This focuses around three key pillars: Education (graduate curriculum sourcebooks on Green Economy, Ecosystems Management, Climate Change Adaptation, REDD+ etc, as well as a toolkit on Greening of Universities – Towards Low Carbon campuses); Training (capacity building of decision/policy makers) and Networking (regional and sub-regional partnerships in developing regions, i.e. Africa: MESA, Asia-Pacific: AP/RUC, Latin America and Caribbean: ETN and MESCA). The next GUPES meeting is planned in conjunction with the 7th World Environmental Education Congress, scheduled 9-14 June 2013, in Marrakech, Morocco. *For more information, please contact Mr. Mahesh Pradhan, Chief, Environmental Education and Training Unit, UNEP, Nairobi (mahesh.pradhan@unep.org).*

UN University (UNU) is the academic arm of the United Nations system and a think tank for the UN and its Member States. As a research, teaching and capacity development institution it addresses the needs of present and future generations to live a decent life, in peace, freedom, safety and good health. In response to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), UNU launched the Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE) on ESD, an initiative to promote local and regional partnerships that foster participation in ESD projects and activities. RCEs are networks of formal, non-formal, and informal education organizations, including higher education institutions. There are currently 101 RCEs operating worldwide, providing innovative platforms for regional and local stakeholders to share information and experiences on ESD, as well as promoting dialogue, action and cross-sectoral collaboration.

UNU also created an alliance of higher education institutions in the Asia-Pacific region, in recognition of the need to advance and disseminate knowledge and research for sustainable development within a systematic and collaborative platform for higher education institutions. The network, called ProSPER.Net: Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network, helps members exchange good practices and expertise on joint projects in sustainable development, such as: integration of sustainability issues in business school curricula, development of materials on social business and social entrepreneurship and also on UN Global Compact principles, faculty training modules and resource materials for sustainability. UN University encourages qualified higher education institutions to consider joining or partnering with the RCE and ProSPER.Net initiatives, in order to maximize the value and impact of their ESD efforts. *For more information, visit www.ias.unu.edu/efsd or contact Mr. Kazuhiko Takemoto, Programme Director for ESD (takemoto@ias.unu.edu).*