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THE MISSION AND THE VISION

The United Nations University (UN University), established in 1973, is an international community of scholars that generates and shares knowledge and strengthens capacities relevant to promoting human security and development, in particular in developing countries. As an academic institution within the United Nations system, the University contributes directly to the advancement of knowledge relevant to the role and work of the United Nations as well as to its application in the formulation of sound principles, policies, strategies and programmes for action. With intellectual independence, in particular in the selection of topics and the dissemination of results, guaranteed through its Charter, the University can make these contributions with objectivity and integrity and in a problem oriented manner essential for dealing with pressing issues of global concern.

the mission

The UN University's mission is to contribute, through collaborative research, capacity development and advisory services, to efforts to resolve the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare that are the concern of the United Nations, its Peoples and Member States. In doing so it pays due attention to the social sciences and the humanities as well as the natural sciences.

the vision

The UN University aspires to be a world-class international research, teaching and capacity development institution that addresses the needs of present and future generations to live a life in decency, in safety, in good health and in freedom. It provides global leadership on aspects of peace, development and sustainability, including governance, gender equality, poverty reduction, global health, climate change, natural resources, energy, new technologies with a special emphasis on collaboration between developed and developing countries. It therefore serves the United Nations and its Member States with state-of-the-art research and with the accumulated knowledge in these areas. It aims to be a graduate institution that attracts top teachers, researchers and students alike.

In the light of the increasing need for advanced research and teaching related directly to the problems which affect developing and transitional countries and their peoples, and the importance of strengthening existing institutions of higher learning in developing countries as a means to enhance the capacities for self-reliant human and social development, the UN University will strongly expand its presence through its research and teaching activities in developing countries and in countries in transition.

The UN University will be a widely recognized international graduate teaching and research institution, best known for

- its emphasis on ensuring the highest possible quality in its research, teaching and academic support services
- its strict adherence to the methods and tools of social and natural sciences and of engineering

- its high relevance to the problems of sustainability, in particular of developing countries and the United Nations system
- its high ethical standards, including integrity, trust, tolerance and acceptance of rights as well as obligations
- its spirit of cooperation, collegiality and a dedication to creating a sense of community
- its equity and openness in access to UNU research, capacity development and dissemination
- its intellectual vitality and openness
- its academic freedom and autonomy with commensurate accountability
- its social responsibility and the environmental sustainability of its own operations.

The UN University will exploit its comparative advantages as both a United Nations organization as well as a high-level research and teaching institution emphasizing a systems oriented, interdisciplinary, problem-solving approach in its work.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND MEASURES

The UN University (UNU) will work systematically towards the realization of its vision by setting well-defined goals and taking specific measures to achieve these goals. These university-wide goals are organized into three categories:

1. Enhancing core activities, including research, teaching and capacity development, and dissemination and sharing of knowledge
 2. Strengthening communications and outreach
 3. Renewing structures and improving quality
1. enhancing core activities: research, teaching and capacity development, and dissemination and sharing of knowledge

One of the major sources of comparative advantage of UN University research is that UNU takes a holistic view of the complex processes that affect human security and development. This is in line with the UNU Charter, which stipulates that the work of the University should be multidisciplinary and problem-oriented. UNU teaching and capacity development entails the development of individual, group and institutional capabilities for self-sustained learning, for the generation of new knowledge and/or technology, for the accumulation of knowledge, or for the implementation of development activities. These capacities are crucial to the development efforts of developing and transitional countries as well as to the effectiveness of United Nations programmes. UNU aims at a multiplier effect by focusing on training the trainers, research leaders and policy and decision makers while at the same time generating new knowledge on the most pressing global issues and transmitting and sharing this knowledge directly to and with young people through high-quality teaching and capacity development programmes.

The main goal of UNU's dissemination and knowledge sharing activities is to get the right knowledge to the people who need it most, in a timely manner and in a form that is most useful to them. The themes and topics UNU deals with are of concern to

a large portion of UN Member States and are of global relevance or are highly relevant to a global issue. With its unique position as a university within the United Nations system, UNU undertakes a wide range of knowledge generation, knowledge transfer and sharing as well as knowledge application/management activities: basic and applied research, foresight and policy studies, capacity development, networking/collaboration with external partners, and dissemination and outreach.

1.1 Twin Institutes

Goal: Strengthen UNU's presence in developing and transitional countries and intensify research and teaching interaction with developed countries.

The focus of attention lies — as it does for the UN system as a whole — on the developing world where the development needs are greatest. Figures 1 and 2 overleaf show that the main focus of UNU's research and capacity development activities lies in the developing countries. However, most of UNU's institutional representations are located in the developed countries, as shown in figure 3. This dichotomy needs to be addressed in order to make UNU's operations more effective, efficient, culturally adapted, and sustainable. A stronger representation of UNU in the developing countries and in the countries in transition will also create a stronger sense of ownership of its various activities and outputs in the different regions.

Measure: Build up the University's presence and outreach in the developing parts of the world by introducing the concept of "Twin Institutes."

A Twin Institute is an ordinary RTC/P with two (in exceptional cases also 3 or maximally 4) different locations, one of them being in a developed country, the other one being in a developing country. In both locations there is a group of researchers, teachers, and students (called a Twin or a Twinning Partner). The two Twins will develop a joint research and teaching agenda: they will spend more than 50% of their time on joint projects. The students, in the course of a programme, usually spend time in both locations and the researchers will meet regularly for exchanging ideas and they might want to organize at least one joint meeting per year. In addition UNU's e-learning facilities and capacities can be a crucial tool for a resource effective way to share and build-up educational programmes and curricula. In this way UNU's capacity development in the developing world will be strengthened and the scholars in the developed countries will be better versed to respond to very specific local/regional conditions. It will also strengthen the academic basis of the developing host country. "Brain drain" is an unlikely consequence since the reputation and scientific quality of the group in the developing country will be equal to that of the twin in the developed country.

For the basic funding of a Twin Institute the cost of the Twin in the developed country has to be covered by its host country. It is crucial that a certain share of the funding for the Twin in the developing country is derived from its host country, too (at least 30%): there should be no part of an institute in a country whose government is not interested in making at least a partial contribution. The remaining financial resources have to come from research and teaching projects that are formulated by the two groups jointly and that are submitted to funding agencies or other donors in the developed country or elsewhere.

The presently existing UNU Institutes (RTC/PS) have been invited to present a plan on how to build up a “Twin Partner” in a developing country (in a developed country, respectively) by the end of November 2009. Good progress in setting up the partner institute should be achieved by the end of 2011¹.

It is highly desirable that the new Twin Partner is near an existing university or another academic institution of high reputation with people interested in having the UNU institute nearby, possibly on the same campus. Probably the most efficient — but not the most direct — approach to twinning is to capitalize on existing partnerships in order to spawn a new entity that will preliminarily operate as an affiliated programme/institute. The context of the existing collaboration will set the basis for, but will not limit the scope of, the affiliated programme to be created. Over time this affiliated programme/institute could gradually become a fully-fledged Twin of the existing institute with a shared educational curriculum, joint research programmes and tightly linked (or common) budgets.

A more direct route to twinning is the creation of an entirely new Twin Institute without pre-existing links to an implementing partner such as another university or research facility. This involves the acquisition of one or several funding partners in the developing country such as a ministry, an endowment fund, private industry etc. In addition, the Twin in the developed country or its direct donors also needs to commit funding to the other Twinning Partner. In this twinning approach, the primary liaison is established between donors and the UNU institute in the developed country. However, to ensure sustainability and a sense of ownership links should also be created with an existing research infrastructure in the developing country. The implementation of the Twin Institute will be guided by the existing Twin in close collaboration with the donors in the other country.

New institutes that are currently under discussion will have to be conceived as Twin Institutes from the outset.

Goal: Strengthen UNU’s activities in developing countries through networking.

Measures:

- Build on existing UNU networks and profit from the establishment of Twin Institute partnerships to create new networks
- Strengthen collaboration with academic and research institutions and other relevant stakeholders, including United Nations organizations located in developing countries
- Network with local institutions to respond to local needs and develop capacities
- Place renewed emphasis on project development and fund-raising in particular for projects in Africa

1.2 Postgraduate Programmes

“The United Nations University shall be an international community of scholars engaged in research, postgraduate training and the dissemination of knowledge...” (UNU Charter, Article 1, paragraph 1) Since its establishment, the UNU has been engaged in different kinds of teaching activities. Today it offers many programmes of shorter or longer duration for which it issues a certificate. Members of UNU are also engaged in Master’s or Ph.D. programmes of other universities, but these programmes are never

1. There will be a need for flexibility in relation to the envisaged time lines contained within the strategic plan. It is understood that expected delays in implementation will need to be discussed and agreed upon with the Rector.

considered as being offered by UNU itself. This is one of the main reasons why UNU has not yet found a worldwide reputation as a leading graduate institution.

Goal: *Improve teaching and capacity development and their relevance and recognition.*

Measures:

- Build on existing joint Master's and Ph.D. programmes undertaken by UNU Institutes and initiate new joint degree programmes with high-level university partners
- Award UNU Master's and Ph.D. degrees according to unified standards and formats. They will be signed by the Rector of UNU.
- Award either a double degree with the partner university or a joint degree
- Formalize the accreditation of degrees via the UNU Council (see below) leading to the award of UNU's own Master's and Ph.D. degrees

Remark: *A joint degree means one degree given jointly by two or more academic institutions where as double degree means that each partner university awards a degree. In the beginning of this type of collaboration, for legalistic reasons, it is often not possible to offer joint degrees if one of the partners is a "foreign" institution. In that case, a double degree is the solution to the problem. It is probable that within a few years most countries will allow for joint degrees due to the pressure created by increasing globalization of the higher education sector.*

1.3 Focusing knowledge production, broadening knowledge accumulation, strengthening knowledge dissemination and sharing

Given the relatively small size of the UNU as an academic institution, in order to maintain a high level of quality, it is essential to focus the activities in both research and in teaching. On the other hand, in order to play its role as a think tank in some areas that are crucial for the UN and for the development of the emerging countries, UNU should accumulate knowledge and at the same time improve its knowledge dissemination and knowledge sharing.

Goal: *Develop more synergies in research within UNU and a higher impact of the research results. At the same time, be prepared to act as a knowledgeable think tank in some of the major areas of interest to the United Nation system.*

Measure: Identify and implement selected areas of focus that capitalize on existing strengths within the University and for which resources are available or obtainable and at the same time broaden knowledge accumulation in these focus areas.

Goal: *Strengthen knowledge dissemination and knowledge sharing.*

Measures:

- Build into the programme planning process a clear priority for knowledge management, dissemination and sharing
- Make use of new and innovative publishing and dissemination techniques and effective vehicles for targeted dissemination and specific policy advice
- Adopt a university-wide approach to online learning
- Enhance external communication and outreach activities

- Give a clear emphasis to high quality outputs including peer reviewed journal articles, monographs and policy and research briefs

Goal: *Emphasize user focused high-impact research and teaching; being leaders rather than followers.*

Measure: Give added emphasis to user-focused and/or user-driven research that could have a direct impact on problems that affect larger numbers of people in developing and transitional countries. Though basic research is vital for the further development of any modern society, this is not the prime focus of UNU.

1.4 Leading through a systems approach

Today's problems connected with sustainability are too complex to be dealt with in a discipline-by-discipline manner. In particular, the division between social and natural sciences is often in the way of a thorough understanding of critical problems. What is called for is a "systems" approach making substantial use of modern modeling techniques and of high-speed computers.

Goal: *Understand and master today's problems in peace, development and sustainability in an all-embracing and holistic manner.*

Measures:

- Replace a disciplinary approach with a systems approach in close collaboration between natural and social sciences
- Stress interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary as well as multicultural and intercultural approaches in UNU research, bringing together the social and natural sciences, humanities and engineering. Organize research along concrete problems rather than along disciplinary lines.
- Every research group should ideally contain both social and natural scientists or people who have expertise in both or have access to such expertise

1.5 Improving access to education through online learning/education

Especially in developing countries, many gifted young people do not have access to university-level classroom teaching because they cannot afford to travel to places where there are universities or are unable to free themselves for the precise times when regular university courses are offered.

Goal: *Make available classroom teaching to people who do not have easy access.*

Measures:

- Promote the virtual university concept by creating a large number of e-learning components and by participating in existing networks such as those under IUCN and the Asia Pacific Initiative
- Strengthen collaboration between the Media Studio in Tokyo and the e-learning activities of the Vice-Rectorate in Bonn as well as with the e-learning activities of other parts of the UNU system

- Develop an incentive structure that encourages researchers to make available content for use in e-learning course modules
- Explore the possibilities for serving as a key international clearinghouse for e-learning courses on sustainability

2. strengthening collaboration, communications and outreach

One of the key roles of the UN University is to serve as a convenor of the international community of scholars. This requires the University to be open, to share information and to extend the reach of its programmes and its dissemination activities to a global audience. The UNU Charter stipulates that “as a world-wide system of research and training centres and programmes, the University will have its location at the site of each centre or programme.” This presents a challenge for the University to be invested in its host countries, in particular, to be well rooted in the academic and policy-making communities in its host countries.

The UN University, as a voluntarily funded United Nations organization, depends heavily on support made available by governments, bilateral and multilateral development assistance agencies, foundations and other public and private sector sources. The UN University Endowment Fund provides a minimum assured income to support long-term planning and programming for most parts of the University system. Nevertheless, the University remains too dependent on annual contributions made available by hosting governments. There is a clear need to enhance the financial base of the University and to diversify the sources of financing for its work.

2.1 Strengthening collaboration with other United Nations organizations, the private sector and civil society

The United Nations system is a key constituency and stakeholder for UNU research, teaching and knowledge dissemination. The quality and relevance of the UNU’s activities could be further strengthened by enhancing existing collaborative programmes and by initiating new cooperative work with different sister organizations within the United Nations family. The University also needs to invest in cooperation and connection with other academic institutions of high repute and with research organizations, foundations and corporations as well as with NGOs and other stakeholders from civil society.

Goal: Enhance the UNU’s connection and contributions to its key stakeholders.

Measures:

- Give emphasis to cooperation and joint initiatives with UNESCO, including the UNESCO Chairs Programme
- Strengthen cooperation with other parts of the United Nations, including in particular UNEP, the substantive departments of the UN Secretariat as well as the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements and the Bretton Woods institutions
- Assure UNU participation in UN committee work on issues relevant for UNU
- Extend and build up joint activities based on effective functional links with strategic UN partners

- Ensure more efficient and effective dissemination of UNU outputs and outcomes within the UN system; strengthen and refocus UNU offices in New York (UN) and in Paris (UNESCO)
- Motivate the ambassadors of UNU host countries to act as promoters of UNU in the diplomatic corps, most importantly in New York and in Paris
- Develop entry points for the involvement of private sector entities and civil society organizations, in particular NGOs, to participate in UNU public events as well as in UNU activities when appropriate

2.2 Strengthening the University's roots in its host countries

The UN University is privileged to enjoy the steadfast generosity and support of the host countries for its Headquarters and each of the research and training centres and programmes. This denotes a special relationship between the University and its host countries. The University needs to ensure that through its activities the host countries derive benefit from the presence of UNU in their territories. To ensure that maximum benefits accrue to its host countries, the University must strengthen its connection and involvement with key stakeholders in each of its host countries.

Goal: Strengthen the presence in and interaction with UNU host countries.

Measures:

- Enhance communication, outreach and dissemination with host governments, academic institutions and civil society
- Enhance knowledge sharing and outreach activities in the University's host countries

2.3 Forging collaborative relationships with leading industries

The UN University has established some collaborative activities with partners in different economic and industrial sectors. Projects related to environmental monitoring, food and nutrition and risk and vulnerability assessment currently form the base for such partnerships. Selected UNU research initiatives would benefit from a stronger connection to leading companies in different industrial sectors. Such cooperation can also be seen as a means to begin to heighten interest in UNU's research as well as to augment support from private sector entities for UNU activities.

Goal: Network with leading industries.

Measures:

- Strengthen and expand existing collaborative relationships with private sector entities and companies
- Develop new contacts and cooperation with key industry partners working or involved in areas related to UNU's research agenda
- Identify potential industry partners who could receive information on UNU research programmes and who could be invited to attend UNU conferences, workshops and seminars

2.4 Enhancing the UNU brand

As an academic institution within the United Nations system, the UN University has a unique “brand” that conveys an image of neutrality and a distinct international profile. As a think tank for the United Nations, the UNU must ensure that its “brand” is supported by a reputation for high quality research, for the relevance of its research outcomes and for its credibility. As a system of research and training centres and programmes, the University must also present a unified brand which can help to enhance the University’s worldwide visibility.

Goal: *Build and protect the UN University brand.*

Measures:

- Make better use of current and former UNU Council members and Institute Advisory Board members to enhance knowledge and understanding of UNU goals and activities
- Enhance coherence and cogency within the UN University by promoting joint research and teaching between different parts of the University
- Harmonize the visual identity, web presentation and public information activities and materials
- Give emphasis to a holistic UN University label rather than a collection of independent institutes
- Promote staff exchange and dialogue
- Implement a Global Office ICT Platform to harmonize and enhance the use of ICT throughout the University
- Identify ways to give due recognition to the contributions to UNU research and teaching of its associated institutions and collaborating partners
- Continue to select highly regarded academic institutions to be designated as UNU Associated Institutions on the basis of a joint programme of research and/or teaching

2.5 Improving internal and external communication

The UN University faces a number of challenges as a decentralized organization of research and training centres and programmes. Among these is maintaining good communication within the University system while at the same time presenting a consistent and continuous stream of communication to its key stakeholders in the public and private sectors and with United Nations Member States. Strengthening cooperation and communication among UNU institutes will have a beneficial effect on the cogency of the University as a whole. To reach its external audiences, the UNU needs to upgrade its communications methods and tools, continue to refine its target markets, and tailor its outputs accordingly. The University is focused on engaging scholars, practitioners, policy makers, and the general public through a combination of discourse and dialogue. Each has different interests and concerns, and these frequently require different messages and communications methods. Therefore, UNU will increasingly focus on contextualizing its outputs in order to convey more effectively the benefits of its activities in terms most relevant to its audiences. UNU will continue to use various languages in order to broaden its ability to communicate appropriately.

Goal: *Improve UNU's capacity to communicate.*

Measures:

- Improve external public information and outreach activities in a targeted manner, emphasizing the use of the internet and new technologies
- Facilitate and give emphasis to internal communication and information sharing
- Ensure that all UNU units have and make use of video communications equipment and capacities
- Strengthen existing communications standing and funding
- Link up existing communications standing among the different parts of the University

2.6 Mobilizing additional resources for the University

A key constraint to the further development of the UN University remains its limited human and financial resources. While significant support is being generated for specific research and teaching initiatives, the University must strengthen its capacity to mobilize and leverage new and unrestricted contributions from governments, development assistance agencies, foundations and private sector sources. The specialized and decentralized nature of the UNU system presents specific challenges for developing and operating a professionalized development department that is increasingly a part of most universities. It will be crucial for the UN University to strengthen its fund raising capacity in the near and long term to support the new twin institute initiative as well as the deployment of UNU graduate degree programmes.

Goal: *Expand and diversify the University's financial base.*

Measures:

- Make renewed efforts to increase the level of financial support from host governments
- Develop and finance a professional UNU fund-raising department and systematize fund-raising university-wide
- Mobilize and allocate resources to build a UNU fund-raising office over a four-year period
- Generate additional capital contributions for UNU as a whole and its existing institutes, and ensure that all new institutes have a sound financial base prior to their establishment
- Mobilize new unearmarked capital contributions to assist the Rector in setting strategic priorities for the University worldwide

2.7 Connecting up with UNU Alumni

A largely untapped resource for UNU remains the students and participants from its teaching and training programmes. While some efforts have been made by individual institutes or programmes to maintain contact with their alumni, a systematic effort to maintain contact with or to reconnect up to UNU alumni is needed for the future. An alumni organization will be increasingly important as the UNU begins to award its own graduate degrees.

Goal: *Coordinate and maintain contact with UNU Alumni as a resource for the future.*

Measures:

- Bring together existing databases and lists of former students, fellows, participants, staff and supporters as the basis for a UNU Alumni Association
- Develop a systematic approach to create and nurture a self-sustaining alumni network/association
- Initiate a periodic newsletter directed to UNU alumni as a way to maintain contact and to engage alumni

3. renewing structures and improving quality

The UN University strives to have an impact that is larger than its available human and financial resources. This calls for focused efforts and the allocation of resources in key areas to exploit the University's comparative advantage. To do so, the University will address itself to a number of key strategic issues affecting the quality of its work and the outreach of its academic activities. Among these will be addressing the current asymmetry in the global presence of the University and enhancing connections and contributions to the United Nations system. The University will pursue collaboration instead of competition and strengthen ties to other leading universities.

The human resources of the University are its greatest asset. It must ensure that the University's "environment" promotes individual and team success and supports a community that values inclusion, diversity and open perspectives.

3.1 Ensuring that UNU graduate programmes are globally recognized

As a global university, the UNU must ensure that its graduate programmes are of the highest quality and relevance for young people entering careers in universities, international organizations, and the public and private sectors. This will require that attention is given to ensuring that the quality and relevance of such programmes are assured and acknowledged academically and at the international level.

Goal: *Award UNU graduate degrees.*

Measures:

- Propose to the UNU Council an accreditation system that is operated under the responsibility of the Council for all UNU degree programmes
- Achieve international recognition through a rigorous system of quality assurance
- Develop the internal mechanism and infrastructure within the UNU Centre for managing the award of degrees by different parts of the UNU system

3.2 Making UNU teaching and research trustworthy and highly regarded

The UN University has an important mandate to function as a think tank for the United Nations system. For the UNU to play this role, it must make continuous efforts to assure the quality of its research and teaching programmes and the efficacy of its knowledge dissemination and sharing activities. UNU strives to establish its graduate degree programmes in full concurrence with the mandate of the University to generate and teach

policy relevant science in a holistic and interdisciplinary context. These features should be brought in to the intended joint degree schemes but will definitely characterize degree programmes UNU may launch on its own.

Goal: Implement a quality assurance and quality improvement framework.

Measures:

- Develop for the whole university a modular system of quality control for all research, teaching, capacity development and dissemination activities
- Build on and enhance the existing institutional quality control and evaluation systems
- Streamline administrative and decision-making processes to deliver services at least cost to the University system
- Explain the quality control system to present and potential future donors and to the relevant entities in the UN system

3.3 Providing stability and continuity for UNU's graduate programmes and research and for advising students

In order for the UN University to deliver high-quality teaching as a part of its new graduate programmes, attention will need to be given to ensuring that the University's human resource management policies are in line with the need for continuity and stability in the teaching faculty and support personnel for such programmes.

Goal: Review and renew UNU Personnel Policies related to existing hiring practices.

Measures:

- Review and upgrade existing hiring practices to facilitate the development and implementation of new graduate programmes
- Revise the existing personnel policy to allow for longer-term appointments for senior research and teaching staff in order to ensure stability and continuity in UNU academic programmes; at the level of postdocs and other junior academic staff there should be a reasonable turnover. Promotion to a senior position has to be the exception
- Arrange training to enhance the human resource management skills of managers
- Develop a fair performance evaluation system for all UNU personnel that emphasizes quality
- Create incentives for staff to conduct research and teaching activities directly in developing countries

3.4 Improving gender balance within the UNU

The University needs to make strong and concerted efforts to ensure gender balance at all levels in its research, teaching and dissemination activities and in its academic support services.

Goal: Give emphasis in recruitment and human resource management policies to ensuring gender balance and equity within the UNU system.

Measures:

- Take stock of the current gender balance in student populations, academic and supporting staff and senior management throughout the UNU system
- Review existing policies and guidelines to ensure that gender equity is clearly articulated as a priority
- Make renewed and strong efforts to achieve gender balance in academic and senior management staff throughout the medium-term period and beyond

3.5 Acting in an environmentally sustainable manner

The UN University will continue to focus its research and teaching programmes on issues related to sustainability. As a United Nations organization promoting education for sustainable development and carrying out research in the area of sustainability science, it is incumbent on the University to carry out its activities and to manage its global footprint in a sustainable manner.

Goal: *Develop and implement a university-wide environmental management plan.*

Measures:

- Broaden the uptake of the current environmental management plan in Tokyo and Yokohama to other UNU institutes worldwide
- Undertake a comprehensive environmental assessment of the UNU Headquarters Building in Tokyo and implement measures to improve the sustainable operation of the Building

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

1. towards global sustainable development

The academic programme of UNU is determined by its mission:

[...] to contribute, through collaborative research, capacity development and advisory services, to efforts to resolve the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare that are the concern of the United Nations, its Peoples and Member States. In doing so it pays due attention to the social sciences and the humanities as well as the natural sciences.

The main goal is to contribute to *global sustainable development*, which is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (*Brundtland Report*, 1987). The major topics of focus fall in five clusters and the following list of topics of focus is not meant to be a complete listing nor is its attribution in any way unique.

UNU thematic dimensions

Peace, Security and Human Rights

- Peace building and peace keeping
- Conflict resolution and human security
- Fostering dialogue among civilizations, religions and cultures
- Human rights and ethics
- Gender equality and mainstreaming

Human and Socio-economic Development and Good Governance

- Growth, economic development and innovation
- Alleviating poverty and inequalities
- Good governance
- Enhancing educational capacities
- Fair trade
- Processes and consequences of regional integration and cooperation
- Leadership, management and entrepreneurship

Global Health, Population and Sustainable Livelihoods

- Global health
- Safe water and sanitation
- Food and nutrition for human and social development
- Combating HIV/AIDS
- Population changes and migration

Global Change and Sustainable Development

- Climate change — adaptation and mitigation
- Ecological health and biodiversity
- New risk and vulnerabilities
- Sustainable land, agriculture and natural resources management
- Green economy

Science, Technology, Innovation and Society

- Science, technology and innovation
- Sustainable energy futures
- Sustainable urban futures
- Sustainable housing and construction

The five clusters are interlinked and inter-dependent in the sense that none can be fulfilled without taking account of the others (i.e., holistic and interdisciplinary approaches are necessary). *“Sustainability” is the overarching theme without which none of the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare can be addressed in a manner that enables present and future generations to live a life in decency, in safety, in good health and in freedom.*

Sustainability can be addressed through a series of topics of focus which relate to the research, teaching, and capacity development activities carried out within the UNU system. UNU activities deal with several different but related topics of focus as the University adopts a multidisciplinary approach in conducting its research, teaching and capacity development activities.

However, and in aiming at enabling a better mapping of UNU activities, as well as a more effective and cohesive approach to dissemination, it is suggested that each UNU activity be classified under one single topic of focus.

2. choosing the focus areas

The above list suggests that the topics are interlinked and that in many cases only a systems approach, involving social sciences as much as natural and engineering sciences can lead towards a solution. This will be a major criterion for UNU when it defines the areas in which it wants to be active in research and in teaching as well as when it comes to the definition of the focus areas of UNU's institutes or to the nomination of new scientific collaborators. Ideally, every institute should be able to consider simultaneously social science as much as natural and engineering science aspects of a given problem.

The above list defines the frame within which the UNU puts together its academic programme. It is clear that choices have to be made: only a small fraction of the problems can be covered.

Special emphasis will have to be put on problem areas to which more than one UNU institute and also research groups of neighbouring institutions (universities) can contribute.

Though UNU is a global institution and preferably works on problems that are global in nature and in their impact, special emphasis will be given to questions relating to the developing world: to problem solving and capacity development in developing countries and in countries in transition. This should not exclude problems that are of particular interest to a certain region or even to the host country of an institute as long as they have a possible extension to global applicability.

NEW (AND NOT SO NEW) STRATEGIES FOR UNU 2009–2012

1. Enhancing core activities: research, teaching and capacity development, and dissemination and sharing of knowledge
 - 1.1. Twin Institutes
 - 1.2. Postgraduate Programmes
 - 1.3. Focusing knowledge production, broadening knowledge accumulation
 - 1.4. Leading through a systems approach
 - 1.5. Improving access to education through online learning/education

2. Strengthening collaboration, communications and outreach
 - 2.1. Strengthening collaboration with other United Nations organizations, the private sector and civil society
 - 2.2. Strengthening the University's roots in its host countries
 - 2.3. Forging collaborative relationships with leading industries
 - 2.4. Enhancing the UNU brand
 - 2.5. Improving internal and external communication
 - 2.6. Mobilizing additional resources for the University
 - 2.7. Connecting up with UNU Alumni

3. Renewing structures and improving quality
 - 3.1. Ensuring that UNU graduate programmes are globally recognized
 - 3.2. Making UNU teaching and research trustworthy and highly regarded
 - 3.3. Providing stability and continuity for UNU's graduate programmes and research and for advising students
 - 3.4. Improving gender balance within the UNU
 - 3.5. Acting in an environmentally sustainable manner