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**\*To be used on or after 21-November, 2007.**

## **Asian University Representatives Adopt Charter to Promote Sustainable Development in Meeting at UNU-IAS**

At a two-day meeting held on the 19 and 20 November at United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) in Yokohama, representatives of several leading Asian universities adopted a charter committing to work together to integrate sustainable development into postgraduate courses and curricula.

The adoption of the charter formalizes the creation of ProSPER.Net: the Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network. This new network comprises academic institutions in the Asia-Pacific region with strong education and research programmes as well as aspiring innovators in sustainable development and related fields, and who offer postgraduate courses in these fields.

“We believe that higher education institutions bear responsibility and have capacity for human resources development for building a sustainable society, by sharing knowledge, experiences and technologies, in cooperation with governments, non-governmental organizations and industry. In this context, the ProSPER.Net initiative of UNU-IAS and the response of leading universities are very promising”, said Koya Ishino, Councilor for the Ministry of Environment, Japan, funders of the initiative, in his opening speech at the meeting.

ProSPER.Net will serve as a platform of collaboration for members to pursue postgraduate education and research on sustainable development and, specifically, on education for sustainable development. Activities that will be undertaken by the network include:

- annual colloquia to discuss experiences in postgraduate education and research on sustainable development,
- a summer school on sustainable development,
- faculty exchange schemes to provide an impetus for resource- and knowledge-sharing,
- development of common basic sustainable development courses,
- collaboration in developing courses on sustainable development in individual member institutions,
- creation of a consortium of business schools to mainstream sustainable development in business and management curricula,
- creation of a facility for joint research activities, and
- the building of alliances with business and industry.

“The Asia-Pacific region has been recognized as critically important for global sustainability because of its rapid and uneven growth, with their underlying concerns. Higher education institutions in the region should take the initiative in addressing sustainability issues,” said Prof. A.H. Zakri, Director of UNU-IAS. “The network fits in with this need by building academic alliances that enhance global efforts on sustainable development.”

Eleven universities from Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea participated in the two-day meeting at UNU-IAS. Three Japanese universities were represented at the meeting: Hokkaido University, Nagoya University and the University of Tokyo.

< continues on page 2 >

MEDIA ADVISORY

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It is planned that ProSPER.Net will expand to include more institutions; it will be governed and managed by a Board comprising representatives from member institutions. The “glue that binds” is a collective commitment to uphold the vision and aspiration of creating a sustainable world — for all societies and for all generations.

For more information about ProSPER.Net, please contact Nami Akimoto (Tel.: 045-2212334; e-mail: akimoto@ias.unu.edu).

**List of universities adopting the ProSPER.Net charter:**

- RMIT University, Australia
- Tongji University, China
- TERI University, India
- Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia
- Hokkaido University, Japan
- Nagoya University, Japan
- University of Tokyo, Japan
- Yonsei University, Republic of Korea
- Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
- University of the Philippines, Philippines
- Asian Institute of Technology

**Background**

*In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was convened in Johannesburg, South Africa, to renew commitment, at the highest level, to sustainable development. In the same year, following WSSD, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to launch the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014) with UNESCO as the lead UN agency.*

*The Education for Sustainable Development Programme at UNU-IAS works on research and capacity development to integrate components of Education for Sustainable Development into curricula at all levels of education and in all sectors of the society by the end of the decade. The creation of the ProSPER.Net alliance is an activity of this programme.*