

2010 G8 University Summit Statement of Action

I. Background

Recognizing the unique role of universities, the challenges of sustainability, and the need for critical self reflection and global awareness, participation and cooperation, the Presidents, Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and other representatives of leading educational and research institutes in the G8 and G20 countries met for the third G8 University Summit in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada prior to the G8 and G20 Summits held under the Canadian presidency.

The 2010 G8 University Summit builds upon the foundations established by the 2008 and 2009 G8 University Summits. The previous two declarations, recognizing the strategic role played by education and research for sustainability, call for a more powerful relationship between universities and governments, and an expanded definition of sustainable development that emphasizes the interdependencies between the environment and human activities, including all ethical and economic dimensions. The subject of discussion at the 2010 Summit was **“Universities and Communities: Transition to a Sustainable Future.”**

Universities exist for social benefit. By providing the highest level of educational opportunities and research resources, universities will help to create the next generation of leaders: exceptional people with the capacity to challenge problems on a global scale and to support sustainable and healthy societies.

These leaders are increasingly required to understand global problems and act locally and globally. Thus, the role of education in a global environment has never been more significant. The university environment must be more globally engaged so that it promotes shared understanding by breaking down barriers among people and fields of study. As the challenges of sustainability are interconnected, so are the solutions.

The 2010 G8 University Summit focused discussion on three sub-themes: sustainable energy, sustainable health, and sustainable higher education. The sub-themes collectively represent the challenge of equitable access to resources, a challenge that must be met to ensure the well being of future generations. Understanding how these three themes interconnect is crucial to building a fully sustainable, global human society.

Sub-theme 1: Sustainable Energy

Establishing sustainable energy systems – clean, green, appropriate, efficient and accessible to all – is a foundation of sustainable societies. Universities are uniquely placed to raise awareness of global environmental issues to trigger change toward an energy-sustainable society. To do so, universities will engage with governments, the private sector and civil society.

Sub-theme 2: Sustainable Health

Many factors connect the topic of health with discussions around sustainability. Equitable access to health resources is a major challenge in every country in the world. There is a critical need to respond to health disparities between regions and manage the consequences of social and economic change, including demographic change, so as to fully realize true sustainability. We should also set health priorities in a transparent and accountable manner.

Sub-theme 3: Sustainable Higher Education

Universities throughout the world are facing profound challenges relating to their sustainability and regulation. These challenges are great and multi-dimensional, especially in developing educational systems. While the challenges in various contexts may be different, they are also intrinsically linked. They will not be effectively met by universities working in isolation. In order to secure a sustainable future, universities will need to work in partnership with government, the private sector, and civil society. We will work together to find solutions on the campus and beyond to problems such as scarcity of resources, development and mobility of intellectual capacity, aging or inadequate infrastructure, and changing social demographics.

As we work to build more sustainable societies, we acknowledge that there is much to be gained in this transition: economic opportunities will arise as we work in partnership and create new processes and technologies, worldwide social benefits will be created as we increase the value of human resources and develop more equitable access to education and natural resources, and the protection of the world environment will improve as we gain a greater understanding of the interconnections between living systems and across countries. Universities have much to contribute to these endeavours.

II. Prerequisites

Leading Change

Universities have an important role in creating and providing new knowledge to drive the development and implementation of innovative and sustainable solutions to global challenges. To be relevant to all of our communities, universities act as living laboratories to demonstrate change, and lead by example in all dimensions of sustainability. As members of a global society with complex problems we should adapt institutional structures to value and support multi-disciplinary viewpoints, empowering socially responsible leaders to undertake transformative change. Effective reporting systems are needed in order to measure success and improve strategies for the future.

Working in Partnership

With the understanding that awareness of the global context is the first step toward sustainability, we must work to build respectful, co-operative and transformational relationships with university partners, the private sector, governments and communities – locally, nationally and internationally.

Building Collaboration

Universities have unique opportunities to build respectful connections with global communities. Links with other universities as through mobility programs, allow faculty and students to experience different cultures, gain understanding and build life-long collaborations. Innovative research and educational projects bring graduate students and faculty members together across disciplines, borders, languages and cultures, leading to the creation, sharing and implementation of knowledge.

In a spirit of cooperation that goes beyond competition, we must work to reduce disparities and build bridges between developed and developing systems and universities to the benefit of all people. In this regard, building networks is a primary responsibility for all concerned.

Multi-dimensional Approach

Success will depend on a global outlook, and a multi-dimensional cross-disciplinary approach, breaking down the barriers between disciplines, cultures, languages, institutions and communities, facilitating inter- and trans-disciplinary research and teaching to address the complexities of sustainability.

New Forms of Partnership

New forms of global academic collaboration are needed that will lead to a more equitable distribution of intellectual capital, resources and access to higher education and health. Our success will depend on a global outlook and a multi-dimensional cross-disciplinary approach incorporating new forms of global academic collaboration to break down the barriers between disciplines, cultures, institutions and the communities we serve.

Consideration for Future Generations

Contributions to knowledge must support the sustainability of the globe, with its natural environments intact for future generations.

III. Recommendations for Action

To meet these challenges, we propose the following recommendations:

Sustainability of Universities (internal goals)

- For sustainable energy, our built environment must stand up to new scrutiny and be designed to reduce the ecological footprint.
- For sustainable health, our campuses and communities will establish principles of fair access, equity, and respect for the values of diversity.
- For sustainable higher education, universities will seek more effective solutions to meet the challenges presented by constraints in public funding and worldwide economic upheaval. Universities will provide opportunities for leadership development and a shared focus on excellence and innovation in teaching and learning.

Sustainability of Human Society (external goals)

- We need to generate and organize our knowledge on sustainable energy in such a way that it contributes to the establishment of a sustainable world, preserving its natural environments for future generations while meeting our current needs.
- To promote the sustainability of health, the effects of local and global demographic change (for example, urbanization and aging populations) must be brought into balance.
- Sustainable higher education must help our young people learn to be global citizens with an international perspective in every field of study.

We, the undersigned Presidents, Rectors, Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors and representatives of universities, do hereby recognize the key role universities must play in efforts to attain global sustainability, affirm the commitments contained herein, and address the proposals for action to the G8 and G20 leaders and the international community.



Stephen J. Toope, President and Vice-Chancellor
The University of British Columbia



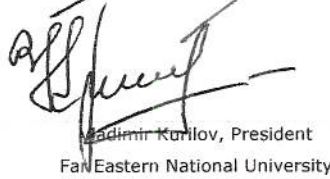
Indira V. Samarasekera, President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Alberta

On behalf of 

Claude Condé, President
Université de Franche-Comté



Tom Traves, President and Vice-Chancellor
Dalhousie University



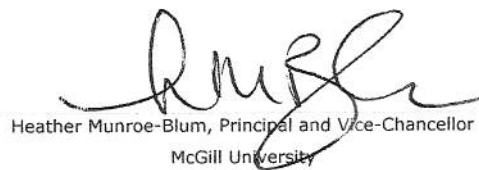
Vladimir Kuzilov, President
Far Eastern National University




Ki-Su Lee, President
Korea University



Bernd Huber, President
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München



Heather Munroe-Blum, Principal and Vice-Chancellor
McGill University



Francesco Profumo, Rector
Politecnico di Torino



Jang-Moo Lee, President
Seoul National University



Akihisa Inoue, President
Tohoku University

On behalf of 

José Narro Robles, Rector
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

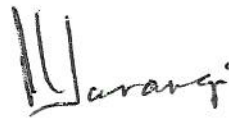

Marco Pasquali, Rector
Università di Pisa

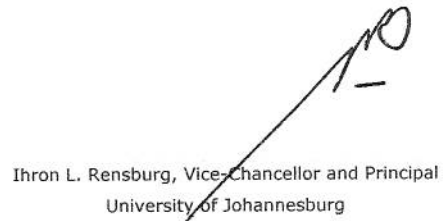

Gumilar Somantri, President
Universitas Indonesia



Luc Vinet, Rector
Université de Montréal


Jean-Pierre Gesson, Rector
Université de Poitiers


for Seyed E. Hasnain, Vice-Chancellor
University of Hyderabad


Ihron L. Rensburg, Vice-Chancellor and Principal
University of Johannesburg


R. Peter MacKinnon, President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Saskatchewan


Junichi Hamada, President
University of Tokyo


David H. Turpin, President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Victoria


Nigel Thrift, Vice-Chancellor
University of Warwick


Kevin Reilly, President
University of Wisconsin System


Katsuhiko Shirai, President
Waseda University