



## Economic and Social Council

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**High-level segment: annual ministerial review**

### **Statement submitted by International Association of University Presidents, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

**Statement\***

Institutions of higher education must be part of the solution in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially Goals 2 and 3. But to do so, they must begin to see themselves as participants in global civil society rather than merely as dispassionate observers. Unfortunately, higher education is too often viewed as a separate sector, above and apart from primary education, and not functionally integrated either with the United Nations or with civil society organizations working to promote the Millennium Development Goals. For that reason, the vast expertise and institutional capacity of higher education has been largely immobile.

The United Nations Academic Impact aims to change this. An initiative of the Secretary-General, organized by the Department of Public Information, it was launched in 2010 to energize higher education. It is open to all higher-education institutions granting degrees or their equivalent, as well as bodies whose substantive responsibilities relate to the conduct of research. So far, dozens of international higher-education associations and more than 600 universities around the world have joined.

All higher-education institutions participating in the United Nations Academic Impact pledge themselves to support and advance these 10 basic principles through direct and concrete programmatic activities:

1. A commitment to the principles inherent in the Charter of the United Nations as values that education seeks to promote and help fulfil.
2. A commitment to human rights, among them freedom of inquiry, opinion and speech.
3. A commitment to educational opportunity for all people regardless of gender, race, religion or ethnicity.
4. A commitment to the opportunity for every interested individual to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for the pursuit of higher education.
5. A commitment to building capacity in higher-education systems across the world.
6. A commitment to encouraging global citizenship through education.
7. A commitment to advancing peace and conflict resolution through education.
8. A commitment to addressing issues of poverty through education.
9. A commitment to promoting sustainability through education.
10. A commitment to promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding, and the “unlearning” of intolerance, through education.

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\* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

There is no shortage of examples of ways higher-education institutions may contribute substantively to Goals 2 and 3. Typical of the sorts of projects in which higher-education institutions can engage are service-learning projects, technical assistance, fund-raising assistance, curriculum development assistance and provision of free or highly discounted teacher training and school administration programmes.

Some universities pursue such projects in an uncoordinated and piecemeal fashion and, as a result, it is difficult to monitor or evaluate their impact or share experiences, successes and best practices. The Economic and Social Council should support the UNAI by calling on higher-education institutions to join and focus on Goals 2 and 3. It also should call upon higher-education institutions to think of themselves as partners in creating a more robust and effective global civil society, rather than standing on the sidelines.

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