

Preparing for the climate change summit – Insights from the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative

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Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI)

The HESI was created by a consortium of UN entities (UNESCO, UN-DESA, UNEP, Global Compact and UNU) in the run up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (RIO+20).



In preparing for the event, UN-DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) is preparing a **Progress report on the impact of Higher Education institutions in advancing sustainable development and climate change.**

Contributions from higher education institutions part of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative are sought, in responding to the following questions:

- What initiatives has your higher education institution taken towards making progress towards climate change action, in terms of teaching, **research**, outreach, or greening campuses?
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The report was presented on the occasion of the event “From Rio to Paris: Higher Education for Climate Change Action”, held on 14 October 2015 at UNESCO headquarters, as contribution to the XXI Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP21), to be held in Paris in December 2015.

You can find the report here:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=2121&menu=35>



**CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



Higher Education for Climate Change Action 14.10.2015 UNESCO Paris

8.00 PM **Contribution of civil society and Higher Education to COP21 and Climate Action**

Pierre Henri Guignard, Secrétaire Général de PARIS 2015 COP21

8:20 PM

Presentation of Report "HESI and Climate Action" to the Representative of the Presidency of COP21

Nikhil Chandavarkar, Chief, Outreach and Communications Branch,
Division for Sustainable development, UN-DESA

Presenting an Open Letter from a global alliance of the world's university and college sustainability network

Iain Patton, EAUC



Dear COP21 Ministers and Governments,

In the coming weeks' negotiations to achieve universal agreement on climate, we urge you to acknowledge and support the research and education role that universities and colleges play in addressing climate change. We represent a global alliance of Higher and Further Education Sustainability networks with a combined membership of **more than 3,000 universities, colleges and student organisations worldwide.**

In this Open Letter to you, we affirm our commitment to the critical role that universities and colleges play in finding and implementing solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation. We see this taking place in the context of also addressing wider issues of sustainability, including social and economic policies and practices. **The commitments and actions outlined below require the urgent support of COP21 Ministers and Governments.**



One of the 5 key points

- Respect, acknowledge and support the academic freedom of universities and colleges in leading the research and understanding of the origins and trajectory of climate change, in gauging its consequences and designing reduction mitigation and adaptation solutions. **National and public research funding support criteria needs to acknowledge and prioritize trans-disciplinary research activities that address climate change and the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.**

Symposium on Sustainable Development Research at Universities in the United Kingdom

5th-6th April 2016

- to provide researchers at UK universities performing research on issues pertaining sustainable development with an opportunity to display and present their works (i.e. curriculum innovation, empirical work, activities, case studies practical projects);
- ii. to foster the exchange of information, ideas and experiences acquired in the execution of research projects, especially successful initiatives and good practice;
- iii. to discuss methodological approaches and projects which aim to offer a better understanding of sustainable development across society and economic sectors and;
- iv. to network the participants and provide a platform so they can explore possibilities for further cooperation.

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A useful tool for climate change research
open to all from the University of Oxford

Zooniverse

<https://www.zooniverse.org/>

Zooniverse Project Builder



“Anyone can build a Zooniverse project. Just upload your data and choose the tasks you want the volunteers to do. To find out more, read our [How to Build a Project documentation](#), or click the button below to get started.”

<http://www.orchidobservers.org/>

More info:

Please contact petra.molthan-hill@ntu.ac.uk

