

Sommet mondial des universités 2011 Global university summit 2011

Building knowledge in the 21st century through cooperation and exchange

Sustainable development & knowledge society

What structuring and cooperation
for universities in the 21st century ?

PARIS & DIJON DECLARATION

In recognition of the recent traumatic events faced by Japan and in solidarity with its people, this Summit is dedicated to Japan.

Building on the previous Summits in Sapporo (2008), Turin (2009), Vancouver (2010) where the importance of sustainable development, with the urgent need for implementing effective government policies in order to deal with current economic, social and environmental problems, led to stressing the vital role of universities and higher education establishments in this field.

Recognising the major role of universities and higher education establishments as important actors in civil society in their teaching and research capacities, as places where knowledge is created and handed on, and in their ability to build long term projects, and train future generations.

Emphasising the university's central role in expanding knowledge for the benefit of humanity and environmental sustainability at global, national and local levels, and the capacity of the university to reach beyond political and cultural boundaries.

Underlining the importance of the university's role and its responsibility in moral, ethical and solidarity terms, made all the more relevant because the issues concern the evolution of our environment on the scale of a human lifetime as well as the prospects for future generations.

Rectors and University Presidents met in Paris on the occasion of the fourth 2011 Summit which was hosted by the University of Dijon. This was preceded by the students' Summit in Besançon.

Both events were founded on the results of the previous Summits and the pre-requisites mentioned in the introduction and convened by the Conference of French University Presidents (CPU) and the G8 University Council.

Invitees included representatives from the countries of the G8-G20 and beyond in order to give a voice to the various countries of the five continents – be they developed, emerging or developing –, and is now called the "Global University Summit".

The overarching theme of the Global University Summit - 2011 was: **“Sustainable development and the Knowledge society: What structuring and cooperation for society in the 21st century”**.

The Summit addressed three themes:

- Networks and cooperation: “universities and territories”
- International mobility of students and research fellows
- Virtual networks and distance cooperation

The Paris & Dijon Declaration commits the university presidents, rectors and vice chancellors attending the Summit to the following actions, based on ethical, equitable and solidarity principles of sustainable development at local as well as global level, and reaffirming that education is a public good, asks Heads of State and Governments for support.

A. Networks and cooperation: “universities and territories”

- Universities should play a central role in responding to issues at a local level within their immediate territory and also in finding sustainable solutions to issues at national and international/supranational levels. Universities need to be responsive to local needs and inclusive of all sectors of society. They are also key players in developing sustainable solutions for global issues in areas such as energy, the environment, the economy, industry, agriculture, land use planning and demographic change.
- Universities need to work in partnership with all stakeholders: national governments, local authorities, industry and civil society. They have an invaluable contribution to make to the decision-making process and their views need to be taken into account.
- The involvement of these stakeholders in the core mission of universities is critical to universities’ success in achieving excellence in research, transferring knowledge, innovating, training professionals.
- Working in partnership with government, industry and civil society, universities play a key role in promoting social cohesion, equity and economic sustainability. This needs to be more fully acknowledged by governments.
- Universities should create and work through networks with other universities at both local, regional and supra/international levels. In particular it is important for universities to work with other universities which are at different stages of development. Effective, responsive and inclusive universities are essential in the social, political and economic development of all regions of the world.

B. International mobility of students and research fellows

- Both universities and Governments should view mobility as integral part of international strategies, not as a single hallmark of internationalization.
- Universities and Governments should try to balance between inbound and outbound movements and promote mobility not only for students and researchers but also for administrative staff.

- *Universities and Governments need to be creative and develop new models for mobility, including all kinds of exchanges based on excellence, competence and affinity.*
- *Universities must continue to make an effort to make mobility more attractive by providing proper curricula, language environment, information services, student services and financial assistance as well as making credit transfers easier.*
- *Universities and Governments should install proper measurement of success, including but not limited to the number of incoming and outgoing students, researchers and academic staff, satisfaction and quality of international experiences and contribution to career development.*

C. Virtual networks and distance cooperation

- *As we progress more deeply into a networked age, universities are challenged by society to become a driving force to create and disseminate knowledge - using innovative, effective, and dynamic approaches - derived from and for the networked world. These approaches and tools should support cooperation and networking, preserving cultural diversity, community values and local identity.*
- *Universities should encourage the setting up of digital campuses to enable the production and dissemination of knowledge, professional training, teaching support, refresher training for teachers.*
- *University should promote projects and research in the field of energy-saving and environmental protection supported by interactive digital media. Their efficacy should be measurable and quantifiable.*
- *In order to use knowledge effectively, universities are required to structure areas of sciences and technologies that are currently undergoing fragmentation so that knowledge can be effectively applied to various problems of the real world. University should encourage "Knowledge Structuring" implementing the Network of Networks as proposed in the Sapporo Declaration.*
- *Universities should recognize the opportunities offered by open access in order to disseminate knowledge and to overcome the digital divide in society, from both a local and an international perspective, narrowing socio-economic gaps.*
- *Universities should provide access to high-level higher education degrees to the widest possible public, capitalizing on the new possibilities offered by interactive digital media. Universities should facilitate learning amongst their students to act as responsible citizens in the use of interactive digital media.*

As higher education is a prerequisite for social cultural and economic development, and for democracy in our societies, the signatories of this Declaration call on the Heads of States and Government to support these commitments.

The next Global Universities Summit will be held in 2012.