



UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY

**Media Centre**  
5-53-70 Jingumae  
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-8925 Japan  
[www.unu.edu](http://www.unu.edu)

## PRESS RELEASE

19 January 2012 • PRE-12-02

**Contact:**

Regional; see end of release.

---

# United Nations University Again Ranked Among Top Ten of Global Government-Affiliated Think Tanks

## UNU-WIDER Also Again Ranked Among Top Ten of International Development Think Tanks

---

The United Nations University (UNU) currently ranks 6th among the world's "Best Government-Affiliated Think Tanks", and its World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) ranks 6th among the global "Top-Thirty International Development Think Tanks", according to the 2011 *Global Go-To Think Tanks Report*.

### About the 2011 *Global Go-To Think Tanks Report*

The 2011 *Global Go-To Think Tanks Report* (an annual report produced by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program of the International Relations Program, University of Pennsylvania) was launched on 18 January 2012 in events at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. The report comprises of the results of the 2011 rankings as well as a summary of the major trends and issues with respect to think tanks worldwide.

The 2011 rankings are based on a survey of 6,545 think tanks from 182 countries as well as some 1,500 policy makers, journalists, and regional and subject area experts from 120 countries. Expert panels of almost 800 members from around the world — spanning the political spectrum and drawing from a wide variety of disciplines and sectors — subsequently worked to refine and validate the ranking lists.

Given the rigor and scope of the process, the *Global Go-To Think Tanks Report* rankings have been described as "the insider's guide to the global marketplace of ideas". To download a copy of the 2011 report from the UNU website, see <http://bit.ly/xoEOVY>.

The 2011 rankings are distilled from a universe of 5,329 nominated think tanks from around the world.

### UNU Ranked 6th in Two Categories

The United Nations University was ranked as number 6 in the "Best Government-Affiliated Think Tanks" category (see table 1 below) and, through its institute UNU-WIDER in Finland, as number 6 in the "Top-Thirty International Development Think Tanks" category (see table 2 below) — two of 31 functional and regional categories covered by the 2011 report.

UNU's number 6 rankings are one-slot advances from the rankings of the 2010 *Global Go-To Think Tanks Report*, when UNU and UNU-WIDER were both ranked 7th in their respective categories.

Prof. Dr. Konrad Osterwalder, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Rector of the United Nations University, welcomed news of UNU's ranking: "We are very pleased that the work of UNU has again been

## United Nations University Again Ranked Among Top Ten of Global Government-Affiliated Think Tanks

---

evaluated so positively by think tank directors, scholars, policy makers, donors and journalists from around the world. Although such listings must be taken with a grain of salt, I believe our sixth-place rank confirms the success of UNU's continuing efforts as an academic and research organization within the United Nations, and our role as a bridge between the United Nations system and the international academic and policy-making communities."

UNU is active in five interlinked, interdependent thematic clusters: (i) Peace, Security and Human Rights; (ii) Development Governance; (iii) Population and Health; (iv) Global Change and Sustainable Development; and (v) Science, Technology and Society. For twice-weekly articles covering the UNU's work in these areas, see <http://unu.edu/articles>.

Professor Finn Tarp, Director of the UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (one of the global UNU system of 15 institutes and programmes in 13 countries) also welcomed the new ranking: "We highly appreciate the continued recognition of our work. UNU-WIDER strives to be a high-quality, policy-oriented research and capacity building institution, dedicated to achieving the central goals of the United Nations system, including poverty reduction and sustainable and equitable development."

"The UNU global system of institutes and programmes is unique in the academic world as well as among think tanks", added Rector Osterwalder. "It enables UNU to provide practical, user-focused scientific results from an interdisciplinary, problem-oriented and global perspective. Recognition by our peers and subject-area experts, as evidenced by these 2011 rankings, encourages us to further enlarge our research and postgraduate education activities, and to intensify our knowledge and capacity development efforts, especially in developing countries."

### Background

The **United Nations University (UNU)** acts as the academic arm of the United Nations system. The overarching theme of UNU's work is "sustainability" — ensuring that today's problems are addressed in a manner that fulfils the needs of present generations without endangering the needs of future generations — with the particular aim of assisting developing countries. Established by the UN General Assembly in 1973 as "an international community of scholars, engaged in research, postgraduate training and dissemination of knowledge in furtherance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations", UNU operates through a worldwide nexus of 12 institutes and 3 programmes that are coordinated by UNU Centre in Tokyo.

The **Global Go-To Think Tanks Report** rankings are compiled by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program of the International Relations Program, University of Pennsylvania. Initiated in 2006, these annual reports seek to evaluate performance and to identify leading think tanks throughout the world. The judgment criteria include an institution's ability to retain top-level analysts and scholars, the richness and rigor of its research, its access to policymakers, and its ability to influence policy decisions in such diverse domains as international security, globalization and governance, the international economy, the environment, poverty reduction and global health.

## United Nations University Again Ranked Among Top Ten of Global Government-Affiliated Think Tanks

---

**Table 1: Best Government-Affiliated Think Tanks (Top 10)**

1. Congressional Research Service – United States
2. German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik SWP) – Germany
3. World Bank Institute (WBI), World Bank – United States
4. Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) – Norway
5. Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI) – United Kingdom
- 6. United Nations University (UNU) – Japan**
7. Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) – Japan
8. Center for Eastern Studies (OSW) – Poland
9. Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, German Development Institute (GDI) – Germany
10. Asian Development Bank Institute – Japan

**Table 2: Top-Thirty International Development Think Tanks (Top 10)**

1. Brookings Institution – United States
2. Center for Global Development – United States
3. Overseas Development Institute (ODI) – United Kingdom
4. Harvard Center for International Development – United States
5. Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, German Development Institute (GDI) – Germany
- 6. United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) – Finland**
7. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars – United States
8. Institute of Development Studies – United Kingdom
9. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) – United Kingdom
10. Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) – Germany

### Media Contacts

- **Tokyo:** William Auckerman, UNU Media Centre  
(auckerman@unu.edu, Tel.: +81-3-5467-1331)
- **New York:** L. Abu-Khadra, UNU Office at the United Nations  
(abukhadra@unu.edu, Tel.: +01-917-367-3502)
- **Bonn:** Alice Fišer, UNU Vice Rectorate in Europe  
(fiser@vie.unu.edu, Tel.: +49-228-815-0219)
- **Helsinki:** Lorraine Telfer-Taivainen, UNU-WIDER  
(telfer@wider.unu.edu, Tel.: +358-9-615-99236)