

# Charter of the United Nations University

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*In 1969, at its 24th session, the United Nations General Assembly considered the question of establishing an international university to be devoted to the United Nations Charter objectives of peace and progress. At that session, the General Assembly invited the UN Secretary-General to undertake, in cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), an expert study on the feasibility of such a university (resolution 2573 (XXIV)). The question was further considered at the following two sessions (resolutions 2691 (XXV) and 2822 (XXVI)).*

*On 11 December 1972, at its 27th session, the UN General Assembly approved the establishment of an international university under the auspices of the United Nations, to be known as the United Nations University (resolution 2951 (XXVII)).*

*On 6 December 1973, at its 28th session, the UN General Assembly formally adopted the Charter of the United Nations University (A/9149/Add.2) (resolution 3081 (XXVIII)).*

*On 21 December 2009, at its 64th session, the UN General Assembly approved two amendments (additions) to the Charter of the United Nations University: article I, paragraph 8 and article IX, paragraph 2bis (A/RES/64/225).*

*On 20 December 2013, at its 68th session, the UN General Assembly approved two amendments to the Charter of the United Nations University: article IV, paragraph 1 and paragraph 3 (A/RES/68/236).*

## ARTICLE I

### Purposes and Structure

1. The United Nations University shall be 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. In achieving its stated objectives, it shall function under the joint sponsorship of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (hereinafter referred to as "UNESCO"), through a central programming and coordinating body and a network of research and postgraduate training centres and programmes located in the developed and developing countries.
2. The University shall devote its work to research into the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare that are the concern of the United Nations and its agencies, with due attention to the social sciences and the humanities as well as natural sciences, pure and applied.
3. The research programmes of the institutions of the University shall include, among other subjects, coexistence between peoples having different cultures, languages and social systems; peaceful relations between States and the maintenance of peace and security; human rights; economic and social change and development; the environment and the proper use of resources; basic scientific research and the application of the results of science and technology in the interests of development; and universal human values related to the improvement of the quality of life.
4. The University shall disseminate the knowledge gained in its activities to the United Nations and its agencies, to scholars and to the public, in order to increase dynamic interaction in the worldwide community of learning and research.
5. The University and all those who work in it shall act in accordance with the spirit of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitution of UNESCO and with the fundamental principles of contemporary international law.
6. The University shall have as a central objective of its research and training centres and programmes the continuing growth of vigorous academic and scientific communities everywhere and particularly in the developing countries, devoted to their vital needs in the fields of learning and research within the framework of the aims assigned to those centres and programmes in the present Charter. It shall

endeavour to alleviate the intellectual isolation of persons in such communities in the developing countries which might otherwise become a reason for their moving to developed countries.

7. In its postgraduate training the University shall assist scholars, especially young scholars, to participate in research in order to increase their capability to contribute to the extension, application and diffusion of knowledge. The University may also undertake the training of persons who will serve in international or national technical assistance programmes, particularly in regard to an interdisciplinary approach to the problems with which they will be called upon to deal.
8. The University shall grant and confer master's degrees and doctorates, diplomas, certificates and other academic distinctions under conditions laid down for that purpose in the statutes by the Council of the University.

#### ARTICLE II

### **Academic Freedom and Autonomy**

1. The University shall enjoy autonomy within the framework of the United Nations. It shall also enjoy the academic freedom required for the achievement of its objectives, with particular reference to the choice of subjects and methods of research and training, the selection of persons and institutions to share in its tasks, and freedom of expression. The University shall decide freely on the use of the financial resources allocated for the execution of its functions.
2. The Rector, with the approval of the Council of the University, shall conclude on behalf of the United Nations such agreements with countries where the University operates as are necessary to ensure academic freedom and autonomy.

#### ARTICLE III

### **Organization**

1. The University shall consist of:
  - (a) A Council which shall serve as the governing board of the University;
  - (b) A Rector, who shall be responsible to the Council for the direction, administration, programming and coordination of the University;

- (c) A University Centre to assist the Rector in the programming, coordination, support, administration and financing of the overall University programme, with a high-level staff responsible to the Rector, and organized so as to ensure effective and prompt action;
  - (d) The research and training centres and programmes.
2. For purposes of advanced research and postgraduate training, the Council of the University may designate, on grounds of academic excellence, certain institutions and centres, or parts thereof, particularly in developing countries, as associated institutions of the University, on terms and conditions to be decided on by the Council.
  3. In order to accomplish its purposes and programmes, the University may organize internationally coordinated research with appropriate institutions and individuals in various parts of the world, by contractual or other arrangements.

#### ARTICLE IV

### **Council of the University**

1. There shall be a Council of the University (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”), to be established on a broad geographical basis with due regard to major academic, scientific, educational and cultural trends in the world, taking into account the various fields of study, with appropriate representation of young scholars. The Council shall have twelve members serving in their individual capacity, who shall be appointed jointly by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO, in consultation with the agencies and programmes concerned, including the United Nations Institute for Training and Research\* (hereinafter referred to as “UNITAR”), and taking into account the views of appropriate representative bodies. The Rector shall be a member of the Council.
2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Director-General of UNESCO and the Executive Director of UNITAR shall be *ex officio* members of the Council. Representatives of other United Nations organs and agencies shall be invited to attend as appropriate. The Council may invite representatives of concerned non-governmental organizations and academic bodies to attend as observers.

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\* Established in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1934 (VIII) of 11 December 1963.

3. The term of office shall be six years, provided that, of the members first appointed pursuant to paragraph 1 above, the terms of six shall expire at the end of three years and the terms of the remaining six at the end of six years. No appointed member of the Council may serve continuously for more than six years. The Council shall be consulted in regard to the replacement of retiring members.
4. The Council shall:
  - (a) Formulate principles and policies which shall govern the activities and operations of the University;
  - (b) Adopt such statutes as may be necessary for the application of the Charter;
  - (c) Decide upon the setting up or incorporation of the research and training centres and programmes which are to constitute the totality of the University in developed or developing countries, establishing standards for their operation either on its own authority, in cases where they are being set up, or by agreement in cases where they are being incorporated;
  - (d) Consider and approve the work programme and adopt the budget of the University on the basis of proposals submitted to it by the Rector;
  - (e) Consider reports of the Rector on the activities of the University and on the execution of its plans of work;
  - (f) Issue directives and take measures within the framework of the present Charter;
  - (g) Make whatever recommendations it may deem either necessary or desirable for the effective functioning of the University;
  - (h) Report annually to the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Executive Board of UNESCO, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO, respectively, on the work of the University;
  - (i) Create such subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary.
5. The Council shall meet in regular session at least once a year, and shall be convened by the Rector. It shall elect its Chairman and other officers and shall adopt rules of procedure, including procedures for convening special sessions as necessary.
6. The Council shall consider the methods of financing the University with a view to ensuring the effectiveness of its future operations, their continuity and the University's autonomous character within the framework of the United Nations. It shall also consider the various kinds of arrangements under which institutions and individuals may be associated with its work, and the criteria to be met by such institutions and individuals in order to ensure the maintenance of the highest academic standards.

7. The Council shall grant to research and training centres and programmes, particularly those in developing countries, adequate resources to ensure that the academic staff, equipment and working conditions meet the highest standards for research and training.

#### ARTICLE V

### **Rector of the University**

1. The Rector of the University shall be appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in conformity with the following procedure. The Council shall designate its Chairman and two other members to a Nominating Committee, to which the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO shall appoint one member each. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a panel of not less than three and not more than five names, arranged in alphabetical order, for consideration by the Council. The Council may approve the proposed panel or may refer it back to the Nominating Committee. When the Council has approved the panel, it shall transmit it to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO. The Secretary-General, after consultation with the Director-General of UNESCO, and with his concurrence, shall appoint one of the candidates as Rector.
2. The Rector shall normally serve for five years and shall be eligible for reappointment for one more term of five years. Conditions of the service of the Rector shall be determined by the Council in consultation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
3. The Rector shall be the chief academic and administrative officer of the University and shall have overall responsibility for the direction, organization, administration and programmes of the University, in accordance with the general policies and criteria formulated by the Council. The Rector shall, *inter alia*:
  - (a) Submit the plan of work and the budget estimates of the University to the Council for its consideration and approval;
  - (b) Direct the activities connected with the execution of the research and training programmes and authorize the expenditures provided in the budget approved by the Council;
  - (c) Appoint the personnel of the University in accordance with article VIII, paragraphs 6 and 7 below, following procedures approved by the Council, so as to

- ensure the highest intellectual and moral quality of that personnel;
- (d) Direct the staff of the University;
  - (e) Set up such advisory bodies as may be necessary, including where appropriate representatives of interested United Nations organs and agencies, and of public and private organizations particularly concerned with the activities of the University;
  - (f) Make arrangements with governments and international as well as national public and private organizations with a view to offering and receiving services related to the activities of the University;
  - (g) After consultation with the Chairman of the Council and subject to the provisions of article IX below, accept, on behalf of the University, voluntary contributions and gifts to the University from governments, international and national organizations, foundations and other non-governmental sources, for all purposes related to the activities of the University;
  - (h) Coordinate the total research and training programmes of the University with the activities of the United Nations and its agencies and, so far as possible, with research programmes of the world scholarly community;
  - (i) Report to the Council in accordance with the rules of procedure on the activities of the University and the execution of its plans of work;
  - (j) Provide the necessary services to the Council.

#### ARTICLE VI

### **University Centre**

The University Centre shall assist the Rector in the performance of the following tasks:

- (a) Programme and plan subjects of research and areas of training for the University and conclude contracts for research and training activities with a view to achieving the aims and objectives of the University, and to ensuring the highest academic standards and universality of approach;
- (b) Administer the overall University programme and fund it in accordance with the approved budget;
- (c) Promote exchanges of scholars, scientific and technical ideas and information within the world academic community, particularly in developing countries, by making use as appropriate of techniques of conferences and workshops;
- (d) Serve as a depository of information regarding the expertise available on subjects of relevance to the work of the University, in cooperation with United

- Nations agencies and existing information systems;
- (e) Maintain an up-to-date roster of qualified scholars from all parts of the world who are experts in the present and prospective fields of research of the University, and assist the research and training centres and programmes in finding competent scholars as necessary;
  - (f) Maintain close coordination between the activities of the University and those of the organs and programmes of the United Nations, including UNITAR, and of United Nations agencies;
  - (g) Perform such other functions as the Rector may determine.

#### ARTICLE VII

### **Research and Training Centres and Programmes**

1. The University shall include a certain number of research and training centres and programmes established or to be established in various countries. Their creation and their incorporation to the University shall be by decision of the Council in accordance with the terms of article IV, paragraph 4(c) above.
2. Each research and training centre or programme shall be under the authority of a Director. The Directors shall collaborate with the Rector, in particular in order to ensure the coordination of programmes of research and training.
3. The Conference of Directors of research and training centres and programmes shall be called by the Rector periodically to review and evaluate programmes of research being undertaken, and advise and assist the Rector in the improvement of current programmes and in the definition and planning of new programmes for the University system.

#### ARTICLE VIII

### **Personnel of the University**

1. The academic and administrative staff of the University shall be selected with a view to achieving its stated objectives. The basic criteria for selection shall be the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, with due regard to appropriate representation in terms of geography, social systems, cultural traditions, age and sex.

2. The personnel of the University shall consist of:

- (a) Academic personnel;
- (b) Administrative personnel;
- (c) Trainees;

it being understood that the assignment of personnel to each of these categories shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the statutes adopted by the Council under the terms of article IV, paragraph 4(b) above.

3. The academic personnel shall be composed of:

- (a) The Rector;
- (b) The directing personnel, i.e. the Rector's senior collaborators and the Directors of the research and training centres and programmes;
- (c) Research personnel, visiting professors, visiting fellows and consultants, including young scholars.

All members of the academic personnel shall enjoy in their research and training work the academic freedom guaranteed by the provisions of article II above.

4. The Rector and — save as otherwise provided in the statutes adopted by the Council under the terms of article IV, paragraph 4(b) above — the academic personnel referred to in paragraph 3(b), and such administrative personnel as may be provided for by the Council in the University budget, shall be covered by the provisions of the Staff Regulations of the United Nations and Staff Rules, subject to such arrangements for special rules or terms of appointment as may be agreed upon by the Rector and the Secretary-General. Such personnel shall be officials of the United Nations within the meaning of Article 105 of the Charter of the United Nations and of other international agreements and United Nations resolutions defining the status of officials of the Organization, and Article 100 of the Charter shall apply to them.

5. The personnel referred to in paragraph 4 above shall be solely responsible to the Rector in the exercise of their functions.

6. The academic personnel referred to in paragraph 3(b) above and such administrative personnel as may be provided for in the University budget established by the Council shall be appointed by the Rector on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, except in case of agreements to the contrary foreseen in article IV, paragraph 4(c) above.

7. The academic and administrative personnel other than the personnel referred to in paragraphs 4 and 6 above, and the trainees shall, in the case of personnel serving at the University Centre, be appointed by the Rector, and in other cases shall be appointed in accordance with the terms of the decision of the Council establishing the research and training centre or programme in question, or of the agreement bringing such centre or programme within the framework of the University. Such staff shall enjoy any privileges or immunities which may be provided for in agreements concluded under article II above, but shall normally not be officials of the United Nations.

#### ARTICLE IX

### **Finance and Budget**

1. Capital costs and recurrent costs of the University shall be met from voluntary contributions for the University, or from the income derived therefrom, made:
  - (a) By governments, directly or through the United Nations, the specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency;
  - (b) By non-governmental sources, including foundations, universities and individuals.
2. The Rector may also accept assistance for the University's projects, particularly fellowships, from the United Nations, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other intergovernmental organizations.
- 2bis. The costs of the postgraduate degree programmes of the University, as referred to in article I, paragraph 8, above may also be met from tuition fees and related charges.
3. Contributions which may directly or indirectly involve an immediate or ultimate financial liability for the University, or which involve a new activity not yet included in its programme, may be accepted only with the approval of the Council.
4. The funds of the University shall be kept in a special account to be established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the United Nations.
5. The funds of the University shall be held and administered solely for the purposes of the University. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall perform all

necessary financial and accounting functions for the University, including the custody of its funds, and shall prepare and certify the annual accounts showing the status of the University's special account.

6. The Financial Regulations and the Financial Rules of the United Nations shall apply to the financial operations of the University subject to such special rules and procedures as the Rector, in agreement with the Secretary-General, may issue after consultations with the Council and with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions of the United Nations.
7. The Rector shall prepare the budget estimates for the University in a manner consistent with the United Nations regulations, rules, policies and procedures. The estimates, together with the comments and recommendations thereon of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, shall be submitted to the Council for approval. The budget, as approved by the Council, shall be transmitted to the General Assembly together with the report of the Council.
8. Funds administered by and for the University shall, as provided in the Financial Regulations of the United Nations, be subject to audit by the United Nations Board of Auditors.
9. The general administrative, personnel and financial services of the United Nations may be utilized by the University on conditions determined in consultation between the Secretary-General and the Rector, it being understood that no extra cost to the regular budget of the United Nations is incurred.

#### ARTICLE X

#### **Location**

1. As a worldwide system of research and training centres and programmes, the University will have its location at the site of each centre or programme.
2. The University shall have its headquarters in the Tokyo metropolitan area, where the University authorities and the University Centre shall be located.

#### ARTICLE XI

### **Status and Authority**

1. The University, as defined in article III, paragraph 1 above, is an autonomous organ of the General Assembly of the United Nations and shall enjoy the status, privileges and immunities provided in Articles 104 and 105 of the Charter of the United Nations and other international agreements and United Nations resolutions relating to the status, privileges and immunities of the Organization.
2. The University may acquire and dispose of real and personal property, and may take other legal actions necessary to the performance of its functions.
3. The University may enter into agreements, contracts or arrangements with governments, organizations, institutions, firms or individuals for the purpose of carrying out its activities.
4. Persons travelling on the official business of the University shall, on request, be provided with appropriate United Nations travel documents.

#### ARTICLE XII

### **Amendments**

1. Amendments to this Charter may be made by the General Assembly of the United Nations.
2. After consultation with UNESCO, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, at the request of the Council or after consultation with it, may propose amendments.

#### ARTICLE XIII

### **Transitional Provision**

Pending the recommendations of the Council in respect of the conditions of service of the different categories of the University's personnel, their status will be determined as provided in article VIII, paragraphs 4 to 7, above.