The United Nations University (UNU) was established by the UN General Assembly in 1973 with a mandate to “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”. As both a research-focused university – with the academic freedom that entails – and a think tank within the UN system, UNU is uniquely positioned to provide objective, evidence-based research that inspires confidence among high-level policymakers and contributes to today’s most important policy discussions.

UNU serves as a bridge between the UN system and worldwide learning and research communities, particularly in the developing world. In addition to drawing on the expertise of more than 670 skilled researchers and support personnel, the University collaborates with multiple networks of expert partners to conduct solutions-focused research and offer specialised postgraduate training. UNU disseminates its research through a range of easily accessible publications and via events, websites, and social media.

This report describes UNU’s activities and achievements in 2019. It does not attempt to provide an exhaustive inventory of the University’s operations and accomplishments, but rather offers an overview of the thematic and geographic scope of UNU’s work. Because the current research programme of UNU is closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the year’s activities are presented to show their alignment with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

This report also presents three feature articles as well as an organisation overview, including a five-year retrospective on efforts to implement the priorities of the UNU Strategic Plan 2015–2019.

If you would like additional information about the work of UNU, we invite you to visit the following online resources:

- the global UNU system website (unu.edu)
- previous years’ UNU Annual Reports (unu.edu/publications/annualreports)
- the UNU Sustainable Development Explorer (unu.edu/explore)
- the monthly UNU INSIGHTS newsletter (unu.edu/insights)

UNU research addresses every SDG. Most projects contribute to multiple Goals.
Rector’s Welcome

It was a half-century ago, in 1969, that the United Nations General Assembly first considered a proposal by the Secretary-General to establish “an international university to be devoted to the United Nations Charter objectives of peace and progress”. After an expert study and further deliberation, the General Assembly formally adopted the UNU Charter in 1973, and in 1975 UNU launched its activities as a think tank for the United Nations system.

Throughout its lifespan, UNU has produced research with strong academic and scientific value linked to the United Nations’ objectives. Over time, however, the focus of UNU’s activities had shifted increasingly towards academia, and away from the generation of policy-relevant knowledge as envisioned by the Charter.

When I joined UNU as Rector in 2013, I undertook, at the request of then-United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, a critical reappraisal of the University’s priorities with the aim of reorienting UNU’s efforts to better serve the policy needs of the United Nations system. With the support of the UNU Council, I initiated a University-wide discussion that culminated in the vision laid out in the *UNU Strategic Plan 2015–2019* — a vision we believed would ensure that UNU research occupies a meaningful place in UN policymakers’ toolkits and informs UN decision-making on key issues.

As 2019 marked the fifth and final year of the *UNU Strategic Plan 2015–2019*, this report includes a section that looks back at UNU’s accomplishments over the past five years. The report also highlights last year’s activities and successes, and provides an overview of UNU’s structure, resources, and governance.

This was also a notable year in that six new members joined UNU’s governing board, the UNU Council. I would like to heartily welcome the new Council members and offer my sincere thanks to the continuing and outgoing members for their dedication and support.

In closing, I would like to extend special thanks to UNU’s host governments and donors, to our collaborators within the UN system and among the global academic and research communities, and to all UNU personnel around the world. Without your support, UNU’s success in delivering relevant, authoritative research and policy advice within and beyond the United Nations system would not be possible.

Warm thanks also to all of you who attend UNU events, take our training courses, browse our websites, follow us on social media, and read our publications. All of us in the UNU family are grateful for your continuing interest and support.

David M. Malone
Rector of the United Nations University
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
Features

UNU takes an interdisciplinary, holistic approach to research on pressing global problems. UNU generates knowledge to support an evidence-based rethinking of policies by providing decision-makers with fresh perspectives on important policy issues and proactive analyses of emerging concerns.

To better highlight UNU’s people, approach, and outputs, this section offers examples of the University’s work on three important global issues: modern slavery, climate change, and gender and health.
The prohibition of slavery is one of the strongest norms in international law, yet modern forms of slavery and forced labour still affect an estimated 40 million people around the world. Under Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, UN Member States committed to take immediate and effective measures to end forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking by 2030, and the worst forms of child labour by 2025. To meet Target 8.7, we will need to reduce the number of people affected by over 10,000 individuals per day – an effort that requires global system-level change.

For the last five years, the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR) – and previously UNU’s Office in New York – has been supporting system-level transformation that will strengthen the global multilateral system’s response to eradicating modern slavery.
Strengthening global anti-slavery efforts

UNU’s initial effort focused on the international criminal justice system. The research project Strengthening the Multilateral Response to Modern Slavery culminated in a special issue of the Journal of International Criminal Justice as well as a commitment by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to help end slavery. Soon after, the ICC opened an investigation into contemporary slavery in Libya, and in 2018 the UN Security Council, for the first time, adopted sanctions on human traffickers.

Measuring our progress

A second project as part of UNU-CPR’s Modern Slavery Programme focuses on enhancing global knowledge systems by working to assemble (in collaboration with several research organisations) the best available evidence on how to achieve Target 8.7, and to present this evidence in ways that maximise its utility for policy actors.

Launched at the UN General Assembly in September 2018, the project – Delta 8.7 – is named after the mathematical symbol for measuring change (Δ) and SDG Target 8.7. It is supported by the UK Modern Slavery Innovation Fund with initial seed funding from the US Department of Labor and the International Labour Organization. Delta 8.7’s course is shaped by a 35-member Reference Group of researchers, government agencies, UN bodies, practitioners, and survivors. The platform is a contribution to Alliance 8.7, the global partnership of organisations working to achieve Target 8.7.

Data visualisation is central to Delta 8.7’s attempt to identify what works and encourage policymakers to take action. The project’s website (delta87.org) presents country dashboards that compile the best available evidence and data on modern slavery, forced labour, human trafficking, and child labour in each country, and brings the issues to life through a series of interactive audio-visual stories built in collaboration with Reference Group members and Carnegie Mellon University. This work has been presented to World Economic Forum audiences in Dalian, Davos, and New York, and to policy audiences from No. 10 Downing Street to Brasilia.

“Delta 8.7 aims to provide the knowledge needed to take effective measures to meet Target 8.7”, explains Alice Eckstein, Programme Manager for the UNU-CPR Modern Slavery Programme. “With 57 country data dashboards, dozens of insights from leading anti-slavery experts and policymakers, and policy research workshops to connect with local actors, we are making important strides to ensure that evidence-based approaches are being taken towards achieving this target.”

In its current phase of work, Delta 8.7 explores the power of artificial intelligence (AI) and computational science to unlock new insights into the best approaches to tackle modern slavery. Working with research partners including the University of Nottingham’s Rights Lab, the Computing Community Consortium, and The Alan Turing Institute, Delta 8.7 has built an AI research coalition – Code 8.7 – that works closely with survivors and survivor-focused organisations like the Survivor Alliance and AnnieCannons. In Brazil, Code 8.7 is working with the consumer credit bureau Experian Serasa to build a research sandbox that accelerates insights into vulnerability to modern slavery and forced labour.

Visit the Delta 8.7 global knowledge platform website: delta87.org
Mobilising the financial sector

A third area of focus for UNU-CPR is the global financial system — a lever that can move the entire global economy towards achieving Target 8.7.

Working with the governments of Liechtenstein, Australia, and the Netherlands along with other public and private sector partners — as well as with Nobel laureate and microfinance pioneer Muhammad Yunus — UNU-CPR helped establish a public-private partnership that mobilises the global financial sector to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking. This effort, known as the Liechtenstein Initiative for a Financial Sector Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, was launched in September 2018, with UNU-CPR serving as secretariat to a commission of 25 financial sector and anti-slavery leaders, including two survivors of modern slavery.

During its one-year mandate, the commission, chaired by the CEO of the UN-backed Principles for Responsible Investment, held four consultations on how the financial sector can help prevent modern slavery and human trafficking through compliance and regulatory regimes, responsible lending and investment, financial inclusion, financial technology, and international cooperation.

The resulting report, "Unlocking Potential: A Blueprint for Mobilizing Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking", was launched at the UN General Assembly in 2019. The Blueprint sets out five goals towards which financial sector actors can work through individual and collective action, and specifies 30 actions to achieve those goals.

The same partners subsequently worked with UNU-CPR to establish a Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST) initiative to promote global implementation of the Blueprint. FAST is partnering with 13 major banks in five countries and survivor service organisations to facilitate the access of survivors of slavery to bank accounts.

FAST is also partnering with the Bali Process to promote implementation in the Asia-Pacific, particularly in the critical area of infrastructure financing. And a partnership with the Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists is bringing the FAST Blueprint to its 77,000 members worldwide, including through a free online training course.

Continuing the fight

UNU-CPR continues to think about how the realities of modern slavery will change by 2030, including how such factors as climate change and displacement, and demographic and employment patterns will influence those changes. Working with the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery in 2019, UNU-CPR crowd-sourced policy analysis through a public consultation, Addressing Tomorrow’s Slavery Today, that contributed to a report to the Human Rights Council and General Assembly.

Looking to the future, in the second quarter of 2020, UNU-CPR plans to publish a major study on the role of the global development sector in fighting modern slavery. In 2021, FAST will organise a review conference to consider the progress made in implementation, identifying lessons and developments, and exploring new opportunities.

“Modern slavery represents a tragic, global market failure. Our programming at UNU-CPR aims to help the UN system achieve SDG Target 8.7 by building evidence-based partnerships for system-level change.”

Dr James Cockayne
UNU-CPR Director
Climate change poses an imminent threat to sustainable human development and the preservation of our Earth’s natural ecosystems. To mitigate the pernicious effects of climate change, our efforts — whether at the level of national policymaking or individual lifestyle choices — must be based on a sound, scientific understanding of earth systems and human-environment interactions.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a United Nations body that provides governments with regular assessments of current climate science. It is supported by leading scientists from around the world who volunteer their time and expertise, reviewing thousands of scientific papers to provide a comprehensive analysis of what is known about the drivers of climate change, its impacts, and how adaptation and mitigation can reduce future risks.

The United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) has a long history of supporting the IPCC. Several of the institute’s top senior scientists have served as IPCC lead authors, including Academic Officer Dr Zita Sebesvari, who was a lead author of the 2019 IPCC “Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate” (SROCC).

The portentous findings of the SROCC, as well as research conducted by UNU-EHS on environmental vulnerability and adaptation options in low-lying coastal areas, demonstrate the complex interconnections between ecosystems and humans that underlie the realities of climate change and sea level rise.

**Evidence for Decision-making**

**The Science Behind Coastal Risk and Sea Level Rise**
Rising oceans and a vulnerable cryosphere

We all depend on the world’s oceans, which cover 71% of our planet’s surface, and the cryosphere, the frozen water that covers about 10% of Earth’s land area. The cryosphere, which provides unique habitats for plants and animals, is shrinking. Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets and glaciers are losing mass at increasing rates; mass loss from the Antarctic ice sheet over the period 2007–2016, for example, tripled relative to 1997–2006. And because the cryosphere and the oceans are so deeply interconnected, ice melting at the poles and on high mountains puts low-lying coastal communities at greater risk.

A key finding of the IPCC report is that the global mean sea level is rising, with a marked acceleration in recent decades. While there will be regional differences, it is predicted that by 2050 the mean global sea level will rise by 17 to 40 cm, which provides a robust basis for short-term adaptation planning.

Rising mean sea levels pose greater challenges for vulnerable areas, including those prone to land subsidence (gradual sinking of an area of land). As an example, for the megacity of Jakarta, Indonesia, which has been experiencing documented land subsidence, 20 cm of sea level rise will be a crucial strain. Coastal areas can be increasingly prone to flooding – such as Nadi Town, Fiji, which experiences periodic river and coastal flooding caused by a combination of elevated sea levels, heavy rainfall, and land subsidence of the river delta.

Mean sea level rise also exacerbates extreme sea level events, such as high tides and storm surges. By 2050, extreme sea level events that have been historically rare – once per century – are projected to occur once a year or more in many places, especially in tropical regions.

Researching human and community consequences

UNU-EHS research in Vietnam’s Mekong River Delta has shown that coastal saltwater intrusion is already changing land use and livelihoods. During the dry season, salt water now intrudes as far as 100 km inland due to the combined effect of lower river flows, changes in the riverbed, and land subsidence caused in part by increased groundwater pumping. Rising sea levels are adding to these pressures and intensifying saltwater intrusion and flooding.

As a result, water for drinking and crop irrigation becomes too saline. This increasing salinity has led to shifts in land use from rice farming to shrimp farming, which can yield a higher income. What farmers often fail to take into consideration, however, is that shrimp farming is inherently riskier than rice farming and does not provide the same level of financial stability. The consequences of a bad harvest can be catastrophic for individuals and families. There can be consequences for the community as well. The conversion of land to saltwater-based aquaculture is largely irreversible, so it is critical that land-use decisions be well considered.

In areas where salt water influences land use and available agricultural options, for example, space could be provided for ecosystems that buffer against coastal flooding and reduce erosion. UNU-EHS research has shown that mangroves and other coastal wetlands...
Informing public debate

Mitigation and adaptation efforts are complex and interlinked; what is possible or practical depends not just on technological capabilities and knowledge, but also on economic, social, and governance realities. Feeding interdisciplinary findings and evidence-based options into the policy debate and increasing public awareness about the scientific facts of climate change are at the heart of UNU’s work.

In addition to sharing the findings of the IPCC report and the impacts of sea level rise, UNU researchers take a holistic approach to the question of how we can best deal with the impacts of climate change while addressing the needs of the most vulnerable. Recent UNU projects have dealt with, inter alia, the impact of saltwater intrusion on soils and water resources; agricultural adaptation; climate-sensitive adaptation strategies to reduce flood risk; the vulnerabilities and risks of coastal urban and peri-urban areas; and the social and human rights aspects of climate-induced migration.

Research is vital if we hope to untangle the complex, evolving realities of climate change and sea level rise from persistent myths and prevailing prejudices. And evidence-based policies derived from that research are an essential foundation for implementing feasible adaptation and mitigation measures.

“A tale of two futures

The SROCC concludes that at the end of the century, the world could face two very different futures. If countries stick to the Paris Agreement and their commitment to reduce carbon emissions, sea level rise can likely be limited to not more than 50 cm – a level that will be challenging in many geographies, but can be addressed by adaptation. If the current emissions scenario continues without strong mitigation action, however, the world will face rising sea levels of at least one metre by 2100, and potentially four metres by 2300. By 2100, more intense and frequent extreme sea level events, together with trends in coastal development, will increase expected annual flood damage by two to three orders of magnitude.

But even if all greenhouse gas emissions stopped tomorrow, the sea level will continue to rise for many years because of the large heat capacity of the oceans. To cope, we must implement effective mitigation and adaptation solutions now; the longer we delay, the more difficult the task will be. Even with strong mitigation efforts, we will still need to take adaptation measures at the coast. And if we do not implement measures to cut emissions, we will soon face a scenario where adaptation will not be sufficient to reduce the risk to human lives and livelihoods.

“Melting ice sheets and sea level rise cannot be stopped and reverted easily. This is because sea level rise lags behind global warming, due in part to the large heat capacity of the oceans. We can influence the trajectory now by cutting down emissions. The later we start, the more likely it is that humanity will face a four-metre mean sea level rise by 2300. There will be no easy fixes.”

Dr Zita Sebesvari
Officer-in-Charge for the Director of UNU-EHS
Throughout history, women have suffered from deliberate discrimination. Yet it was not until the First World Conference on Women in 1975 that the global community formally acknowledged this injustice. Two more decades would pass before the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action declared gender equality and women’s empowerment to be essential priorities for achieving a prosperous, peaceful, and sustainable world.

The Beijing Declaration flagged women’s “inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services” as one of 12 critical areas of concern. Today, there is a growing understanding and recognition that the negative health impacts of inequitable gender norms, and other intersecting forms of discrimination, affect the health and well-being of women, men, and gender-nonconforming individuals.

The United Nations University’s research supports effective policies targeted towards ensuring gender equity in all aspects of life. In the realm of health policy, the UNU International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH) generates policy-relevant analysis by applying a gender lens to inform, guide, and advance a more gender-transformative health agenda.

Given the critical role of gender in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 3 (“good health and well-being”), UNU-IIGH supports the efforts of UN agencies, programmes, and Member States in reducing gender inequities in health.
Gender mainstreaming in health policy

In 2019, UNU-IIGH research focused on helping to answer the critical question: How can we ensure that countries, health systems, and international organisations deliver most effectively on gender equity in policies and programming for universal health coverage?

Part of the answer to this complex question can be found through gender mainstreaming — the process of assessing and responding to the implications for women and men of any planned action, such as legislation, policies, or programmes. The aim is to make women’s and men’s diverse concerns and experiences an integral dimension so that inequality and discrimination are not perpetuated.

Despite repeated commitments to the objectives of gender mainstreaming, it is often seen as less pertinent to health policymakers, or is implemented in a fragmented and unsustainable manner. While there appears to be increasing demand to integrate gender more intentionally, this is coupled with gender mainstreaming “fatigue” and uncertainty about the effectiveness of what many perceive to be a process-heavy exercise with unclear results.

To ensure continued interest and commitment, it is critical to build on the experiences, successes, and failures of the past 25 years. However, systematic documentation, assessment, and learning are lacking. Without this evidence and real commitment to change, gender mainstreaming will remain a tokenistic add-on, health investments will not be optimised, and gender inequities will not be overcome. UNU-IIGH researcher Dr Michelle Remme emphasises that “there are several evaluations and reports listing the challenges in mainstreaming gender in health, but there is limited systematic assessment of which approaches have worked to achieve change and programmatic impact, and why and how they have worked. This means that we may keep repeating the same mistakes and recommending flawed approaches to health programme implementers and policymakers, instead of focussing on effective strategies.”

Having adopted gender mainstreaming since 1997, the UN system is uniquely placed to provide leadership by harnessing its unrivalled geographical reach, breadth, and scope of operation; its banks of data; and promising practices in what has worked (or failed) in efforts to promote gender equity in health for communities, countries, and regions.

A hub of evidence for action

Building on this potential, in April 2019 UNU-IIGH and the World Health Organization co-convened a two-day consultation with UN health agencies, academics, and civil society experts to take stock of recent progress on gender-based approaches in health. Outcomes of the consultation were an agenda for priority research and action to disrupt the “business as usual” attitude, and support for the creation of a Policy Hub on Gender and Health — a repository for evidence, policy engagement, and practice-based learning.

Dr Rosemary Morgan of Johns Hopkins University framed the importance of the Policy Hub as “a platform in which gender and health specialists can come together in a non-competitive way. There is a need to break geographical, generational, and racial boundaries within this work with the aim of working horizontally. We need to better learn from each other.”

The priorities of the Policy Hub will align with the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All (SDG3 GAP). Launched in September 2019, the Action Plan unites 12 global health, development, and humanitarian agencies for more effective collaboration and greater impact at the country level. One of the 7 “accelerator themes” in the Plan is addressing the determinants of health through rights-based and gender-responsive approaches. According to Dr Remme, “the Policy Hub, coordinated by UNU-IIGH, will serve as a platform to generate and share evidence that can inform the work of the SDG3 GAP partners as they accelerate progress on gender equality in their health programming and country support”.

As part of this programme of work, the UNU-IIGH project What Works in Gender and Health: Learning from Practice illuminates the successes of gender mainstreaming in health — what approaches were successful for whom, in what circumstances, in what respects, and why – among five UN agencies working on global health. The project is identifying and socialising
successful approaches and strategies that can respond to gender inequities in health policy and practice, thereby transforming entrenched gendered power dynamics and promoting gender equality in the UN’s normative and programmatic work on health.

**Research at the intersection of health issues**

Successful gender mainstreaming drives progress on gender and health, but there are other intersecting areas that need to be addressed to bridge gaps in knowledge. UNU-IIGH is also investigating dimensions of health systems ranging from inequitable financing for women’s health issues and underinvestment in health programmes that promote gender equality, to how health systems impact communities.

At a 2019 expert meeting co-convened by UNU-IIGH and UN Women, stakeholders examined existing approaches for tracking financing for gender equality and women’s organisations in HIV responses, and identified good practices and emerging innovations. The findings and recommendations were shared with UNAIDS as part of their resource needs estimates for the global AIDS response.

And on the front lines of community healthcare in Mozambique, Niger, and Zambia, UNU-IIGH partnered with UNICEF to gain a better understanding of how gender-informed policies and practices can be applied in community health programmes to strengthen primary healthcare. Because community health workers typically are women, who are the communities’ main or only point of contact with the health system, gender inequalities adversely impact their work and the health of populations they serve. The project confirmed that local populations of both genders can derive benefit when a mostly female frontline health workforce is supported from a women’s rights-based perspective.

All of these research efforts point to a fundamental tenet of gender and health: Gender equality does not mean ignoring or expunging the differences between women and men, but rather developing a more nuanced understanding of the relational (social, economic, and political) aspects of gender, and the dynamic, intersecting factors that impact human health and well-being.

There is a considerable body of evidence and lessons learned from promoting gender equity in specific health areas, such as sexual and reproductive health, maternal health, gender-based violence, and HIV/AIDS. The challenge now is to expand its applicability to other areas, including newer, non-traditional spheres such as universal health coverage.

Based on a diverse portfolio of health-related research conducted by UNU-IIGH, as well as other UNU institutes, the United Nations University is identifying pragmatic, evidence-based insights and developing targeted health improvement and healthcare strategies through the lens of gender equality. These efforts contribute to SDG 3, SDG 5, and to the universal aspiration of achieving a peaceful, just, sustainable, and healthy world.

“We cannot accept the perpetuation of inequities in health policies and health systems. Gender inequality and harmful gender norms undermine the goal of universal health coverage. We must use evidence and collective learning to reshape health systems and to improve health and well-being for all, particularly for those who have been the most marginalised, discriminated against, and disadvantaged.”

Dr Michelle Remme
UNU-IIGH Research Fellow
Our Work on the Global Goals

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development prescribes an ambitious set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that represent “the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all”. The 17 SDGs address a wide range of global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, economic growth, peace, and justice.

In 2019, UNU researchers engaged in more than 200 research and capacity development projects worldwide that generated solutions for achievement of the SDGs. The following sections highlight how UNU’s activities in 2019 contributed to the 17 goals.
GOALS 1 & 2

No Poverty, Zero Hunger

More than 700 million people worldwide are living in extreme poverty, while even more – an estimated 820 million – must cope with chronic hunger and malnutrition. Children are disproportionately affected, with one out of five children living in extreme poverty. UNU research brings new perspectives to poverty reduction and food security by helping policymakers understand the causal socio-economic factors, advocating for policies that improve access to basic resources and services, and supporting communities ravaged by conflict or natural disasters.

PROJECT

Crop management
Ensuring the sustainability of high crop yields requires management practices that promote soil health. This UNU-FLORES project, conducted with partners in India, used an integrated approach to better understand the interactions of temporal soil pore system evolution and soil organic carbon dynamics. The findings contributed to better assessment of the impact that long-term climate and land use management strategies will have on soil health and the environment.

Impact of Soil and Crop Management Practices on Soil, Water, and Carbon Dynamics

Drought risk
The UNU-EHS GlobeDrought project seeks to co-design and co-develop a web-based drought risk information system. The system will comprehensively characterise drought events; quantify the risk of drought’s negative effects on water resources, crop productivity, and trade in food products; and highlight the need for international food aid. The project supplements global-scale analyses with in-depth analyses of countries heavily affected by droughts, including South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Brazil.

A Global Scale Tool for the Characterization of Droughts (GlobeDrought)

TRAINING

Agricultural management
UNU-INRA co-organised a three-day course in Accra on how Earth Observation (EO) software can improve natural resources management. The course provided participants with the theoretical background of EO systems, data, and analysis procedures, with a focus on the practical application of such data in agricultural management.

Hands-on Training on Earth Observation Data for the SDGs

REPORT

Food security
Two UNU-MERIT researchers co-authored a WFP report summarising the findings of three country case studies in Central Asia. The report provides an overview of social protection and safety net issues in relation to food security and nutrition, synthesises regional trends, and offers policy recommendations.

Scoping Study on Social Protection and Safety Nets for Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition in the Central Asia Region

EXPERT

“Land is a critical resource that provides food, fresh water, and other ecosystem services – but human and climatic impacts are increasingly rendering land unproductive. I am passionate about producing knowledge that can help enhance land productivity for sustainable improved food security and livelihoods.”

Gerald Forkuor
UNU-INRA Postdoctoral Fellow
“Local grammars of poverty — namely, the terms used to describe who are better- or worse-off — consistently distinguish between socially marginalised individuals and those with strong local social connections. ... Social relationships are vital to cope with vulnerability (shocks) and to facilitate social mobility. Being poor is intimately connected to one’s perceived ‘position’ in a wider society and, through this, one’s scope for upward movement.”

Excerpt from “Mozambique Case Study Shows That Poverty Is About Much More Than Income”, an article published by The Conversation; co-written by UNU-WIDER Research Fellow Sam Jones

**PROJECT**

**Aid delivery**
UNU-MERIT provides long-term support for the World Food Programme’s (WFP) work with refugee and vulnerable communities in Kenya. The institute’s work focuses on monitoring and evaluating the effects of long-term aid programmes for refugees and persons living in areas prone to food insecurity and climate disasters. The research also assesses user experiences and the efficiency and utility of technological innovations such as mobile phone money systems in delivering social transfers. This work will enhance efforts to support food security, livelihoods, and self-reliance.

*Monitoring and Evaluation of WFP’s Kenya Country Strategic Plan*

**LECTURE**

**Social security**
The topic of the 2019 WIDER Annual Lecture in Geneva was “Informality: Addressing the Achilles Heel of Social Protection in Latin America”. The lecturer was Santiago Levy, former Vice President of the Inter-American Development Bank and main architect of Progresa/Oportunidades (Mexico’s incentive-based health, nutrition, and education programme for the poor). He discussed the critical distinction between social insurance and social assistance.

**BOOK**

**Social protection**
This UNU-WIDER book challenges the common conception that social protection is primarily driven by international development agencies. It focuses instead on the critical role of political dynamics within specific African countries, detailing how power and politics at multiple levels of governance shape the extent to which political elites are committed to social protection, and the form that this commitment takes. It also explores the implications for future welfare regimes and state–citizen relations.

*The Politics of Social Protection in Eastern and Southern Africa*
Though people today generally live longer and healthier lives than their ancestors, at least half the world’s population lacks access to essential health services. Many suffer needlessly from lifestyle–based illness or preventable disease. And even in rich countries, health emergencies can push families into poverty. UNU’s policy–relevant analyses are helping to inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of health programmes. UNU’s work focuses on how public health governance can help stem the rise of noncommunicable diseases, respond to global pathogens, and reduce the health toll of natural disasters – with a special focus on the most vulnerable groups and regions.

EXPERT
“It is unfortunate that one’s gender and bank accounts still influence their access to healthcare. I work on projects and research that tackle the influence of gender and gender inequality in health access, universal health coverage, healthcare financing, and global health programming.”

Lavanya Vijayasingham
UNU-IIGH Postdoctoral Fellow
REPORT

Sexual health
UNU-IIGH’s technical inputs and analyses informed the development of WHO’s guideline on self-care interventions in the context of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The guideline is grounded in and advocates for a strengthened, comprehensive, people-centred approach to health and well-being — one that is underpinned by the key principles of human rights, ethics, and gender equality.

WHO Consolidated Guideline on Self-Care Interventions for Health: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS

Health, technology & gender
UNU-IIGH and UNU-CS hosted a week of seminars and workshops in Kuala Lumpur that provided opportunities to discuss critical gaps in evidence regarding gender-based inequities in the age of big data. The seminars delineated a UNU-IIGH research programme for generating evidence on what digital health innovations can advance gender equality and promote well-being for all. Various UN agencies and relevant technology industry stakeholders showcased their work, identified synergies, and discussed potential areas for joint research and collaboration.

Gender and Digital Health Week

PROJECT

Organic waste
The literature on organic waste composting is biased towards two distinct sectors — waste management or nutrient recycling — with little discussion of how these two perspectives can benefit from each other. This UNU-FLORES project brought together waste management experts and soil scientists to fill gaps in the science and explore the importance of organic waste composting in the context of sustainability, the circular economy, and waste recycling.

Organic Waste Composting through Nexus Thinking

PROJECT

Local decision-making
This UNU-IIGH project tested speculative design as a participatory method for policymaking in Malaysia, focusing on the well-being of older persons and persons with disabilities. A portfolio of multimedia resources shows what transport and mobility means to older adults, and a handbook supports the future adoption of participatory design methods by Malaysian government officials.

Proto Policy Asia

ARTICLE

“Preserving individual privacy and providing protection from potential discrimination based on sensitive health data requires putting fair, accountable, and transparent algorithms in place. It also requires regulations which limit data use that might cause harm to certain individuals or groups.”

Excerpt from “Small Data Approaches Provide Nuance and Context to Health Datasets”, an article published by The Conversation; co-written by UNU-CS Research Assistant Debora Irene Christine and Principal Research Fellow Mamello Thinyane
GOALS 4 & 10

Quality Education, Reduced Inequalities

Education is essential in acquiring the practical knowledge and critical thinking skills people need to live healthy and successful lives. Yet many around the world lack access to a quality education – a failing that contributes to persistent, widespread economic and social inequality. UNU supports the growth of vigorous academic and scientific communities worldwide. The University provides accessible learning opportunities through postgraduate degree programmes and specialised training, and conducts research that informs policymakers on where, why, and to what extent inequalities exist.

WORKING PAPER

Inequality & multilateralism
This UNU-CRIS paper argues that high levels of social inequality lead to distorted and manipulated public discourse. This, in turn, creates a more resentful electorate that can be persuaded to cast protest votes, thus triggering electoral volatility and producing elected leaders who tend to be polarising, demagogic, and nationalistic. The paper maintains that growing frictions within the global trading system and the present-day crisis in multilateralism cannot be disassociated from growing inequality at the state level.

Growing Inequality and Weakening Multilateralism: Is There a Connection?

TRAINING

Biotechnology for health
Rapid changes and advances in the field of biotechnology demand continuous updates of knowledge and skills. In 2019, UNU-BIOLAC supported eight courses on biotechnology topics for researchers in the Latin America and Caribbean region specialising in health issues. The courses offered specialized training in such topics as genetic diagnosis, neglected diseases and pharmaceutical production, industrial biotechnology, and biodiversity protection and conservation.

EXPERT

“International migration is driven by social transformation and increased mobility. My passion is to help policymakers be more compassionate in regulating immigration by placing migrants’ human agency rather than their economic attributes at the centre of the discussion.”

Chinedu Obi Temple
UNU-CRIS PhD Fellow
“If made accessible to a wide audience, e-learning can empower disadvantaged populations that risk getting left behind during the 4th industrial revolution brought on by the wide adoption of information and communication technologies.”

Excerpt from “How to Adapt Education for the Digital Age”, an article published by SciDev.Net; co-written by UNU-EHS Associate Academic Officer Zeinab El Maadawi

PROJECT
Leadership
This UNU-IAS project facilitates academic engagement between Africa and Japan by providing Japanese postgraduate students with fieldwork opportunities at partner universities in Africa. The participating students contribute to solving various challenges and issues related to sustainable development in Africa, and share their experiences and research findings with host country academics. Since 2013, 57 participants have worked at 23 institutions in 13 African countries. Global Leadership Training Programme in Africa

PROJECT
Social mobility
Concerns about rising inequality have engendered a renewed interest in social mobility, especially in the developing world. This UNU-WIDER project analyses what we know about social mobility in developing countries, with a focus on how to ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome. Researchers are investigating the underlying theories, concepts, types, measurements, and drivers of social mobility from an interdisciplinary perspective. Social Mobility in the Global South - Concepts, Measures, and Determinants

SYMPOSIUM & WORKSHOP
Inequality in human development
UNU-WIDER contributed to several UN events supporting SDG 10. These included a symposium at the UNDP Human Development Report Office in New York that focused on measuring inequality in the 21st century, where research from the UNU-WIDER Inequality in the Giants project was discussed. The institute also co-convened, with UN DESA, a workshop on inequality for the UN Secretariat, and presented insights from UNU-WIDER’s research and data from its World Income Inequality Database.

PROJECT
E-governance
UNU-EGOV is participating in an Erasmus+ project that seeks to go beyond existing state-of-the-art analysis of public and private sector electronic government, ICT-enabled governance, and digital government to establish a new “Government 3.0” scientific domain. The project will help participants to strengthen their capabilities as providers of high-level e-governance education and to facilitate the formation an e-governance support network. Scientific Foundations, Training, and Entrepreneurship Activities in the Domain of ICT-enabled Governance
Although the world is making progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment, women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence. Women remain underrepresented in leadership roles. A commitment to gender equality permeates everything we do at UNU. In addition to generating knowledge in support of policies that eliminate barriers for women and girls in health, education, employment, and access to resources, UNU sets gender equity objectives for all its projects and training activities. Internally, UNU has achieved gender parity at senior staff levels.

EXPERT
“Gender equality and reduced digital inequality are two significant dimensions of the opportunities provided by digital technology. My work seeks to promote gender equality, inclusion, and transparency by suggesting policy recommendations for reducing inequality in the digital transformation process.”

Mercy Makpor
UNU-EGOV Research Assistant
**PROJECT**

**Workplace gender barriers**

Recent progress in narrowing gender gaps in education, health, and political representation has not been matched by similar improvements in labour market outcomes for women. This UNU-WIDER project looks at the nature of women’s work in developing countries, and evaluates policy paths for creating productive, properly remunerated jobs for women. It considers, in particular, policies that address the “double burden” of low-income women, who must earn an income to support their families while also caring for other household members.

Women's Work — Routes to Economic and Social Empowerment

**BOOK**

**Empowering African Women**

Multiple UNU-MERIT researchers contributed to a book, published by Palgrave, that adds significantly to our understanding of the progress made in empowering women in Africa over the last decade. The book provides strong research evidence on diverse and timely gender issues in varied African countries, and makes a compelling case that African women’s experience should be considered a core concern of the global SDG agenda.

Women and Sustainable Human Development: Empowering Women in Africa

**ARTICLE**

“The recommitment to gender mainstreaming in universal health coverage (UHC) is important, especially given a growing political context of hostility to human rights and gender equality. The slow pace of progress over the years must be a reality check. The global community must choose to learn from our experience....”

Excerpt from “The Path to 2030 Isn’t Gender-neutral”, an article published by Apolitical; co-written by UNU-IIGH Postdoctoral Fellow George Atiim, Research Fellow Michelle Remme, and Director Pascale Allotey

**PROJECT**

**Frontline health workers**

This UNU-IIGH project will strengthen the evidence base on how best to support a mainly female frontline health workforce by applying a feminist and rights-based perspective. An important expected outcome is to contribute to a better understanding of how gender-informed policies and practices in “Community Health Roadmaps” can help to strengthen primary health care and achieve universal health coverage in sub-Saharan Africa.

Promoting Gender Equity in the Frontline Community Health Workforce

**POLICY BRIEF**

**Measuring women’s empowerment**

This UNU-MERIT brief demonstrates that measurement tools, based on individual and household surveys, are being developed to monitor the evolution of women’s positions in the household, family, and community in the Middle East/North Africa region. It stresses that when making an intervention, it is vital to investigate whether women are likely to benefit, and to determine why or why not.

Measuring Women’s Empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa
GOALS 6 & 7

Clean Water & Sanitation, Affordable & Clean Energy

Clean water and sanitary living conditions are basic human needs – but a quarter of the world’s population lack access to safe drinking water, and even more must cope without such basic sanitation as toilets or hand-washing facilities. Affordable and clean energy sources for cooking, lighting, and heating are also beyond the reach of billions worldwide. UNU’s water-related research bridges science, policy, and practice to pair innovative solutions with the specific needs of communities. UNU’s energy-related research focuses on the efficient use of renewable and low-carbon power sources, and on clean and affordable energy production technologies.

PROJECT

Social equity
UNU-INWEH is a lead partner in a project funded by Canada’s International Development Research Centre that unpacks the nexus of water, gender, and migration in the Congo River basin. The project focuses on the most vulnerable communities in the area, particularly women and girls. The findings of this project will contribute to implementation of the Democratic Republic of Congo’s National Strategic Plan for Development. Addressing Climate- and Water-driven Migration and Conflict Interlinkages to Build Community Resilience in the Congo Basin

Conserving water environments
This UNU-IAS project focuses on areas where economic activity is tied to watersheds, especially where the main source of income is agriculture, industry, or services linked to natural or historical landscapes. The project will provide tools and policy options that can contribute to improved management of water environments. Activities included a project case study in Nepal and a workshop in Bali. Water for Sustainable Development

TRAINING

Water security
Two new UNU-designed e-courses were launched on the UNU-INWEH online Water Learning Center. The two-hour SDG 6 Policy Support System course provides training on how to use that tool – developed by the institute – to produce reliable, systematic, “fit-for-policy” evidence on the enabling environment for achieving SDG 6. The 25-hour Global Water Security course provides a general international approach to ensuring safe, secure, sustainable, and sufficient water for community development. Water Learning Center

Geothermal energy
Twenty-four fellows from fifteen countries graduated from the UNU-GTP annual six-month training programme; seven fellows specialised in Geothermal Utilization, five in Geothermal Geology, five in Project Management and Finances, four in Environmental Science, and three in Reservoir Engineering and Borehole Geophysics. UNU-GTP Six-Month Training Programme

EXPERT

“The increasing demand for energy leads to an increase in CO2 emissions and global warming, so it is crucial to limit energy-related emissions by promoting clean energy. My research focuses on policy implications towards promoting green growth based on the socio-economic-environmental nexus.”

Md Sujahangir Kabir Sarkar
JSPS-UNU Postdoctoral Fellow (UNU-IAS)
Stress Indicator 6.4.2

Incorporating Environmental Flows into “Water management

The Need for a National Water Commission

POLICY SESSION

Safe, clean water

UNU-INWEH worked closely with Global Water Futures, Canada’s largest water research programme, to improve Canadian water policies. The effort included organising a high-level policy session that was attended by some 50 cabinet ministers, parliament members, and federal government representatives, as well as a wide range of Canadian water experts. At that event, UNU-INWEH presented a summary of its analysis of the Canadian water sector’s capabilities to meet the goals of SDG6 domestically. The Need for a National Water Commission and a National Water Security Centre

POLICY BRIEF

Renewable energy

This policy brief is the outcome of a comprehensive UNU-INRA assessment of the uptake of solar energy in Ghana. It explores the potential and the enabling environment needed to ensure that green solar energy businesses are profitable. The brief offers recommendations on changes in the enabling environment that will be required to support the scale-up of solar installations and use.

Solar Energy as Alternative Energy Source in Ghana: Stakeholder Uptake and Business Case

REPORT

Water management

UNU-INWEH was the primary contributor to development of the FAO-led process of including and quantifying the concept of “environmental flows” in the monitoring methodology of the SDG indicator that measures the level of water stress (freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources). This is the first time that the concept, which can assist countries in the assessment of water stress, has received explicit attention in a global policy document. Incorporating Environmental Flows into “Water Stress” Indicator 6.4.2

ARTICLE

“The technologies in hand today can significantly reduce the numbers of people affected by [arsenic-contaminated water consumption]. Needed is a sustained, concerted effort from policymakers, engineers, healthcare providers, donors, and community leaders to achieve quantifiable and sustainable impacts.”

Excerpt from “Removing Arsenic from Groundwater: We Have the Tools, Let’s Use Them”, an article published in IPS News; co-written by UNU-INWEH Senior Researcher Duminda Perera
Having a job does not guarantee a decent living: eight per cent of employed workers and their families still live in extreme poverty. Sustainable economic growth requires creating quality jobs that contribute to the economy without harming the environment. UNU’s research helps UN Member States build sustainable, innovative, people-centred economies; provide young people with opportunities for decent jobs; promote women’s economic empowerment; and foster community cohesion, personal security, and productive employment.
“[T]radable services and agri-businesses ... share the ability to create jobs. These “industries without smokestacks” are among the most dynamic sectors of Africa’s economies. And because tradable services, agro-industry, and horticulture share many characteristics with manufacturing, policies designed to promote the growth of manufacturing — such as improving trade logistics, investing in infrastructure and skills, and increasing exports — promote them as well.”

Excerpt from “Avoiding a Jobs Crisis in Africa Is a Global Responsibility”, an article published by Modern Diplomacy; written by UNU-WIDER Non-Resident Senior Research Fellow John Page.
WORKSHOP

Industrial transformation
UNU-MERIT co-organised with UNIDO an interdisciplinary workshop to explore new pathways of structural transformation in industrial work. Sessions of this two-day workshop in Vienna focused on automation, globalisation, jobs, and development, as well as on the threats that emerging technologies and “premature de-industrialisation” pose to developing countries.

The Future of Industrial Work

TRAINING

Innovation policies
UNU-MERIT delivered sessions of its DEIP training series in India and Bolivia. This intensive one-week programme is designed for policymakers in science, technology, and innovation in developing countries, as well as private sector participants involved in strategic decision-making about technology and innovation.

Design and Evaluation of Innovation Policies (DEIP)

POLICY BRIEF

Wood fuel
Charcoal remains one of the most important home fuel sources in Ghana and is a key contributor to deforestation. This UNU-INRA policy brief provides a comprehensive analysis of the latest data and empirical evidence to set out a transformational pathway for greening the charcoal value chain by replacing current hardwood fuel sources with easily regenerative natural woods and grasses. It presents policy options for making the charcoal value chain a specific component of national contributions to the mitigation of climate change.

Greening the Wood Fuel Sector of Ghana: The Role of Bamboo Charcoal

GOALS 9 & 12

Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure; Responsible Consumption & Production

Ensuring long-term sustainable development requires that economic growth be decoupled from resource use by changing the ways in which goods are produced and resources consumed, and the ways in which toxic waste and pollutants are handled and disposed of. UNU’s research focuses on development linkages that catalyse innovation, foster equal resource benefits, and build resilient urban systems — as well as the governance, processes, and practices of the world’s product cycles and value chains.

EXPERT

“The decisive question for life on our planet will not be ‘whether’ it pays to be green, but ‘how’ it pays to be green. Bringing experts from different disciplines to collaborate helps us develop innovative ideas that can shape the future: to challenge existing products and promote new lifestyles.”

Edeltraud Guenther
UNU-FLORES Director
TRAINING

Waste management
The UNU-ViE-hosted SCYCLE programme organised an electronic waste academy session in Costa Rica in March. This training was part of a broader initiative managed by UNIDO that aims to strengthen national initiatives and enhance regional cooperation for the environmentally sound management of persistent organic pollutants present in electrical waste products in the Latin American region.

E-Waste Academy - Manager Edition

LECTURES

Africa’s transformational potential
UNU-INRA organised two sessions of its new “Nature Speaks” lecture series. In the inaugural session, Dr Frannie Léautier of the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank spoke on “Innovation, Infrastructure, Technology, and the Promise of New Growth for Natural Resource Management in Africa”. The second lecture of the series featured Dr Youba Sokona of the IPCC speaking on the topic “Is Africa’s Energy Transition Within Reach?”

Professor Alexander Adum Kwapong Lectures: “Nature Speaks”

REPORT

Innovation performance
This report series is the European Commission’s main tool for tracking innovation performance across the continent and beyond. Each year, UNU-MERIT gathers data along 27 indicators that cover a broad range of innovation and related activities, ranging from education, research, and development investments to other innovation expenditures, patents and trademarks, and exports of high-tech goods and services. A UNU-MERIT researcher served as the 2019 scoreboard’s lead author.

European Innovation Scoreboard 2019

PROJECT

E-waste issues
This report, co-published by the UNU-ViE-hosted SCYCLE programme, maps several dimensions of the electrical and electronic waste problem, and provides a snapshot of future challenges. It also considers the opportunities and challenges presented by our evolving use of electronic products and our management of e-waste.

Future E-waste Scenarios

POLICY BRIEF

Organic pollutants
This UNU-IAS policy brief focuses on the issue of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in the Asia-Pacific region, which suffers from the extensive use of these toxic substances and their transboundary movement, and their transportation as hazardous waste from developed countries. It argues that sustained efforts to manage POPs are essential at national, regional, and global levels, and offers recommendations for effective strategies.

Managing Persistent Organic Pollutants in the Asia-Pacific Region: A Multi-Level Approach

REPORT

Extractive resources
UNU-INRA provides policy advice on stranded assets and sustainable development to governments of African countries that are at various stages of hydrocarbon resources exploitation. This UNU-INRA report discusses the risk and possible drivers of stranding, as well as the socio-economic and environmental implications, and proffers varied policy recommendations for the different case study countries depending on their stage in hydrocarbon exploration.

Africa’s Development in the Age of Stranded Assets
With more than half of the world’s population living in urban areas, proper urban planning and governance are essential for all facets of city life: housing, health care, utilities, sanitation, employment, public transportation, safety, and more. The failure of proper urban planning manifests in the form of huge slums, sprawling suburbs, inadequate public transport systems, tangled traffic, and massive greenhouse gas emissions. UNU’s research promotes solutions that collectively tackle these interconnected urban challenges.

**GOAL 11**
Sustainable Cities & Communities

With more than half of the world’s population living in urban areas, proper urban planning and governance are essential for all facets of city life: housing, health care, utilities, sanitation, employment, public transportation, safety, and more. The failure of proper urban planning manifests in the form of huge slums, sprawling suburbs, inadequate public transport systems, tangled traffic, and massive greenhouse gas emissions. UNU’s research promotes solutions that collectively tackle these interconnected urban challenges.

**PROJECT**
Disaster resilience
The ARIMA project aims at enhancing regional disaster resilience by developing a spatial, multi-hazard risk information platform based on innovative risk assessment and simulation methods. The project is taking stock of existing risk reduction adaptation strategies and management capabilities in Morocco, and will propose complementary solutions. UNU-EHS leads the project’s “multi-hazard risk assessment” and “future risk scenarios” work packages, and contributes to the evaluation of risk reduction and adaptation solutions. 

*Assessment and Simulation of Present and Future Multi-hazard Risk in the Marrakesh-Safi Region (ARIMA)*

**WORKSHOP**
Sustainable urban environments
In October, UNU-MERIT joined with partners to co-host an interactive multi-stakeholder circular economy forum at the Climate Resilience and Waste Management for Sustainable Development Conference in Ghana. The workshop focused on co-designed innovative solutions for inclusive and sustainable urban environments through efficient municipal solid waste management. The forum built collective insight about possible pathways to sustainability transitions and explored possible cooperation pathways between Europe and developing countries.

*Transitions Towards a Circular Economy: A Cross-National Study of Urban Solid Waste Management*

**EXPERT**
“I want to help create well-functioning and sustainable cities to improve the quality of life and reduce inequality. My research looks at how we measure conditions and improvements in cities, and how those measurements support efforts to reduce inequality.”

Judy Backhouse
UNU-EGOV Senior Academic Fellow
TRAINING

Environmental risks

UNU-EHS and the University of Bonn welcomed the seventh cohort of students to their joint master’s degree programme. In addition to a curriculum that draws from research areas such as vulnerability assessment, resilience analysis, risk management, and adaptation strategies within linked human–environment systems, the programme provides advice on intercultural and scientific communication and offers sessions on working culture, entry roles, and potential career paths within the UN system.

MSc in Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security

PROJECT

Delta-level monitoring

UNU-EHS launched a five-year project to coordinate the work of the GCRF Living Deltas Hub on improving delta-level SDG monitoring and review processes. The project identifies challenges and gaps in existing country- and regional-level SDG monitoring frameworks, and develops a new delta-specific assessment framework that is participatory and heritage-sensitive, focusing on marginalised and vulnerable groups.

Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Living Deltas Hub

PROJECT

Development pathways

UNU-IAS played a key role in creating and is supporting a network of mayors and other local leaders in the Asia–Pacific region who are committed to sustainable urban development. The initiative provides tools, strategies, and models to improve community capacity to achieve the SDGs via appropriate city planning and management. The Mayors Academy, launched in October at the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum in Bangkok, will run until December 2020.

Mayors Academy for Sustainable Urban Development

PROJECT

Urbanisation strategies

This UNU-INRA project, conducted through a consortium of five research partners, is training the next generation of African leaders on the complexities of urban Africa. The project will make a meaningful impact on the policy and practice of managing urban development, and help to ensure an inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable socio-spatial and economic transformation in African cities.

Pan-African Research College on Sustainable Cities
The effects of climate change – including higher average temperatures, rising sea levels, and increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events – are affecting people and communities worldwide. Without urgent action, climate change could cause the mean global temperature to increase by 3°C or more, adversely affecting every natural ecosystem and negatively impacting human health, food security, and daily life. UNU’s research contributes to reducing the catastrophic impacts of climate change on economies, communities, and livelihoods, with a particular focus on helping those who are most vulnerable to improve their adaptive capabilities and resilience.

**GOAL 13**
Climate Action

The CLIMAFRI project is co-developing a river basin information system by integrating science-based data with knowledge from local stakeholders and communities, deriving strategies to reduce flood risks and sustain development. As part of the project, UNU-EHS is analysing the vulnerability and risk to current and future flooding, and evaluating insurance-based solutions for risk transfer and capacity building in West Africa. The resulting data and tools will be made available both in the local study area and regionally in West Africa.

**PROJECT**

**Flood risk**
The CLIMAFRI project is co-developing a river basin information system by integrating science-based data with knowledge from local stakeholders and communities, deriving strategies to reduce flood risks and sustain development. As part of the project, UNU-EHS is analysing the vulnerability and risk to current and future flooding, and evaluating insurance-based solutions for risk transfer and capacity building in West Africa. The resulting data and tools will be made available both in the local study area and regionally in West Africa.

Implementing Climate-sensitive Adaptation Strategies to Reduce Flood Risk in the Transboundary Lower Mono River Catchment in Togo and Benin (CLIMAFRI)

**EVENT**

**Global warming & Africa**
UNU-INRA joined with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the African Academy of Science to convene a two-day climate change event in Ghana.

**PROJECT**

**Climate-risk insurance**
The UNU-EHS-hosted MCII supported the Presidency of the V20 Group of Finance Ministers (representing 48 of the most climate-vulnerable countries) in their engagement with the InsuResilience Global Partnership, a leading network on climate and disaster risk financing for vulnerable countries. Additionally, MCII was named a technical partner for supporting development of the V20-led Sustainable Insurance Facility.

**EXPERT**

“Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is fundamental for enhancing community adaptation to extreme climate events. My research focuses on how to strengthen DRR for vulnerable communities and how to link the SDGs to achieve climate resilience.”

Duminda Perera
UNU-INWEH Senior Researcher

Lead researchers of the IPCC and targeted stakeholder groups came together to critically examine the IPCC global warming report in relation to Africa, specifically with respect to the pace and scale of climate action, with the aim of facilitating increased African participation in the IPCC process and products.

Outreach Event on The IPCC Special Report on “Global Warming of 1.5°C”: Significance and Implications for Africa
**Training**

**Climate study**
In October, UNU-EHS launched the UNFCCC–UNU Early Career Climate Fellowship Programme with 12 fellows from developing countries. The programme enables early career professionals from the Global South to gain first-hand professional experience at the interface between climate change research and policy. The programme helps young professionals from developing countries contribute to the implementation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement and climate-related aspects of the SDGs.

**UNFCCC–UNU Early Career Climate Fellowship Programme**

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**Project**

**Green economy**
Through the GCIC project, UNU-INRA is helping to develop and promote low-carbon technologies that can support Ghana’s transition to a green economy by grooming young entrepreneurs and climate innovators to scale their technologies. The project is also conducting policy research and advocacy to provide an enabling regulatory environment for growth in five critical climate-related economic sectors: waste management, climate-smart agriculture, energy efficiency, solar energy, and water management and purification.

**Ghana Climate Innovation Centre (GCIC)**

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**Article**

“[B]iases and uncertainties associated with GCMs [global climate models] increase from global to regional and local scales, which limits the suitability and applicability of GCMs in local-scale impact assessment studies. Therefore, downscaling is required to increase the spatial resolution and reduce biases before climate projections can be used for impact assessment and adaptation planning.”

Excerpt from “Statistically Downscaled Climate Dataset for East Africa”, published in the journal Nature; co-authored by UNU-FLORES PhD Researcher Solomon Gebrechorkos and Unit Head Stephan Hülsmann
The earth’s oceans are not only home to a vast array of lifeforms; they also provide humankind with key natural resources, help to recycle waste, and via their coastal ecosystems act as buffers to reduce damage from storms. Forests and other terrestrial ecosystem covers are essential habitats, helping to sustain the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. UNU’s research and training activities address global water and biodiversity challenges by helping developing countries build capacity for lasting improvements in human and ecosystem health. UNU’s work blends the latest scientific knowledge with an appreciation of traditional management practices to foster the sustainable use of our planet’s precious living resources.

**TRAINING**

**Fisheries**
Twenty-four fellows from 15 countries graduated from the UNU-FTP annual six-month training programme; nine fellows specialised in Fisheries Policy and Management, eight in Stock Assessment and Fishing Gear Technology, and seven in Quality Management.

**UNU-FTP Six-Month Training Programme**

**PROJECT**

**Ecosystem services**
This UNU-IAS project, funded by the Japan Ministry of the Environment, is building an integrated model of social-ecological systems to strengthen the science-policy interface. The model will help to predict and assess both terrestrial and marine natural capital and ecosystem services in Japan, and will contribute to strengthening the multi-level governance of natural capital and biodiversity.

*Predicting and Assessing Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services*

**TRAINING**

**Landscape restoration**
Twenty-one fellows from 10 countries graduated from the UNU-LRT annual six-month training programme, which trains working professionals in developing countries in the methods and theories of sustainable land management and restoration of degraded land.

**UNU-LRT Six-Month Training Programme**

**PROJECT**

**Conservation management**
This UNU-IAS project, based in the Republic of Korea, is developing conservation management indicators and guidelines for the evaluation of sustainability related to agricultural heritage systems. The project will contribute to the conservation and sustainable development of rural landscapes by helping to safeguard traditional agricultural systems and the livelihoods of local communities.

*Introduction of Technologies on Characteristic Analysis and Conservation Management in Agricultural Heritage Systems*

**EXPERT**

“Land is fundamental to our lives not only as a source of food, energy, and water but also as a sink for greenhouse gases. My research aims to unlock the potential of land to meet future demand without further depleting this finite resource.”

Lulu Zhang
UNU-FLORES Senior Research Associate
“How far the oceans rise will depend a great deal on what we do in the next few decades. Whether emissions can be restrained and sharply reduced will mean the difference between manageable disruption and catastrophic inundation. If we take action now, we'll save and improve the lives of those 680 m people who live in coastal areas just 10 metres above sea level.”

Excerpt from “Sea Level Rise Is Inevitable - but What We Do Today Can Still Prevent Catastrophe for Coastal Regions”, published by The Conversation; written by UNU-EHS Academic Officer Zita Sebesvari.

**ARTICLE**

**DIALOGUE**

**Marine plastic litter**
UNU-IAS co-organised a four-day event in Tokyo that promoted cooperation and dialogue between G20 members on policy options and good practices for resource efficiency, within the context of the overall lifecycle of natural resources, products, and infrastructure. Participants also discussed the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision”, an initiative that aims to reduce additional marine plastic litter pollution to zero by 2050.


**PROJECT**

**Biodiversity**
UNU-IAS hosts the Secretariat of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI), which builds capacities at global, regional, and sub-regional levels by engaging local communities and other stakeholders. The IPSI encourages the realisation of human societies that are in harmony with nature, through the revitalisation and sustainable management of socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes that improve biodiversity and human well-being.

*International Satoyama Initiative*
Inclusive public institutions are necessary for all aspects of civic life: education, health care, justice, national security, fair economic and social policies, and inclusive environmental protection. UNU’s research provides insights that can reduce violence and its impact on society, including in the context of crime, terrorism, and rapid urbanisation. UNU’s work on the drivers and impacts of migration – and the realities of human trafficking and modern slavery – helps policymakers improve legal protections for vulnerable individuals.

**PROJECT**

**Cultural & science diplomacy**

UNU-CRIS was a consortium partner of the Horizon 2020-funded EL-CSID project. The project’s final report provided a state-of-the-art analysis of the key areas of European external cultural relations and science diplomacy that bear specifically upon the EU’s role as a global actor. The project’s findings launched a process by the cultural relations and science policy communities in Brussels to design a “strategic approach” to international cultural relations.

*European Leadership in Cultural, Science and Innovation Diplomacy (EL-CSID)*

**TRAINING**

**Global terrorism**

UNU-IAS co-organised the annual UNU Global Seminar in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan. Focusing on the theme “Global Actions against International Terrorism”, students from universities across Japan discussed how to strengthen international cooperation, how best to address the conditions conducive to terrorism, and how to ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law.

*UNU Global Seminar – 35th Shonan Session*

**WORKSHOP**

**Post-conflict reintegration**

As part of its Managing Exits from Armed Conflict project, UNU-CPR organised an expert workshop at which leading researchers and reintegration programming practitioners finalised the design of the project’s survey instrument. In-depth discussion focused on the merits of particular outcomes, metrics, and research techniques, to build a practical tool that helps researchers and practitioners better understand individual transitions from armed conflict to civilian life.

*Managing Exits from Armed Conflict: Survey Instrument Validation Workshop*

**TRAINING**

**Electronic government**

UNU-EGOV conducted a graduate-level course on electronic governance at its host institution, the University of Minho. The course addressed topics related to digital governance, the use of social media by governments and public services, smart cities, emerging technologies, and data protection and privacy.

*Technology and Information Systems for Electronic Government*

**EXPERT**

“My research explores the relations between inequality, trust, and governance, because the extent to which people have confidence in each other and towards institutions shapes their political and social behaviours.”

Patricia Justino

UNU-WIDER Senior Research Fellow
From data-manipulation on the safety of vaccines or gene-therapies to disinformation campaigns about the health of financial institutions… governments [must] collaborate with the private sector to create more efficient early warning-systems to detect and analyse the sources of data-forgeries and targeted propaganda.

Excerpt from “From Drone Swarms to Modified E. Coli: Say Hello to a New Wave of Cyberattacks”, published by the World Economic Forum; written by UNU-CPR Research Fellow Eleonore Pauwels.
Successful achievement of the 2030 Agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector, and civil society. These partnerships must be built upon normative values, a shared vision, and common goals that place people and the planet at the centre. With expertise across the range of the SDGs, and active partnerships across all sectors, UNU is a convener of a diverse range of development stakeholders and a facilitator of knowledge dissemination. UNU’s research contributes to both near-term SDG implementation and long-term policy frameworks for sustainability.

**EU–UN partnership**
UNU-CRIS held a two-week summer school in Bruges that explored how the European Union interacts with the United Nations in tackling prominent global issues. The session focused on the synergies for and challenges to coordination in providing public goods aimed at enhancing stability, sustainability, peace, and justice.  
*The European Union and the United Nations in Global Governance*

**SYMPOSIUM**
**Policy-relevant research**  
This UNU-IAS symposium, held in Tokyo, brought together experts from Japan and other countries to discuss the role, and future challenges and opportunities, of policy-oriented research for achieving the SDGs. It included a session on how to co-design research with policymakers.  
*The Future of Policy-Oriented Research for Achieving the SDGs*

**EVENT**
**Social compliance auditing**  
In October, UNU-CS and The Mekong Club organised an event in Hong Kong to showcase the impact of their Apprise Audit mobile application. The event included a live demonstration of the latest version of the application, which provides organisations with a mobile solution to assess working conditions in their supply chains.  
*Apprise Audit 2.0 Launch*

**DIALOGUE**
**Science-based policy**  
UNU-FLORES convened a day-long event to discuss how academic inputs can better contribute to policymaking. UNU-FLORES presented projects that advance the safe use of agricultural wastewater in Colombia and monitor the sustainability of rural water supplies in Tanzania as examples of how science and policy actors have successfully worked together on research and policy formulation.  
*International Dialogue on Working at the Science-Policy Interface*

**EXPERT**
“Achievement of the SDGs requires a harmonisation of national, regional, and international priorities and agendas. My work contributes to strengthening the bridge between the UN system and the African Union to address global challenges with local solutions.”

Erick Gankam Tambo  
UNU-EHS Associate Academic Officer
Tax-benefit microsimulation
As part of its SOUTHMOD project, UNU-WIDER provides regular training for national stakeholders within the eight countries for which tax and benefit policy models have been developed. In 2019, training events were held in Uganda, Mozambique, Ghana, Ecuador, and Zambia. These trainings helped local researchers and policymakers to better understand the opportunities inherent in their national tax-benefit microsimulation models. SOUTHMOD – Simulating Tax and Benefit Policies for Development

National SDG implementation
This UNU-IAS policy brief draws out key areas of progress and other insights from 99 Voluntary National Reviews regarding national governance structures for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It offers recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders who are working to accelerate national SDG implementation processes. Governance and National Implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Lessons from Voluntary National Reviews

Digital government
The “UN e-Government Survey”, which collects data on the development of Electronic Government across all UN Member States, was for the first time translated into Portuguese through a collaborative effort led by UNU-EGOV. The Portuguese edition of the 2018 survey was launched at an event co-organised by UNU-EGOV. Progress of Digital Government Transformation: The 2018 UN e-Government Survey
Organisational Review

Beyond its role as a research institution and UN system think tank, UNU offers a range of postgraduate programmes and specialised training opportunities across its global network. The University also disseminates the findings of its research to policymakers, practitioners, scholars, and the general public through a variety of publications and public events.

The following sections offer a look behind the research to summarise these efforts and explain who we are. Included also is a five-year retrospective on implementation of the UNU Strategic Plan 2015–2019.
Implementing the UNU Strategic Plan
2015–2019

Since 1982, the work of UNU has been guided by a succession of multi-year strategic documents1 aimed at ensuring that the University could adapt its priorities and operations to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world. Over the past five years, the University’s programmes and institutional development have been guided by the UN University Strategic Plan 2015–2019.

The UNU Strategic Plan 2015–2019 was the product of a critical, future-oriented reappraisal of UNU launched by Dr David Malone soon after he joined UNU as its sixth Rector in 2013. That year-long process elicited new ideas on possible modalities of research, capacity building, policy development, and knowledge translation activities that could be undertaken by UNU. It also addressed a request by then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon that the University reorient its research efforts to better serve the policy needs of the United Nations and its Member States. Additionally, it integrated key priorities of the UNU Council — including the need to focus on financial sustainability, ensure management excellence, and develop a research programme that demonstrates the University’s value proposition without duplicating the activities of other entities working in the research-policy nexus.

The resulting five-year vision, as laid out in the UNU Strategic Plan 2015–2019, affirmed the commitment of UNU’s institutes to work with common purpose. The plan introduced a programme of change that addressed institutional priorities and the University’s evolving academic work programme. It set out a range of reforms to ensure that UNU research would occupy a central place in UN policymakers’ toolkits, and could inform decision-making for the 2030 Agenda for Development as well as for the world’s evolving peace, security, environmental, and health challenges.

Institutional priorities

Strengthening management

In March 2016, the University strengthened institute-level performance management by introducing a framework of benchmarks and indicators. This simple framework encourages valuable conversations about management, programming, quality assurance, and strategy, and has supported institute Advisory Boards/Committees in monitoring of budgetary and programmatic matters.

In 2018, the UNU Council adopted UNU’s first Organisational Performance Policy. This document, and an accompanying Organisational Performance Handbook, outlines monitoring mechanisms across UNU, specifies how they are connected, and clarifies roles and responsibilities in performance management.

In 2017, the UNU Council adopted the **UNU Policy on Gender Equality**, including a **UNU Action Plan on Gender Equality** and an **Accountability Framework**. The policy commits the University to achieving gender parity at all senior levels (P-3 and above) by 2021. Throughout the 2015–2019 Strategic Plan period, there was a notable increase in the number of women occupying senior positions: including six female institute directors, up from just one in 2015. UNU has attained gender parity at nearly all senior levels.

**Ensuring sustainable growth**
UNU, supported by the Council, worked with the Representative of the Secretary-General for the investment of the assets of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (who exercises fiduciary responsibility for the UNU Endowment Fund), the UN Office of Investment Management, and two investment managers to ensure that the UNU Endowment Fund can react proactively to changes in market conditions. In 2017, UNU utilised a competitive and open call to appoint a new asset manager for its Endowment Fund, which has resulted in an advantageous portfolio management strategy.

To ensure long-term financial stability, UNU revised the policy on the establishment of new institutes and has promulgated new fundraising guidelines and strategies. This revised guidance, approved by the UNU Council in June 2018, requires that the establishment of any new UNU entity be accompanied by significant capital investment by the host country. UNU entities are now encouraged to seek fewer grants, that are larger in size, as opposed to several small grants. As a result, in 2018–2019, the average size of grants increased by 47% from the previous biennium. Additional financial resilience has also been facilitated by increasing the number of joint (inter-institute) projects – the result of newly exploited synergies across the UNU system – some of which have already attracted third-party funding.

**Streamlining partnerships**
Three recent actions demonstrate how UNU has changed its approach to partnerships.

(i) UNU is frequently solicited by external parties to join in large consortia or to conclude memoranda of understanding for conceptual initiatives. The University has put in place a policy that it will agree to join only those initiatives that both have a clearly defined purpose and scope of activities, and where it is clear that UNU can make a meaningful contribution.

(ii) Recognising that many advantages accrue to UNU institutes from being co-located on or near the campus of a prestigious local university, the Rectorate has encouraged those institutes not currently so co-located to consider changing locations and to prioritise investment in local university partnerships.

(iii) Engagement with new stakeholders, particularly in Japan, has helped raise awareness of the University’s activities and its value proposition. Two notable examples of this type of engagement are:
- the SDG Corporate Strategy Forum, organised in Tokyo for the business community, which offers a place for businesses to discuss opportunities and challenges for their SDG contributions.
- the UNU Conversation Series, the UNU Headquarters flagship public seminar series in which influential experts, world leaders, and respected scholars and authors share personal insights on contemporary global affairs, politics, and media.
Research priorities

Spotlighting UNU expertise
UNU brings new, critical perspectives to issues that are of concern to the United Nations system and Member States. To further improve communications – key to achieving the impact sought by the University and its researchers – UNU introduced a mechanism to coordinate and manage its communications activities globally. The result has been a more coherent online presence, which has improved the University’s global profile.

An “experts database” was also launched to make UNU’s researchers more visible to the University’s publics. The Sustainable Development Explorer section on the UNU website now spotlights UNU experts and the impact of their projects in driving forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Generating policy-relevant research & advice
Under the reorientation proposed by the UNU Strategic Plan 2015-2019, UNU researchers are encouraged to engage policymaker audiences from the outset of projects to ascertain the level of interest before launching a research initiative. Over the past five years, there have been many notable examples of activities that had a clear policy impact and helped raise UNU’s profile among key stakeholders.

A major step in addressing the needs of the UNU system, and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in particular, was the creation in 2014 of the UNU Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR) in Tokyo. In 2018, UNU-CPR merged with the UNU Office at the United Nations in New York to better connect with sister agencies and serve the needs of this policy community. The move enabled UNU to launch several new lines of policy-relevant research, including on the Security Council and multilateralism, artificial intelligence, managing exits from armed conflict, and modern slavery and human trafficking.
UNU also serves as an important convener and facilitator of policy dialogues. Notable among the many seminars and dialogues launched in 2015–2019 were public events that UNU co-hosted with UNESCO on migration, heritage in the context of conflict, and the evolution of war and conflict. Another notable event co-organised by UNU was a 2016 conference on “Strengthening the UN’s Research Uptake”, which was attended by more than 40 senior representatives from UN research and policy units and representatives from over 50 leading think tanks and research organisations. And in 2017, UNU played an important facilitating role as Chair of the Global Migration Group, during a time when the United Nations was helping to shepherd fundamental changes in global migration governance.

More recently, the UNU Rector chaired an inter-agency UN group tasked with producing a foundational primer to help new Resident Coordinators and UN field staff effectively engage UN Member States on the integrated nature of the 2030 development framework and its usefulness as a development planning tool.

Diversifying the UNU thematic work programme
The UNU Strategic Plan 2015-2019 identified three new themes not covered by the previous programme of work: (i) demography and migration, (ii) higher education policy, and (iii) energy. These themes figured in several recent UNU initiatives. The theme of migration, in particular, evolved over the course of the strategic plan into a major nexus of research and policy advice, while the work of the UNU Migration Network has helped to raise UNU’s visibility in the UN system and among subject matter experts.

Moving forward
By implementing the priorities of the UNU Strategic Plan 2015–2019, the University has been able to reach new audiences and, through them, achieve more policy impact than ever before. This has led to greater demand, with UNU being frequently sought out to partner in policy initiatives, including at the highest levels of the United Nations’ planning and policymaking offices.

Building on the successes of the UNU Strategic Plan 2015–2019, UNU has now transitioned to the UNU Strategic Plan 2020–2024. Under this plan, UNU will remain focused on being a reliable, forward-thinking knowledge broker and thought leader that adds value to key debates and policy initiatives concerning peace, development, and sustainability.
Postgraduate education & specialised training
Each year, UNU organises dozens of specialised postgraduate degree and non-degree training sessions and provides project-based learning opportunities.

In 2019, 356 students (260 master’s degree candidates and 96 doctoral degree candidates) were enrolled in the six postgraduate degree programmes offered through the University’s institutes in Germany, Japan, and the Netherlands:

• a joint MSc in Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security (Bonn; UNU-EHS & University of Bonn)
• a double MSc in Public Policy and Human Development (Maastricht; UNU-MERIT & Maastricht University)
• an MSc in Sustainability (Tokyo; UNU-IAS)
• a joint PhD in Integrated Management of Water, Soil, and Waste (Dresden; UNU-FLORES & Technische Universität Dresden)
• a PhD in Innovation, Economics and Governance for Development (Maastricht; UNU-MERIT)
• a PhD in Sustainability Science (Tokyo; UNU-IAS)

UNU also organises a wide variety of specialised non-degree training opportunities, ranging from single-day sessions to multi-month courses; in 2019, more than 3,200 students attended 138 such UNU programmes, courses, schools, and workshops.

In addition, many institutes also provide opportunities through fellowships or internships that enable young scholars and researchers to enhance their skills and knowledge by working alongside UNU staff. In 2019, UNU hosted 268 fellows (83% from developing countries) and 119 interns (47% from developing countries).
Publications
UNU researchers disseminate the findings of their projects through a variety of print and online publications, such as books, articles in peer-reviewed journals, articles and op-eds in magazines and newspapers, policy briefs, reports, and working/discussion papers. More than 6,700 UNU publications are available free online through UNU Collections, including more than 240 that were published in 2019. Thousands more publications are accessible via the various UNU institute websites.

Events
The global UNU system convenes numerous events each year; many are open to the general public while others target specialised audiences. These events extend the reach of UNU’s research and provide networking opportunities for scholars, researchers, and practitioners. In 2019, UNU organised or co-organised more than 600 such events.

Briefings & presentations
UNU experts are regularly invited to give in-person briefings or presentations to influential decision- and policymakers, government officials, and other key stakeholders, to provide advice in the form of tailored findings and analyses that address stakeholders’ fundamental needs and concerns. In 2019, these included briefings for the UN Security Council, the UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee, two separate Arria Formula meetings, and other senior UN groups (including Resident Coordinators) as well as at Member State high-level events, external forums, and private sector associations and institutions.

Mass media coverage and online outreach
UNU utilises traditional media outlets and undertakes outreach via the internet, social media platforms, and a monthly email newsletter to increase the University’s visibility, raise awareness about its work, generate public support, and facilitate engagement. Highlights for 2019 include:

- **Media coverage** – More than 18,000 articles about UNU and its research were published worldwide, primarily by outlets based in China (38%), the USA (15%), Japan (10%), and Germany (5%). Coverage was mainly by online news sites (71%), followed by blogs (24%), newspapers, and magazines.

- **Internet** – UNU’s websites received nearly 6.24 million pageviews – including more than 2.10 million pageviews for the global UNU system website (https://unu.edu) and 1.06 million pageviews for UNU’s Our World (https://ourworld.unu.edu) research blog.

- **Social media** – UNU had more than 134,000 Facebook followers (a 20% year-on-year increase) and almost 155,000 Twitter followers (a 10% increase).

- **Email** – INSIGHTS, UNU’s monthly email newsletter, reached more than 20,000 subscribers.
UNU operates as a network of research and training institutes in 12 countries. This global system is coordinated by UNU Centre in Tokyo, which provides executive management, administration, coordination, and support services. In addition to the Headquarters unit in Tokyo, Japan, UNU Centre encompasses satellite offices in Bonn, Germany (the UNU Vice-Rectorate in Europe), and Putrajaya, Malaysia (administrative services).

The research and academic work of the University is carried out by 14 institutes, each of which has a specific research and training focus as mandated by its statute and host country agreement:

1. **UNU Biotechnology Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNU-BIOLAC)**, in Caracas, Venezuela, supports training and research that demonstrate how modern biotechnology can encourage social and economic development, with a focus on capacity development in the region.

2. **UNU Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR)**, in New York, NY, USA, focuses on three priority areas: preventing violence/conflict; fighting modern slavery and human trafficking; and exploring digital technology and the global order. UNU-CPR also serves as the main pipeline for UNU access to the major policy processes at United Nations Headquarters.

3. **UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS)**, in Bruges, Belgium, is to foster a better understanding of the processes of regional integration and cooperation, and their implications. UNU-CRIS specialises in the comparative study of regional integration and the interactions between regional organisations and global institutions.

4. **UNU Institute on Computing and Society (UNU-CS)** in Macau, SAR, China, works at the intersections of information and communication technology (ICT) and international development. The institute addresses key issues expressed in the 2030 Agenda through high-impact innovations and frontier technologies, seeking to encourage data-driven and evidence-based actions and policies.

5. **UNU Operating Unit on Policy-driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV)**, in Guimarães, Portugal, is to support the United Nations and its Member States in transforming the mechanisms of governance and building effective governance capabilities through the strategic application of digital technologies.

6. **UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS)**, in Bonn, Germany, carries out cutting-edge research on risks and adaptation related to environmental hazards and global change. The aim is to promote policies and programmes that can reduce these risks while taking into account the interplay between environmental and societal factors.

7. **UNU Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources (UNU-FLORES)** in Dresden, Germany, develops strategies to resolve pressing problems in the sustainable use and integrated management of environmental resources through a “Nexus Approach”, with a focus on the needs of developing and emerging economies.

8. **UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS)** in Tokyo, Japan, is to advance efforts towards a more sustainable future through policy-oriented research and capacity development. The institute works in three thematic areas: sustainable societies, natural capital and biodiversity, and global change and resilience.

9. **UNU International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH)** in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, generates policy-relevant analysis by applying a gender lens to inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of health programmes. The institute also supports local decision-makers and stakeholders in their efforts to engage effectively with global health challenges.
The **UNU Institute for Natural Resources in Africa** (UNU-INRA) in Accra, Ghana, undertakes cross-cultural and interdisciplinary research on natural resources management issues in Africa; conducts targeted studies to inform policymaking on sustainable development; and offers training on relevant natural resources management challenges.

The **UNU Institute for Water, Environment and Health** (UNU-INWEH) in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, conceives, develops, and manages water initiatives that help developing countries build their capacity for lasting improvements in human and ecosystem health, and overall reduction in poverty with the goal of creating a world free of water problems.

The **UNU Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology** (UNU-MERIT) in Maastricht, Netherlands, carries out research and training on social, political, and economic factors that drive economic development. This includes the process of technological change and innovation, (public) policy analysis and evaluation, the social aspects of growth and development, and the relationship between global development and migration.

The **Sustainable Cycles** (SCYCLE) Programme hosted by the **UNU Vice-Rectorate in Europe** (UNU-VIE) in Bonn, Germany, focuses on the sustainable production, consumption/usage, and disposal of ubiquitous goods, with a particular focus on electrical and electronic equipment (e-waste) management strategies that incorporate lifecycle thinking.

The **UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research** (UNU-WIDER) in Helsinki, Finland, provides economic analysis and policy advice with the aim of promoting sustainable and equitable development for all. Its current focus is on the interlinked development challenges of transforming economies, states, and societies; integrated throughout the research programme are three concerns: fragility and risk, empowerment, and knowledge and capacity.

In addition to these 14 institutes, UNU continued to provide institutional affiliation in 2019 for four specialised training programmes in Iceland: the **UNU Fisheries Training Programme**, **UNU Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme**, **UNU Geothermal Training Programme**, and **UNU Land Restoration Training Programme**. From 1 January 2020, these programmes function under the auspices of UNESCO.
Human & Financial Resources

Personnel
UNU is committed to maintaining a fair, supportive, and diverse workplace that embeds an institutional culture tolerant of cultural, racial, sexual, and other differences. In this context, UNU strives to maintain a gender balance among its personnel, to ensure that developing countries are properly represented, and to prevent any form of disability-based exclusion or discrimination.

The global UNU system comprises a diverse group of researchers and managers possessing expertise spanning a wide range of issues. UNU Professional and General Service staff are appointed and serve in accordance with the UN Staff Regulations and Rules. Other personnel include visiting scholars, research associates, postdoctoral fellows, consultants, and interns.

As of year-end 2019, the global UNU system had a personnel complement of 673 (10% Professional Staff, 8% General Service Staff, 34% Personnel Service Agreements, and 48% consultant contractors), of whom 53% were female and 44% were developing country nationals.

Budget
UNU receives no funds from the regular UN budget. The University is funded entirely through voluntary contributions received as institutional funding (primarily recurring host country contributions plus investment income derived from the UNU Endowment Fund) and special project contributions (SPCs) from UN Member States, foundations, agencies, international organisations, and other sources for specific academic projects.

UNU thus is obliged to work within a balanced budget, with projected expenditures supported by an equal level of projected income. During the biennium, UNU received contributions of approximately $36.9 million in 2018 and $35.7 million in 2019, supplemented by income of $32.4 million from the UNU Endowment Fund. The UNU budget for the 2018–2019 biennium was US$109.5 million: core funding of $74.9 million and SPCs of $34.6 million.
## Contributions Received

**Contributions Received by UNU**

1 January – 31 December 2019

Contribution figures are converted to US dollar equivalents and rounded to the nearest dollar; subtotals may reflect rounding approximations.

### Member States (US Dollars*)

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<th>State</th>
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<td>Australia</td>
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<td>European Union (European Commission)</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,730,546</strong></td>
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</table>

### Other Contributors

- ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre)  87,824
- Asian Development Bank - Metro Manila, Philippines  130,508
- Centre de Recherche en Ressource en Eau du Bassin du Congo (CRREBaC) - University of Kinshasa  30,064
- Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft  63,059
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  68,340
- Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e.V. (DLR)  585,533
- Edmonton Power Corporation Water Services Inc.  75,988
- Eurac Research  317,019
- Farmer’s Market Association  224,930
- Frankfurt School of Finance & Management  269,433
- Hilti Foundation  64,806
- Humanity United  39,000
- International Telecommunication Union  108,291
- Ishikawa Prefecture  228,314
- Japan Foundation for the United Nation University (JFUNU)  147,859
- Japan Society for the Promotion of Science  22,495
- Kanagawa International Foundation (KIF)  34,233
- Kanazawa City  94,841
- Keio University, Keio Research Institute at SFC  301,714
- Maastricht Graduate School of Governance  273,703
- McMaster University  98,700
- Medicor Foundation  63,663
- Munich Climate Insurance Initiative  1,143,632
- Munich Re Foundation  52,312
- Munich Re Insurance (Münchener Rückversicherungsgesellschaft)  27,871
- National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES)  112,742
- National Treasury of the Republic of South Africa  1,814,472
- Resona Holdings, Inc.  98,620
- Stichting Maastricht Economic Research Institute on Innovation and Technology  79,710
- Tarom Foundation  20,263
- Technische Hochschule Köln  44,557
- TMI Associates  90,154
- Trade & Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS)  214,439
- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)  130,508
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)  50,000
- United Nations Department of Political and Peace Building Affairs (UN-DPPA)  190,666
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  103,750
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)  110,950
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)  52,800
- Universiteit Gent  327,392
- University of the Witwatersrand  45,662
- University of Tokyo  144,485
- Vereniging Nederlandse Verwijdering Metaalkro Producten (NVMP)  42,886
- Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)  134,680
- WASTE  79,909
- World Health Organization (WHO)  64,482
- Other donors (27 individual contributions of less than US$20,000 each)  190,211
- **Subtotal**  8,928,268
- **Total**  35,658,814

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*Contribution figures are converted to US dollar equivalents and rounded to the nearest dollar; subtotals may reflect rounding approximations.*
Oversight of UNU’s operations and academic activities is exercised by five governance and leadership structures: the UNU Council, UNU Rectorate, UNU administration, UNU institute directors, and UNU institute Advisory Boards/Committees.

The **UNU Council** oversees the affairs of the University; its responsibilities include, *inter alia*, approval of the UNU Work Programme and Budget and adoption of University-wide policies. The UNU Council comprises 12 appointed members who serve six-year terms (in an individual capacity, not as representatives of their countries), the UNU Rector, and three *ex officio* members (the United Nations Secretary-General, the UNESCO Director-General, and the UNITAR Executive Director). In 2019, the UNU Council met for its 71st Session (13-14 May) in Rome and its 72nd Session (11-13 December) in Tokyo.

The **Office of the Rector** (Rectorate) provides management direction for the University and coordinates policy development activities within the UNU system. The Rector, who holds the rank of United Nations Under-Secretary-General, is the chief academic and administrative officer of UNU. He is supported by the Office of the Rector staff and advised by a Management Group comprising the Vice–Rectors, Director of Administration, and Executive Officer.

**UNU Administration** is responsible for development of unified standards, financial/treasury system management, and budget reporting to the UNU Council, as well as for providing HR, financial, and procurement services to the global UNU system.

Each UNU institute is headed by a **Director**, who reports to the Rector. Directors have direct oversight of the formulation of their institute’s budget, human resources, and research and programme development. They confer periodically by videoconference to discuss matters of policy and coordination, and meet annually in a gathering known as the Conference of Directors (CONDIR). The 51st session of CONDIR was convened in Tokyo (9-10 December), followed by a joint session of UNU Directors and the UNU Council (12 December).

Each UNU institute benefits from the guidance of an **Advisory Board/Committee**, typically comprising at least three appointed members plus the institute director and the UNU Rector. Each Advisory Board/Committee takes an active role in institute oversight and management, including in matters of quality assurance and fundraising.
UNU COUNCIL

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Serving 2016–2022

• Professor Carlos Henrique de Brito Cruz (Brazil), Scientific Director, São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP); Professor, Gleb Wataghin Physics Institute, State University of Campinas
• Ms Isabel Guerrero Pulgar (Chile), Director, IMAGO Global Grassroots; Lecturer at Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology
• Ms Angela Kane (Germany) (UNU Council Chair from 2019), Senior Fellow, Vienna Center for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament; Professor, Sciences Po (Paris)
• Dr Segenet Kelemu (Ethiopia), Director General and CEO, International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology
• Dr Radha Kumar (India) (UNU Council Chair through 2018), Policy Analyst
• Amb. Tsuneo Nishida (Japan), Special Advisor to the President of Kanagawa University; Honorary Director of the Institute for Peace Science, Hiroshima University

Serving 2019–2025

• Dr Denisa Číderová (Slovakia), Associate Professor in the Department of International Trade and Liaison for Idea Puzzle, University of Economics in Bratislava
• Dr Comfort Ero (United Kingdom), Programme Director, Crisis Group
• Dr Xin Fang (China), President & Professor, School of Public Policy and Management, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences
• Prof. Adam Habib (South Africa), Vice-Chancellor and Principal, University of Witwatersrand
• Prof. Funmi Olonisakin (Nigeria & United Kingdom), Vice-President & Vice-Principal International and Professor of Security, Leadership & Development, King’s College London
• Prof. Brenda Yeoh (Singapore), Raffles Professor of Social Sciences, National University of Singapore

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

• The Rector of UNU • The Secretary-General of the United Nations
• The Director-General of UNESCO • The Executive Director of UNITAR

UNU MANAGEMENT GROUP MEMBERS

• Rector David M. Malone
• Senior Vice–Rector Taikan Oki
• Director of Administration Joan Sawe
• Executive Officer David Passarelli
• Vice-Rector in Europe Sebastian von Einsiedel (through Aug.)/Vice-Rector in Europe a.i. Dirk Messner (from Sept).

UNU INSTITUTE DIRECTORS

• UNU–BIOLAC Programme Director Ivan Galindo–Castro
• UNU–CPR Director James Cockayne
• UNU–CRIS Director Madeleine Hosli (through Sept.)
• UNU–CS Director ad interim Jingbo Huang
• UNU–EGOV Head Delfina Soares
• UNU–EHS Director Dirk Messner
• UNU–FLORES Director Edeltraud Günther
• UNU–IAS Director Kazuhiko Takemoto (through Oct.); Shinobu Yamaguchi (from Nov.)
• UNU–IIGH Director Pascale Allotey
• UNU–INRA Director Fatima Denton
• UNU–INWEH Director Vladimir Smakhtin
• UNU–MERIT Director Bart Verspagen
• UNU–ViE SCYCLE Director Rüdiger Kühr
• UNU–WIDER Director Kunal Sen