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# Strategic Plan 2023-2026

## Summary

### INTRODUCTION

The WUN Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 was the first to explicitly embrace *Sustainable Development* as a theme around which to organize the network's principal initiatives. The plan for 2023-2026 affirms the value of that commitment but recognizes that in a pandemic-altered world university research priorities have evolved and that areas of focus should be adjusted accordingly.

### MISSION AND AIMS

The purpose of WUN is to strengthen member universities, and their impact and prominence, by:

- Fostering distinctive international research collaborations directed at problems of global significance.
- Nurturing research talent, particularly of early career researchers.
- Promoting the development of global citizens through targeted programs for undergraduates.
- Informing institutional policy and practice through analysis and information exchange.
- Building partnerships with relevant national and international bodies.
- Communicating WUN's strengths and achievements to ensure visibility and impact.

### Foster Research Collaboration

WUN supports collaborative research in fields where the network can add most value. The greatest opportunity to add value arises when the distinctive attributes of WUN—the geographical and cultural diversity of its member universities—confer advantage in addressing the research problem.

*Sustainable Development* provides a strategic focus that embraces many important global challenges (e.g., adaptation to climate change, combatting infectious disease) that are experienced in different geographical, cultural and legal contexts, and give rise to varied approaches to their solution.

WUN will pursue a small number of priority areas in which the research challenges are well-aligned with individual member universities' priorities, and can be tackled with advantage:

- Social justice, human rights, inequality
- Sustainable world: cities and urbanization, energy transitions, water and food security
- Mental health, child and maternal health, ageing
- Responsible and ethical use of computing: artificial intelligence, information security, privacy

### Nurture Research Talent

Early Career Researchers are a special priority for support, provided through the *Research Development Fund*, and through activities such as webinars that promote the generally transferable (soft) skills needed for a successful research career.

### Develop Global Citizens

WUN will support initiatives, such as research-focused summer schools, that engage students in the challenges that are addressed by WUN research projects.

### **Inform Policy and Practice**

Where shared challenges related to university policy or management can be beneficially addressed by information exchange and/or comparative analysis, WUN will establish ad hoc initiatives to examine them and recommend solutions.

### **Build External Partnerships**

WUN will build external partnerships with national and international organizations where the partnership can elevate the profile of WUN and its members, and/or enlarge member universities' access to resources and channels of influence.

### **Communications**

In partnership with member universities' communications offices and governance group representatives, WUN will broaden awareness of its programs, including collaborative research projects, to build further engagement and to increase the reach and impact of the network.