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Nov. 7, 2015

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USA Sustainable Cities Initiative Launches in Baltimore, with UB Named as Lead University Partner

Part of a Global Effort to Achieve Newly Adopted Sustainable Development Goals

The University of Baltimore, its College of Public Affairs and the Jacob France Institute in its Merrick School of Business will serve as lead university partner to facilitate a process that articulates Baltimore's strategies and goals in support of sustainable development.

Baltimore has been selected as a model city for the new USA Sustainable Cities Initiative (USA-SCI). This project, led by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and Climate Nexus, brings together academic institutions and key stakeholders to support the UN's newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—a series of global aspirations and priorities designed to take on major sustainable development challenges.

UB serves Baltimore as an [Anchor Institution](#), a regional steward and an integral partner in the culture, commerce and future development of Baltimore and the region. The University's role, as established by SDSN, will be to provide support and guidance as the city expands its capabilities regarding sustainable development.

Last September, world leaders gathered at the UN in New York to adopt 17 SDGs that articulate these challenges and map out a way forward. The list of priorities reflects an evolution in the definition of sustainable development, one that captures a holistic approach across three pillars: economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

Jeffrey Sachs, special advisor to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and director of SDSN, believes Baltimore can serve as a trailblazer in demonstrating how the SDGs could work for cities in the United States, and the importance of addressing social issues, such as race and class and poverty alleviation, along with economic ones.

"I am thrilled to be working with Baltimore and its citizens to build on past successes, to find new, innovative solutions to persistent development challenges, and to support Baltimore to become a leader in the world of sustainable development," Sachs said.

"This initiative reflects the University of Baltimore's continued commitment to improving Baltimore, and I'm pleased to see involvement by faculty from across the university," said **Kurt L. Schmoke**, president of UB.

President Obama has voiced strong support for the Sustainable Development Goals, calling them “one of the smartest investments we can make in our own future.” By serving as a model city, Baltimore has the opportunity to showcase the value of the SDGs, producing measurable sustainable development targets that can be monitored and evaluated into the future. As a sustainability champion and early actor on the SDGs, Baltimore will demonstrate key leadership in the age of sustainable development.

For the first time in human history, more than half of the global population lives in urban areas and this number will continue to grow. Tokyo’s population exceeds that of Canada, while Mexico City’s population of 19 million is nearly equal to that of Australia. Cities, now more than ever, must be epicenters of environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

With USA-SCI, the SDSN and Climate Nexus have initiated USA-SCI to support the technical process of developing long-term SDG-based strategies in select US cities. These cities will be global pioneers—the first to develop SDG-based city-level development strategies that will serve as a model for other urban areas worldwide.

UB’s efforts in the USA-SCI initiative in Baltimore will be led by [Ivan Sascha Sheehan](#), associate professor and director of the M.S. in Negotiations and Conflict Management program in the College of Public Affairs, and [Seema Iyer](#), associate director of the Jacob France Institute and research assistant professor in the Merrick School of Business. UB will collaborate with University of Maryland National Center for Smart Growth and Communities Without Boundaries International.

Learn more about the [College of Public Affairs](#).

Learn more about the [Jacob France Institute](#) and the [Merrick School of Business](#).

The University of Baltimore is a member of the University System of Maryland and comprises the College of Public Affairs, the Merrick School of Business, the UB School of Law and the Yale Gordon College of Arts and Sciences.

About the Sustainable Development Solutions Network: The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) was commissioned by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2012 to mobilize scientific and technical expertise from academia, civil society, and the private sector to support practical problem solving for sustainable development at local, national, and global scales. The SDSN operates national and regional networks of knowledge institutions, solution-focused thematic networks, and is building SDSNedu, an online university for sustainable development.

About Climate Nexus: Climate Nexus is a strategic communications group dedicated to highlighting the wide-ranging impacts of climate change and clean energy solutions in the United States.

About University of Maryland National Center for Smart Growth: Located at the University of Maryland, College Park, the National Center for Smart Growth is a non-partisan center for research and leadership training on smart growth and related land use issues in Maryland, in metropolitan regions around the nation, and in Asia and Europe. The mission of the center is to bring the diverse resources of the University of Maryland and a network of national experts to bear on issues related to land use and the environment, transportation and public health, housing and community development, and international urban development.