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Alliance of top universities urges G20 leaders to prioritise net zero emissions

An international coalition of leading climate research universities will issue its first [declaration](#) ahead of the G20 Summit on 21 and 22 November 2020.

The [International Universities Climate Alliance](#) member universities, including the University of Cape Town (UCT), span all populated continents, representing one-third of the 100 highest performing climate research universities and a quarter of the top 100 environmental research universities worldwide.

Its Declaration urges world leaders to use the post-COVID recovery to implement measures to counteract climate change, warning that failure to do so will lock in catastrophic consequences for generations to come.

Professor Ian Jacobs, President and Vice-Chancellor (VC) of UNSW Sydney in Australia, a founding member of the Alliance, said he and his colleagues recognised the need for experts with diverse voices to speak out about the climate crisis.

“Many challenges lie ahead of us in combatting the existential crisis in which the world finds itself. The International Universities Climate Alliance is a rich resource upon which governments, business, industry and the wider community can rely for evidence-based expert advice.”

UCT’s participation in the alliance will be led by the [African Climate and Development Initiative](#) (ACDI), one of the leading institutes in climate change on the continent and internationally. The ACDI brings together work in the field of climate and development across the university, including areas such as physical climate science, renewable energy, climate modelling, urban resilience, poverty and inequality, and economics.

“We have the knowledge, technology and tools to build a climate resilient low carbon future, but we need the international political system to proactively support the transition to a green economy. Our leaders need to move beyond lofty talk to real action, supported by best

available knowledge, and that is what this alliance provides and is lobbying for," said Professor Mark New, Director of the ACDI and Pro-VC for Climate Change at UCT.

The Climate Alliance is unprecedented in scale and scope and will support world leaders, policy makers and industry in planning for and responding to climate change. The advent of the Climate Alliance comes at a time when momentum is building for countries to decarbonise their economies. In recent months there have been moves by various nations to fortify incremental efforts with policies and actions equal to the urgency of the situation.

The Alliance will provide a central hub for universities to share the latest climate research and enable greater collaboration between leading research teams.

Note to editors

[Media briefing notes](#) are available.

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