



UNDP ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH TOP UNIVERSITIES TO SET DEVELOPMENT YARDSTICK FOR IMPACT INVESTING

New York, Sep 22, 2017 – The United Nations Development Programme announced a partnership with nine leading universities to develop a research agenda that will better leverage private investment to finance the Sustainable Development Goals.

The announcement came on the sidelines of the 72nd United Nations General Assembly, at an event titled “Big Data, Impact Management & the SDGs”, which was co-hosted by the UNDP and the UN Global Pulse.

This partnership is led by UNDP SDG Impact Finance (UNSIF), an initiative that aims at bringing the private sector and public sector together through impact investment that yields competitive financial, social and environmental returns.

The impact investment sector has been growing rapidly. The Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) estimated that there is now at least \$114 billion worth of impact investing assets under management. As the sector grows, one of the biggest challenges is how to measure impact.

The UNSIF Research Council includes prominent universities in the US, Europe and Asia, and is tasked to develop the methodology and to set down yardsticks that measure the development impact. The Council will undertake research to improve the analytical frameworks, evidence, and policy environment that encourage and guide commercial capital flows in support of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“The growing and promising niche of impact investing is a vanguard for how the private sector can intentionally create positive impacts. The term “impact” can be seen as a convenient shorthand for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals – and impact investors, by their own definition, embody an ethos for intentionally creating outcomes that are positive for society and the environment. The returns they target are much more than just financial. These experiences can guide us as we re-imagine development finance for the SDGs.” said Magdy Martinez-Soliman, UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support.

Recognized the need of a combined research effort to face the challenges facing Impact Investing, the following nine business schools and academic institutions have committed to join force on this important initiative, listed in alphabetically order:

- Bertha Centre for Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship, University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business
- Carleton University
- China Europe International Business School
- Maastricht University
- National University of Singapore Business School
- Oxford University Said Business School
- University of Pennsylvania, The Wharton School
- Tsinghua University
- University of Zurich, Center for Sustainable Finance and Private Wealth

Together with the launch of the UNSIF Research Council, a discussion paper was published to propose a high-level research agenda and inform the discussion at the inaugural meeting of the Research Council. The paper was authored by Prof. Alex Nicholls and Jess Dagers at the University of Oxford.

“There is a real need for more private investment to address big global problems. The UNSIF is the best game in town to achieve this,” said Alex Nicholls, Professor of Social Entrepreneurship at Said Business School, Oxford University.

Through complementary cycles of research-testing-certification-policy cycles, the ultimate goal of the Research Council is to produce a standardised impact measuring framework that governments can use to make informed public investment decisions, define new policy options for impact investing and incentivise capital markets to prioritize SDG-aligned investment practices.

###

For more information, please contact:

Yolanda Ma
Communications & Partnership Analyst, UNSIF
jinxin.ma@undp.org

Mahtab Haider
Communications Specialist, UNDP
mahtab.haider@undp.org

Karl H Richter
Head of Research and Knowledge
karl.richter@undp.org