



2022 U7+ Statement to the G7

U7+ Alliance of World Universities – June 24, 2022

Since its inaugural meeting in Paris under the high patronage of French President Emmanuel Macron in July 2019, the [U7+ Alliance of World Universities](#) has emerged as a significant platform for more than 45 premier universities committed to tackling pressing global issues.

Given our Alliance’s unique positioning and objectives, our aspiration is to be recognized as an official G7 engagement group, and to support the G7 agenda through advice and action.

Stronger together

The U7+ Alliance defends and promotes the fundamental values of peace, truth, democracy, academic freedom and international cooperation that are the foundation of all universities’ work.

Universities support peace and sustainable democracies by facilitating fact-based dialogue, harnessing our unique convening power to bring together all sectors and communities, and by taking concrete action, including:

- **Actively contributing to policy discussions**

As drivers of scientific research, universities can effectively support approaches to public policy that are both fact-based and nuanced. As institutions committed to the free and respectful exchange of ideas, universities are well positioned to convene diverse perspectives on critical issues such as climate change, public health, inequality, diversity and migration.

- **Defending academic freedom**

Academic freedom is an essential contributor to the advancement of knowledge and prosperity, yet it faces limitations around the world. Academic freedom has two interrelated components, institutional and individual. The resurgence of autocracy has stripped many universities of the institutional autonomy necessary to fulfill their core mission—the creation and dissemination of knowledge and education of future generations. The crisis of democracy, evident in rising political extremism and polarization, has threatened the freedom of some university faculty as individual scholars to address controversial topics in research and teaching. The U7+ is committed to working with the G7 in insisting that academic freedom, open and respectful dialogue and debate are critical to a well-functioning democracy. In particular, we call on the G7 member countries to act to ensure that university faculty are able to conduct their work free from domestic and international political interference, and that they receive sufficient protection in their role.

- **Supporting values of peace and open societies everywhere**

All violence and all wars anywhere on the globe are, at their core, a devastating collapse of respect for humanity. We urge that all refugees fleeing conflict be treated equally and with compassion, without prejudice based on race, nationality, gender, or any other identity. In response to conflict, our universities are actively mobilizing in support of those in need, both within and outside of our communities. To the best of our abilities, we are providing safe haven, aid, assistance with legal obligations and material and psychological support to students and scholars at risk. Our faculty are also offering insightful and unflinching expert commentary.

- **Driving innovation and addressing global challenges**

Our universities share a commitment to developing solutions to the world's most pressing problems. We will continue to work to develop and transfer new knowledge and new technologies across sectors for optimal implementation, including to government, industry and civil society. We will also continue to educate our students to be active citizens within our democratic societies, by both modeling these values and practices within our own universities.

The U7+ wishes to highlight areas for collaboration with G7 leaders on issues of importance to this year's multilateral agenda:

- **Strong alliances for a sustainable planet**

Universities are key partners in addressing the planetary crisis of climate change through innovative research, by serving as living laboratories, and by educating the next generation of climate leaders. Universities are unique sites of intergenerational dialogue about climate justice. As hubs for innovation, we are designing the solutions upon which future generations will depend. In particular, U7+ members are committed to enhancing access to courses on climate, biodiversity, and sustainability for their students, as well as to improving their operational energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, including setting specific reduction targets to 2030 relative to 2018 levels.

- **Investing in infrastructure for a better future**

The emergence of new technologies based on recent advances in fundamental science strongly impacts the global outlook. In particular, the digitalization of virtually every sector of economic, political and cultural life requires new technological developments, new regulatory responses, and new investments in human capital. To respond to the challenge, the U7+ has developed the [Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence by and for Universities \(HAICU\) Lab](#), to promote cooperation between universities and other stakeholders in a more global perspective to ensure AI is developed, regulated and used in a just and equitable human-centered fashion.

- **Setting the course for economic stability and transformation**

The path to economic stability, and to addressing global inequalities, requires access to opportunity for all. Our universities create opportunity and attract talent from our local communities, as well as from all over the world, bringing together curious minds to address

the most critical global challenges, and fostering a more equitable and globally connected world. In our classrooms, we prepare the global workforce for tomorrow's international economy. In our laboratories and libraries, we imagine new paths forward for people and the planet. It is critical that such opportunities be accessible to all – including prospective students from systematically disadvantaged communities.