Enhancing North-South Cooperation in Community-University Engagement

We, international community and university networks representing several thousand universities, professional bodies and civil society organisations: the Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios, Commonwealth Universities Extension and Engagement Network, Global Alliance on Community Engaged Research, Global Universities Network for Innovation, Living Knowledge Network, PASCAL International Observatory, Participatory Research in Asia, and the Talloires Network, held a global dialogue on North-South Cooperation in Community-University Engagement on September 23 2010;

Deeply concerned with local, national and global challenges in the form of complex issues of an economic, social justice, health, cultural, environmental and sustainability nature;

Taking Account of the growing interest in global higher education circles of the importance of the expansion of and support for structures, practices and policies to support community-university engagement;

Respecting previous statements of principle by each of our networks;

Aware that while there are some extremely innovative examples of community-university partnerships in the majority world, nevertheless there remains a significant imbalance in resources for strengthening strategic knowledge partnerships especially in vulnerable populations and poorer countries of the global South;

Supported by Evidence that the co-creation of knowledge, the use and sharing of such knowledge through the engagement of our students and scholars jointly by our higher education institutions and our community partners is a critical contribution to meeting the challenges of our times;

Recognizing that knowledge is created in multiple sites such as universities, communities, the private sector, civil society organizations, government agencies, international organisations and social movements;

In Respect of Indigenous knowledge systems and other ways of knowing and

being;

Understanding Community-University Engagement to mean respectful and genuine collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of democratic partnership and reciprocity;

Underscore the following principles in our Call to Action:

1. All higher education institutions express a strategic commitment to genuine community engagement, societal relevance of research and education and social responsibility

as a core principle.

2. Community engagement activities be based on two-way communication and guided by values of inclusion, mutual respect, integrity, freedom and democratic decision-making.

3. Recognise and support the role of community partners in the creation and

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co-creation of knowledge.

4. Scholars, researchers, students, practitioners, communities and their networks be enabled to participate in public engagement activities through appropriate training, and support.

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5. Scholars, researchers, students, practitioners, communities and their networks be recognised and valued for their involvement with public engagement.
6. In the interest of achieving global targets and world equity challenges as expressed by the Millennium

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Development Goals and other such statements, investment be strengthened to build community-university engagement capacities especially in the global South with attention to vulnerable populations and less wealthy countries.

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7. Rather than world-ranking systems for higher education that are often ineffective in advancing engagement practices, we support appraisal systems such as the Alternative University Appraisal system (in collaboration with the United Nations University) as

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development tools.

We believe that the transformative potential of our community sector organisations and our higher education institutions is enhanced when we combine our collective knowledge, global connections, skills and resources to address the myriad of social, economic, cultural, health and environmental challenges in our places and regions.

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