

Joint statement by the Government of Italy, the Emilia Romagna Region, and the United Nations University (UNU) regarding the establishment of a new UNU Institute in Bologna, Italy

We, the representatives of the United Nations University and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, together with the Ministry of University and Research, Emilia Romagna Region and University of Bologna, met in Bologna on June 12 to launch the Scoping Workshop “Towards a new UNU institute on Big Data and Artificial Intelligence for Managing Human Habitat Change”.

We are pleased to announce the pending establishment of a new United Nations University (UNU) institute in Bologna, Italy. Harnessing the power of big data and artificial intelligence for managing human habitat change, the institute will leverage the use of cutting-edge digital technologies to help solve pressing global challenges and foster international collaboration.

The establishment of the new UNU institute is possible thanks to the generous support of the Government of Italy and the Emilia-Romagna Region. In line with its strong commitment to multilateralism and support to the United Nations (UN) towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Italian government has committed USD 40 million to the UNU Endowment Fund as well as an annual contribution shared with the Emilia-Romagna region of EUR 2.5 million during the first decade of the institute's operation.

Earlier this month, the UNU Governing Board authorised the Rector to begin negotiating the agreements necessary for the establishment and operation of the institute. In anticipation of the establishment, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation financed the construction of a new building to house the institute within Bologna's Technopole, a state-of-the-art and fast-growing research hub in Italy.

The selection of Bologna as the host city for the institute is both deliberate and strategic. The region's thriving innovation ecosystem, access to distinguished researchers, supercomputing facilities, and cloud infrastructure offer an ideal environment for the institute's operation, and dynamic synergies with local institutions, industry partners, and the wider community will amplify the institute's impact and influence.

By advancing global research, development, and policy in the domains of big data and artificial intelligence, the institute will cooperate with other UNU and UN entities to deliver data-driven insights and catalyse innovation that can contribute to achievement of the UN Development Agenda. Central to the institute's work will be active collaboration and engagement with institutions and researchers in the Global South to ensure that UNU's work genuinely addresses the diverse needs and aspirations of nations and peoples worldwide, in line with the spirit of the many UN agencies and UN-backed research centres hosted in Italy.

In this workshop, UNU and UN representatives, national and regional government officials, and a panel of international experts will confer to more precisely outline the institute's scope and

mandate and determine how to achieve optimal inter-regional collaboration and knowledge exchange.

We are embarking on a journey with the goal of using digital technologies to shape a more sustainable and equitable future for all. Thank you all for your continued support as we set forth on this exciting endeavour.