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Senior UN official stresses potential impact of new partnership with academia



Kiyoo Akasaka, Under-Secretary-General for Public Information.

19 November 2010 – A top United Nations official voiced optimism today about what a newly-launched initiative between the world body and the academic community can achieve in areas such as development, human rights and literacy.

Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Kiyoo Akasaka looked forward to a busy 2011 for the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI), an initiative of the Department of Public Information (DPI) that was officially launched yesterday in New York.

“Over the past two days, representatives of 160 universities from 47 countries – altogether about 500 people – have come to the UN to share their ideas to exchange information and make plans for future collaboration on issues that affect us all,” he told a news conference on the second day of the launch event.

Mr. Akasaka said that participants involved in the initiative will carry out at least one activity next year in support of UNAI’s ten principles in the areas of human rights, literacy, sustainability and conflict resolution. Next year will also see the founding of ten institutional hubs, one for each of the principles.

“Each hub will be a focal point to receive and to disseminate ideas among universities and with us at the United Nations,” he stated.

The two-day launch culminates tonight with a concert at UN Headquarters featuring the Asia-Pacific United Orchestra performing a variety of works, a special appearance by the UN Staff Recreation Council Singers and a unique performance of the *Water Concerto for Water Percussion and Orchestra* by Tan Dun.

“The concert is a celebration of this launching of this new initiative,” said Mr. Akasaka. “[It] shows that harmony among different nations and different cultures is being promoted through the very many musicians from different countries playing music in harmony and this is most appropriate for the launching of the new initiative.”

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