

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



The Smart Global Development conference brings great global minds to Ottawa

OTTAWA, April 12, 2016 – A lecture hall, a research lab, a textbook: each of these is a powerful tool to combat poverty around the world.

Universities are hubs of knowledge and innovation, poised to unleash new opportunities and drive growth.

But despite this potential, the international development community has made limited investments in higher education in the Global South – particularly compared to support for primary education and basic health care.

On April 13 and 14, international experts will convene in Ottawa for the Smart Global Development conference, tackling key questions of higher education and its role in reducing global poverty.

Building on the momentum of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in September, the conference will explore how universities in Canada and overseas can contribute to the 2030 Development Agenda.

The opening keynote address will be delivered by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada.

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie will deliver opening remarks on April 14.

A truly global event, the two-day conference will feature some of the brightest minds from over 20 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean. More than a dozen Canadian universities will be represented at the conference.

The conference is presented by Aga Khan Foundation Canada, Academics Without Borders, and the International Development Research Centre – with financial support from Global Affairs Canada.

The launch of the conference on April 13 and all plenary sessions on April 14 will be webcast live in French and English.

More information is available on the conference website: www.smartglobaldev.ca

#SmartGlobalDev #DévIntelligent

Quotes:

“Progress in the developing world cannot be sustained without a vibrant constellation of universities, colleges, and research institutes to anchor local knowledge and innovation. Higher education institutions – in Africa, Asia, and Canada – have played a key role in the decades-long collaboration between Canada and the Aga Khan Development Network to improve lives in the developing world. We are coming together for the Smart Global Development conference out of a shared conviction that investments in higher education will underwrite long-term improvements in quality of life.”

– Khalil Z. Shariff, Chief Executive Officer, Aga Khan Foundation Canada

“Many low- and middle-income developing countries do not have the experts and professionals needed to provide basic services for their citizens, grow their economies, and do the research necessary for sustainable development. To avoid the brain drain, which often happens when students leave their home country to study in the developed world, these countries urgently need to provide high-quality tertiary education within their own borders. Their universities must be able to create the experts they need by giving their students both knowledge that is relevant to local conditions and the skills necessary to solve problems unique to their socioeconomic circumstances. For several years, Academics Without Borders has been working on projects initiated by universities in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia to help them improve their universities’ teaching, research, and back-office operations. The Smart Development Conference provides an opportunity to demonstrate how good universities can play a vitally important role in improving the lives of developing countries’ citizens.”

– Steven Davis, Executive Director, Academics Without Borders-Universitaires sans frontières

“The International Development Research Centre has long recognized the immense potential of higher-education institutions as drivers of social and economic development, repositories of cultural heritage, research centres for expanding human knowledge and hubs that spark innovation. We are committed to supporting access to higher education and to finding more effective ways for its integration into development policy, development assistance, program design and evaluation. This Smart Global Development Conference is a powerful acknowledgement of the promise of higher education in the developing world to forge innovation and resolve challenges.”

– Jean Lebel, President, International Development Research Centre

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