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## **UCT GSB centre only African business school on new UN development programme research council**

### **UNDP announces partnership with top universities to set development yardstick for impact investing**

The University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business (GSB) has been named as one of nine leading universities to be part of a partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop a research agenda that will better leverage private investment to finance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The announcement came on the side-lines of the 72nd United Nations (UN) general assembly, at an event titled "Big Data, Impact Management & the SDGs", which was co-hosted by the UNDP and the UN Global Pulse.

This partnership is led by UNDP SDG Impact Finance (UNSIF), an initiative that aims at bringing the private sector and public sector together through impact investment that yields competitive financial, social and environmental returns.

The UNSIF Research Council includes prominent universities in the US, Europe and Asia with only UCT – through its Bertha Centre for Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship, a specialised centre at the UCT Graduate School of Business – representing the African continent.

The Council is tasked to develop the methodology and to set down yardsticks that measure the development impact. The council will undertake research to improve the analytical frameworks, evidence, and policy environment that encourage and guide commercial capital flows in support of the UN's SDGs.

The impact investment sector has been growing rapidly. The Global Impact Investing Network estimated that there is now at least \$114 billion worth of impact investing assets under management. As the sector grows, one of the biggest challenges is how to measure impact.

Magdy Martinez-Soliman, UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director at the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, said: "The growing and promising niche of impact investing is a vanguard for how the private sector can

intentionally create positive impacts. The term “impact” can be seen as a convenient shorthand for the 17 SDGs – and impact investors, by their own definition, embody an ethos for intentionally creating outcomes that are positive for society and the environment. The returns they target are much more than just financial. These experiences can guide us as we re-imagine development finance for the SDGs.”

Recognising the need for a combined research effort to tackle the challenges facing impact investing, the following nine business schools and academic institutions have committed to joining forces on this important initiative, listed in alphabetically order:

- Bertha Centre for Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship, UCT’s GSB
- Carleton University
- China Europe International Business School
- Maastricht University
- National University of Singapore Business School
- Oxford University Saïd Business School
- University of Pennsylvania, The Wharton School
- Tsinghua University
- University of Zurich, Center for Sustainable Finance and Private Wealth

Together with the launch of the UNSIF Research Council, a discussion paper was published to propose a high-level research agenda and inform the discussion at the inaugural meeting of the council. The paper was authored by Professor Alex Nicholls and Jess Daggars at the University of Oxford.

Aunnie Patton Power, Innovative Finance Lead and Impact Investing in Africa course convenor at the Bertha Centre, said: “Impact investing holds significant promise for Africa for both local investments and investors. At the UCT GSB, we have been working with leading local and global practitioners and governments, to help catalyse this market on the continent and we look forward to participating in this research network to continue to expand the scope and impact of the field.”

Through complementary cycles of research-testing-certification-policy cycles, the ultimate goal of the research council is to produce a standardised impact measuring framework that governments can use to make informed public investment decisions, define new policy options for impact investing and incentivise capital markets to prioritize SDG-aligned investment practices.

**ENDS**

### **About the Bertha Centre**

The Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship is a specialised unit at the UCT’s GSB. Established in 2011 in partnership with the Bertha Foundation, a family foundation that works with inspiring leaders who are catalysts for social and economic change and human rights, the centre has become a leading academic centre in Africa.

Its mission is to pursue social impact towards social justice in Africa, through teaching, knowledge building, convening and catalytic projects with a systems lens on social innovation.

In collaboration with the GSB, the centre has integrated social innovation into the business

school curriculum, established a wide community of practitioners and awarded over R6-million in scholarships to students from across Africa. The Bertha Centre offers scholarships to UCT GSB applicants who would like to complete either the UCT GSB MBA or MPhil in Inclusive Innovation. For more information on this please visit their [website](#). These applications are now open until 31 October 2017.

Its [Impact Investing in Africa](#) executive education course will also run at the GSB this November, and is open to those working in the private and public sector including investors, development finance professionals, lawyers, intermediaries and consultants. To find out more about the course content and what past participants had to say, please watch the short course video [here](#). Applications to attend this course closes 13 October 2017.

**Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department**

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