

## GMA III Theme

### **Associations, Network, Alliances, etc.: Making Sense of the Emerging Global Higher Education Landscape**

Evidence suggests that the higher education and research landscape is becoming filled with layer upon layer of organizational structures with global agendas. These include associations of higher education institutions at national, regional and international levels, global university networks, more narrowly focused or specialized groups, international alliances, professional associations, learned societies and many other groupings. Each pursues a different set of objectives, has a distinct purpose, and justifies its usefulness to its members in a variety of ways. They also differ in terms of scale, scope, resources and thus power. In such a densely populated international scene, on which many actors are vying for the lead role, IAU is convinced that it is cooperation and collaboration, rather than competition, that is most likely to bring the greatest benefits to the largest number of stakeholders.

The International Association of Universities (IAU), positioned as a keen actor and observer of this evolving global scene, is once again using its convening capacity to bring together many of these organizations and networks to undertake a structured reflection and discussion about a number of critical questions, including the following:

- i) In a world subject to strong globalizing trends, what are the 'global' responsibilities of university associations?
- ii) With the growth and differentiation among Higher Education Institutions, how do Associations respond to the diversity among their members?
- iii) What are some of the visible factors or forces that are structuring the global higher education and research space?
- iv) Will strong regional integration movements and the creation of regional higher education areas lead to a more collaborative or competitive global higher education scene?
- v) Why do all international groups eventually feel the need to go global?
- vi) Through on-going collaboration among the associations, what may be some of the most useful achievements that would be of service to all?
- vii) Are there specific responsibilities that befall the international associations, some that should be taken up by regional associations and finally others that are best left to organizations at the national or sub-regional level?
- viii) What are the fundamental differences between the more established associations and the newer networks, alliances etc?
- ix) How could associations become more effective by working together on some common issues, by sharing 'intelligence', and by tackling some major global challenges?
- x) What mechanisms could be used to facilitate collaboration among associations that would not impose constraints but lead to results of positive benefit to all?
- xi) What danger—if any—and what obstacles are preventing increased collaboration among associations?