



PRESS RELEASE [1st July 2009]

University of Botswana receives Support to launch new Programme to train Students in Sustainable Development

U.S.-based MacArthur Foundation awards nearly \$8 million US (60 million Pula) to address challenges of global sustainable development

[Gaborone, Botswana] – The University of Botswana (UB) has been selected by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, globally headquartered in Chicago, as one of 10 universities worldwide to receive significant support in the amount of 2.5 million Pula (330,000 US\$) to create a new master's degree program in Development Practice. The MacArthur Foundation has awarded \$7.6 million US (57.5 million Pula) to seed the creation of Master's Development Practice (MDP) programs that will provide rigorous post-graduate training for a new generation of development experts over the next three years.

"Being chosen to receive this grant signifies the increasing global importance of sustainable development and acknowledges the multi-disciplinary competencies the University of Botswana has developed in this area," said Prof. Ulrich Schmitt, Dean of UB's School of Graduate Studies (SGS). "UB's MDP program will provide an effective enabler towards Botswana's Vision 2016 and beyond, and its modular delivery (to commence in late 2010 with 20 weeks of residential requirements over 2.5 years) means value-added convenient access for participants and organizations alike."

The MDP programs are designed to provide graduate students with training beyond the typical focus on classroom study of economics and management found in most development studies. The program's core curriculum bridges the natural sciences, health sciences, social sciences and management. It combines classroom study with field experiences in a range of disciplines, including agriculture, policy, health, engineering, management, environmental science, education, and nutrition.

"Through our work around the globe, we at MacArthur understand that poverty, population, health, conservation, and human rights are all interconnected, requiring sustained and comprehensive interventions," said Foundation President Jonathan Fanton. "These new programs are a model for training the next generation of these critically needed professionals."

Through financial and other support, the University of Botswana will create a modular program designed for working professionals. Rigorous independent study will be complemented by two to three weeks of on campus training each semester. University of Botswana will partner with University of Florida to offer field training experiences in Botswana.

Other universities that will receive funding to establish the 10 MDP programs are:

- **Columbia University** (New York, New York)
- **Emory University** (Atlanta, Georgia)
- **The Energy Resources Institute University** (New Delhi, India)
- **James Cook University** (Cairns and Townsville, Australia)
- **Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin** (Dublin, Ireland)
- **Tsinghua University** (Beijing, China)
- **University of Cheikh Anta Diop** (Dakar, Senegal)
- **University of Florida** (Gainesville, Florida)
- **University of Ibadan** (Ibadan, Nigeria)

Columbia University in New York City, will serve as Secretariat in helping to manage the MDP network of universities, and will develop an open-source repository for the MDP curriculum and other teaching materials. Ultimately, materials will be shared with other universities as part of an open-source resource on sustainable development for students worldwide, including an online Global Classroom.

The universities are expected to produce 250 graduates with a Master's Degree in Development Practice by 2012, with a total of 750 students enrolled. They were selected based on numerous criteria, including support from top university leadership, excellent infrastructure and academic programs, the ability to serve as a regional hub, geographic representation among students, exceptional faculty, and a timeline and business plan for financial sustainability when funding ends in three years.

There was widespread global interest in establishing the programs, and the quality and diversity of the proposals indicate strong interest in expanding inter-disciplinary development studies around the world. More than 70 universities in North America, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Latin America submitted proposals.

CONTACT: Prof. Ulrich Schmitt, (+267) 355-2391, schmittu@mopipi.ub.bw

###

The University of Botswana (UB) is a national asset of significant importance in the country's ability to achieve national goals and priorities with a student population of 15,000. UB's School of Graduate Studies (SGS) is one of the eight Faculties of the University and hosts 43 taught graduate programs and 22 MPhil/PhD programs for 1,500 graduate students. More information is available at www.ub.bw.

The MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is changing children and society. More information is available at www.macfound.org.



PROFILE AND RATIONALE OF THE MASTER IN DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE (MDP)

In 2007 the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation created the International Commission on Education for Development Professionals. The aim of the Commission was to identify the core disciplines and areas of expertise needed to help professionals address the complex challenges of sustainable development. Comprised of 20 eminent sustainable development experts and practitioners, the Commission found that worldwide, many people working in the field of development – at inter-governmental organizations, developed and developing-country ministries, aid agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions – are not sufficiently prepared to tackle the challenges they face. Currently, the bulk of development leaders are trained in narrow fields, usually in the social sciences, such as economics. By broadening their training and providing them with a knowledge base including health sciences, natural sciences, social sciences, and management, they will be able to more effectively understand and address the root causes of extreme poverty and the challenges of sustainable development. Consequently, the Commission's report put forward recommendations for new, cross-disciplinary training for aspiring practitioners in the field of sustainable development practice [mdp.ei.columbia.edu].

The new Global Master's in Development Practice (MDP) program is one of the Commission's key recommendations and addresses poverty, population, health, conservation, climate change, and human rights in an interconnected way. The key skills and learning outcomes include agriculture, policymaking, health care, engineering, management, environmental science, education, and nutrition. The objective of the two-year, graduate level program is to develop a new generation of "generalist" practitioners able to diagnose and address priorities for sustainable development. The proposed curriculum challenges students to seek integrated approaches to development drawing on the multi-disciplinary areas concerned and also integrates two intensive practical field-training experiences. Thus, the MDP will provide graduate students with training beyond the typical classroom study of economics and management found in most development studies programs. Columbia University's Earth Institute in New York, in cooperation with the School of International and Public Affairs, is creating the first MDP program that will launch in the fall of 2009 [www.sipa.columbia.edu/academics/degree_programs/mpa-dp].

To help provide individuals who are addressing global development challenges with the skills they need, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has committed \$15 million to create a Master's in Development Practice (MDP) program at up to 15 universities worldwide over the next three years. Based on the recommendations of the International Commission, the Foundation identified nine additional global centers of academic excellence across the globe and, in July 2009, announced the award of significant grants to jointly launch Global Masters in Development Practice (MDP) programs (see press release above). MacArthur also established a Global Master's in Development Practice Secretariat based at Columbia University's Earth Institute. The Secretariat will help manage the development of the MDP programs, develop an open-source repository for the MDP curriculum and other teaching materials, support the networking of the MDP universities, and will offer an online, Global Classroom on sustainable development for students worldwide.

THE MDP TO BE OFFERED AT UB'S SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES (SGS)

In February 2009, UB's School of Graduate Studies and 70 other universities responded to Mac Arthur's request for proposals. As one of the ten universities selected, UB has been awarded 2.5 million Pula (330,000 US\$) for seed funding. UB's Masters in Development Practice Program to commence in the academic year 2010/11 will promote full-time, modular, and on-line study opportunities for regional and international students as well as for professional capacity development. At the end of the programme, graduates will be well prepared to confront complex sustainable development challenges in the private or public sector. These outcomes will be met by gearing the MDP's contents, assignments, and assessments towards the achievement of four major aims:

- **Integration** of the Recommendations of the International Commission on Education for Development Professionals including the scope, duration, contents, and learning outcomes regarding the eighteen competency areas expressed across the four key disciplines;
- **Compliance** with Regional Credit and Qualification Frameworks concerning size, workload distribution, and level descriptors;
- **Equivalence** with international qualifications as evidenced by an International Accreditation Agency's Audit during the 1st year of delivery;
- **Contribution** to Botswana's Economic and Social Development Agenda by assuring that graduates are equipped with knowledge, skills, entrepreneurial talent, and attitudes to create a society and economy that will benefit the advancement of the country and its people, including the development of communication, project management, research and leadership skills as expected by the professional world of government, enterprises and non-profit organisations.

However, UB's MDP framework will considerably differ from the other selected proposals (delivered in 25-27 months of full-time mode) by integrating a compulsory in-company research project and by its modular delivery. Taught graduate programmes at UB, so far, have been offered only in full/part-time mode, limiting the intake to those students who are able to be residential in Gaborone during their semesters of study. Considering that Botswana has a population of 1.8 million dispersed over a territory of around 600,000 km² (combined area of Germany and UK), lifelong learning for professionals living outside the capital's catchment area has been severely restricted.

Starting in 2010, first with an Executive MBA followed by the MDP later in the year, the School of Graduate Studies will launch a new breed of modular programmes in Botswana which also addresses the need to provide life-long-learning opportunities for graduate students and professionals residential/employed outside Gaborone and to support their employing organisations nationwide and in the region. Hence, UB's MDP will be based on eight intensive residential modules and two practical placements with an opportunity to participate in a field-training programme to be set up in collaboration with the University of Florida at UB's Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Centre (HOORC). The latter utilises HOORC's comprehensive know-how and unique location, the gateway to the Okavango Delta and Moremi Game Reserve, in order to focus on the local development and conservation issues and to reflect the political, managerial, and practical dimensions in the region of Ngamiland and Maun, its administrative centre and tourism capital of Botswana. Thus, UB's MDP program comprises a total of 20 weeks of residential lecture requirements in Gaborone and Maun, demanding 8 visits over a time span of 2.5 years.

Two courses and a seminar make up each of the first four 2-week intensive block modules (9 ECTS credits, 100 residential hours) with 101 (24) hours of preparatory (post) work each. Three courses and a workshop or mini-group-project make up each of the subsequent four three-week intensive block modules (12 ECTS credits, 144 residential hours) with 120 (36) hours of preparatory (post) work each. The modules are:

- Essential Research Methodologies (focus on quantitative methods and econometric techniques for policy makers),
- Fundamentals of Development Practice (focus on economic and policy analysis),
- Tropical Agriculture & Pre-Field Study (focus on tropical agriculture and commodities management),
- Health Sector Management (focus on population sciences, reproductive health, health policy/education, epidemiology, disease control),
- Ecology & Development Interventions (focus on human ecology, sustainable development, and multi-sectoral development interventions),
- Towards a Knowledge Society (focus on macroeconomic policy, knowledge management, advanced applications of policy/planning tools),
- Sustainable Development Practice (focus on international energy and environmental policy, engineering and urban and rural planning),
- Sustainable Infrastructure Development (focus on environment, water, climate science and methods of sustainable development practice).

An option in Wetland Ecology & Water Management will also be available. The gaps between the residential modules are based on the assumption that participants in employment are able to devote 12 hours per week for the required preparatory and post work (UB's MDP programme is not run in distance mode; the number of face-to-face class hours are equivalent to the full-time programme; online-support, however, will be available). All modules are self-contained to create convenient one-visit openings for graduate students from universities abroad to study any of the 2 or 3-week residential modules and to carry home an internationally accepted currency of recognised credits devoid of bureaucratic hurdles concerning course recognitions. With this framework, UB also hopes to encourage many of the international volunteers in Botswana interested in further studies to participate in the MDP programme, fully or partially.

Calls for Applications will commence in early 2010 after all internal UB approval processes including fee structures have been finalised.