



The City College  
of New York



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**The United Nations University Hub at CCNY (R-SIRUS) Joins the First Annual UNU Hubs Meeting in Hamburg, Germany**

**New York, NY** – The inaugural Annual Meeting of the United Nations University (UNU) Hubs was held at Hamburg University of Technology (TUHH) from June 5-6, 2025. A milestone event, it set the stage for enhanced research collaboration across UNU Hub institutions. It brought together representatives from the four active UNU Hubs- Calgary (Canada), TUHH (Germany), City College of New York (CCNY) (USA), and Lund University (Sweden) as well as delegates from the forthcoming hubs at the University of Pretoria (South Africa) and the University of Toronto (Canada), fostering a growing network of academic collaboration focused on sustainability, innovation, and global impact.

The UNU Hub at City College of New York (CCNY)-Remote-Sensing and Sustainable Innovations for Resilient Urban Systems (R-SIRUS) was notably represented at the meeting by R-SIRUS Executive Co-Director and Dean of the Grove School of Engineering (GSOE), [Alexander Couzis](#) and R-SIRUS Executive Co-Director and NOAA Chair and Professor at GSOE, [Dr. Reza Khanbilvardi](#), R-SIRUS Deputy Executive Director of Operations, Dr. Karin Sjöstrand, and CCNY Faculty- Drs. [Mitch Goldberg](#), [Naresh Devineni](#), [Prathap Ramamurthy](#).



The primary goals of the meeting were to advance the integration of science, policy, and society, and to develop sustainable technological solutions to address today's most urgent global challenges including climate change, food and water security, and equitable development. The event kicked off with introductions from each UNU Hub, who then shared their mission, research priorities, and strategic goals to lay the foundation for long term collaboration. Further, the keynote speakers addressed the participants on crucial topics; UNU Rector Prof. Tshilidzi Marwala discussed the UNU's unique role in connecting scientific research with policy impact while industry leaders and experts including Nicole Dreyer-Langlet (AIRBUS), Franziska Meinzingen (Hamburg WASSER), Prof. Stefan Palzer (Nestlé), and Prof. Björn Stevens (Max Planck Institute) offered insights on sustainability in aviation, water management, food systems, and climate-informed engineering.



*President of TUHH, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Andreas Timm-Giel, delivering the opening remarks*

A major highlight of the event was the inauguration of the Campus LAB Circular Economy and the Global Soil Health, Water, and Climate Field Lab at TUHH, showcasing applied research platforms with high potential for inter-Hub collaboration. The meeting also hosted thematic workshops led by UNU Institute for Water, Environment and Health (INWEH), which engaged participants in exploring regional and disciplinary intersections across water, environment, and health. These sessions focused on identifying new collaborative opportunities, addressing systemic barriers, and co-developing sustainable development goals aligned with strategic roadmaps. Participants emphasized the need for shared digital platforms, expanded funding opportunities for joint initiatives, and robust faculty and student exchange programs to sustain and deepen the global UNU Hub network. This meeting was vital toward creating a globally connected research and policy network. It underlined the importance of cross-regional dialogue and interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing complex global challenges.

Dr. Reza Khanbilvardi expressed R-SIRUS's commitment to advancing the outcomes of the meeting, "R-SIRUS will initiate collaborations with other UNU hubs, engage with stakeholders to operationalize research outputs into policy recommendations, and contribute to a shared knowledge platform that promotes real time exchange of best practices and innovations."

For more information on the meeting, [read here](#).

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### **UNU-Hub at CCNY- R-SIRUS**

The United Nations University Hub for Remote Sensing and Sustainable Innovation Resiliency in Urban Systems (R-SIRUS)- first of its kind in the U.S. and globally advances the sustainable development goals by tackling urban sustainability, climate resilience, and equity through science, innovation, and international collaboration. For more information, [click here](#).

### **CUNY CREST Institute**

The CUNY CREST was institutionalized in 2010 and approved by the CUNY Board of Trustees. It is a coalition of interdisciplinary researchers across the CUNY system, with a global reach, who are passionate about addressing grand societal challenges by advancing earth system sciences, social science, and environmental justice, through applications of a suite of ground-based and satellite-based remote sensing technologies, raising awareness, engaging secondary & postsecondary students and community outreach. CREST is headquartered at T-107, Steinman Hall, 140th St. & Convent Ave., New York, NY 10031, USA. For more information, [click here](#).