On Campus

Jeffrey Sachs Appointed to Head the Columbia Earth Institute

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With the appointment of Jeffrey Sachs as director of the Columbia Earth Institute, the University now has one of the world's most prominent global economic thinkers leading its boldly innovative multidisciplinary federation of research and teaching centers.

Sachs, who came to Columbia last July from Harvard, has spent decades working to understand and address the world's most serious problems, from poverty and AIDS to environmental threats and the effects of international trade. He serves as an economic advisor to governments all over the world and has helped lead dramatic reforms in Bolivia, Poland, and Russia.

His Columbia appointment, made jointly by Columbia President Lee Bollinger and former president George Rupp, will allow Sachs to work more closely with United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, to whom he was named a special advisor in February. Sachs will help with the UN's Millennium Development Goals, which aim to cut global poverty in half by 2015. His leadership will also allow the Earth Institute to forge a close relationship with the UN on issues such as climate change, sustainable development, and the spread of communicable diseases.

"Jeffrey Sachs is a major public intellectual, in the best sense," said Bollinger. "He brings scholarly erudition and insight to the most serious and fundamental issues of our time—the organization of market economies in newly developing democracies; the methods of dealing with countries that are under threat of having their economies dissolve into bankruptcy; and the critical importance of focusing on the interrelationships of economic structures with, for example, disease and climate."

Among Sachs's research interests are the links between health and development, globalization, economic geography, emerging markets, global competitiveness, transitions to market economies, international financial markets and macroeconomic

policy coordination, and macroeconomic policies in developing and developed countries.

In addition to heading the Earth Institute, Sachs has appointments at three of Columbia's schools—the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the School of International and Public Affairs, and the Mailman School of Public Health, where his projects include working to investigate the causes and health effects of toxic levels of arsenic in areas of Bangladesh and working on the School's international HIV/AIDS initiatives.

The Earth Institute, which Sachs has called "unique in American academia," is an ambitious innovation in academic organization: It provides a maximum of academic freedom within a minimum of institutional constraints, enabling new levels of creativity and collaboration. Sachs oversees about 1,000 Columbia scholars in the earth, life, and social sciences.

The Earth Institute is a federation of eight research and teaching centers: Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Goddard Institute for Space Studies at Columbia, Biosphere 2 Center, Center for Environmental Research and Conservation (CERC), Earth Engineering Center, International Research Institute for Climate Prediction (IRI), Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), and Laboratory of Populations, which is a joint venture of Columbia and Rockefeller University.

At Harvard, Sachs was director of the Center for International Development and Galen L. Stone Professor of International Trade. He arrived at Harvard as a freshman in 1972 and went on to earn his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees.



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