

# JGU Delegation to the Times Higher Education Emerging Economies Summit

RABAT, ROYAL KINGDOM OF MOROCCO  
8 – 10 MAY 2018

*Morocco, in transit through Casablanca*

## Background & Introduction

A delegation of JGU faculty attended the **Times Higher Education Emerging Economies Summit** at Rabat, the capital of Morocco from 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> May 2018. Times Higher Education (THE) is one of the world's premier agencies working in the area of higher education rankings and benchmarking. While their core ranking operations result in an annual World University Rankings that are released every year in September, over recent years THE has also released rankings disaggregated by (1) region, (2) size of the economy, and (3) disciplines/subject areas.

As the name suggests, the Times Higher Education Emerging Economies University Rankings 2018 includes institutions in only those countries that are classified by the FTSE as (1) "advanced emerging" (including Brazil, Greece, South Africa, Turkey), (2) "secondary emerging" (including Chile, India, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation) or, (3) "frontier" (including Argentina, Bangladesh, Croatia, Cyprus, Morocco, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Vietnam).



**O.P. Jindal Global University**  
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*O.P. Jindal Global University and the Times Higher Education (THE) share a long-standing relationship. JGU hosted the Times Higher Education BRICS and Emerging Economies Summit in December 2015 followed by joint conferences with THE.*

## Members of the JGU delegation

1. Prof (Dr.) C Raj Kumar, Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University
2. Prof. Arjya B. Majumdar, Executive Director, Office of Rankings, Benchmarking and Institutional Transformation (ORBIT) and Associate Professor, Jindal Global Law School.
3. Prof. (Dr.) Ashish Bharadwaj, Associate Professor, Jindal Global Law School; Executive Director, Office of Rankings, Benchmarking and Institutional Transformation (ORBIT); Co-Director of JIRICO.

*JGU Delegation at the opening of the THE Emerging Economies Summit in Rabat*



## BOOK LAUNCH

*'The Future of Indian Universities', C. Raj Kumar (Ed.), Oxford University Press, 2017*

In Rabat (Morocco), Prof Raj Kumar was invited to speak at the THE Emerging Economies Summit as part of a panel on 'Research Universities: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Training Hub?' and to launch his recently released edited book titled 'The Future of Indian Universities', published by the Oxford University Press. It was a rare honor for us that the book was released at the THE Summit.



# Purpose of JGU's Participation

The primary objective of undertaking this trip was to participate in panel discussions and in the launch event of the OUP book 'The Future of Indian Universities'.



*THE rankings of universities are based on performance, academic reputation, and bibliometric data*

## OTHER REASONS OF JGU'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS SUMMIT:

1. To get an in-depth understanding of the parameters used by THE, and other ranking agencies to measure university performance and, consequently, develop high-level strategies to boost JGU's performance.
2. To develop a strong presence of JGU in the international context of rankings.
3. To explore new international collaborations with universities in Africa in general, and the MENA (Middle-East and North Africa) region in particular.

*The Summit was co-hosted by Moroccan Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research; Mohammed V University in Rabat, and 5-100 Russian Academic Excellence Project.*



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## Significance of Morocco



Morocco has a long history of undertaking significant reforms in higher education, perhaps the longest in the world. **The world's oldest, continuously functioning university is the University of Al Quaraouiyine located in Fez, Morocco, as opposed to the University of Bologna in Italy as commonly believed.** This university was founded in 859 by Fatima al-Firhi as part of the al-Qarawiyyin mosque in Fez and was eventually accorded university status in 1965.

Situated at the crossroads of Africa, Europe and Northern America, Morocco occupies a critical position of strategic importance in the geopolitical space of the North Atlantic. It was also the first nation to recognize the United States of America upon its Declaration of Independence. India and Morocco enjoy strong diplomatic & economic relations, particularly in the trading of phosphate, which is one of Morocco's primary exports. Phosphate is widely used in the chemical and fertilizer industries in India.

JGU has limited collaborations with universities in African nations, and a lot of work needs to be done in this regard. We hope that building collaborations with Moroccan and other African universities will increase our inward-bound student mobility and provide a greater level of internationalization in our student body.

## Times Higher Education Emerging Economies Summit 2018

This Summit took place over three days – 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and was hosted at the Mohammad V University in Rabat. **Prof. Saaïd Amzazi, Minister of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, Morocco** opened the Summit.

The primary focus of the Summit was to launch the ‘2018 THE

**Emerging Economies Ranking’**. Within these rankings, 42 countries were represented with China accounting for the highest number of universities within the top 350. India had the second highest number of universities in the top 350 with 42. While this is an improvement from 2017 when India had only 27 universities in the top 300, it may also be attributed to THE increasing its rankings from 250 to 300. It is also interesting to note that Indian universities are yet to break into the top 10 while 7 of the top 10 universities are in China. Equally telling is the drop in ranks for IIT Delhi, IIT Kanpur and IIT Madras.

The Summit featured 20 keynote addresses and panels that covered a wide variety of contemporary issues faced in higher education – ranging from ‘Widening participation and access in higher education’ to ‘Preparing students for the 21st Century’. The Summit had the participation of over 200 faculty members, higher education administrators and other participants.



In addition to the meetings that we had with the representatives of THE, we had a very useful meeting with the leadership of **ELSEVIER** regarding the **SCOPUS-indexed journals**. We raised several concerns regarding the issues relating to Scopus-indexed journals and their applicability to India and to certain specific disciplines. We have established a very good rapport with the leadership of ELSEVIER and they have agreed to examine our concerns. They have also agreed to consider addition to new journals and other publications as part of their efforts to expand the various disciplines and scholarship currently served by Scopus.

There is a process for this and we can participate in this effort. This is a very important development and we need to work on this in a systematic manner. As you will appreciate, nearly **60% of the weightage in international rankings such as THE and QS** is linked to publications and citations. Scopus becomes the most critical factor in relation to this element. We will begin immediate engagement with the faculty members of JGU to ensure that we have a full understanding of what we need to discuss and share with ELSEVIER regarding the inclusion of various publications that meet with our different schools' concerns.

Prof C. Raj Kumar had a separate session for the launch of his book on 'The Future of Indian Universities', which was followed by a discussion with Mr. Chris Havergal, Editor of the Times Higher Education. We also had detailed discussions with representatives of THE regarding **our proposal to host a conference on Higher Education in South Asia in collaboration with THE in December 2019**. We were happy to note that THE representatives viewed this proposal in a positive vein and we expect talks on this to proceed favorably.

### Some notable meetings included:

*Prof Saaïd Amzazi, Minister of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, Morocco*

*Prof Mohamed Al-Rubeai, Chairman, University College Dublin*

*Prof Abdelhanine Belhaj, President, Mohammad V University*

*Prof Mamdouh Shoukri, President, York University*

*Prof Mohamed Albaili, Vice-Chancellor, United Arab Emirates University*

*Mr İhsan Sabuncuoğlu, Rector, Abdullah Gül University in Istanbul, Turkey*

We were also delighted to meet **Her Excellency Ms. Kheya Bhattacharya, Hon'ble Ambassador of India to Morocco** at the conference. She had come to the conference specifically to meet with delegates from JGU and two other Indian universities. She also hosted the JGU delegation to the Indian embassy in Rabat where she provided an overview of the relationship between India and Morocco, the role and functions of her office and guidance as to negotiating international collaborations with Moroccan universities.



*Her Excellency Ms. Kheya Bhattacharya, Hon'ble Ambassador of India to Morocco (third from right)*

We were also fortunate in that **Mr. Sanjay Kumar Verma, Additional Secretary, Administration, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India** was also visiting Rabat at the same time and Her Excellency took this opportunity to introduce us to him.

We are deeply touched by the time she devoted to us, and we are grateful to her and the staff at the Indian embassy in Rabat for their hospitality and guidance. We look forward to working with the Indian embassy in Rabat more closely in the future.

## Efforts at Internationalisation

We met with and had detailed discussions with the following participants with regard to our internationalization efforts:

- . **Prof Abdelhanine Belhaj, President, Mohammad V University**
- . **Prof Mohamed Albaili, Vice-Chancellor, United Arab Emirates University**
- . **Prof İhsan Sabuncuoğlu, Rector, Abdullah Gul University**
- . **Prof Hasan Rashid Al-Derham, President, Qatar University**

We intend to enter into international collaborations with the above-mentioned universities with regard to student and faculty exchange, joint research culminating in joint conferences and publications and short-term study programmes in each of the participating institutions. To this end and effect, **we have delivered draft MOU to each of the above and expect to have these MoUs signed very soon.**

## The Way Forward

Overall, the trip to Morocco was very productive as this is the one of the most important ways of engaging with the global rankings organisation, **Times Higher Education**. JGU has the potential to see itself in the international rankings in the near future. But we need to be very active in these summits and other international engagements. Our reputation for the purposes of these rankings also requires our global presence in various forums, including in such summits. We are beginning to be recognized in these international summits and even when we participate in these summits, we make a substantial intellectual contribution to the deliberations of the summit. We need to do more and that is part of our understanding through shared experiences and learnings from the summits. Joint research and joint conferences are indeed very valuable and we should continue to do them as we are doing with our partner universities around the world. But we also need to develop stronger partnerships that will lead to faculty publications between our university faculty and our partner universities. We need to work on this effort with all our faculty members and also with the International Office.

We have another major challenge. This is regarding our media presence, including social media and other forms of communication that we need to expand internationally. We have a very strong media presence within India, but we need to examine as to how we are going to build a global media presence both in terms of the JGU brand as a global university and as an institution of global excellence. While we need to focus on what we are good at and continue to pursue our mission with passion, commitment and dedication towards promoting excellence in teaching, research, experimental learning and administration, we also need to be mindful of what the rankings organisations use as their methodology for assessing institutions. This is the only way by which we can expect JGU and other Indian universities to see themselves in the international rankings. Over the last few years, we have developed a much better understanding of what we need to do in ensuring that we are recognized internationally. These efforts have indeed culminated for JGU to be the youngest university in India and beyond for being recognized in international rankings. The fact that QS BRICS Rankings recognized JGU among the top 250-200 universities in the BRICS where there are 9000 universities is a significant milestone that we had crossed this year. But we need to do more as there are many other universities in East Asia, China and the Emerging Economies in Middle East and Africa, which are pursuing effective policies to empower their universities.

(continued)

One of the remarkable aspects of this effort is for us to understand what other countries are doing to make their universities world class. Obviously, the most inspiring and compelling story emerges out of China where every year, new universities are emerging into international rankings, in addition to some of the most reputed existing universities rising in their rankings. In addition to China, there are amazing developments taking place in Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Taipei, Malaysia, Turkey and many other countries where public policy is dramatically changing the landscape of higher education. More and more emphasis is being given to quality and excellence with significant public investment in higher education. This year's Emerging Economies THE Rankings has seen Indian universities slipping in their rankings from the previous year. For example, IIT at Kanpur, Delhi and Chennai, slipped in ranking. IIT Kanpur fell from 32nd to 49th position this year, whereas IIT Delhi came down to 63rd position from its previous ranking of 32. IIT Madras was down to 70, from its previous position of 35. This has happened not because of the fact that these institutions failed to do something this year; it has happened because of the fact that many more institutions across the Emerging Economies and particularly from China are dramatically improving their universities. We need to take cognizance of this in India.

The debate on the purpose of rankings will continue unabated. JGU has strategically decided that we will engage in all earnestness with the international rankings and benchmarking processes. We owe it to our students that they become part of an institution that will globally renowned and recognized. Our students and alumni stand to benefit significantly as JGU gets recognized more and more in national and international rankings. **The awareness and sensitivity towards rankings should be taken to each faculty member, each student and each staff member of the university. The rankings effort cannot be driven by my office or me or for that matter the newly established Office of Rankings, Benchmarking and Institutional Transformation (ORBIT) alone. It has to be part of our collective imagination at JGU and become part of our institutional vision.**

I believe we are moving in the right direction and the Morocco THE Summit has only reinforced our mission and indeed our destiny.

**Prof. (Dr.) C. Raj Kumar**  
**Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University**