

Oral Report of the Rector
to the 27th Session of the United Nations University Council

Tokyo, Japan
7 July 1986

I would like to join Professor Kamba in formally welcoming everyone, Council members and observers, to the United Nations University. I wish to express, on behalf of all my colleagues, as especially warm welcome to those who are just beginning their terms as Council members and who are joining us for the first time.

I would also like to bid a very special welcome to the Director-General of UNESCO. It is a pleasure and a privilege to have him here with us for this 27th session of the UNU Council. Those of you who are familiar with the history of the UNU know that Mr. M'Bow played a seminal role in the creation of this University.

This twenty-seventh Council session is a special one for three reasons. I have already mentioned two of them: the presence of our eleven new Council members and the presence of the Director-General. The third reason is that we are publicly celebrating the 10th anniversary of the United Nations University programme. There are many milestones one could choose to celebrate in the process of the UNU's creation. As most of you know, the Charter of the University was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December, 1973. The headquarters was established in Tokyo in June, 1975. But the programme, naturally, took a little time to organize, so we feel that it is appropriate to celebrate in 1986 the completion of the first decade of work at the UN University.

As the experienced members of the Council know, the usual major task of the mid-year Council session used to be the preparation of the Annual Report of the Council. However, we now follow the calendar year for our reporting to ECOSOC, the General Assembly and UNESCO, so the Annual Report will be prepared in December. Furthermore, since we now prepare a biennial (rather than a yearly) programme and budget, this session does not have to discuss a programme and budget document. Thus, our agenda is rather free of substantive items for action.

The relative blankness of our business agenda might have been cause for tedium; however, it also provides an opportunity. We will have ample time at this session for what I consider to be a most important matter: reflection on the future direction of this University. At the end of the current biennium, we will come to the end of the period covered by the first Medium-Term Perspective (MTP) of the UNU. The second Medium-Term Perspective will cover the period 1988-1993. At the twenty-sixth Council session, last December, I was

instructed by the Council to begin planning for the second MTP. I initiated the planning process with a series of meetings this spring. The Japanese Scientific Advisory Panel met in March. We held an Annual Planning meeting in April, and there was a meeting of the Rector's Advisory Committee in May. This Council session is the next step in this major effort to articulate the ideas that will form the basis of the second MTP. I have prepared a paper to help get our discussion started, and I believe you have received that paper this morning. I hope that for all your fatigue and jet lag you will find time to go through it. I would like to emphasize even before you read it that it is not a consensus document. It is very much a presentation of my personal reflections. As you see from the agenda, we have allotted a whole day for a brainstorming session on the second MTP and I am very much looking forward to a rich and stimulating discussion on Wednesday.

As suggested by the Council at the twenty-sixth session, the work schedule of this meeting has been organized to achieve greater efficiency. For this reason, following my oral report, most other items on the agenda for today are information items. This means that for each of those items there will be no oral introduction.

As is usual in my oral report to the Council, I would like to spend several minutes bringing you up to date on developments within the University since our last Council meeting. I will first refer to several administrative and institutional matters, and then discuss programme activities.

In May, I appeared before the Programme and External Relations Commission of the UNESCO Executive Board to present the Report of the Council for 1985. I also took the opportunity afforded by that occasion to speak to the Commission about the institutional identity of the UNU. As the text of the decision of the Executive Board indicates, the report was very well received.

There have been several staff changes since our last Council meeting. Dr. Nevin Scrimshaw completed his temporary assignment as Director of the Development Studies Division on 31 May, 1986. The position of Vice-Rector of that division has been vacant for well over a year now, and we have been extremely fortunate that Dr. Scrimshaw was able and willing to disrupt his heavy schedule of commitments to fill what could have been a crippling gap in our senior management. As an additional stopgap measure, he has now agreed to serve for few more months as Senior Adviser to the Rector with responsibility for the Development Studies Division, but working primarily from his office at M.I.T.

Dr. Fred Schindeler has been appointed Director of Dissemination, with broad responsibilities for management of the information and dissemination activities of the UNU. Mr. Amadio A. Arboleda, who is

well known to you as Council Affairs Officer, has been appointed Chief of Academic Publication Services to replace Mr. Shigeo Minowa, who retired in February. Mr. Arboleda will continue to carry out the duties of the Council Affairs Officer until a new Secretary of the Council is appointed.

Dr. Jose V. Abueva has returned to Tokyo from our New York Liaison Office, and takes up the duties of Director of Planning and Evaluation Services from today.

Mr. Noboru Noguchi was appointed Senior Liaison Officer for Japan in May. He is working with our Standing Committee on the Research and Training Centre in Japan and the Permanent Headquarters Building. He will assist the senior staff of the University in achieving closer relations with the Japanese academic and scientific communities and with the Japanese Government ministries, particularly with regard to the headquarters building and additional project funding.

Dr. Abraham Besrat joined the University at the beginning of January, 1986, as Training and Fellowships Officer in the University's new training unit.

Mr. Douglas Manson, the Director of Administration, is planning to retire from active service with the University this autumn. Mr. Manson has been with the University for eight years, and he will be sorely missed.

Let me now turn to the programme activities of the last several months. Shortness of time allows me only to mention some of the highlights of the period, although, responding to questions of various new Council members, this will take a little longer than usual. I will present these highlights in rough chronological order.

In October, 1985, a panel of lawyers and scientists from Latin America, North America, Asia and Europe, met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to advise the UNU on a research project on common patrimony and intergenerational equity. The discussion focused on theoretical aspects of international law related to the management of global commons, and on strategies for meeting obligations that the present generation has toward future generations. The panel also reviewed the progress of research on several case studies of the management of selected "global commons". The principles of intergenerational equity covered in the project deal with conservation of the diversity of the world's resource base, conservation of the quality of cultural and natural resources, and the right of equal access to the benefits of this legacy.

The Latin American network of the project on Regional Peace and Security held an international seminar, also in Rio de Janeiro, in November. A series of studies on the role of the state in the security

of Latin America were presented. The research of the Latin American network has focused on the links between democracy, development and peace. The impact of the Latin American economic crisis arising from external debt, the constraints on political alternatives due to the influence of the two superpowers, and the extent of militarization in Latin America were analyzed.

Scholars from universities and research institutes in eight socialist countries in Europe met at a UNU workshop on security issues, in Budapest, Hungary, in November. The discussions reflected an East European perspective on the theoretical and practical problems of economic, political and military security. Confidence-building measures in international relations, and the economic relations of the European socialist states with the developing countries and the capitalist or market economies were also on the agenda. The workshop set priorities and made recommendations for research co-operation within the framework of the UNU project on Regional Peace and Security.

The second workshop of the UNU project on Economic Development Models for Resource-Rich Developing Countries was held in Bangkok, Thailand in December. The seven case studies reviewed dealt with the management of natural resources booms and their impact on the economy. The studies will help to identify the general constraints on the economic development of resource-rich countries as well as politically viable strategies to enable resource-rich countries to manage both rapid growth and improved distribution of income.

The UNU organized a seminar in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in December, in collaboration with Environment and Development Action in the Third World (ENDA). The subject was policies and programmes to improve the access of disadvantaged residents of Third World cities to basic supplies of food and energy. Linkages between food and energy problems in urban areas of certain developing countries were analyzed by researchers involved in the Food-Energy Nexus programme.

The University held a consultative meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in January, to review plans for the proposed Advanced Seminar on Global Problems. Fifteen African scholars and policy-makers, mainly from universities, United Nations agencies and regional organizations, participated. The first phase of this project will be a regional seminar, intended to provide a forum for young African scholars, professionals, policy-makers, entrepreneurs, and administrators to study and discuss African problems and their interlinkages with external factors.

In January, at the request of a number of African Member States of the Lomé Convention, the Commission of the European Communities approved the allocation of approximately \$1.4 million for implementation of the Regional Food and Nutrition Project in Africa. The project is jointly organized by the UNU and the Association of African Universities (AAU). The total budget request, of which this is the first

installment, is US\$7 million. Under the requirements of the Lomé Convention, the AAU will administer the funds. The project will undertake a programme of research and development, advanced training, and dissemination to help strengthen the scientific and technological capabilities of African institutions in the area of food and nutrition.

The African Regional Perspectives project, involving 250 researchers from 35 nations, moved toward completion with a series of workshops in Senegal, Tanzania and Tunisia. The results of studies on the crisis of African agriculture, industrial strategies in Africa, and Arab-African relations, among others, are being readied for publication.

The Advisory Committee for the project on Poverty and Welfare Resource Allocation held a planning meeting in Guatemala City, Guatemala, in February. The Committee continued the forward planning for the project and discussed reports of research on social support systems in Japan and the Republic of Korea. It also produced methodological guidelines to be used for comparative research in several country studies. A worldwide solicitation for research proposals has elicited a strong collection of proposals, which are now being screened by the Academic Advisory Committee. Preliminary findings concerning social support systems for the aged in the selected countries are expected to be presented to a mid-course meeting of the project researchers in December, 1986.

Researchers of the Food-Energy Nexus (FEN) programme explored the relationship between food and energy production at the programme's second international symposium in New Delhi, India, in February. The meeting was jointly sponsored by UNESCO, the Department of Non-Conventional Energy Sources of the Government of India, and the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. The symposium evaluated food and energy production systems under diverse ecological conditions in order to evolve criteria for the development of systems that are not only economically efficient, but also ecologically sound. The programme has published 14 papers in its publications series.

A review of the traditions of non-violence within Islam brought together religious scholars and academic researchers from nine countries at a UNU seminar held in Bali, Indonesia, in February. The Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs, Mr. Munawir Sjadzali, opened the seminar, and several government officials and military officers attended as observers. The seminar considered ways in which non-violence is practiced in Muslim societies, as well as the scriptural and legal supports for non-violence in the Islamic tradition. The success of this seminar has begun to stimulate similar studies in other religions.

The developing environmental crisis in the Himalayan-Ganges region was the subject of a conference organized by the UNU, in collaboration with the International Mountain Society and the East-West

Center. It was held in the Mohonk Mountain Preserve, New York (United States), in April. Scholars from mountain research centres from around the world met with administrators and local practitioners concerned with mountain development and conservation in Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. The conference was chaired by Maurice Strong, Executive Co-ordinator of the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa. Among the participants were print and broadcast journalists, who not only covered the conference but also participated in discussions on the role of the media in raising public awareness of the problems that threaten the Himalayan region before the problems reach the proportions of a major world disaster.

A UNU meeting on peace and security in Oceania was held in Auckland, New Zealand, in April, aimed at formulating a research agenda for the region. The meeting was organized in co-operation with the Pacific Research and Information Network and the New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies, and was opened by Mr. Russel Marshall, New Zealand Minister for Education. Major research topics were identified and recommendations were made on how the UNU could help strengthen peace research in Oceania.

At the UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER), over a hundred papers on the three major themes of the research programme have been commissioned, and the first four working papers have been published.

In March, at the request of the UN Director-General for Development and Economic Co-operation, WIDER hosted a meeting of officials from member states and organizations of the UN system to review a number of issues affecting the coherence, responsiveness and effectiveness of the UN system's development-related activities. Such policy issues will be the subject of a report to be submitted by the Director-General later this year to ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

An informal meeting of high-level officials and academics from a key grouping of middle-sized economies of the North and South was also held at WIDER in March to review current issues in international finance and trade. It explored the potential for a more effective role for the middle-sized economies in improved governance of the world economy. The meeting identified priority areas for urgent, detailed studies and expressed the hope that any community of interest that evolved among the middle powers would persuade the larger powers of the North to join in a consensus for action.

In April, a WIDER working group issued a statement in Tokyo on "The Potential of the Japanese Surplus for World Economic Development". The group was made up of the Chairman of the Board of WIDER, Dr. Saburo Okita, the Director, Dr. Jayawardena and Mr. Arjun Sengupta, Indian Executive Director of the IMF. The statement received press coverage in several countries, including stories in The Hindu of Madras, the London Financial Times, and several Japanese

newspapers. A high-level study group at WIDER will further examine mechanisms for financial intermediation of the Japanese surplus so that funds can be most appropriately channelled in support of world economic development.

Professor Eric J. Hobsbaum of Birkbeck College, University of London, a distinguished economic historian, and Professor Charles P. Kindleberger of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, renowned for major contributions in international economics, were the first two appointees to the position of "James S. McDonnell Distinguished United Nations University scholar" at WIDER.

As you know, the Government of the Netherlands is funding a UNU study to explore the feasibility of establishing a research and training centre to deal with the impact of new technologies on employment and the geographical distribution of economic activity. The study unit based at the University of Limburgh in Maastricht, the Netherlands, is now fully staffed and hard at work on studies of the impact of microelectronics and biotechnology. Country-study teams have been established in India, Brazil and South Korea. A fourth will shortly begin work in China. At our next Council meeting, we will hear a preliminary report on the findings of both the country studies and the sectoral studies.

I would like to mention, briefly, a few of the publishing achievements of the past few months. The UNU International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS) has recently published the first edition of the INFOODS International Directory of Food Consumption Tables. Planning is also underway for a new international journal in conjunction with INFOODS. The Journal of Food Composition and Analysis will begin publication quarterly, in English in 1987.

The University's book publication programme has continued to grow steadily. In the past six months a number of outstanding volumes have appeared. Among them are: Meiji Ishin: Restoration and Revolution, edited by Michio Nagai and Miguel Urrutia; Nutrition and Development, edited by Margaret Biswas and Per Pinstrup-Andersen; The Future of the International Law of the Environment, edited by René-Jean Dupuy; Imperialism : the Permanent Stage of Capitalism, by Herb Addo; Dry Area Agriculture, Food Science and Human Nutrition, edited by David F. Nygaard and Peter L. Pellett; and Military Technology, Military Strategy and the Arms Race, by Marek Thee.

Our new Director of Dissemination, Dr. Schindeler, has produced several policy papers (and more are in progress) to guide the dissemination work of the University. The computer needs of the UNU, both for in-house work and for communication with and service to our networks, have been examined, as have the library facilities, and, in co-operation with our Planning and Evaluation Services, the project information system. In all these, and in future papers, we are taking

into consideration the equipment and facilities that we will need in the UNU permanent headquarters.

A Committee has been established under the chairmanship of the Director of Dissemination to assist the Vice-Rector of the Global Learning Division in developing a management information system for the operation of the University and to plan for the application of computers and other office automation equipment.

In my oral report last December, I reported on the plans for external evaluation of completed projects. Evaluators have now been chosen to examine the following projects:

In the Development Studies Division

- Human Protein-Energy Requirements in Developing Countries
- Effects of Agricultural Policy on Nutrition and Health
- Effects of Nutrition and Primary Health Care Programmes at the Household Level

In the Regional and Global Studies Division

- Technology Transfer, Transformation and Development: the Japanese Experience
- Self-Reliance in Science and Technology
- Technological Capacity in Latin America

In the Global Studies Division

- Mastering of Microprocessor Technology

Some of the evaluations are already under way and the others will begin shortly. The final reports should be ready before the end of this year, for submission to the twenty-eighth session in December.

In my personal capacity as a member of several boards, commissions and such, I have taken the work of the UNU into diverse international forums. As member of the Palme Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, I attended its meeting in New Delhi, in January of this year. The main topics on the agenda were regional security arrangements and UN peace-keeping activities. I presented a paper on "Regional Security Arrangements in the Third World", and four papers from the UNU project on Security and Development were presented as background documents for the regional security discussion. Olof Palme's death, in February, came as a most profound shock. Along with my fellow Commissioners, I attended his funeral in Stockholm. In May, I was again in Stockholm and gave a speech in his memory, on non-violence.

I attended two plenary meetings of Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues (ICHI) (of which I am member), in December in Vienna and in Stockholm in May. The agenda took up reports of working groups on disasters, street children, disappeared persons, and refugees and displaced persons. A UNU project on displaced persons in Asia contributed a report to the working group on refugees. At the Vienna meeting, the Commission also discussed the preparation of the final report of its work, which is due to be completed at the end of 1986. I was asked to prepare a draft of the first chapter of the final report, and I presented the draft chapter for discussion at the Commission meeting in May.

Several additional co-operative arrangements with other academic bodies have been consolidated in the past few months. The University signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Foundation for Science (IFS), based in Stockholm, Sweden, in January. The IFS, founded in 1972, is a non-governmental organization with a membership of 77 scientific academies and research councils in 67 countries. It provides young scientists and technologists from developing countries with financial and other support for their work. The UNU and IFS will collaborate in research projects and training activities of common interest.

A delegation from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, headed by the Vice-President of the Academy, Professor Sun Hónglie, visited the UNU in April to renew agreements of co-operation. The agreements include co-operation with two subsidiary institutions, the Institute of Geography and the Guangzhou Institute of Energy Conversion, and cover the fields of energy systems and policy, natural resources, biotechnology, and microprocessor technology.

Informal consultations were held in February at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, to review possible areas of co-operation between the UNU projects on regional perspectives and UNESCO's Major Programme 1 entitled "Reflections on world problems and future-oriented studies." The conclusion was reached that the UNU project on the Third World and World Development, to be completed in the 1986-1987 biennium, could provide a basis for collaboration between the UNU and UNESCO beginning in 1988. Other areas of suggested co-operation included the exchange of information, co-publications of studies, bilateral exchanges and participation by research teams from the UNU networks in studies carried out by UNESCO.

Since the beginning of the year, a number of additional financial contributions to the programme have been made, totalling over \$900,000. I would like to point out a few of these. The Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) has approved a grant of \$209,000 to the University for our project on Social and Economic Conditions in Arab Areas. UNDP pledged \$160,000 for our migration project. The Ford Foundation pledged \$200,000 and UNICEF

\$140,000 for the project on primary health care. IDRC pledged \$96,000 for the project on computerized communication links for brucellosis in Latin America.

Finally, I am most pleased to report that, a few days ago, the University was officially informed of the approval by Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) of a grant to WIDER of one million Swedish Kroner - about US\$139,000. This pledge is specifically earmarked for the programme on "Hunger and Poverty: the Poorest Billion", during the 1986-1987 financial period.

Despite these very encouraging contributions, the University remains sorely affected by the dramatic appreciation of the Japanese yen. Most of our endowment investment is in dollars, but roughly half of our expenditure is in yen. To prevent this from bringing us into a financial crisis, we are implementing an overall 20 per cent cut, selectively applied, in programme-related expenditures, and reducing expenditures in other areas as well.

In January, I convened an advisory panel of 20 prominent Japanese scientist and scholars, representing a broad range of disciplines, to advise me on strengthening programme activities in Japan as a first step towards the establishment of a UNU research and training centre in Japan. The panel met on 26 March at the UNU Centre. Chaired by Dr. Takashi Mukaibo, former President of the University of Tokyo and Deputy Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, it discussed possible specific subjects for research and training programmes in Japan under the overall theme of science, technology, and society. On the basis of the general comments of the Panel, I plan to follow up with individual or smaller group meetings in order to develop a work plan for the RTC planning process.

The fourth Annual Planning Meeting (APM) of UNU staff, invited scholars, Project Co-ordinators, and Programme Directors was held at the Tokyo Centre from 14 to 17 April. I asked the meeting to consider issues for possible inclusion in the second MTP under two main themes: "Management of the Global Life-Support Systems" and "Problems of Governance in a Changing and Interdependent World".

The third formal step in the planning process for the second MTP took place in May, with the meeting of the Rector's Advisory Committee. The Nobel Prize-winning chemist, Professor Ilya Prigogine, chaired the meeting, which brought together an extremely distinguished group of scholars. They were asked to identify the next generation of issues in their respective fields, and the discussions that took place in that meeting were immensely stimulating. We are still trying to digest all of that.

What has emerged very clearly from these meetings, from other discussions both within the house and outside, and from our own

reflections, is the need for a major, thorough-going reassessment of the intellectual needs of this period and the best way that the UNU can contribute to meeting those needs.

The intellectual landscape has changed dramatically since the UNU was founded, and even in the five years since the first Medium-term Perspective was formulated. We have witnessed the economic devastation of the Third World, through such phenomena as the debt crisis, the collapse of commodity markets, foreign exchange constraints, and grave problems of domestic mismanagement, compounded by natural disasters in which the hand of man is all too visible. At the time of greatest need, the flows of development finance from the North to the South have not only stagnated but in some cases reversed, so that even an institution like the World Bank threatens to become a net importer of capital from the Third World.

Neither the enormous technical expertise that is available to us, nor the elaboration of theories of social and economic development, have brought us close to eliminating poverty and human misery. They have not even shown us how to reverse the destruction of the natural environment on which our life-support systems are built. Since the beginning of this century, humankind has destroyed half of the tropical forests on earth. And we are still destroying it as a rate of 11 million hectares each year. Each year we turn six million hectares of land into desert. It is not because we do not know what we are doing. But clearly, we do not know how to stop.

The reasons for the continuation of these and other destructive trends (I have not even mentioned the arms race, for example), clearly lie in the cultural, political and social realms. The rapid and accelerating pace of change in virtually every aspect of human existence is stretching the resilience of human societies to the breaking point. We see the manifestations of the strains in growing intellectual intolerance; the defensive withdrawal into the certainties of primary ethnic, religious or linguistic groupings; the deepening fissures between groups that are fragmenting the polity in so many countries; and the growth of unilateralism in international affairs.

Our knowledge has grown enormously, but our ability to put it to work in the service of human betterment lags far behind. We must ask ourselves why. And I think the United Nations University should, in a most determined fashion, apply the instruments of scholarship to these fundamental questions.

Occasionally discussions of this sweeping nature cause people to ask if the UNU is losing interest in mundane, practical problems. The answer is of course no. But we have learned that it is not enough to focus on the mundane problems without looking at the broader issues that make them so intractable. That is why, I believe, the UNU must grapple with subjects that are very hard to get a grip on: questions

of values and ethics, questions of the linkages among issues, and questions of the implications of the daunting complexity of the issues that we are called upon to face.

In our discussion of the future direction of the UNU, which will take place on Wednesday, I hope that we will take a very free and wide-ranging look at the contemporary intellectual landscape, and at the place that the United Nations University may come to occupy in it.

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