

Rector's Speech for 10th Anniversary Reception

Tokyo, 10 July 1986

Your Excellency the Minister of Education, Your Excellency the Governor of Tokyo, Mr. Director-General of United Nations Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Honored guests.

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to welcome you on behalf of the United Nations University to this Reception in observance of the 10th anniversary of the University.

As you know, the UN University was established when the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted its Charter in 1973. The dream of establishing a University within the United Nations system was turned into a reality because of the generosity and foresight of Japan. From the outset, the Government and people of Japan have provided strong support to the UN University. Without this, the UN University would not be what it is today. It might not even exist. I should therefore like to take this opportunity to express, once again, on behalf of the University and all those who are associated with it, our profound thanks to the Government and people of Japan for the outstanding support extended to the United Nations University from its inception.



This support has been much more than financial. In addition to pledging and paying 100 million US\$ to the Endowment Fund of the University, the Government of Japan has provided the provisional headquarters facilities, here in the Toho Seimei Building. Furthermore, the Government's plan to construct a permanent headquarters building for the UNU is now well under way, on a magnificent site in the heart of Tokyo, offered by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. We are deeply grateful to Governor Suzuki and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government for steadfast support they have given the University.

Neither should we forget to thank all the scholarly institutions and scientists in Japan who have co-operated with the University and contributed to its research and training programmes in various ways. In addition, private enterprises and individuals have also provided and continue to provide assistance to the activities of the University, particularly through the Japan Foundation for the UN University which was established thanks to the untiring efforts of my Senior Adviser, Dr. Michio Nagai.

I would fail in my duties if I did not also extend our heartfelt appreciation to the many honorable members of the Japanese Diet who have continuously shown interest in the cause of the University and supported its development.



The UN University, as described in its Charter, is an international community of scholars, engaged in research, training and dissemination of knowledge on pressing global problems. Starting from a very small staff at the Tokyo Centre ten years ago, and with a limited budget, the University has grown steadily, developed its programmes and expanded its world-wide networks of institutions and scholars. Let me give you some examples. The University now has 39 associated institutions in 30 countries. Over 800 fellowships have been awarded to young researchers in developing countries. UNU research and training activities are being actively implemented in more than 60 countries. In addition, the UNU has taken the first steps to establish a world-wide network of research and training centres. The first of these, the World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER), opened its doors in Finland in 1984. Preparatory work has been vigorously pursued to establish the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa, INRA, as the second UN Research and Training Institute.

As this network of research and training centres is developed, we feel it is of the utmost importance to have a strong research and training centre in Japan, alongside the UNU Headquarters. This research and training centre in Japan should be the first among equals in the system, the intellectual fulcrum of the network of RTCs. The RTC in Japan would also be the point of contact with the UNU for many individual scholars and



intellectuals from around the world, as well as the location of lectures, seminars and workshops through which the UNU could interact more fully with the Japanese scholarly community and public. A very distinguished panel of 20 Japanese scholars and scientists is advising me on appropriate steps to bring this research and training centre in Japan into reality.

Through these and many other activities, the United Nations University has been striving to establish a distinctive institutional identity within the UN system to reflect the unique contribution it can make to the international community. However, the UN University is still young, and still very small when compared to the magnitude of the pressing global problems which face humankind today.

We must continually ask ourselves if we are looking at the most important issues. We must make sure that we are at the forefront of scholarship, working in areas where our presence can make a real difference to the understanding of pressing human problems.

Let me assure all of you that the staff of the University and its network of scholars are firmly committed to make using the instruments of scholarship to this fragile planet of ours a better place to live.

I sincerely hope that the Government and people of Japan will have reason to be proud of the major and pioneering role that they have played in the establishment of the UN University, and will continue to extend to the University the same valuable assistance and co-operation that the University has enjoyed over the last 10 years.

Thank you very much.