

Summary of Dr. Soedjatmoko's Presentation

In his paper entitled EDUCATION IN THE GLOBAL CRISIS, Soedjatmoko, social scientist and former Rector of the United Nations University, headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, called for a new **ethical framework for human survival and solidarity**. He developed the point that the present human predicament did not only require new ways of thinking about the globe and the place of the human species in the global ecology, but would also require changes in attitudes and behaviour of human beings, both individually and collectively.

In that light he identified a number of new learning needs for the human community that should be met, if the threats to human survival are to be contained. These needs are both of a cognitive and of a behavioural nature, involving on the one hand the learning of the facts and relationships governing global interdependence and, on the other, the implications of the interconnectedness of the human race with nature and its systems.

The paper describes how little the formal educational systems in the world, or industrial and developing countries alike, are prepared for this double barrelled task of teaching new generations the essential changes in the human condition and the ethics that should help the human race to survive in a crowded, competitive, often hungry, and rapidly changing world. This may well require changes in the intellectual orientations, organisational structures of the educational systems that we know. This should also require changes in the areas of paedagogy and in curriculum development that go way beyond the usual notions of educational reform.

At the university level the teaching of ethics will require a reoriented and revitalised humanities to develop technological literacy as well as close familiarity with the social sciences and the world views and values of other cultures in the world. In 3rd World especially, learning systems will have to be devised to help scientific information relevant to both the survival strategies of the peasants in many parts of the Third World and to the protection of their extremely fragile environment, reach the poor and the marginalized. One might speak here of the need for a poor man's learning system, in light of the harsh fact that the formal as well as the non-formal systems that we know have proven to be too expensive to reach them. Of course, in their case access to scientific information will have to be reinforced by a proper policy framework of incentives and disincentives.

For new ways of thinking about the globe as a single system and about humankind as a single but varied unit, needed to reduce the threats to human survival, to lead to effective international action, will require the continuous dialogue between legislators and religious leaders as the first step towards collaboration. Ethics in large part derives from an awareness of the transcendental significance of human life, even though it also has other, non-religious roots. The complex problems humanity faces for its survival requires a revitalized capability for moral reasoning. The time has passed when moralists could get away with being technologically illiterate, insensitive to the existence and validity of other countries in the world, or to the realities and limits to power.

Likewise will it no longer be enough for legislators to legislate on problems as defined by the experts. It is no longer adequate to look at the legislative process primarily in terms of the conventional horsetrading or tit-for-tat. It is becoming increasingly clear that, in the words of the Dutch philosopher Van Peuroon, the future is an ethical category. Mankind's responsibility to protect and nurture the globe's life-support systems with its attendant problems of poverty, willful abuse, injustice and violence requires first priority on national legislative agendas and the agendas for international cooperation.

In the course of modern history the distance between religion and politica, between ethics and policy, has very much widened. The dialogue between parliamentarians and religious leaders should serve to re-link the two in new ways that are relevant to the contemporary human predicament. Dialogue between religious leaders and parliamentarians, as dialogues generally do, if they are to be effective, require the equality of both sides. Here again, because of their colonial past, lies in many 3rd world countries a major educational challenge.