

Statement of Soedjatmoko,
Rector of the United Nations University*

at Inauguration of
Nagasaki Association for Promoting Peace
Nagasaki, Japan
12 February 1983

Mayor Motoshima, Mr. Akizuki, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great honour and pleasure to send you this message of heartfelt congratulations on the inauguration of the Nagasaki Association for Promoting Peace. I regret very much that I am unable to be with you in person on this occasion.

Peace is the single most important issue in the world today and is particularly foremost in the national consciousness of Japan where last year more than 36 million people signed a nuclear disarmament petition. With its own tragic experience of nuclear destruction, it is most appropriate that the City of Nagasaki should show the way towards peace. It is local authorities with their close links to their constituents who have the greatest possibility for stimulating direct action in promoting peace and national and international understanding. This is exactly what you are doing through inviting broadscale citizen participation and membership in the Nagasaki Association for Promoting Peace. The local authorities of Nagasaki are thus helping fulfil a very noble mission -- the search for peace and the avoidance of war and conflict.

Through its own activities, the United Nations University shares the same pathway -- and specifically through its concern with Peace, Security, Conflict Resolution and Global Transformation, the first of five themes which guide and help shape its programme work. But the other themes -- dealing with the global economy, hunger, poverty and resource use, the co-existence of peoples, cultures and social systems, and the implications of technology -- are all part of the common endeavour to contribute to world peace. Let me note at this point our deep appreciation for the co-operation that we have been receiving from the Mayor of Nagasaki in our activities bearing on peace and security. Consequently we are most interested in the new local efforts proposed by the people of your great city.

The desire for peace is, of course, very much on our minds in these times of increased nuclear danger, economic confrontation through protectionism and other forms of economic reprisals, persistent slow economic growth and high levels of unemployment, and pessimism among the young about the future. So perilous is our age that many young people have come to adopt the fatalistic view that they will not live out their natural life spans.

At the UN University, such problems are a very central focus, and we are seeking to promote a global discussion and debate over them. The study of peace in the context of the present global transformation is a major activity of the University's recently broadened plan of work. The world has

lost political control over the nuclear arms race and arms trade. A labour force of more than one hundred million men and women are in the world's armed forces, 10 million in the paramilitary and another 4 million civilians are employed in government defence departments. Some 500,000 scientists and engineers -- one out of every five in the world -- are engaged in military research and development, and the arms race represents an annual expense of 600 billion dollars, an approximation which could well be an underestimation.

At a time of economic crisis, it is a comment on the state of human folly that the military is the sole remaining growth sector, and we are witnessing the militarization of whole societies. There is thus urgent need for the little people to rise up and say with determined conviction -- "No more war." I salute therefore the birth of your organization and express my hopes for its success on the difficult but common pathway to peace.