

Rector's Statement on
the Emerging Profile of the University

I would like to introduce the topic with a few words and then open the floor for comments and suggestions. First, when we speak about the profile, I think it is important to realize what we mean by it. I think when we speak of the profile, it is possible to look at the problems in different ways. Essentially, however, it is what does the UN University wants to be known for as a distinctive feature, or as distinctive features.

I would like to focus the discussion on a certain time period, namely, the end of 1985. To focus on what things by which the United Nations will be known hopefully. What things we have made our reputation on, and will help us be perceived as a serious institution of higher learning, of a new kind. I think this seriousness has to do with the relevance and the relevance of its work and quality of its work, and the degree to which it has been possible for the United Nation University to stimulate or actually achieve breakthroughs in the certain points. By 1985, I hope, that the United Nations University will be known as an institution that, in its concern with its stated concerns in the Charter of the global issues, pressing global issues, is very much moved by a predominant concern with the weak, a predominant concern with poverty and inequality both at the national and international level. Also, that it is an institution that is seen to be concerned with peace and conflict resolution and with development, self-generating development, particularly, with capacity building, of course, although always in a global context.

I hope that by 1985 the UN University will be known also for the uniqueness of its training programme. And certainly, I believe, we should take our training programme much more seriously than we have done. So far, we should, I think, aim at the doubling the numbers of trainees by the end of 1985, if that is possible, and we should by that time have worked out the specificity of the multi-disciplinary character of the training that we are giving. I hope also that by 1985 some significant contributions to the dissemination of knowledge and its use will have been achieved, and that UN University will have built up by that time, an effective and known early-warning system for emerging world crises. Institutionally, I hope, that by 1985 the UN University will already be a global network of institutions, even if the number of incorporated institutions may be just two or three.

Now a profile, of course, is shaped very much by what is feasible, and whatever I am going to say does not imply that the less feasible is less important. But I think it is important that our profile is clearly seen by or through its feasible achievements. So our discussions now will be concerned with first our continuing concern with

peace and development, and science and technology should be seen as a part of our concern with both these preoccupations. And we are perceived to do significant work on specific problems with some specific achievements.

Now the UN University, of course, as I said yesterday, is not just a think-tank, it is a University. It is a place where there should be continuing intellectual concern and work on problems with a view to expanding knowledge, reflecting itself in a continuous stream of publications and other contributions to knowledge and its dissemination, and, of course, training and its teaching role. Now, I think, it is also important that as distinct from a think-tank, that in this continuity there is a wide variety of activities. Let a thousand flowers bloom even though not all flowers may provide the seeds for other things, at least it will provide the ambience in which creativity is stimulated. And so this variety of activities is a condition, I believe, to a creativity.

So let me try to indicate how I see it in programmatic terms, or let say in terms of possible achievements or in terms of being perceived to be engaged in very significant work in those areas. How I see the programmatic profile; the profile is, of course, shaped, as I said before, by the institutional and training role, institutional development and training role of the university but programmatically, of course, our profile is defined by the five themes. But within those five themes, we should have made a major contribution in the area of resource conflict and resource conflict resolution

I think that it should also be possible to have become a significant presence in the area of regional security studies. Theme two, I hope by that time there will be an institute. The Wider Institute will be located somewhere and it will be just starting up. Now in theme three, of course, it is important that our work in development should keep to provide the profile of an institute that is devoted to peace and development. The suggestion Carlos Mallman made of means and goals, I think, is a useful one. I think it is very important for us to realize that all our activities are related and should support and reinforce the search for a more democratic, more humane development theory. I think that if we are recognized to be a serious institution doing serious work in that area, we will have a profile that is desirable

We should find ways, in order to do so, to integrate our work in the operational field and means area more concretely as inputs into the search for a democratic development theory. The input of the natural sciences in this area should be seriously integrated into that work, over and beyond the general problems of the interface between science technology on one hand and society on the other. But the research for the democratic development theory should not be isolated from the other developmental activities of the UN University.

In food nutrition and resources, in conflict resolution and economic war that is being done, but also it should be taken into account as its efforts are being made in culture and religion as well.

Now when it comes to the specific achievement by which the UNU wants to be known, and what specific achievement may be possible, let me throw out a few ideas. I think by 1985, as we have established some considerable credibility in the nutrition field, it may be possible to have established or to have brought out, the linkage between nutritional need measurements and quality of life and health and human productivity because it is so much related to the problem of poverty. I am not sure, but I hope that we will be known by 1985 for significant work that we are doing in the area of solar energy for diversified rural communities. I hope that by the 1985 we will be known to be seriously engaged in and having produced significant results in the area of bio-technology, especially nitrogen fixation in trees, plants, as well as in the area of food technology, specifically the entrepreneurial development among the poor in food technology as a means for poverty reduction and employment creation. Whether by 1985 we will be able to offer the joint-supply function in food and energy which I am still hoping the food-energy nexus will produce, we don't know, but it might be another area which we, in which we may make some significant contribution if we can get the things going properly.

In the area of science and technology on the theme five, I think, that apart from the capacity-building in bio-technology and microprocessors in the third world, and the University establishing a specific niche in the process, I think if we can identify through our work by 1985, one or two strategic issues that are crucial in the enhancement of the capability of third world countries to make the relevant technology choices, I think, we will have achieved something in this area.

A number of other things that cut through all the various themes but which, I think, could increase and shape their feasibility and profile that we would like. And it is our work in the global commons, our work on youth and our work on migration. These are some of the ideas, I am throwing this out to you, putting on the table, as a sort of check on myself. Am I too optimistic in my expectations? Have I underestimated? Can we do more? Should we do less and concentrate even more?

1985 will be the year in which the UN University will be ten years old. I think by that time we should be able to present to the world a clear profile that makes it realize how relevant the United Nations University is to the anxieties, to the fears, to the hopes, to the anger of many people around this globe. If by that time our image is still unclear to the point where there are great many misperceptions of the UN University being an ivory tower, or an other UN agency, or an institution only concerned with a high level abstraction and reflection,

or only as another technocratic institution, if by that time these misperceptions have not been overcome by the concreteness of our results and the significance of our continuing concerns and work, then we may have lost the game, in a sense. So, I am throwing this out, it is in a way, a challenge, I believe myself that it is possible to achieve this with the collaboration of all, but I maybe misjudging the situation, and I maybe in the process also have overlooked some other possible achievements that might help shape the profile of the UN University.