

STATEMENT BY SOEDJATMOKO
RECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY
BEFORE THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
9 November 1984

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

It is my pleasure and honour once again to make a statement, on behalf of the United Nations University, before the Second Committee of the General Assembly. First, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Bryce Harland on his election as chairman of this body. I am certain that the deliberations of this Committee will greatly benefit from his wisdom and guidance.

I would like to introduce the Annual Report of the Council of the United Nations University for 1983-1984, which is before you, by focusing on a sampling of our activities to show how we have moved towards achieving the objectives of the University's Medium-Term Perspective (MTP) which began in 1982 and ends in 1987.

The University's activities, I would like to emphasize, are being carried out in pursuance of the main purposes set forth in the University Charter. Article 1, section 2 of the Charter charges the University to "devote its work to research into the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare that are the concern of the United Nations, and its agencies, with due attention to the social sciences and the humanities as well as natural sciences, pure and applied." Article 1, section 3 elaborates on these areas of research suggesting the specific subjects to be included in the University's research programmes: "coexistence between peoples having different cultures, languages and social systems; peaceful relations between States and the maintenance of peace and security; human rights; economic and social change and development; the environment and the proper use of resources; basic scientific research and the application of the results of science and technology in the interests of development; and universal human values related to the improvement of the quality of life."

Although this is a wide range of work by any standards, the framers of the Charter recognized that to be a university the UNU would have to concentrate its efforts on researching the broad spectrum of pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare. Neither a narrow focus, nor a single discipline approach would be adequate to deal with questions of this kind. Inevitably, such a range of work also raises the spectre of duplication within the system. In keeping with its Charter mandate, the University's work, touching as it does on the same agenda of concerns as all United Nations organizations, enhances and complements their work by providing an academic perspective on a broad intellectual and cultural scale.

As a university UNU is first and foremost an international community of scholars and a worldwide network of academic institutions. This, too, was envisioned by the General Assembly in the resolution establishing the University in 1972. The scholars have come from many regions

and many cultural areas and involving them has been an ongoing process. While not all regions can, or even should, be represented in each of the University's projects, the representation has been broad and is increasing, particularly as the University expands ongoing work and moves into new areas of concern with its Charter tasks. We are at the same time an organ of the United Nations working to uphold and promote the purposes and principles of its Charter. This dual role of working within the United Nations system of organizations and with the global academic community gives the University its inherent distinctiveness.

When the University began operations its work concentrated on three aspects of major world problems: world hunger, human and social development and the use and management of natural resources. After this initial 5-year period the University developed the Medium-Term Perspective that would, over a 6-year period from 1982 to 1987, help it broaden its programme base and bring its profile closer to its Charter assignments but also closer to that of other universities. We are now at the midway point of the MTP and we generally appear to be on course.

The Report of the Council of the University describes achievements of the past three years in showing how the University has progressed in trying to fulfill the MTP objectives. These objectives involve, essentially, (a) developing the University programme focussed on the five themes of the MTP, (b) pursuing a new phase of institutional development, emphasizing the exploration and establishment of the University's own research and training centres, and (c) obtaining supplementary programme support in addition to the University's Endowment Fund. In highlighting the selection of activities from the report, I will try to show how they link our research concerns in development theory to some of its practical policy implications. This linkage can be seen in some of our published research results as well as our training activities and other dissemination activities. I will also indicate where UNU activities are undertaken in conjunction with other United Nations agencies or are contributing input to efforts within the United Nations system. The Council's report mentions the collaboration we have had with other international, academic and scientific organizations.

A significant proportion of the University's activities is concentrated under theme III on Hunger, Poverty, Resources and the Environment. This reflects, in part, a continuation of earlier work in world hunger and natural resources. One project in the Programme Area on Food, Nutrition, Biotechnology and Poverty, on Functional Consequences of Iron Deficiency, for example, draws on work in the former World Hunger Programme on the relationship between iron deficiency and productivity. Results here will be reported in a publication supported by the ACC Sub-Committee on Nutrition.

The Programme Area on Energy Systems and Policy includes the ASSET network and journal that got its start under the former Natural Resources Programme. During this past year, the University published the 50th issue of ASSET (acronym for Abstracts of Selected Solar Energy Technology) and is now set to bring out an edition in Spanish, thanks to support from the Spanish Government. ASSET's clearing house function was set up with support from UNESCO. In another project in this programme area, activities of the Integrated Rural Energy Systems Association, INRESA, led in the past year

to the development of three types of low-cost meteorological instrument packages in co-operation with Hollis Geosystem Corporation in the U.S. and Brace Research Institute in Canada for use by association members in solar and wind energy projects in remote areas. Fifteen UNU Fellows completed training in this programme area during the year and 10 more began training. A major book that came out of work in this programme area is Energy and Agriculture: Their Interacting Futures.

Policy was, of course, the primary concern of work in the Programme Area on Resource Policy and Management. Dissemination of research results through publications figured very prominently here and produced such books as: Fuelwood and Rural Energy Production and Supply in the Humid Tropics; Renewable Natural Resources and the Environment: Pressing Problems in the Developing World; Long-Distance Water Transfer: A Chinese Case Study and International Experiences; Renewable Natural Resources and the Environment; and Urban Geomorphology in Drylands. Maps and research reports on mountain hazard mapping in Nepal produced by the project on Highland-Lowland Interactive Systems are intended input to the work of Nepalese agencies and concerned agencies in the United Nations system. On the training side of work in this area 13 UNU Fellows completed training in the past year and 3 new Fellows started.

Training played an important role in the project on traditional food technologies in the Programme Area on the Food-Energy Nexus. Seven former UNU Fellows and 2 current UNU Fellows participated in a workshop co-sponsored by the University in July 1983 in Mysore, India, along with other scientists and scholars from 20 countries and 4 United Nations agencies, to discuss the state-of-the-art of traditional food technologies that could be used in improving food supplies. UNU was also appointed, along with FAO, as joint lead agency in the area of traditional food technologies by the ACC Task Force on Science and Technology for Development.

Research and related activities in the Programme Area on Food Nutrition, Biotechnology and Poverty produced, among others, several books, new approaches to the study of iron deficiency, a food data systems network, and a series of educational programmes for radio and television. Two of the books were Nutrition Policy Implementations: Issues and Experience and Diarrhea and Malnutrition: Interactions, Mechanisms and Interventions. Research on the functional consequences of iron deficiency was initiated by the University in 1982, in recognition of an urgent need for more detailed understanding of this topic. As indicated in the Council Report, a major publication is expected to present the results of this research. The International Food Data Systems project, INFOODS, has received wide spread support from a number of countries and institutions and recognition and promises to contribute greatly to improving the collection, storage, interchange and use of food composition data on an international scale. In the area of the nutritional component of primary health care, some of the audiovisual education programmes that we helped prepare in co-operation with the Colombian Government for television and radio are already in use. Furthermore, the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network of Canada is already adapting this material for use in their educational cassettes. UNICEF has also asked UNU for permission to use this material in its work in Colombia and other Latin American countries. A significant portion of

the work here was done with the support of, or in conjunction with, a number of United Nations agencies, including UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO, as well as with the ACC Sub-Committee on Nutrition. The total number of UNU Fellows trained in this area during the year was 33, with 20 others starting.

Several projects in the programme areas on Human and Social Development and Regional Perspectives have produced, or are about to produce, results. Research in a Regional Perspectives project entitled "Arab Alternative Futures", for example, resulted in a book in Arabic, Images of the Arab Future, published in 1982 as well as in an English translation published in 1983. Another book in Arabic, The State and Capitalist Development in Iraq, 1968-1978, was published in Cairo earlier this year. The results of a successful international conference on the Meiji Restoration in Japan will soon be published in book form. This is the first of a series of comparative studies of major processes of social transformation in modern non-Western societies. A second volume will report on the conference to be held in Mexico next year on the Mexican Revolution.

Both of these projects are attempts to understand the macro-sociological processes of change which in turn could contribute to increasing our understanding of development. At the same time, we are also trying to broaden our knowledge at the micro level. Here we are concentrating on the project on Household, Gender and Age to study changing relationships among different household members, in the Programme Area on Human and Social Development which has established links with INSTRAW. In developing its input to the formulation of policy recommendations as part of the project on The Global Impact of Human Migration, the University benefitted from support by UNDP.

To assess the complex interaction between new technological advances and the development process we are engaged in work in the Programme Area on Science, Technology and the Information Society. We have started work on mastering of microprocessor technology, which we hope will make a practical contribution to the capability of developing countries to use microprocessors for development. We also have a project on the management of complexity to help understand complex natural and social systems that affect the problems confronting society. Some of the work in this area has involved collaboration with UNESCO and other United Nations agencies.

In the training on microprocessor technology, we collaborated with the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste in setting up in Colombo in June this year the Asian Regional College on Microprocessors concerned specifically with Technology and Applications. The College, which was attended by 60 young scientists from the region, was the third UNU-supported training college set up by the Centre, following those in 1981 and 1983 in Trieste.

While it continues to use traditional means of research and dissemination, the University has had some success with non-traditional methods involving the use of video tapes, notably in projects on biogas technology for rural areas, nutrition and primary health care and the village video networks. Such techniques are important since the

University is aiming at reaching, with the knowledge gained, a wide span of end users, ranging from policy makers to villagers. The work on new modes for sharing knowledge and new learning materials involving village networks is also trying to promote the use of video as a development tool. It aims to set up an international village network and undertake training workshops. So far it has participating members in Antigua, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica and Mali.

One interesting development in work in this area is an experimental video tape produced by the University using a new computer-assisted animation technique to help explain difficult concepts graphically. This seven-minute videotape was made to explain the organization and concept of the University. We have titled it "Sharing for Survival". We are looking into possible applications of this technique in creating learning materials for development.

Lastly, we are now engaged in a study of the relationship between security and development. The University is undertaking this in response to a request made at the joint meeting of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues and the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues of which I am a member, in January this year. Through my membership in the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, the UNU is participating in its work and providing research assistance. In this connection, a grant for a research project on displaced persons has been given to the University.

In another area of our work that concerns peace several projects involve co-operation with or input to the United Nations system. One of these is the University-sponsored international symposium held in the Hague earlier this year to discuss possible means of strengthening international law to safeguard outer space for peaceful uses. The symposium, which was organized with the co-operation of the Hague Academy of International Law and the International Institute of Space Law and with the support of the Hague Carnegie Foundation and the Outer Space Affairs Division of the United Nations, has produced a book which will be off the press by next month. Pre-publication copies of the book, which is entitled appropriately *Maintaining Outer Space for Peaceful Uses*, will be made available for distribution later, during the current session of the General Assembly. We have also set up for the benefit of the Committee a display of many of the books mentioned in the Council report.

Another outcome of the symposium is the fourth of the Tokyo Seminar series on peace issues sponsored by the University. The Seminar, in co-operation with the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment and the International Council of Scientific Unions, will consider, in the unique setting of the only country that has experienced nuclear attack, the question of nuclear danger. Another project on regional peace and security is preparing a report to be presented to United Nations Headquarters as a contribution to the International Year of Peace (IYP). Four regional seminars are planned between November 1984 and May 1985 in San Jose, Addis Ababa, Bangkok and Vienna. Each is expected to produce a final report for the contribution. For the IYP preparations the University was also charged by the Preparatory

Committee of the United Nations with organizing a meeting of experts in London in July 1984 to help plan a series of UN regional inter-governmental meetings on regional peace and security. In a report to the General Assembly in September 1984, the Secretary-General recognized these inputs of the UNU to the International Year of Peace (A/39/500).

The past three years have seen a broadening of the University's training activities. This is because we now have training components included in programme areas where no training had previously been done. As indicated in the Council Report for the past year, by 1 June this year a total of 402 UNU Fellows had completed training and there was ongoing training in six of our nine programme areas. A very encouraging aspect of our training activities was the high rate of return of UNU Fellows to their institutions of origin on completion of training; about 95 percent. We feel that this may be due, in part, to our system of site visits to a prospective candidate's institution which leads to careful selection of trainees and tailored training programmes that suit their needs and those of their institution. It may be of interest to you that a large proportion of all UNU Fellows have been trained at institutions in the Third World, the majority of which were associated institutions of the University. They have come from more than 241 institutions in more than 69 countries in the Third World. Almost all of the Fellows funded by University resources also came from the Third World, but we hope that in the future Fellows from the industrial world, funded from their own resources, will also join our training programmes. The second edition of our "Directory of UNU Fellows", which was completed in June, provides other statistics on the training programme.

As we gain experience in our training activities, more and more former Fellows, and some current Fellows, are being brought into the ongoing research projects in their areas of interest, and increasingly the results of their work are being incorporated into this research. Former UNU Fellows have by now participated in planning activities of the University, in the development of one of our research and training centres, in research projects, particularly through meetings, workshops symposia or seminars, and in the publications of the University. The involvement of UNU Fellows in a Food-Energy nexus project workshop which I mentioned earlier is only one example of their increasing involvement in all aspects of the work of the University. We have maintained continuing contact with other United Nations organizations engaged in training through, among others, participation in UNITAR's annual meeting of directors of United Nations institutes for training research and planning. Last year we also participated in UNITAR's Advisory Panel on Training. I might add here that the Executive-Director of UNITAR is an ex-officio member of the UNU Council and participates, therefore, in the policy planning of the work of the University. We have also had a number of consultations with the Executive-Director on UNU-UNITAR collaboration.

Given the range of tasks assigned to us by our Charter, planning and ongoing evaluation of the University's work are of paramount importance. Before embarking on new work, all of our activities are submitted to rigorous academic scrutiny by the University Council and its committees and by groups of experts in the fields concerned. Evaluation is done within the University as a means of continually assessing our performance in accordance with the Charter and in accomplishing the

objectives of the MTP. At the request of the Council, we also carried out University-wide external evaluations on training and institutional relations and we have planned others for two completed projects. Here, too, we involve experts in the field.

Mr. Chairman, given the enormous task of studying global problems and their complex aspects, the Charter wisely mandated the University to organize its own research and training centres and to associate itself with existing institutions in various parts of the world. In this way the University shares its approaches and findings with other institutions and organizations and, can in turn, benefit from their expertise. In striving to comply with the Charter requirement, we have made significant progress in the past year. In addition to our six new associated institutions in East Asia, South Asia, Africa, North America and South America, we have moved considerably on preparatory work for the World Institute for Development Economics Research, known as WIDER, on the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa, known as INRA and the research and training centre planned for Japan. Further to the information given in the Report, I am pleased to tell you that the WIDER Board is now complete with the recent appointment of its remaining two members. We now look forward to the appointment of a Director within the next few months so that activities can get under way. The WIDER Liaison Office in Helsinki has been in operation since the end of July. The continuing support that the Government of Finland has given WIDER is outstanding and heartening. We at the University would like to reiterate our gratitude for this.

After having received the generous pledge of the Government of the Ivory Coast of US\$5 million to the Endowment Fund for INRA, together with the offer of excellent readily available facilities, including housing, in the country's new capital Yamoussoukro, we are now in the process of trying to secure the bulk of the financial resources for the Institute from major donor countries. A number of governments, notably the Government of France, and international organizations have shown much interest in supporting INRA.

Regarding the proposed research and training centre in Japan, the Council agreed at its 24th session that this could be an institute of advanced studies. The Council also recognized that activities of the institute need not await its formal establishment and therefore encouraged the University to initiate programme activities in Japan, even if this means using temporary facilities. Since the 24th session, efforts have been stepped up in Japan by local supporters of the University to build up the financial base for the proposed institute and elicit broader support for the University and its work. Last month the Japan Foundation for the United Nations University, headed by one of Japan's leading industrialists, was established. Its membership also includes leading figures from the academic, business and political sectors of Japan.

Preparatory work for the headquarters has progressed with the allocation of a budgetary provision for planning activities by the Japanese Government for fiscal year 1984-1985. This allocation for planning activities includes primarily the framework design which is an overall

study of architectural needs and obtaining information to be used in the basic design. The budget for the basic design is now being considered by the Government of Japan. We would like to thank the Government of Japan for its continuing interest in and support of the University and for its efforts to complete the permanent headquarters.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the establishment of the research and training centres has opened up new opportunities for the University to increase its financial resources for its overall work. The generous pledge from the Government of Finland for WIDER was a tremendous boost for the University's Endowment Fund. Fund-raising for INRA, as I mentioned, was initiated with the pledge from the Government of the Ivory Coast. Our programme and training activities have also begun to stimulate the interest of other donors.

We are basically still a young institution, as I have said in the past, but we have begun to achieve some results and are moving towards achieving more as we pursue our Charter objectives. We are vigorously continuing our efforts to mobilize resources and we are trying our best to structure our activities to get the maximum results out of the resources that we do have. Nevertheless, we are fully aware of the difficulties we face in this time of worldwide economic problems. Still, we find some indications of our prospects changing as we develop new activities and the new research and training centres to attract potential supporters and donors. The Report of the Council before you indicates where we are. Our primary objective now is to complete the work set out in the remaining period of the MTP.