

STATEMENT BY MR. SOEDJATMOKO,  
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BEFORE THE PROGRAMME AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMISSION  
OF THE UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD  
15 MAY 1985

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Representative of the Director-General, Distinguished Delegates of the Commission,

It is my pleasure and honour to appear once again before the Commission of the Executive Board of Unesco to present the Report of the Council of the United Nations University for 1984. Almost five years have passed since I first appeared before this body. On that first occasion, having just assumed the Rectorship of the University, I shared some of my thoughts about the role of the UNU. 1985 marks the tenth year of the University's programme of work. It is therefore a particularly appropriate time to examine the progress we have made. For my presentation today, I have divided my statement into two main parts. The first part is a brief resume of our work in the latter half of 1984. It will highlight some of the events that have taken place since I appeared before the Executive Board in October last year. You will recall that the Council's Report at that time covered the period from July 1983 to June 1984. At the request of ECOSOC, we have altered our reporting period, so the present Council Report covers the calendar year 1984. Obviously there is considerable overlapping with my previous report, which I shall try to minimize in this oral presentation.

The second part of my statement is a look at the direction of the University in the second half of the Medium-Term Perspective of the University for 1982-1987.

Let me first give you a brief sampling of the events of the past six months. The Council of the University, at its twenty-fourth session in December last year, elected as its Chairman for 1985 Professor Victor Urquidi, the President of El Colegio de Mexico. Dr. Lalith Jayawardena, a Sri Lankan economist, was appointed in March of this year as the first Director of the UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research, known as WIDER. The WIDER Board is scheduled to hold its first meeting, in Helsinki, at the end of this month.

In February this year the UNU joined with the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment of the International Council of Scientific Unions in sponsoring the fourth Tokyo Seminar on Issues of Peace. The Seminar, which was also extended to the City of Hiroshima, examined the current state of scientific assessment of the climatic and biological effects of nuclear war.

In November 1984, the first of a series of four UNU seminars on Regional Peace and Security was held in San Jose, Costa Rica, to discuss Latin American regional security problems. The series of seminars was organized in close consultation with the United Nations, particularly with the Secretariat



for the International Year of Peace. Part of its purpose was to provide scholarly background information for the regional, inter-governmental meetings organized by the UN in preparation for the International Year of Peace in 1986. I might add, though a more detailed account should be reserved for my next report to UNESCO, that the remaining three Regional Peace and Security seminars, in Africa, Asia and Europe, have been held in the first half of 1985. The rapporteurs of all four UNU seminars have been asked to participate in the UN Inter-governmental Meetings as experts. UNESCO was invited to all the four UNU seminars, and was represented at the European Peace and Security Seminar. We look forward to further collaboration with UNESCO in the development of our programme on Peace and Conflict Resolution.

The first version of the international survey of distance learning systems, which I mentioned in my report last year, was completed with the co-operation of the Open University in the United Kingdom and the International Council for Distance Education. The survey is based on information collected through the establishment of an international data bank which now includes data from some 300 institutions in 52 countries. This information covering distance learning system in all parts of the world will be continuously updated and will be available to institutions and countries wishing to improve or develop distance learning systems and materials. This activity is consistent with the University's Charter mandate to engage in dissemination of knowledge as well as post-graduate training. The UNU has been in close contact with UNESCO at every stage of the development of the data-bank and its institutional framework, the International Centre for Distance Learning. It is now proposed to set up an Advisory Committee for the Centre, on which we have requested that UNESCO be represented. The UNU's senior consultant on this activity has provided UNESCO with full documentation on the work that has been done, and remains available for consultations. Through these and other close communications, we are determined to avoid any duplication of UNESCO's extensive efforts in the field of distance education.

The Director-General's report to the Executive Board comments on the proposal for a feasibility study on the preparation by the UNU of a programme of education on global issues and problems for undergraduate university students. As you know, at its 23rd session the UNU Council debated the advisability of the University developing such undergraduate course materials. Though reservations were expressed within the Council, it did formally request that the Rector conduct a feasibility study. I have responded to that request by appointing two experts to undertake the study, which is now underway. A report on its progress will be presented to the Council at its July, 1985 session, and the completed study will be submitted as soon as possible. I hope that the results will clarify what, if any, appropriate role there is for the UNU in this area, and in so doing will satisfy any remaining reservations.

The University's continued expansion of co-operative activities with other international organizations was exemplified by our seventh annual joint colloquium with the Hague Academy of International Law. This multi-disciplinary



colloquium, held in November last year, addressed the future of international law concerning the protection and restoration of the environment. International environmental law is increasingly recognized because of its importance for other branches of international law, including those related to the sea, outer space and the conduct of war; and particularly for its relevance to the largely unexplored but vitally important issue of intergenerational equity and obligation. The report of the sixth joint colloquium in the Hague was published in December as the book Maintaining Outer Space for Peaceful Uses, and was distributed in pre-publication form to delegations of Member States during the 39th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

As part of the work being done in the University's programme area on Food, Nutrition, Biotechnology and Poverty, an international directory of anthropologists and social scientists who work on food and nutrition is now available for users. The directory, which was compiled by the International Union of Anthropology and Ethnography and the International Union of Nutritional Sciences, is stored in a computer at the MIT/Harvard International Food and Nutrition Program and contains information about individual specialists, including their academic and field experience. It can be accessed directly by computer; print-outs are also available.

The UNU co-ordinated international food data systems project, known as INFOODS, has received a grant of \$2.1 million from the U.S. National Institute of Health and additional funds from IDRC of Canada. As this project progresses, regional and subregional working groups have already emerged: Eurofoods, Asiafoods, Latinfoods, Norfoods (for North America), Medifoods and Norfoods (for the Nordic countries).

Fieldwork has begun in a joint study with UNICEF in which we are examining the effects of nutrition and primary health care programmes at the household level. The project, from which we already have some results, is expected to make a major contribution to the formulation of nutrition and primary health care guidelines as part of the effort by WHO, UNICEF and national governments to assure "health for all by the year 2000".

UNU training in the development and application of microprocessor technology for Third World scientists began with support from the Government of Italy through the International Centre for Theoretical Physics at Trieste. We have now expanded our activities in this field as a result of a substantial grant from the Government of Ireland. A tailor-made training programme is being created at Trinity College, Dublin; the first three fellows for this training, from Ethiopia, have been identified and will shortly begin their work.

An exploratory UNU workshop was held in January 1985, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on the search for economic theories which are in accord with new insights into the development process. Designed to have a catalytic role in promoting new research, the workshop took up, among other topics, international finance and debt, new directions in macro-economics, household economics, the place of agriculture in development economics, and international trade and industrial strategy.



In consonance with the Secretary-General's call for all parts of the United Nations system to devote special attention to the problems of Africa, I would like to draw the Board's attention to the following activities of the UNU in Africa. All are characterized by an effort to use the UNU's status as an international community of scholars to mobilize African expertise in a long-term, co-ordinated programme to analyze, anticipate, and contribute to solutions for the continent's grave problems.

The UNU is continuing to prepare the ground for the establishment of the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa, which we call INRA. It is to be a research and training centre of the United Nations University, analogous to the World Institute for Development Economics Research in Helsinki. As you know, the Government of the Ivory Coast has offered to host INRA, and has pledged US\$5 million to its endowment fund. In addition, the Government of Zambia has offered to host a mineral resources unit of INRA in Lusaka, and has pledged US\$2 million to that end. The UNU is now trying to secure a financial base for INRA that will insure its long-term viability. With the active co-operation of the Governments of France, the Ivory Coast, and Zambia, as well as the World Bank and UNDP, we have prepared a prospectus for INRA which summarizes the salient features of the proposal. The Government of France has agreed to host a technical meeting of experts from interested governments and organizations in June, which will advise the UNU on the final revision of the proposal. We will submit the proposal to a pledging conference of potential donors later this year, in Paris. We are grateful to the Director-General of UNESCO for his emphasis on the importance of INRA to the African continent.

As plans for the establishment of INRA progress, the UNU's regular programme activities in Africa continue and expand. Among them is the joint project of the UNU and the Association of African Universities on African Regional Food and Nutrition. The aim of this 5-year Project is to augment scientific and institutional resources for research and development, planning, training, and related advisory services on food and nutrition in Africa. The African member states of the Lome Convention have requested complete funding for the project from the European Development Fund of the EEC. The first phase of the project will concentrate on post-harvest food conservation and processing technologies in relation to nutritional needs, taking into account the work of others in food strategies and policies and in nutrition and health.

One part of our programme area on Regional Perspectives is a five-year project called "Nation-building or Transnationalization in Africa". It began in 1982 with the main objective of studying the following question: to what extent do actual development strategies in Africa contribute to self-reliant development, which is a necessary condition for nation-building, or rather to the integration of Africa in the dominant global process of transnationalization of economies, cultures and politics? With a co-ordinating unit in Dakar, Senegal, 36 researchers from 24 African countries are engaged in the project, working specifically on three themes: (1) the state and the peasant, (2) the



state, natural resources and industrialization strategies, and (3) the state, the social components of the nation and world conflicts.

The Special Committee on Africa is a group of senior African scholars who, under the auspices of the UNU, are attempting through collaborative research and reflection to map a more stable future defined by and for indigenous aspirations. The secretariat of the Committee and the Project Director are based in Nairobi, which was the site of the first symposium organized by the Committee, earlier this year.

In addition to these research projects, over 100 young African scholars had participated in UNU's training programmes as of the end of 1984, out of a total of 450 fellows. A number of fellowships are continuing through the 1984-85 biennium, in the areas of nutrition, food technology, energy, biotechnology, agro-forestry, and human and social development. The success of our training programme is marked by an unusually high return rate of fellows to their own countries, and by a pattern of career development among them that points to the relevance of their training experience.

I have dwelt at some length on UNU activities in Africa, because I know that the crisis of that continent is a continuing preoccupation of the entire United Nations system, as well as of other institutions and people throughout the world.

This very condensed summary of some of the highlights of the UNU's activities in the last six months of 1984 would be incomplete without mention of our publication programme, through which the findings of some of our research are presented. I would like to call your attention to the exhibition of 70 UNU publications which is located outside of this conference hall near the cloakroom. I invite you to examine the fruits of our research programmes. If you are interested in acquiring a copy of one of the UNU publications please indicate your choice on the list which is being distributed and give it to the secretary who will be standing near the cases after the session, or contact Mr. Robert Kalman, Chief of the Higher Education Section in room 4122.

In my presentation five years ago, I indicated my belief that the UNU, along with the world's other universities and research centres, must help build the knowledge and skills to answer questions dealing with global problems of great complexity and scope. It was on the basis of these questions that the University formulated the five themes of the Medium-Term Perspective for 1982-1987 which I presented to this Board in 1981. The five themes, if I may remind you, are:

1. Peace, Security, Conflict Resolution and Global Transformation
2. The Global Economy
3. Hunger, Poverty, Resources and the Environment
4. Human and Social Development and the Co-existence of Peoples, Cultures and Social Systems, and
5. Science and Technology and Their Social and Ethical Implications.



Our first Medium-Term Perspective has just passed its mid-point - which coincides with the tenth year of operations of the UNU. This is a natural time for the University to take stock of its achievements thus far, and to plan our future course. I believe that the identity of the UNU has begun to coalesce in a distinctive manner. The most important elements of it are the capability to pursue research at the cutting edge of scientific knowledge, the willingness to take risks in our intellectual explorations to ensure that new aspects of the emerging human situation in the late 20th century are not ignored, and the insistence that University research include, as an integral part of the design as well as the execution of projects, the perspectives of scholars and scientists from the developing countries. One of the most distinctive contributions of the UNU, I believe, is to provide a setting for the mobilization of indigenous scholarship in all regions, a setting in which problems are defined and approaches to them fashioned from within rather than in conformity to an agenda set from outside.

The University's current programme of research reflects the larger concept of development which has evolved in the last decade and a half, a concept that includes political and social as well as economic and technical factors in a coherent framework. During the first five years of its existence, the work of the University concentrated heavily on the second of the three concerns mentioned in the Charter which are human survival, development and welfare. Under the Medium-Term Perspective, the UNU has moved more strongly to address issues of survival and welfare, from its standing concern for and experience with development.

The main thrust of the programme still is research directed toward increasing both the physical wherewithal for a satisfactory standard of living and the knowledge and tools needed to use it to best advantage. This corresponds to the earlier, more restricted concept of development. The physical underpinnings of an acceptable level of living include most prominently food, energy, and the natural systems that support their production. The UNU programme areas on energy systems and policy; resource policy and management; the food-energy nexus; and food, nutrition, biotechnology and poverty concentrate on these resources -- their productivity, sustainability and appropriate usage. The programme area on science, technology and the information society addresses the need for improved capability in and access to the knowledge and tools that undergird the formulation and execution of development policy and action.

The framers of the UNU Charter did not equate development and welfare. Progress in the state of the human condition is not just a matter of the growth of GNP or stocks of material goods, as has long been recognized. The distribution of resources is a more important determinant of the average level of living, and therefore, of the welfare of society. For this reason, the UNU devotes a substantial portion of its resources, in the programme areas on human and social development and regional perspectives, to the study of the distribution of wealth and power at virtually every level, from the household to the world system, including distribution within nations and within regions.



Increased production and more even distribution of the material goods that support human standards of living are important indicators of progress. But in order to understand fully the conditions and the prospects of society, it is also necessary to study the political, social and economic structures that perpetuate deprivation; the rapidly shifting international environment; and the broad, historical sources and processes of change. UNU projects in the programme areas on peace and conflict resolution, human and social development and regional perspectives address these more abstract but equally fundamental issues.

By addressing the problems and prospects of the human condition from three perspectives -- the physical supports of the quality of life, distribution, and the long term structures of society and processes of change -- *I think the programme has shown itself to be both internally consistent and externally relevant.* The overall goal of UNU research can be described as a better understanding of the dynamics of development -- development in the largest sense, which encompasses welfare and survival as well as an improved material standard of living.

Development, as we all know, is a concept and an endeavour that must unfold in a world bewildered by change and beset with conflict. Many of the conflicts are products of the inability to manage change; others have their roots in contradictory perceptions of and beliefs about change. Both UNESCO and, in its more limited framework, the UNU are confronted daily with evidence of increasing intellectual fragmentation in the world, and with the difficulty of communicating across cultural and ideological boundaries. Though there has been, in the one decade of the UNU's existence, an explosion of knowledge, there have been no great new integrative ideas to channel the force of the knowledge explosion productively. The complexity of the interlinkages among problems creates in many minds a powerful longing for simple, reductionist explanations, whose foundations in reality are so insecure that they have no capacity for tolerance of other approaches. This intellectual intolerance is one of the great dangers of our time. The only guard against it, I think, is an unflagging search for new syntheses to serve as the bases for co-operative action on present and emerging global problems. The terms of the discourse in which both the UNU and UNESCO engage, in their distinct but complementary spheres, are constantly changing. But now more than ever, the continuation of this discourse is absolutely essential.