

STATEMENT BY MR. SOEDJATMOKO,
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BEFORE THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

26 SEPTEMBER 1980

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the United Nations University, it is my honour and pleasure to make a statement before this Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. May I take this opportunity, Ambassador Sbihi, to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this body. I am quite confident that, under your able guidance and leadership, the work of the Committee during this session will be a productive one and will conclude with many desired results.

As I speak here barely one month after assuming office as Rector, I inevitably recall my early personal involvement with the United Nations when, in 1947, the Indonesian case was put before the Security Council at Lake Success. I was still a member of my country's delegation when Indonesia became a member of the United Nations in 1950. Again, in 1966, I was privileged to be Vice-Chairman of the Indonesian delegation when my country decided to resume its cooperation as a Member State. I am also proud subsequently to have intermittently been able to continue my involvement in UN activities either officially or in my private capacity.

The Year 1979/80

Mr. Chairman, in the year under review, the final one of my predecessor, Dr. James Hester, the University continued the expansion of its networks and associated institutions and of its fellowship programme for advanced training. The details are set out in the Report of the Council of the United Nations University (A/35/31) but perhaps I may just summarise this progress by saying that, by the end of the year, the University had 18 networks and 26 associated institutions and that during the year 60 UNU Fellows completed their training.

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Another statistic is worth quoting: during the year the University published 115 books, periodicals and papers. These included 4 issues of the quarterly Food and Nutrition Bulletin and 11 issues of the monthly ASSET (Abstracts of Selected Solar Energy Technologies).

This considerable output of information deriving from the research programmes of the University indicates that these three programmes, namely: World Hunger, Human and Social Development and the Use and Management of Natural Resources, are beginning to contribute knowledge towards the understanding and hopefully the eventual solution of the complex problems they are concerned with.

At the same time, during the year, the programmes had reached that stage when their progress and direction required evaluation. Under the policy guidance of the Council and with the assistance of the Programme Advisory Committees considerable attention was devoted to mid-term reviews of the programmes. Consequently, one of the University's most urgent tasks now is to assess the results of this review and to pursue it to the point where the University staff and the Council can draw useful conclusions to guide them in developing as well as modifying existing programmes, and in initiating new programme activities, structures and methods in fulfilment of the purposes of the University as spelled out in its Charter and in line with an emerging vision of the University's role in this decade of the 1980s.

Concurrently with the review process, the Council in the past year embarked on its planning for the University with a medium-term perspective. At its fifteenth session the Council received the "Report on the Development of a Medium-term Plan for the United Nations University" prepared by an ad hoc committee. As members of this committee, the representative of the Secretary-General and the representative of the Director-General were able to share with the Council the rich experience in medium-term planning of the United Nations and UNESCO, respectively. The Council has asked me to present at its sixteenth session, in December, my comments on the medium-term planning process in the University. Partly on the basis of my comments, the Council would decide how to resume its discussion of the Report of its ad hoc committee on medium-term planning. I should say that as a University, the UNU would need to maintain

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flexibility in its planning process to enable it to respond to various challenges and opportunities as they arise, and to resources as they become available, in the course of our collaboration with scholars and their institutions, policy-makers, and educators throughout the world. More important and useful to the University than any plan document setting forth in detail what it expects to achieve in, say, five or six years - and such a lengthy and costly document would be quickly obsolescent - is the collective learning which the planning process makes possible in identifying pressing as well as future global problems and in formulating the UNU's research and advanced training objectives and modalities responsive to those problems. It is such a conception of a continuous and self-adjusting academic planning process that I should like to emphasize.

During the year ending 30 June, paid contributions to the UNU Endowment Fund and Operating Fund increased by US\$15.6 million. The main contributors were Japan (US\$10.0 million), the United Kingdom (US\$2.3 million), the Federal Republic of Germany (US\$1.1 million) and Saudi Arabia (US\$1.0 million). In June 1980 pledges to the Endowment Fund amounted to US\$139,169,082, of which US\$105,036,189 had been received by the University. Moreover, a total of US\$2,936,896 had been pledged or received for the Operating Fund of the University from governmental sources and US\$378,980 as project support from other sources. In all, only 29 Member States of the United Nations have contributed to the financial support of the University so far.

I would be failing my duty, as Rector of the University, Mr. Chairman, not to pay tribute to my predecessor, Dr. James Hester, for his invaluable contribution to the organisation and development of the University during the past five years. During his able stewardship, the idea of a global university has become a reality with an established Centre and headquarters in Tokyo and an extensive, international system of 18 networks of scholars and institutions engaged in research, advanced training, and dissemination of knowledge on "pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare". Without the progress made during Dr. Hester's term as first Rector of this institution, it would not have been possible for me to be here today and share my thoughts with you on the future course of this University.

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The UN University and its Global Setting

Mr. Chairman, as the person newly entrusted with the University's academic and administrative leadership in the next five years, let me now share with you some of my thoughts on the University and the challenges and opportunities it faces in its global context.

The UN University exists in a world characterized by hunger and poverty amid abundance and affluence; chronic food shortages despite the tremendous scientific and technological capacity for food production; increasing resource scarcities amid colossal wastage and ecological degradation; a global arms race and trade diverting vast resources from basic needs and social services; rampant conflict, blind violence and terrorism; exploitation, oppression and people's movements; widening alienation as well as fanaticism; despair as well as emerging visions of alternative worlds and styles of life within a new sense of ecological and social limits. Rapid population growth and over-urbanization create imbalances with resources and threaten opportunities for human survival and welfare in many countries of the Third World. Fragmentation within countries - developing or industrialized - and among countries make societies and the international system fragile and unstable. There is a breakdown of dialogue and the mechanisms for dialogue between North and South, East and West, and East and South. Indeed, our world may well be drifting into a nuclear conflagration.

From another angle of vision, the UN University exists in a world undergoing rapid and pervasive change under the mounting impact of science and technology, including the rapid growth and reach of modern transportation and communication, and the changing values, aspirations and perceptions of people. The international order is experiencing profound shifts in the configuration of social forces at national, regional and global levels. However, this social transformation of individual countries and the world at large is also marked by the lag and resistance of social and political structures. This is traceable not only to the opposition of forces whose economic and political interests are being threatened by chance but also to the individual human (biological and psychic) and social limits to change because of the need for individual and societal continuity, stability, integrity, and identity.

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In this increasingly crowded, competitive, insecure and fragile world, we urgently need valid, viable and persuasive ideas and solutions capable of commanding loyalty of many people for dealing with the unprecedented scale, pervasiveness and complexity of national and global problems and for providing the requirements of human survival and development. Despite the knowledge explosion, contemporary social and political thought and international economics seem dangerously out of pace with the awesome technological advances in weaponry and industry, in cosmic exploration, in micro-biology, and in the exploitation of the non-renewable riches of our planet.

We need to know much more about the specificity of world hunger and absolute poverty that grips nearly 800 millions of people in the Third World and how to deal with it. We need to know how to break the structures of powerlessness, exploitation and permanent indebtedness that keep the absolutely poor in a state of dependency upon the rich and powerful. We need to know and understand how the desired social transformation of whole societies and, indeed, of the international order, can be made in a manner which is orderly and peaceful, just and humane. We need to identify and understand the minimum political requirements for dealing more effectively and more humanely with the problems of massive poverty, injustice and unemployment, for ways which would enable us to bring about the structural changes necessary to provide employment and to meet other human needs, but above all, for ways which would break the shackles of restrictive political and social structures, and thus release the full creative potential of all the people who are now at the bottom of their societies.

It is my perception that in the view of a large majority of mankind the present international order is not only ineffective and non-viable, but also immoral. The struggle of the Third World for a new international economic order is one manifestation of a more general desire to overcome the global, structural dualism which lies at the heart of the present international pattern of inequality and injustice. It is therefore unlikely that we will see a reduction of international tensions before the attainment of greater equity in the international division of labour and in the global distribution of political power.

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Given this formidable array of problems afflicting humankind in our time, we cannot escape the observation that the explosion of knowledge and the advances in science and technology that have taken place in the last few decades have added little to our capacity to solve some of the most urgent problems besetting humankind as a whole. In part this has been the result of an absence of political will. But what is important here is that the knowledge that we have gained has often been irrelevant to these problems. To that extent we are the victims of the fragmentation of knowledge when it comes to dealing with global problems of great complexity and of unprecedented scale.

It should be emphatically clear that we must build a different kind of knowledge and understanding of global problems. This cannot be generated or gained solely by the efforts of the great national institutions of learning whose aims are generally the promotion of the national welfare and the advancement of disciplinary knowledge. It can be initiated by a University that organizes international networks of scholars to deal systematically with global problems on a comprehensive and universal basis so that, as far as possible, no human, cultural, social, political or economic dimension is overlooked in its search for knowledge and understanding that is relevant in the context of a culturally, religiously and ideologically pluralistic world. The United Nations University is such a university deliberately established as a global and world-wide institution.

The Charter of the University which the General Assembly adopted in 1973 defines this institution as an "international community of scholars, engaged in research, post-graduate training and dissemination of knowledge in furtherance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations." Foremost among these are world peace and international security and the conditions that make them attainable and viable, including a just and equitable international order, the observance of human rights and duties, and the promotion of human development and welfare.

The University, like the United Nations of whose General Assembly it is an autonomous organ, is founded on the recognition of the interdependence of all nations: that the major problems every country faces have transnational and

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global dimensions and every global problem has micro elements that must also be dealt with at regional, national and local levels. The UNU is inspired by the ideal and the necessity of human solidarity and the primacy of improving the human condition everywhere in the world. It is premised on the requirement that the world's people and their leaders must learn to think of the human species as a single and indivisible unit comprising a global society if it is to survive amid global dangers and catastrophes of its own making, and if it is to maximize the chances of solving together its problems while enabling our civilizations to advance in increasing harmony and enriching diversity.

Fortunately for humankind, as the agenda of the current 35th regular session of the General Assembly clearly demonstrates, the statesmen on this great forum of the world are grappling with major global questions and problems; that agenda includes specific areas of conflict and struggle, peace-keeping, peaceful settlement of disputes, international development strategy, nuclear weapons, disarmament, self-determination, new and renewable sources of energy, human rights, cultural values, refugees, law of the sea, peaceful uses of outer space, science and technology for development, economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, policies and programmes for women and youth, problems of the elderly and the aged, the rights of the child, and many more.

The Charter of the UN University mandates us to devote our research to such pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare which are manifestly the concern of the United Nations and its agencies. In its first five years the UNU rightly put its emphasis on problem-oriented programmes which focussed on Third World development questions. Those programmes are now well established and give the promise of useful results in the relatively near future. Building on these programmes, I believe the time is right for the University to broaden its scope - in effect, for us to begin to respond more fully to our Charter when it states that the University shall also undertake research on: coexistence between peoples having different cultures, languages and social systems; 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

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to the improvement of the quality of life.

It is a formidable agenda. But it is an agenda for life and peace, for equality and dignity for this world. The UN University must address these issues.

There is no doubt in my mind that the UN University must evolve in these directions - in helping to create knowledge for and gain understanding of the processes of peaceful and humane social transformation towards a new, more viable, just and peaceful international order based on a new foundation of world morality and consensus. Our capacity to make these shifts and contribute to the solution or alleviation of the basic problems of humankind will depend on the resources - intellectual and financial - that we can mobilize. Given our limited funding, we shall make a careful selection of those problems where further knowledge and understanding will be critical in the search for solutions. On these we shall concentrate our efforts and it is here where the UN University can make a unique and specific contribution because of its academic freedom and its autonomy within the UN system which that system guarantees through the University's Charter.

In order for the UN University to perform the unique role assigned to it by the General Assembly, it will have to strengthen - on top of its present primarily administrative and managerial role - the University Centre's capability for intellectual leadership in Tokyo. In this way, the University Centre can become a vital core of a world-wide academic community - creative, critical, and intellectually effective.

With the indispensable support of Member States of the United Nations, it is our hope that, through its collaborative scholarship and its creative involvement in the international debate on critical human issues, the UN University can make an impact on the consciousness and thinking of the world and help give structure and meaning to the profound changes and movements taking place, relating the University's work to the hopes and fears of people everywhere, especially the youth, concerning their problems and needs and the world's future. Contrary to some misconception, the UN University is not a development agency, nor an institution devoted only to the problems of the Third World. The UN University is a global and universal institution of higher learning as intended by the

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General Assembly which brought it into existence.

Response to General Assembly Resolutions 33/108 and 34/112

Mr. Chairman, I should finally emphasize the Council's appreciation for the initiative of the General Assembly at its 33rd session, embodied in resolution 33/108, "in finding ways and means of promoting the awareness and understanding of the programmes and activities of the UN University with a view to establishing a more stable financial situation and thereby strengthening the University," and for the positive response of the Secretary-General and the Director-General who appointed consultants who undertook the study called for in the General Assembly resolution, in consultation, among others, with the Council, the Rector, and the University staff.

Mr. Chairman, I also wish to express the appreciation of the Council and the University as a whole for the General Assembly's encouragement and support as again evidenced by resolution 34/112 adopted at its thirty-fourth session. May I draw your particular attention, in this connection, to paragraphs 46 to 52 of the Council's Report (A/35/31) in which the Council responds directly to the suggestions and recommendations on fund-raising possibilities in the Secretary-General's "Report on Fund-raising Efforts for the United Nations University" (A/34/645, 16 November 1979).

In its Report, the Council also especially welcomed the Secretary-General's statement in his Report that the burden and responsibility for fund-raising ought not to rest mainly on the officers of the University or on its Council, but on those Governments which had voted the University into existence. The Council welcomes the fund-raising possibilities explored in the Secretary-General's "Report on Fund-raising Efforts for the UNU." As the General Assembly has urged, "I shall work closely with the Secretary-General and the Director-General of UNESCO on how to realize those possibilities and "to increase [our] efforts to obtain financial support for the University from all possible sources." The Council and I fully realize that without more resources than it now possesses, the University cannot initiate the new programme activities I have mentioned earlier nor respond to insistent demands for extending certain parts of its present programmes. As the General Assembly resolution noted, the results of

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fund-raising "have not yet proved sufficient to support the programmes of the ... University at an adequate level."

I should also inform this Committee, Mr. Chairman, that the University is just entering a new phase in its institutional development. It is my hope and determination that we begin to move into the new problem areas as well as to institutionalize the University's activities in various locations around the globe as called for in the University's Charter. With the approval of the Council of the University, I am hopeful that we can develop attractive new programmes and institutions and mobilize financial and intellectual support for them, precisely because of their clear relevance to the deep concerns and anxieties of the world's statesmen and of peoples everywhere as humankind approaches the 21st century.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, thank you for giving me this opportunity to make my statement on behalf of the United Nations University. I hope that our work in the next five years will deserve and elicit the increasing support of the Member States of the United Nations whose peoples comprise the global society the University is mandated by its Charter to serve.