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**UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY:
REPORT BY THE COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY
AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

SUMMARY

In accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations University (Article IV, para. 4(h)) whereby the Council shall “report annually to the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and to the Executive Board of UNESCO, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO, respectively, on the work of the University”, and in accordance with the provision of paragraph 10 of decision 5.2.1 adopted by the Executive Board at its 129th session whereby the Director-General is invited to submit to the Executive Board after 1989 “(a) every second year, for its consideration, the United Nations University Council’s report on the second year of the University’s biennial budgetary period, and his own report on the progress made by the University and the University’s cooperation with UNESCO; (b) in the intervening years, for its information and possible consideration, the United Nations University Council’s annual report”, the Director-General communicates to the Executive Board for its information the annual reports of the Council of the United Nations University covering the periods January-December 2000 and January-December 2001.¹ The present document contains the observations of the Director-General on the work of the University and on cooperation between UNESCO and the University during 2000-2001.

Decision required: paragraph 24.

¹ For technical reasons, these reports will be available during the session in English and French only.

Profile of the University

1. Established in 1973 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, the United Nations University is a community of scientists and researchers whose mission is to advance knowledge and seek opportunities for action in areas related to the global problems of security, peace, human development, human rights, the environment and progress at the international level.

Under the terms of its Charter, the University operates as an independent institution under the joint auspices of the United Nations and UNESCO.

2. The University consists of:

- (a) a Council, which operates as the governing board of the University;
- (b) a Rector, accountable to the Council, who is in charge of the administration, programming and coordination of the University;
- (c) a Centre, based in Tokyo, which assists the Rector in the elaboration, coordination, administration and financing of the University programme as a whole;
- (d) research and training centres and programmes established in various countries by decision of the Council;
- (e) institutions affiliated with the University for purposes of advanced research and postgraduate training.

3. The University budget is financed by voluntary contributions to the University from governments (in particular those hosting the headquarters, centres and programmes), non-governmental sources (including foundations, universities and individual donors) and the University's own activities.

Principal centres and programmes of the University

4. In addition to the central coordinating and programming unit based at its headquarters in Tokyo, UNU has a network of research and postgraduate training centres (RTCs) and the following programmes:

- (a) the World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) in Helsinki (Finland);
- (b) the Institute for New Technologies (UNU/INTECH) in Maastricht, Netherlands;
- (c) the International Institute for Software Technology (UNU/IIST) in Macao, China;
- (d) the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU/INRA) in Accra, Ghana;
- (e) the Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU/IAS) in Tokyo, Japan, which inaugurated its activities in April 1996. Its mission is focused on the development of original, forward-looking solutions to problems at the interface of societal and natural systems.

The research programmes are:

- (a) the Programme on Environment and Sustainable Development at headquarters in Tokyo, Japan;
 - (b) the Programme on Peace and Governance in Tokyo, Japan;
 - (c) the UNU Programme on Biotechnology for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNU/BIOLAC) in Caracas, Venezuela;
 - (d) the UNU International Leadership Academy (UNU/ILA) in Amman, Jordan;
 - (e) the UNU International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU/INWEH) in Ontario, Canada;
 - (f) the UNU Geothermal Training Programme (UNU/GTP) in Iceland;
 - (g) the Fisheries Training Programme (UNU/FTP) in Iceland;
 - (h) the Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity (INCORE);
 - (i) the UNU Programme on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU/CRIS), in Bruges, Belgium;
 - (j) Science and Technology for Sustainability (UNU/ISTS), Kwangju, Republic of Korea.
5. These centres and programmes all share a common fourfold objective:
- (a) to develop an international community of scholars;
 - (b) to build a bridge between the United Nations system and the international academic community;
 - (c) to act as a think-tank for the United Nations system;
 - (d) to contribute to capacity-building, particularly in the developing countries.

Fields of activity of the United Nations University

6. The work of the University is focused on two major themes:
- (a) peace and governance;
 - (b) the environment and sustainable development.

Its activities may be divided into five principal groups: (i) peace; (ii) governance; (iii) development; (iv) science, technology and society; (v) the environment.

Peace

7. The events of 2001 have reminded us that peace, welfare, equity and justice are closely linked and interconnected with governance. These issues are approached through comparative studies undertaken by UNU/WIDER on the causes of conflicts and strategies for avoiding them and settling disputes.

Governance

8. The University analyses changes in the world economy, the political and social problems arising therefrom and the solutions that international civil society can offer.

Development

9. The studies carried out by the University do not neglect the relation between debt burden, development and poverty reduction or the problems connected with debt reduction and relations between donor countries and disadvantaged countries. Particular attention is being paid to the impact of privatization on the State's capacity to meet basic needs.

Science, technology and society

10. An assessment has been made of the policy measures used to increase investment in the field of research and development. Stress is also being placed on the need for effective linkage between innovation and the development of human resources. One of the main priorities is assisting developing countries in the use of the new information and communication technologies for teaching and research.

Environment

11. The emphasis here is on participatory approaches for the preservation of biodiversity worldwide in the context of agricultural development systems: systems management, networking of a large number of developing countries and relation to development capacities. Zero emission activities (relationship between zero emission and the use of biological resources) have been strengthened.

Transdisciplinary themes – Dialogue of civilizations

12. In the framework of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, proclaimed in 2001 by the General Assembly, UNU undertook research on dialogue, its prerequisites and its meaning. How can dialogue be facilitated? An international conference on this theme was held in Tokyo in August 2001.

Capacity-building

13. All parts of UNU participate in capacity-building activities in developing countries:
- (a) postgraduate training programmes for senior researchers and young professionals;
 - (b) certificate courses or introduction to research.

In 2001, more than 800 young professionals participated in short-term programmes and more than 80 long-term fellowships (three months to one year) were awarded. Support was provided for 30 PhD candidates. Distance training was also developed.

Knowledge networks

14. UNU maintains an active partnership with many university institutions and associations worldwide and with numerous networks:
- (a) International Association of Universities (IAU),

- (b) International Association of University Presidents (IAUP),
- (c) International Social Science Council,
- (d) Networks of researchers worldwide.

Role of think-tank for the United Nations system

15. UNU has organized in Geneva an activity on research and political dialogue. The presentations deal with issues raised in the Millennium Report of the Secretary-General. In addition several workshops were organized in Paris and in New York to inform decision-makers within the system of the research findings.

Dissemination of findings and public lectures

16. The University organized a series of lectures (the U Thant Distinguished Lecture Series) on the most pressing issues of the twenty-first century and the role of the United Nations in improving relations among nations. Top-ranking political figures participated in this series. Mention might also be made of the Amilcar Herrera annual public lecture on the theme: “Science, technology and development” (UNU/INTECH) and a conference on growth, poverty and debt reduction (UNU/WIDER).

Publications

17. The UNU Press received the “Library Journal Notable Government Document Award” for the book: “Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention”. The University has also been encouraging lower-cost publications by local publishers for free-of-charge distribution. During 2001, the University’s studies resulted in the publication of 20 books, 17 of which it published itself, and some 30 scientific articles in the scientific and popular press. Negotiations are under way to boost publications using electronic technology.

UNU income and expenditure

18. In 2000 the United Nations University received contributions of US \$12,078,580 from 13 governments and also US \$4,534,807 from numerous other partners. Efforts must be made to limit the decline in income noted since 1996-1997. For the period 2002-2003, the University’s budget will balance out in terms of income and expenditure at US \$73,555,000.

Personnel policy

19. UNU is pursuing its efforts to strengthen its make-up as an international institution through its personnel policy. In 2000, the Tokyo Centre, the research and training centres and the programmes (RTC/PS) had a combined total staff of 223: of that number, 103 were women and 72 came from developing countries. There are 105 professional staff, 23 of whom are women and 43 are from developing countries.

Cooperation between UNU and institutions of the United Nations system, including UNESCO

20. As stipulated in its Charter, one of the missions of the University is to serve as a think-tank for the system and as a bridge between the international academic community and the United Nations. During 2001, the United Nations University collaborated with 38 United Nations agencies.

- (a) The Rector attends the meetings of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) of the United Nations and several staff members participate in the work of ACC subsidiary bodies. The ACC meetings provide the University with an opportunity to become more familiar with the most challenging political problems which may call for in-depth reflection.
- (b) The Geneva meeting in 2001 on research and political dialogue focused on the theme of human security. Grouped under a series of subtopics, the presentations dealt with issues raised by the Secretary-General in his Millennium Report.
- (c) Round tables on political topics were organized in New York, Geneva and Paris to inform policy-makers in the system of UNU research findings. In 2001 meetings were held on the following themes: (i) governance and globalization; (ii) global finance and civil society after Prague; (iii) coming out of violence; (iv) the management of peace processes; (v) governance and development in Africa; (vi) the practice of sustainable development (UNU/UNITAR series).
- (d) In addition, several activities were organized as part of the preparatory work for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002.

Cooperation with UNESCO

21. Cooperation between UNU and UNESCO intensified during 2001.

- (a) UNESCO and UNU organized in Tokyo and Kyoto a major conference on the dialogue of civilizations. The conference was preceded by preparatory workshops considering the roles of education, science, ethics, the media and leadership in the dialogue among civilizations.
- (b) An international course on biodiversity in the ecosystems of mangrove zones was held at Annamalai University in India.
- (c) Under the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, the two UNESCO/UNU Chairs – the UNESCO-UNU Chair on the Concept and Practice of Zero Emission in Africa (Namibia) and the UNESCO Chair in Leadership Studies (Jordan) – pursued their activities satisfactorily. A third UNESCO/UNU Chair on electronic learning is at the planning stage.
- (d) UNESCO and UNU also cooperated actively on follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education, leading to the establishment of the Global Network for Innovation in Higher Education (GUNI), the secretariat of which is located in Spain.
- (e) The two organizations will be supporting projects developed in the framework of the Global Network, in particular those benefiting the least developed countries.

In addition, the following activities were undertaken jointly with the Education Sector and the Communication Sector:

- (a) UNU took part in a meeting of experts on research management, organized by UNESCO in Paris, in cooperation with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and in a round table on higher education in the era of the information society, organized in New York (May 2001) by UNESCO under the auspices of ECOSOC;

- (b) a high-level training course on formal methods of software development, held in April 2000 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

In recent years there has been very active cooperation between the UNU sustainable development programme (ESD) and UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and International Hydrological Programme (IHP):

- (a) a joint project on sustainable management of marginal arid zones, with the participation of 15 African and Asian countries;
- (b) a UNESCO/UNU workshop on the rehabilitation of eroded arid zones and biosphere reserves;
- (c) preparation of a document on the role of education, science and culture in the sustainable development of mountain regions, in connection with the International Year of Mountains, proclaimed by the United Nations;
- (d) integrated biodiversity strategies for islands and coastal areas and joint meetings on the conservation of mangrove zones (Japan);
- (e) an international workshop on globally-integrated modelling (China);
- (f) an international conference on water and civilization (Iran).

An exchange of experts (Mr Thomas Schaaf, SC/ECO and Mr Zafar Adeel (UNU/ESD) between the Natural Sciences Sector at UNESCO and the United Nations University produced good results.

In the field of culture, in addition to the International Conference on the Dialogue of Civilizations held in Tokyo in August 2001, the World Heritage Centre participated in the 19th International Congress of the International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (Amsterdam, July 2000) and the thematic expert meeting on Asia-Pacific sacred mountains, held in Wakayama City, Japan, in September 2001.

Implementation by UNU of the recommendations of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit

22. Collaboration between UNESCO and UNU is continuing to gain strength. Beyond the traditional shared fields of action (education and communication, natural sciences), cooperation has extended to culture (dialogue of civilizations and World Heritage Centre). Cooperation in the area of science was enriched by an innovative exchange of staff between UNU and UNESCO, which has produced satisfactory results.

As a result of its cycle of internal and external evaluations, the University developed a clear definition of its mission, leading to the elaboration of a *Strategic Plan, 2000*, the implementation of which is under way. The Tokyo Centre has become the principal site for administration, and staff and budget management. The University is playing an increasingly successful role as think-tank for the United Nations system and is strengthening its partnership with most of the specialized agencies of the system.

A new programme (UNU/BIOLAC), with headquarters in Caracas (Venezuela) has been established. While still concerned with biotechnology, the programme is geared towards networks dealing with bio-safety, genomes and ethical issues.

The creation of new programmes (UNU/CRIS in Bruges, Belgium, and UNU/ISTS in Kwangju, Republic of Korea) has not brought about any significant change in the worldwide distribution of centres and programmes owing to the fact that the host countries have to bear the financial costs of the centres and programmes on their territory. Nevertheless, the Director-General has emphasized that all the centres and programmes have been instructed to reinforce their activities in favour of developing countries.

The negotiations under way with regard to a new UNU initiative in Qatar are worth pursuing since that would reinforce the University's presence in the region. The same is true of the project under discussion for the establishment of a programme on fragile wetland ecosystems in the state of Mato Grosso in Brazil.

The elaboration of a policy document, as suggested by the Council, on the current and future role of UNU in Africa should reinforce the University's efforts to help developing countries.

Conclusions

23. An analysis of the report of the Rector of the United Nations University on the functioning of the University during the period 2000-2001 prompts the following observations:

- (a) Through its training and research programmes, its global approach to problems, its partnership with numerous agencies of the United Nations system, the University continues to play its role to the full as a think-tank for the entire system;
- (b) Considerable efforts have been made to strengthen the management of the University and the quality of its research and innovation efforts in the areas of peace, governance, environment and sustainable development;
- (c) In its own way, the University provides a highly-applauded contribution to capacity-building and to the solution of problems confronting humanity as a whole;
- (d) Cooperation between UNESCO and the University has developed positively, particularly in the areas of sustainable development, environment, education, culture and communication. This cooperation should be strengthened;
- (e) The United Nations University should pursue its efforts, while continuing to diversify its partnerships and funding, optimizing its functioning and management, reinforcing its cooperation with associations and regional programmes and continuing to accord priority to developing countries not only through its activities but also by the extension of its network and the definition of strategies enabling it to establish new centres and programmes in developing countries.

24. In view of the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 164 EX/8,
2. Considering the improvements in the management of the University, the relevance and quality of its training and research programmes, and its role as a think-tank for the United Nations system,

3. Recognizing that the improvements noted are closely linked to the efforts made by the Council and the Rector of the University to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/98/3),
4. Expresses its satisfaction at the development of the programme and activities of UNU;
5. Expresses its appreciation of the active cooperation between UNESCO and UNU in their shared areas of interest;
6. Expresses its gratitude to the Government of Japan, the country in which the University's headquarters are located, for the financial and intellectual support that it gives to UNU, particularly through its funds-in-trust;
7. Thanks the Member States in which the research and training centres (RTCs) and programmes (RTPs) are located for their endorsement of the ideals of the University and their financial and intellectual support;
8. Expresses its gratitude to the other governments and organizations that have contributed to the University's funds-in-trust and have provided support for the implementation of its programmes;
9. Reaffirms its previous recommendations for the continuation of cooperation between UNESCO and the United Nations University, mainly through the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, follow-up to international conferences on higher education and science, the programmes concerning the promotion of human rights, peace, conflict resolution, sustainable development, culture, communication and the human and social sciences;
10. Expresses its renewed support to the Council and the Rector of the United Nations University;
11. Urges the University to pursue the renovation of its structure, management and programmes through the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit;
12. Invites the Director-General to communicate to the Chair of the Council of the University and to the Rector the terms of this decision.