United Nations University

Background

United Nations University (UNU) is an international community of scholars engaged in research, postgraduate training and dissemination of knowledge in furtherance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The idea for this type of international organization was originally proposed in 1969 by then United Nations Secretary-General U Thant, who suggested the creation of “a United Nations university, truly international in character and devoted to the Charter’s objectives of peace and progress.”


Objectives and main roles

As the UNU Charter states, the aim of the University is to foster intellectual cooperation among scholars and scientists in an effort to understand and solve “pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare.” The University has a special mandate to alleviate the intellectual isolation of academics in developing countries by organizing worldwide networks of collaborating scholars and research institutions.

Five main roles are central to UNU’s mission. These are that the University should:

- be an international community of scholars;
- form a bridge between the United Nations and the international academic community;
- serve as a think-tank for the United Nations system;
- contribute to capacity building, particularly in developing countries; and
- serve as a platform for dialogue and new and creative ideas.

Organization

The University consists of UNU Centre in Tokyo, several research and training centres and programmes (RTC/Ps), and a network of associated and cooperating institutions and scholars.

The University Council sets the principles and policies for the University. It has 24 members who are appointed for six-year terms by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO. Members serve in their individual capacities, not as representatives of their countries. There are three ex officio members: the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Director-General of UNESCO and the Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The UNU Rector is also a Council member.

The Rector is the University’s chief academic and administrative officer, with responsibility for the direction, organization and administration of its overall programme.

Research and training directions in the 21st century

The University studies the effects of human activities, which are altering the world on an unprecedented scale. Particular importance is given to those that affect developing countries. The University’s academic activities are coordinated and carried out by UNU Centre and the RTC/Ps as well as through a global network of associated and cooperating institutions and scholars. UNU’s work is clustered within two main programme areas: peace and governance, and environment and sustainable development.

UNU Centre, Tokyo, Japan (1975)

UNU Centre assists the Rector in programming, planning and administering the work of the University. UNU Centre comprises three main academic units: The Environment and Sustainable Development Programme focuses on the interactions between human activities and the natural environment, and their implications for sustainable human development. The Peace and Governance Programme undertakes research, foresight and policy studies, and capacity development to promote peace and good governance. The Capacity Development Programme coordinates a variety of short- and long-duration fellowship programmes to train young scientists from developing countries.

UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), Helsinki, Finland (1985)

UNU-WIDER, the University’s first research and training centre, provides original analyses of emerging topics and offers policy advice aimed at the sustainable economic and social development of the poorest nations.

UNU Institute for New Technologies (UNU-INTECH), Maastricht, the Netherlands (1990)

UNU-INTECH develops fresh insights into the emergence, spread and impacts of new technologies, especially in developing countries. The Institute specializes in the role of new technologies in the development process. It conducts research, foresight and policy analyses, and capacity development. Its teaching programmes, workshops and joint research projects help people from developing countries to explore and assess the opportunities created by new technologies, and to anticipate the potential consequences for their countries.

UNU Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA), Accra, Ghana, with a Mineral Resources Unit in Lusaka, Zambia (1990)

UNU-INRA focuses on working with African universities and research institutions to generate knowledge and train human capital needed to develop, adapt and disseminate technologies for the conservation and productive use of Africa’s natural resources.

UNU International Institute for Software Technology (UNU-IIST), Macao (1992)

UNU-IIST aims to help developing countries improve their capacity in software engineering, and hence their capacity to be involved in and take advantage of the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT).

(Continued on the inside back cover)
CONTENTS

RECTOR’S PREFACE ........................................................................................................... 2

THE YEAR IN REVIEW .................................................................................................... 4

PEACE AND GOVERNANCE ....................................................................................... 9

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ............................................. 18

MAJOR CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES ........................................................................... 29

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ................................................................................... 34

NETWORKING ACTIVITIES ..................................................................................... 42

LINKS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM .................................................. 49

DISSEMINATION .......................................................................................................... 52

INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND STAFF ................................................................... 60

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Statistical Information on UNU Activities ................................................. 63

ANNEX 2: New UNU Agreements in 2003 ................................................................. 66

ANNEX 3: Other Partners (non-UN) ........................................................................... 68

ANNEX 4: Contributions Received in 2003 ................................................................. 71

ANNEX 5: Titles Published in 2003 ........................................................................... 74

ANNEX 6: Journal Articles, Book Chapters and Working Papers
Published in 2003 ........................................................................................................ 78

ANNEX 7: Members of the Council of United Nations University
for 2003 ................................................................................................................... 96
There is increasing recognition that United Nations University (UNU) is making useful and valued contributions to the work of the United Nations system. This Annual Report highlights some of those contributions.

UNU’s programme networks are addressing key issues that are of concern to United Nations organizations and programmes, ranging from conflict and security, human rights and ethics, sustainable urbanization, and the management of fragile ecosystems to solutions to international water crises, economic and environmental governance, natural resources management and regional integration, to name just a few. UNU’s research and capacity development activities increasingly bring UNU scientists into direct contact with the ongoing work of the UN. This year has been particularly encouraging to us, as we have found that our continuing efforts to strengthen and expand the UNU system, to enhance our cooperation with and contributions to the United Nations system, as well as to expand the outreach of the University worldwide are bearing fruit.

During 2003, we were able to put the finishing touches on a new initiative, the UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) in Bonn. The Institute began its work on 1 December 2003. Also during the year, we made good progress in discussions with the Government of Malaysia to establish a new UNU research and training centre, the UNU Institute of Global Health (UNU-IIGH), to be located in Kuala Lumpur. Late in the year, the Malaysian Cabinet formally approved the proposal for establishing this new Institute.

This year, we saw good progress in the further development of our online learning initiative. Together with partner institutions in Norway and Japan, and in good cooperation with, for instance, UNEP and ITU, we have begun to develop broader regional networks covering Africa and the Asia-Pacific that will help us to ensure that the knowledge gained through our ongoing research projects is made available to those who need it and can benefit most from it in the form of interactive, online, modular courses as well as in forms of dissemination using other media.

We continued to make progress in 2003 in strengthening our ongoing capacity development programmes, including the annual sessions of UNU International Courses that take place in Tokyo in May and June of each year. Many of our research and training centres and programmes also have been able to expand the outreach of their capacity development programmes, such as those of UNU-INWEH in the Middle East and UNU-INRA in Africa. Our Geothermal Training Programme, organized in Iceland, reached its landmark 25th year in 2003, the longest ongoing training programme within the UNU system. We continued to improve the quality and outreach of the annual UNU Global Seminars in Japan, and to initiate the first off-shore global seminar in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in cooperation with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO.

We have been continuing our efforts to improve the effectiveness of the UNU system and to renew and strengthen cooperation among our 12 research and training centres and programmes. A new Joint Activities Fund (JAF), included in the 2004–2005 biennial academic programme and budget and approved by the UNU Council in its December 2003 meeting, is meant to support joint projects that will bring additionality to the work of UNU as a whole involving two or more parts of the UNU system. A similar fund for “innovative capacity building initiatives” has been included in our plans for 2004–2005, also, to promote new training or teaching activities involving cooperation among different parts of the UNU system. A number of topics have been identified around which intra-UNU cooperation will be focused as from 2003, including water resources, a web portal for UN research, social acceptance of biotechnology and management of fragile ecosystems, among others. It is envisaged that the web portal for UNU research will be extended to eventually include all research relating to UN.
During 2003, we have sought to extend and build up our cooperation with different parts of the United Nations system; joint initiatives with UNEP in the area of online learning through GRID-Arendal in Norway and the interlinkages project are but two examples. We have renewed our contacts with other parts of the UN system in areas of mutual interest, such as with ITU related to the World Summit on the Information Society and with UNAIDS regarding HIV/AIDS and security issues. We co-organized in late October 2003 the fourth annual Geneva Research and Policy Dialogue (GRPD) together with the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. There are clear indications that the GRPD initiative is itself helping to foster new cooperation among different parts of the UN research community.

We were able to sustain ongoing cooperation with some of our key partners within the UN system, such as FAO, WHO, UNCTAD, UNITAR and UNDP, and to initiate new cooperation with WTO, ITU, UNFPA, UNDESA and UNECA, among others. Our relations with UNESCO are particularly strong, which is illustrated by our productive staff exchange programme. This year, we organized jointly the conference on “Globalization with a Human Face — Benefitting All,” and worked closely together with the science sector, specifically on water-related issues — in preparing for the Third World Water Forum — and with the (higher) education sector on the World Conference on Higher Education Plus Five and in the preparation of the Year and Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. In this context, we have further strengthened our relations with worldwide organizations in the fields of science and technology and education, such as TWAS, ICSU and IAU.

Finally, during the past year we have been focused on expanding the outreach of the UNU system in its various host locations and in terms of our networks of associated and cooperating institutions. We have continued to concentrate on a number of key issues, such as African development through our participation in the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III). This activity has involved different parts of the UNU system, including UNU-WIDER, UNU-INRA and UNU-CRIS. We have also continued to work with members of the African diplomatic corps in Tokyo to organize an annual African Day symposium. Our continuing work with the EU Delegation in Tokyo, as well as with the member countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, is another indication of our growing involvement with different regional organizations and consortia.

We made a specific University-wide effort to contribute to the outcomes of the Third World Water Forum, held in Kyoto in March as a part of the International Year of Freshwater (2003). I have already mentioned developments regarding online learning involving the Global Virtual University initiative with support from the Government of Norway and UNEP, as well as the Asia Pacific Initiative coordinated with Keio University and CISCO Systems in the UNU Media Studio in Tokyo. Our research and training centres have also made specific efforts to foster stronger links with their local academic communities through annual lectures and joint research initiatives in such locations as Helsinki, Hamilton, Macao, Bruges and Tokyo.

We were pleased to be able to redefine and implement a new framework for associated institutions of the UNU system as set out in our Charter. Towards this end, the UNU Council designated four new associated institutions at its 50th session in December: Griffith University in Australia, the Federal University of Mato Grosso in Brazil, the Kwangju Institute for Science and Technology in the Republic of Korea and GRID-Arendal in Norway.

While we made good progress during 2003 towards the goals and objectives set for UNU within its Strategic Plan 2002, we will endeavour to continue these efforts and to renew our efforts to mobilize additional financial and other resources for the University’s work. It is against the context of reduced resources and decreasing financial assistance being made available by donor governments that UNU is striving to enhance the quality of its contributions to the United Nations system, its active involvement with the international academic community, and our efforts to broaden the outreach and visibility of UNU’s work worldwide.

I am sure that you will find this year’s annual report to be of interest, in terms of both the substance of our work as well as the many varied events and development. I hope that it will give you a better understanding of the varied and important work being undertaken by UNU as the University of the United Nations.

Hans van Ginkel
Rector
The overarching goal of United Nations University (UNU) is the advancement of knowledge in areas relevant to addressing global issues of human security and development. As an international community of scholars, UNU strives to be a think tank for the United Nations (UN) system, a bridge between the UN and the international scientific community, a builder of capacities (particularly in developing countries), and a platform for dialogue and new and creative ideas. The special nature of UNU is that it not only combines research, policy studies and teaching, but also brings to this work a global perspective that incorporates both theoretical and practical approaches.

Rather than attempting to provide an exhaustive account of UNU work, this Annual Report focuses on selected key topics and major advances in 2003. Further information about UNU’s research, training and dissemination activities can be found on the UNU website.

In addition to undertaking its ongoing agenda of research, capacity development and dissemination activities, UNU actively contributed in 2003 to several major international events held in Japan. These included the Third World Water Forum (March), a Wilton Park Conference (September), the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (Sept./Oct.), and The World Summit on the Information Society (December).

UNU continues to actively promote the adoption and use of computer-mediated dissemination and learning technologies. The year saw the official launches of the Media Studio at UN House in Tokyo (March) and Global Virtual University in Norway (June), and introduction of a Video Portal offering public access (online and via CD-ROM) to UNU’s video archives and regular livecasts. Another key online initiative in 2003 was establishment of the Alumni-Net database as a means of linking up UNU “alumni” (former fellows, Council and Board members, employees and project participants) with new generations of young scholars.

A major role of UNU is to contribute to the work of the United Nations by presenting its research results and introducing new and creative ideas. UNU clusters its work within two broad programme areas — Peace and Governance and Environment and Sustainable Development — utilizing innovative techniques and methodologies to undertake cross-cultural and multidisciplinary research and training on a broad range of themes within these areas as well as on issues that cut across themes and programme areas. UNU disseminates the results of its work through a variety of channels, including high-level conferences, panels and workshops as well as books, reports, journal articles, newsletters and the Internet.

UNU Centre, based in Tokyo, is supported by a network of 12 Research and Training Centres and Programmes (RTC/Ps) located throughout the world. Each RTC/P has its own individual programmatic focus that both integrates with and supplements the work of the above programme areas. The activities of UNU Centre and the UNU RTC/Ps are, in turn, supported by global networks of associated and cooperating institutions and scholars.

---

1 UNU’s website, http://www.unu.edu/, provides details of the activities of UNU Centre as well as links to the websites of each of UNU’s network of Research and Training Centres and Programmes.
The governing body of UNU, the Council of United Nations University, held its 50th session at UNU Centre in Tokyo from 1–5 December 2003. The main functions of the Council are to formulate the principles and policies that govern the operations of the University, consider and approve the UNU work programme and budget, and make recommendations regarding the effective functioning of the University. This year deliberations focused on the following main topics: (1) the 2004–2005 Academic Programme and Budget; (2) a review of the financial situation of UNU, including the management of the UNU Endowment Fund; (3) the UNU Personnel Policy; (4) a policy paper on new UNU associated institutions; (5) a policy on the role of UNU support groups and associations; (6) a UNU-wide strategy for follow-up of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD); and (7) a report on UNU’s strategy for future activities in and on Africa.

The work of the UNU Peace and Governance Programme focuses on the interconnected issues of sustainable peace, security and good governance. The Programme’s projects are organized into four main thematic areas: (a) Conflict and Security, (b) Human Rights and Ethics, (c) Policy and Institutional Frameworks, and (d) the International Order and International Justice. The projects in these areas seek to generate policy-relevant research results aimed at deepening our understanding of pressing global problems and, where feasible, presenting policy prescriptions. An inter-related set of new projects and activities for the 2004–5 biennium has been conceptualized and prepared under the broad theme of “Multilateralism under Challenge.”

In 2003, the Peace and Governance Programme implemented a wide range of research, policy analysis, capacity development and dissemination activities; the year saw the completion and dissemination of a number of long-term projects and the launching of several new projects. An important aspect of most project activities is partnerships with researchers and research institutions around the world. Such partnerships permit leveraging of modest core funds and enable substantial expansion of the networking base of UNU.

The Peace and Governance Programme continued its fruitful collaboration with the European Union Commission Delegation in Japan by co-hosting the third EU-UNU Tokyo Global Forum in January. The theme of this major international conference was “Children in Turmoil: Rights of the Child in the Midst of Human Insecurity.” The Programme also co-organized an autumn Wilton Park Conference on “Japan and East Asia in a Globalising World” in Hakone, Japan, marking the first time that a Wilton Park conference had been held outside Europe.

A number of Peace and Governance Programme books were published in 2003 by UNU Press.

In 2003, the UNU Environment and Sustainable Development Programme streamlined its activities into four main thematic areas — (a) Sustainable Urbanization, (b) Management of Fragile Ecosystems, (c) Solutions to Water Crises, and (d) Environmental Governance and Information — and expanded in coverage, especially in issues relating to water and information technology (IT). These changes reflect UNU’s response to current major global issues in areas of growing concern, such as difficulties in guaranteeing an adequate supply of water to the global population and the challenges brought about by IT in the management of the environment.
During UN International Year of Freshwater 2003, UNU played an important role in organizing a number of sessions at the 3rd World Water Forum, held in Japan in March; experts from the Environment and Sustainable Development Programme and UNU-INWEH led or participated in discussions at those and other sessions, and UNU Rector Hans van Ginkel chaired an opening plenary session and delivered a keynote address on emerging water issues. The UNU Environment and Sustainable Development Programme also explored the issue of public participation in water management through international symposiums on “Improving Public Participation and Governance in International Watershed Management,” held in April at the University of Virginia School of Law, and “Public Participation and Governance in Water Resources Management,” held in October in Tokyo.

In July, UNU organized a regional workshop in Bangkok that brought together senior representatives from 15 countries in the Asia-Pacific to discuss the issue of catastrophic floods. In response to a resolution adopted by workshop participants, UNU will launch a regional action programme for flood risk assessment and risk reduction. Impact assessment of anthropogenic and climate changes on the water cycle has already started in the Mekong basin and in Sri Lanka.

IT-related work of the Environment and Sustainable Development Programme included the Information Technology and Environmental Issues project. Findings of the project regarding the high production cost of computer microchips received worldwide media attention in 2003.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Rather than fitting neatly into a specific thematic structure, some issues cut across or complement UNU’s formal programme areas. To counteract the typical narrow, single-issue focus of global agreements and treaties, for example, UNU puts emphasis on exploring the changing nature of multilateral governance frameworks relating to technology, the economy and the environment. In 2003, UNU’s research work involved multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary projects that dealt with such cross-cutting issues as globalization with a “human face,” the effects of the international trade regime, sustainable development finance and governance, and inequality and human well-being.

Other issues, meanwhile, significantly impact ongoing activities in all areas of research, capacity building and dissemination. Such issues such as gender-sensitive development and appropriate adoption of advances in information and communication technologies are embedded across the range of UNU’s work.

Capacity Development

UNU is strongly committed to capacity building, with the particular aim of enhancing individual and institutional capacity in developing countries. UNU focuses its capacity building efforts on advanced training (particularly at the postgraduate level) and sustainability
(“training the trainers,” and helping to ensure that training provided to individuals will bear greater fruit at an institutional level). Training opportunities are implemented worldwide in cooperation with strong partner institutions.

UNU undertakes capacity development for postgraduate scholars and young professionals through specialized advanced training programmes; these encompass short- and long-duration courses as well as postgraduate degree-oriented study in fields that span the University’s priority programme areas. In 2003, UNU supported:

- short-duration training courses and workshops in such diverse fields as armed conflict and peacekeeping, environment and sustainable development, human rights, international cooperation and development, environmental and natural resources management, coastal biodiversity, natural disaster risk management, biotechnology and nutrition;
- long-duration programmes in biodiversity, fisheries, geothermal energy, food technology, biotechnology, remote sensing, information technology, and peace and sustainable development; and
- degree-oriented study programmes in human nutrition, applied mathematics and computer science, economics of technological change, development planning, and more.

UNU also provides project-based development by giving individuals, groups and institutions opportunities to upgrade their skills and knowledge through involvement in UNU project work, and supports the networking activities of developing country academics.

### Networking

The concept of networking is integral to UNU’s research and capacity development activities. To complement its own internal network of Research and Training Centres and Programmes, UNU reaches out to wider networks of partners in international academia that share similar objectives.

The adoption of new information and communications technologies has greatly enhanced the effectiveness of UNU’s networking approach. Under the leadership of the UNU Campus Computing Centre in Tokyo, IT capabilities and services were enhanced and expanded throughout the UNU system.

In the realm of policy dialogue, 2003 saw the previously mentioned EU-UNU Tokyo Global Forum in January and the Wilton Park Conference in September.

Prominent among UNU networking activities in 2003 were the Latin American and African initiatives, Asia task force, multi-country growth reference study and training fellowship programme initiatives undertaken by the Food and Nutrition Programme, in partnership with one or more UN agencies and other regional or global organizations. Other notable networking efforts included UNU-INRA’s African networking initiatives and UNU-BIOLAC’s biotechnology networking activities.

### Links within the UN System

To better tap knowledge, analyses and expertise from around the world, each year UNU and the UN Office in Geneva jointly organize the Geneva Research and Policy Dialogue. This Dialogue is meant to provide practical and pertinent inputs for policy development and implementation across programmes and departments. Among the presentations in 2003 were the UNU projects on refugees and human rights in societies in transition.

UNU continues to explore ways and means to strengthen its connection to the UN system of organizations by enhancing existing links and forging new cooperative relationships. UNU works closely with such key UN partners as UNESCO, UNEP, FAO, WHO,UNCTAD, UNITAR and UNDP, and seeks to identify new possibilities for cooperation with these partners as well as with WTO, ITU, UNFPA, UNDESA, UNECA and others.\(^2\) The types and extent of cooperation vary widely.

In 2003, UNU collaborated with about 40 UN system organizations in implementing its activities. Among new agreements that UNU signed with other UN agencies were a memorandum of understanding between UNU-WIDER and UNDESA regarding a joint development finance project, and a memorandum of understanding between UNU-FTP and the UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (UNEP-GPA) regarding consultancy and training.

---

\(^2\) See the list at the end of the Links Within the United Nation System section for the full names of these UN organizations.
The work of UNU led to the publication of more than 40 new books in 2003, including 15 new titles published by UNU Press. UNU Press undertook a series of cost-reduction and process enhancement projects, completed its first entirely onscreen publishing project, and re-printed its first title using digital print-on-demand technology. UNU Press actively promoted its publications and the work of UNU at panels and book fairs around the world, including at the Third World Water Forum and the World Summit on the Information Society.

In the print media, UNU staff published more than 160 articles in scholarly and popular journals as well as over 100 discussion and working papers, and contributed to more than 40 books. UNU also made increasing use of electronic means to disseminate information about its activities in 2003. This includes the Web-based UNU Update newsletter and electronic versions of the print newsletters UNUnexions, Work in Progress and WIDER Angle. UNU Library launched a pilot version of an online public access catalog of UNU publications.

Information about UNU’s work was further disseminated to target audiences through numerous public lectures, conferences, symposiums, workshops and other events. The U Thant Distinguished Lecture Series presented lectures by Prof. Ahmed H. Zewail, 1999 Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry (15 April); the Honorable Jimmy Carter, 39th President of the United States of America and recipient of the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize (5 September); and Australian scientist Dr. Peter Doherty, co-winner of the 1996 Nobel Prize in Medicine (17 October).

The UNU Global Seminar series for university students and young professionals was attended by more than 390 participants in seven sessions held throughout Japan, and the first session held outside of Japan (in Seoul, Republic of Korea). Four sessions of the UNU-IAS Tokyo Roundtable were also convened in 2003.

• Following the sudden death of UNU-IIST Director Armando Haeberer in February, Senior Research Fellow Chris George was appointed UNU-IIST Director ad interim, effective 1 March.
• During 2003, membership of UNU-INRA’s College of Research Associates increased from 22 to 54 (from 37 universities and research institutes in 19 countries).
• UNU-IAS Director A.H. Zakri attended a series of feasibility study team meetings and negotiated, on behalf of UNU, with the Malaysian Government and other academic counterparts regarding the initiative to establish a new UNU-RTC/P on Global Health in Malaysia.
• Responding to a request by the Japanese Government, UNU-IAS took a proactive role in organizing the Global Environmental Action Conference for Sustainable Future, held in Tokyo in October.
• UNU-INWEH received assurance of three years of additional funding from the Canadian International Development Agency.
• Dr. Zafar Adeel of the UNU Centre Environment and Sustainable Development Programme was appointed Assistant Director of UNU-INWEH.
• Dr. Jean-Marc Coicaud of the UNU Centre Peace and Governance Programme was appointed interim head of the UNU Office in New York.
• Peer evaluation of UNU-INTECH was completed.
• UNU played an active role in the 3rd World Water Forum held in March in Kyoto and organized a workshop in July as an input to the 3rd Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which opened in late September.
• Prof. Itaru Yasui was appointed as Vice-Rector, Environment and Sustainable Development, in December.
• Dr. Janos Bogardi was appointed as Director of the new UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) in Bonn, Germany.