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## **UNU Financial Assistance Programme for Students from Developing Countries Enters 4th Year of Operation**

*Programme Has Helped More Than 400 Students Attend 21 Cooperating Universities*

The United Nations University Financial Assistance Programme for Students from Developing Countries (UNU-FAP), which provides self-financed students from developing countries with reimbursable, no-interest funds to study at a university in Japan, has entered its 4th year of operation. The aim of the programme, implemented by United Nations University with financial cooperation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) and Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC), is to assist in the capacity building of developing nations. During its three-year pilot phase (April 2003 to March 2006), UNU-FAP assisted 402 students attending 21 cooperating universities. The programme has received favourable reaction from the recipient students, and the reimbursement rate has been excellent (over 99 per cent of recipients have made repaid their funds on schedule).

In addition to providing recipient students with funds, UNU-FAP supports them in other ways, such as through Academic Excellence Awards, essay contests, internships, and a newsletter with useful information on job-hunting in Japan. In a survey conducted by external consultants in autumn 2004, some 80 per cent of respondents (both recipients and non-recipients) expressed positive attitudes toward UNU-FAP. "UNU-FAP is a useful and necessary programme for international students", says Ms. Yoshiko Hayakawa, Assistant Director-General of Administrative Affairs, Ferris University. "I hope more universities will choose to participate."

UNU-FAP offers several advantages for cooperating universities. First, the programme enables cooperating universities to provide funds to international students without dipping into their own resources (a cooperating university also receives administrative expenses from the programme). And by providing an additional option for financial support to international students, UNU-FAP helps universities to attract more students and to promote the university's image. Furthermore, the programme offers opportunities to exchange information and views with other cooperating universities, and enables universities to strengthen their ties with UNU.

Reflecting the know-how accumulated during the pilot phase, in April 2006 the programme was modified to be more user-friendly. As the number of international students in Japan continues to increase, their financial support system needs to be upgraded, both quantitatively and qualitatively. UNU-FAP will respond to such needs by continuing to make efforts to increase the scope of cooperating universities and the number of recipient students.

For more information about the UNU Financial Assistance Programme for Students from Developing Countries, see the UNU-FAP website at <http://www.fap.hq.unu.edu>, or contact Dr. Yoshinobu Onishi (tel: 03-3499-2811, fax: 03-5467-1489).

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