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Question of the establishment of a University for Peace

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 1 of its resolution 33/109 of 18 December 1979, the General Assembly noted with appreciation the proposal submitted by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for the establishment of a University for Peace; in paragraph 2, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to transmit the text of that proposal to Member States, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Rector and Council of the United Nations University and to any other agencies deemed appropriate in order to obtain their views on it.

2. In paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to bring those views to the attention of all Member States and interested specialized agencies and to submit a report, through the Economic and Social Council, to the Assembly at its thirty-fourth session. The present report, submitted in pursuance of the above-mentioned paragraph, summarizes the views received.

3. According to the proposal, the primary objective of the University for Peace would be "to contribute, through research, teaching, dissemination and free inquiry, to the cause of peace, to mutual knowledge for men throughout the world and to the promotion among all men of a spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, in order to stimulate international co-operation and eliminate any situation which might imperil universal peace and progress", (A/C.2/33/SR.51, para. 32). In the second preambular paragraph of the resolution the General Assembly noted that "the Government of Costa Rica has not only offered preliminary plans and designs for the proposed University for Peace and the headquarters and land for the campus of that institution but has also made every effort to finance it outside the United Nations and the United Nations University so that it will not constitute a financial burden for either the Organization or the Member States". Furthermore, it was stressed that the University for Peace would be part of the existing United Nations University system: "a specialized international centre within it, thus enriching it and enabling it to begin to embark truly on the second aspect of its institutional mandate, the post-graduate training envisaged in its Charter" (A/C.2/33/SR.51, para. 49).

4. When presenting the proposal to the Council of the United Nations University, the Vice-President of Costa Rica emphasized especially the latter two points. He underlined that, first, Costa Rica had the means of obtaining the resources necessary to establish and maintain the proposed University, and, second, that the United Nations University would need to examine the question of eligibility of the new organization as part of its system of associated institutions. 1/

5. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/109, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to all Member States inviting their views on the Costa Rican proposal. In addition, he consulted the following: the United

1/ See UNU/C/12/L.15, p. VII-3 and VII-4.

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the Rector and Council of the United Nations University; the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR); and the United Nations Centre for Disarmament. The views received in response to the Secretary-General's note are summarized below.

II. SUMMARY OF REPLIES RECEIVED FROM MEMBER STATES

6. Altogether 10 Governments responded to the Secretary-General's note. 2/ They commended the Government of Costa Rica for its desire to promote the cause of peace and noted with appreciation its generosity in making such a proposal. Most of the comments received endorsed the underlying idea in principle. Two Governments supported the Costa Rican proposal as set forth in the relevant resolution.

7. Several Governments felt that it was not appropriate, at the present state, to take a decision towards establishment of the proposed institution within the United Nations University system. They wished to have further information regarding its relationship to the United Nations University before making any commitment. Concern was expressed for the possible duplication between the activities of the intended University for Peace and those of the United Nations University. In view of the budgetary constraints currently facing Member States, concern was also expressed for the financial difficulties which might arise should the proposed University be so designed as to depend primarily on voluntary contributions from Governments.

2/ Australia, Canada, Cyprus, France, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Japan, Mauritius and Niger.

III. SUMMARY OF REPLIES RECEIVED FROM UNITED NATIONS
AGENCIES AND BODIES

8. At its 107th meeting, on 27 April 1979, the Executive Board of UNESCO studied the question of a University for Peace. The Board, in approving the initiative in its decision 5.1.2, thanked the President of Costa Rica for his proposal and made the following observations:

- "(1) the generous proposal of the Government of Costa Rica is of considerable importance and merits unreserved moral support;
- "(2) the insertion of the University for Peace into the system of the United Nations University would presuppose that the institutional model and the spheres of competence of that institution took into account the aims and functions of the United Nations University as defined in its Charter;
- "(3) its financing should be guaranteed in such a way as to avoid any adverse effect on the United Nations University."

9. The Board also emphasized that it would be desirable to define the themes of action of the proposed institution so as to make them complimentary to the activities of other United Nations organizations, particularly to those of the United Nations University and UNESCO. Furthermore, the Board noted with satisfaction that the Director-General of UNESCO would be prepared, within the limits of available resources, to consider requests for consultancy services in some of the Organization's fields of competence to help establish the proposed institution, and to assist in drawing up plans for its documentation and information centre. 3/

10. At its twelfth session, held in Tokyo from 25 to 29 June 1979, the Council of the United Nations University heard a statement of the Vice-President of Costa Rica, Dr. Jose Miquel Alfaro, concerning the University for Peace. The Council considered the proposed project especially in terms of its relation to the United Nations University. It welcomed the initiative taken by the President of Costa Rica and stated, inter alia, that:

"Since the bold idea of the University for Peace is still in the first stage of its formulation, the Council cannot determine at this point in time how and whether the United Nations University could include the proposed university within its system. Concerned as it is with the difficult problem of the financing of that system, it stresses that the financing of the proposed new university should be planned and organized in such a manner that it involves no diversion of financial resource from the United Nations University.

3/ For the full text of the Board's decision, see annex I below.

"The Council would give the fullest consideration in the future, however, to including the University for Peace as an associated institution if, as an autonomous body, it establishes programmes which contribute to the effective operation of the network of collaborating institutions within the United Nations University system. At present this network includes 23 association institutions and more than 80 research and training units." 4/

11. The Council also agreed that the Rector should establish contacts with the Costa Rican Government and report on his contacts to the Council.

12. According to UNITAR, the possibility of a University for Peace is an inviting one, deserving encouragement and support. Yet, it would be important to give clear financial estimates for this project and to state the likelihood of obtaining the required funds. The establishment and maintenance of the University could not be paid for by fees charged, for example, to Member States for the students they send to the University. Past experience had shown that organizations like the proposed one tend to find it very difficult to obtain the funds necessary for them to function effectively.

13. The United Nations Centre for Disarmament noted the proposal with interest and suggested that the University for Peace might become a vehicle for the transmission of information on disarmament and on the underlying problems of the arms race. It was pointed out that, at the tenth special session of the General Assembly, the Government of France submitted a proposal to establish an autonomous international institute for disarmament research to carry out technical studies relating to armaments and disarmament (A/S-10/AC.1/8). In its resolution 33/71K of 14 December 1978, concerning review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek the advice of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies on possible ways of establishing, operating and financing such an institute. The Board discussed this matter at its recent session in May 1979 and will report to the Secretary-General after further discussion at its session in October this year.

4/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 31 (A/34/31), annex VII, paras. 7 and 8. For the full text of the Council's statement, see annex II below.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

14. From the comments received in response to the Secretary-General's note verbale it would appear that general support has been expressed for the basic idea underlying the proposal for the establishment of a University for Peace. As regards the implementation of the proposed project, three main questions have been identified as requiring careful consideration and clarification: (a) the relation of the new institution to the United Nations University; (b) possible duplication between the activities of the University for Peace and those of other existing institutions; and (c) provision of the necessary financial resources.

15. Bearing in mind the concern of the United Nations University for international peace and development, the Secretary-General believes that it is important that the Council of the United Nations University expedite completion of its consultation with the Costa Rican Government on the proposed project. The Secretary-General also believes that such consultations will be greatly facilitated if, on the basis of the views set out in this document, the General Assembly were to provide further guidance on ways and means of ensuring further elaboration of the proposal submitted by the Government of Costa Rica.

ANNEX I

Decision 5.1.2 of the Executive Board of the United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,
concerning the proposal for the establishment of a
University for Peace

The Executive Board,

1. Having taken note of the opinion of the Programme and External Relations Commission concerning the project for the establishment of a University for Peace,
2. Endorses this opinion and transmits it to the Director-General for forwarding to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

OPINION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

1. In resolution 33/109 the United Nations General Assembly requested UNESCO to communicate its views to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the proposal made by the Government of Costa Rica to establish a University for Peace, as a specialized international institute for post-graduate studies, within the system of the United Nations University.
2. The Executive Board has studied this question on the basis of documents 107 EX/17 Add. and 107 EX/INF.3 and of the oral information provided by the representative of the Presidential Commission, appointed by the Government of Costa Rica.
3. The problem of peace and the strengthening of peace in regard to its many aspects, including security and disarmament, as well as the problems of aggressivity and violence, are central to the concerns of the United Nations system. All efforts that, at various levels, are likely to further the achievement of a positive and constructive peace rooted in the hearts of men and in the consciousness of peoples deserve to be undertaken and to be carried through with the greatest determination and with the utmost effectiveness.
4. Costa Rica's initiative is in keeping with this concern and with the need to promote forthwith a just and lasting peace by means of considered and lucid action.
5. Costa Rica's long peace-loving and democratic tradition and its exemplary efforts and achievements in the field of education give to that country a moral authority that makes it particularly well-placed to formulate the proposal submitted to the United Nations General Assembly and to host an international institution dedicated to peace.

6. Consequently, UNESCO cannot but approve this initiative and thank the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for his generous proposal. It should offer to him its moral support and its technical assistance so that the lofty aim referred to in that proposal may be achieved.

7. Mindful of this duty, the Executive Board has the following observations to make in this connexion:

- I. The General Assembly of the United Nations, in its resolution 33/109, noted that the proposal submitted by Costa Rica concerns "the establishment of a University for Peace ... within the system of the United Nations University" and considered that "both its resolution 2951 (XXVII) of 11 December 1972, by which it established the United Nations University, and the Charter of the United Nations University, adopted in resolution 3081 (XXVIII) of 6 December 1973, provided expressly for the establishment of a decentralized system of affiliated institutions, integrated into the world university community". It is accordingly within this context that the issues involved in the establishment of a University for Peace should be examined: firstly, the feasibility and the desirability of the proposal to make the University for Peace a part of the system of the United Nations University; and, alternatively, a co-operation scheme whereby only certain institutes of the University for Peace would be associated with the work of the United Nations University in accordance with procedures to be determined by the Council of the United Nations University, in line with the provisions of its Charter.
- II. It is necessary, in addition, to examine the respective fields of action of the United Nations University and the University for Peace. Under the terms of Article I.3, of the Charter of the United Nations University, the following subjects, more especially, fall within its competence: "coexistence between peoples having different cultures, languages and social systems; peaceful relations between States and the maintenance of peace and security; 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; universal human values related to the improvement of the quality of life".

Furthermore, reference to paragraph 11 of document 107 EX/INF.3 shows that the planned fields of study for the University for Peace are the following:

1. Peace research and study,
2. Peace education or instruction,
3. Human rights,

4. Communication,
5. Transfer of science and technology,
6. Natural resources and the quality of life,
7. Disarmament and arms control.

Clearly, vast sectors would thus come within the competence of both institutions. In order to avoid duplication, it would therefore be desirable, without setting aside certain fields exclusively for one institution, to define the themes of action of the proposed institution with a view to making them complementary to the programme fields and forms of action of the United Nations University.

At the same time, care must be taken to avoid any duplication of work of work with UNESCO, whose mission, as defined by its Constitution, involves numerous programme activities concerning peace and education for international understanding, co-operation and peace, human rights, the transfer of science and technology, natural resources and communication. The same applies to other institutions of the United Nations system.

- III. General Assembly resolution 33/109 specifies that the Government of Costa Rica has not only offered preliminary plans and designs for the proposed University for Peace and the headquarters and land for the campus of that institution but has also made every effort to finance it outside the United Nations and the United Nations University so that it will not constitute a financial burden for either the Organization or the Member States.

On the other hand, paragraph 14 of document 107 EX/INF.3 refers to aid to be provided by various countries to the University, assistance which would be sought by Costa Rica itself. This means that the establishment's operating costs would have to be met, at least in part, by aid from countries and from international organizations in the years to come. The search for resources is a very important point. The United Nations University has come up against serious difficulties in finding the necessary funds for its operation, which is to a considerable extent ensured by the generosity of the host country. Any diverting of the necessary material, human and intellectual resources from the United Nations University to the institution proposed by Costa Rica should be avoided, as should its development as an undertaking in competition with the United Nations University.

- IV. The establishment proposed by Costa Rica provides for a campus and post-graduate courses at the headquarters. It should be noted that this formula was not adopted during exchanges of views prior to the founding of the United Nations University. It is perhaps worthwhile investigating whether these arguments are still valid for the proposed institution.

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8. Having due regard to these considerations, it is the Programme Commission's opinion that:

- (1) the generous proposal of the Government of Costa Rica is of considerable importance and merits unreserved moral support;
- (2) the insertion of the University for Peace into the system of the United Nations University would presuppose that the institutional model and the spheres of competence of that institution took into account the aims and functions of the United Nations University as defined in its Charter;
- (3) its financing should be guaranteed in such a way as to avoid any adverse effect on the United Nations University.

9. The Executive Board, in the spirit of the foregoing considerations, notes with satisfaction that the Director-General is prepared, within the limits of the resources available, to consider requests for consultant services in some of the Organization's fields of competence, and on the drawing up of plans for the documentation and information centre which the Costa Rican Government would like to submit in preparation for the organization of the proposed institution.

10. The opinion of the Council of the United Nations University, particularly concerning paragraph 8(2), should be a determining factor in the final resolution which the General Assembly of the United Nations is to adopt in this matter.

ANNEX II

Opinion of the Council of the United Nations University
on the proposal of the Republic of Costa Rica for the
establishment of a University for Peace a/

1. The Council of the United Nations University has given careful consideration to General Assembly resolution 33/109 of 18 December 1978 requesting the Secretary-General to transmit the text of the proposal of the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for the establishment of a University for Peace within the system of the United Nations University.
2. The Council had also before it the text of decision 5.1.2 adopted by the Executive Board of UNESCO at its one hundred and seventh session.
3. The Council had the privilege of hearing at its twelfth session the imaginative and constructive proposal of the President of Costa Rica as expounded by the Vice-President of the Republic of Costa Rica.
4. In considering the proposal, the Council has taken into full account the objectives of the University as set out in article 1, paragraph 1, of its Charter "The United Nations University shall be 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." Moreover, the Charter states in article 1, paragraph 3, that the research programmes of the University shall include among other subjects "co-existence between peoples having different cultures, languages and social systems; /and/ peaceful relations between States and the maintenance of peace and security". Foremost, therefore, among the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations which the University is called upon by its own Charter to advance is the maintenance of international peace and security.
5. All the present programmes of the University - the World Hunger Programme, the Human and Social Development Programme and the Programme on the Use and Management of Natural Resources - have been designed to help bring about conditions, structures and processes of development that contribute to international peace and security. Within its Human and Social Development Programme particularly, the United Nations University has been developing a research project in the area of human rights, peace and international law in collaboration with several organizations, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the Hague Academy of International Law, and various peace research institutes. The University hopes to expand this project if additional resources are made available.

a/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth session, Supplement No. 31 (A/34/31), annex VII.

6. Given the United Nations University's concern and ongoing programmes for international peace and development, the Council of the University welcomes the initiative taken by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

7. Since the bold idea of the University for Peace is still in the first stage of its formulation, the Council cannot determine at this point in time how and whether the United Nations University could include the proposed university within its system. Concerned as it is with the difficult problem of the financing of that system, it stresses that the financing of the proposed new university should be planned and organized in such a manner that it involves no diversion of financial resources for the United Nations University.

8. The Council would give the fullest consideration in the future, however, to including the University for Peace as an associated institution if, as an autonomous body, it establishes programmes which contribute to the effective operation of the network of collaborating institutions within the United Nations University system. At present this network includes 23 associated institutions and more than 80 research and training units.
