

Though in the past UNHCR had been involved in organizing repatriation on a substantial scale, the South Asian sub-continent undertaking involved the largest number of people, the longest distances, and the most complex logistical arrangements. It was moreover closely linked, under the terms of the New Delhi Agreement, with the return of 92,000 Pakistani prisoners of war and internees from India. This was completed on 30 April on a bilateral basis under the aegis of the ICRC, thus respecting the principle of simultaneity which was the keystone of the Agreement.

Beyond its immediate humanitarian impact, the operation helped attenuate political tensions in the region. In an agreement signed on 9 April, the Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan credited the swift movement of the returnees with having "*generated an atmosphere of reconciliation and paved the way for the normalization of relations on the sub-continent.*"

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### THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY AND CURRENT WORLD PROBLEMS

The main purpose of the fourth session of the United Nations University Council held in Tokyo from 20 to 24 January was to define the broad lines of policy which will enable the rector to present concrete proposals for the programme at the next session, to be held in New York from 24 to 26 June. At the opening session Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, Unesco Director-General, delivered an address of which the following excerpts contain the substance, especially concerning the problem of peace and international co-operation.<sup>1</sup>

...The Director-General then cited a few examples of decisive matters on which the United Nations University, by adopting a scientific, multidisciplinary approach, could advance mankind's knowledge and hence its means of action.

<sup>1</sup> See *Unesco Chronicle*, Vol. XXI (1975), No. 1-2.

“ Let us take first of all the basic question of peace, which is the essential objective of both the organizations that have brought the United Nations University into being ”, said Mr. M’Bow. “ Everyone here is aware that various institutions, too numerous for me to list them now, have for years past been investigating the legal and political aspects of the maintenance of peace and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Nevertheless, however good the work already done may be, there are many reasons for having these questions considered by the United Nations University. For one thing, the approach in most of the work has been highly specialized, whereas the university’s rôle would be to invite scientists already studying these problems to join forces and to co-operate in interdisciplinary and transnational research. For another, most of the studies so far completed have been too strictly concerned with history, whereas the United Nations University, thanks to the wide-ranging contacts it would make possible, would certainly be conducive to the adoption of a forward-looking attitude. Lastly, almost all the institutions at present engaged on peace research are in the industrialized countries, and mainly in the Western hemisphere.

The remedies for the existing inequalities between peoples and nations, without which it is illusory to suppose that true peace, based on fellowship among all men, can be established, do not generally receive the attention they should in such research. The findings arrived at are thus open to criticism in so far as they may be considered to be based on prejudice or affected by national or regional attitudes...

...My good wishes for your success are commensurate with the high mission entrusted to you amid all the uncertainties of this period in mankind’s history. Not a month, not a week goes by, in fact, without bringing us new threats. Some, comparing this time with the period which preceded the Second World War, speak of its ‘rising dangers’. One of the highest moral authorities in the world has recently publicly proclaimed his anxiety. Almost everywhere on earth, in fact, we see the strong oppressing the weak; the most elementary human rights being violated; armaments budgets eating into the livelihood of the poorest people, when bombs are not raining down upon them; we see nature itself polluted, with poisons invading rivers and oceans and penetrating the air we breathe. Yes, I want to say again here that mankind is faced with an alternative which it has never had to meet before: either we must organize ourselves by redesigning our national and international structures on generous and realistic lines, in other words by demonstrating our fellowship and community of interest, or we shall be doomed to sink back into a barbarism which would bring

to nought all that man has painfully achieved over thousands of years.

It is in this tremendous task, wherein the very survival of the human race is at stake, that you have the frightening honour of being called upon to assist. You are unlikely to have any magic formula for this purpose, but it rests with you, making use of an innovatory form of machinery, to plan activities which will themselves be innovatory and will pave the way for concerted thought and investigation directed to dealing with the major problems of our time. At this period when international co-operation is seeking new paths, you are called upon to show that such co-operation, in the field allotted to you, can take new forms to achieve the purposes common to the United Nations and to Unesco — namely, peace and the social and economic advancement of mankind. All men of goodwill are whole-heartedly with you in the pursuit of this lofty task.”

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