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Dear John,

"Global Learning" Activities of UN University

Interest has been expressed at JUNIC meetings in the new Global Learning Division of the UN University which, as you know, is headed by a long-time colleague of a number of JUNIC members, Edward Ploman.

Since he was appointed Vice-Rector last year, Eddi has been formulating and initiating a programme of activities which are described in the enclosed paper. Briefly the programme falls into two distinct, but related, parts:

1. research and training activities under the broad heading of "The Information Society: Past, Present and Future" which includes as subject areas: Transformation and transfer of knowledge - traditional knowledge and new information; information technolgy and society; emerging issues and perspectives.

2. operational activities concerned with the dissemination of knowledge and UNU 'outreach.'

I should add that the enclosed paper was prepared about three months ago and is currently being refined and translated into operational projects; but it provides a broad picture of what will be done by Global Learning Division and I thought it might be helpful to send it to you before we meet at JUNIC in Vienna.

As ever,

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UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY

GLOBAL LEARNING DIVISION

Conceptual Framework and Proposed Activities

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Introduction

1.   The proposed activities of the Global Learning Division represent a
response to the rapid social and technological changes which affect the
conditions for the creation, evaluation, sharing and application of knowledge,
i.e. the conditions for the "management of knowledge" in contemporary society.
Within the framework of the University's over-all programme as set out in the
Medium Term Perspective adopted by the Council in 1981, the Global Learning
Division will have the following main goals:

- to promote an equitable distribution, within and between societies,
  of the capacity and the means to generate, process, select, communicate
  and use knowledge and information

- to encourage understanding and informed debate of local and national
  issues in their global dimensions and vice-versa

- to promote the development and application of new learning perspectives
  and capacities at the individual, group, institutional and societal
  level

- to clarify the issues and implications at the local, national and
  international level, of current developments in the knowledge,
  information and communications field.

To achieve these goals, the Division will, inter alia

- explore new modes and methods for the dissemination and sharing of
  knowledge and information at all levels, from the local to the
  international

- foster participation in learning and information sharing processes at
  different social levels and different ages and the wide access to
  knowledge, in all appropriate forms

- study relevant aspects of conceptual issues, implications and
  applications of new information and communications technology, placing
  these issues in the context of the development of international
  relations and international law

- increase the co-operation with scientific and professional organizations
  and increase UNU outreach.

2.   In this perspective, knowledge, learning and information sharing are seen
as facets of a process which comprises not only the production of knowledge
but also the evaluation, dissemination and application of knowledge and
information. Thus, the activities of the University are embedded in the
complex, rapidly changing and barely understood general context which
variously has been described as the knowledge explosion, the advent of a new
information society or the communications revolution. The forms and modes

A number of useful and interesting suggestions have been made, in respect of conceptual approaches, as well as of specific activities. Some of these suggestions have already been incorporated in the proposed framework and the programme of activities - others require further elaboration and consultation.

In all cases, the implementation of projects to be undertaken requires close co-operation: with other organizations, in particular international scientific associations, agencies of the UN system with national research institutions and authorities and with professional organizations in the learning, communications information, media and related areas. To assist the Division's work an Advisory Panel representing different areas, disciplines and professions is being established.

The proposals set out below have been selected on the basis of the following criteria: the possibility of the UNU making a specific contribution through its unique location at the intersection of the international system and the scientific community and thus its multi-cultural and interdisciplinary approach; the stated needs and concerns at the national and international level; the known needs for advancing present knowledge and understanding.

The proposed activities have been structured according to three main areas:

- activities concerned with the "Information society: past, present and future"

- the exploration of new modes and methods of transmitting, disseminating and sharing knowledge and information at all relevant levels.

- the development of the University's outreach and the dissemination of UNU generated information.

1. The information society: past, present and future

Introduction: background and basic approaches

It has almost become a cliché to speak of the communications revolution, the knowledge explosion or the advent of what is variously called the information society or the learning and knowledge society. In the absence of any agreed terminology, the expression "information society" has been chosen as covering a wider area and as an entry point into global problems complementing those adopted for other activities of the University. It should also be noted that such expressions as 'information', 'knowledge', 'learning', communications at this stage are used in a rather loose sense, reflecting the lack of a generally agreed conceptual approach or terminology, and refer to distinct but interrelated even converging activities, processes and products.

Despite the variety of approaches there seems to be agreement on one point: communication is a prerequisite for all social organization - whether among animals or humans. Without communication there can be no community. In this perspective all societies have been information societies. What we tend to forget is that this view of society is recent. Throughout human history societies have evolved practices for organizing their information flows. All have accumulated stocks of knowledge. History shows that in the past human learning has been largely successful in ensuring the survival of the species and a gradually increasing well-being for larger sectors of the population. However, communications, information and the application of knowledge do not seem to have been perceived as problems per se but rather to have been taken for granted, seen almost as natural constants, placed in the service of other social activities and goals whether they were expressed in religious, economic or political terms. It is only in recent years, that there has occurred a shift in perspective so that communications and information by themselves have become issues in society, at the level of individuals and institutions, as well as at the national and international level.

This fundamental change in our attitude towards the communications/ information complex is so recent that we still seem very unsure about what it means and how to deal with it. We face a paradoxical and contradictory situation. On the one hand, each discipline, each profession has developed approaches, paradigms of its own, as has each government department. On the other hand, more holistic approaches are emerging which have resulted in a new way of looking at the communications/information complex: communication patterns and information flows are now used as basic concepts in the interpretation of natural phenomena (cf. genetics) and of social organization; they are seen to affect social and economic organization, the relations between countries, the nature of work and leisure, patterns of spatial arrangement and movement, as well as the processes of learning, knowledge and culture. Interesting examples of such more holistic approaches are represented by the "natural history of communications" as proposed by such scientists as Boulding and de Rosnay which starts with basic forms of chemical communication at the nuclear level and traces developments of communication patterns between living systems to the level of the "global village". Other scholars have pointed to the creation of a new outlook

emerging information society: what are the limitations to human information handling capacity; will the increasing predominance of the information sector necessarily imply economic stagnation; will an indiscriminate adoption of new electronic, information-oriented technology reinforce the trend towards the "de-skilling" of human beings that began with the industrial revolution; will these developments cause a new gap between "post-industrialized" and developing societies; how dangerous and disruptive is the newly perceived vulnerability of the computerized society?

These trends, however, represent only one dimension of the emerging new information society. There is another trend also presenting a complex set of developments of equal importance. This trend includes the resurgence and growth of national, regional and local self-assertion, expressing itself for example in the insistence on the recognition and use of local languages and even dialects. It manifests itself in the emergence of new issue-oriented groups and in grass-root movements becoming increasingly more visible and vocal both in developing and industrialized countries.

A key aspect of the goals of these movements concerns communications in the form of demands for a greater measure of self-control over communication systems and information generation. These demands are reflected in the clamour for greater participation and access, for a more equitable distribution of communication facilities and information resources within and between societies, in the emergence of new concepts such as the right to communicate, and in such phenomena as the underground press, "guerilla television", the emphasis on local broadcasting, on demonstrations, sit-ins, street theatre and other ways, traditional and modern, of exercising what might be called the right to be heard by the "unseen voices". While so far more attention has been devoted to the first dimention it seems that this second dimension will be an equally important feature of the emerging new information society.

Both trends make communication and information technologies appear as technologies of organization and of knowledge. It is significant that the problems that have confronted scientists and engineers in the research and development of computerized information systems, of telecommunications and data networks have caused them to evolve new conceptual models and theoretical constructs. In the last few years these have been combined with concepts in other fields so as to create new intellectual tools for analyzing complex structures and processes. Thus, a recently emerging area of inquiry concerns what has been called "the management of complexity" which draws upon findings in telecommunications, microbiology, mathematical information theory and thermodynamics.

One of the researchers involved in this area, Nobel Prize winner Ilya Prigogine has stated: "This without doubt is the symbol of what we understand by the metamorphosis of science: the opening up of a new theoretical space." This in fact seems to be the meaning of the "information society" at the frontiers of knowledge. At the cutting edge of inquiry, science uncovers knowledge which poses new questions while encountering at the same time old problems in new guises. Concurrently, the struggle against

information as basic conceptual units (Georgescu-Roegen, Attali). General semantics (von Korzybski et al) analyzes not only language but, at a meta level, the meaning of meaning and general systems theory (van Bertalanffy, Boulding et al) dared to attach the concept of systems and their inter-relationships.

All these trends can be seen in terms of a push towards edges where, in novel modes, questions are raised about the nature of and the possible limits to human capacity to inquire and to communicate findings.

These trends also affect knowledge processes and ideas about learning and learning capacities. It is now recognized that learning is mediated by the total environment, physical and social. From this total information and learning environment it is possible to identify various elements, even though together they seem to comprise all social processes and products: language, tools and other objects, values, human relations, rites, ceremonies and art, customs and laws, and images of the world.

Analysts agree on the changes in the information environment. With the advent of electronic communications many postulate a new communications and information environment whose invisible and often transnational networks constitute a radically changed global context for economic and cultural life. The changes in the information environment are seen to go beyond the increase in data and the volume of information that is now being made available. The perceived changed bring about a new phenomenon: transfor-mation of a qualitative nature which affect fundamental aspects of society.

In this view, the changes of modalities of communication and information handling are crucial in their impact on cultural forms and identities. Inherent in these changes is the possibility of a shift from the traditional paradigm of linear communication from sender to receiver to modes of commu-nication that are multi-modal, interactive and more participatory in their potentials. The convergence of technologies and modes amplifies the relationships with the social and physical environment and, more important, reshapes the information content and perceptions of society.

These analyses have then been combiend with studies of the effects of increasing population density and urbanization: the concern is with the characteristics and the effects on human beings of an increasingly "artificial", i.e., man-made environment, represented primarily by an urban, media-oriented "symbolic" world.

There are other effects which also directly concern the scientific enterprise and the presentation of its findings. We introduce new time-scales of slow-motion and ultra-rapid: we change the spatial scale by picturing the infinitely small and the outer reaches of cosmic space. Thus, the changes in the information environment effect the images, the symbol systems which sustain all cultures and our images of the world. Through the new communications and information systems we are dealing with our knowledge of the world, with the signals and messages which change us as well as with those through which we act upon the environment.

1. Transformation and transfer of knowledge: traditional knowledge and
    new information

    In this cluster priority has been given to these activities which
concern the exploration of the introduction of new information and new
means of communication in traditional settings, particularly at the local
level, and of new methods for the use, sharing and communication of
traditional knowledge.

(i) Transfer of scientific knowledge for self-management at the local level

    In recent years work is being done to renew, to invent and to experiment
with techniques, methods and even concepts which are intended to facilitate
the survival of those most in need, to assist people and communities to
cope with the problems of self-help and to build up an autonomous capacity
for change and innovation. A number of UNU projects include this concern
(e.g. the "Japanese experience", sharing traditional technology, rural energy
systems). The result of these efforts by organizations and research
institutions at both the national and international level is a stock of
knowledge which is important and useful - provided it is communicated
efficiently to those who should be the users and beneficiaries of this
information. The question of how to communicate such knowledge is
therefore crucial, particularly with regard to the most disfavoured
groups in society: those with low levels of education, and with no or
very limited access to means of communication and sources of information.

    This project therefore focusses on the knowledge transfer of
ordinary people who are supposed to apply the methods, techniques, even
behaviour patterns elaborated by scientists and researchers and by the
concerned national and international organizations. The popularization
of such knowledge that can assist communities and individuals in the
social learning process leading to a capacity to manage change could also
be described as education for understanding and self-help or as elementary
courses of practical science.

    In one perspective, the problem is one of language. Usually, the
scientific language is too esoteric for the layman. How then can useful
knowledge be transposed into a form clear enough for all to understand?
Which are the appropriate methods to disseminate such knowledge to those
for whom it would be useful? And how can such dissemination be achieved
in a manner that is both efficient and inexpensive?

    In order to start with a focussed and manageable approach the project
will build on the experience gained through the pilot projects which were
initiated and implemented by the French architect, city planner and
communication expert Professor Yona Friedman. The method to be used is
a combination of drawings and texts in the form of simple prototype "manuals"
which can be adapted at the local level and to various media. Thus, the
dissemination can take place in various forms: in book format, as "wall
journals" or in audio-visual form. The content of these manuals is to be
selected in relation to on-going UNU projects, in co-operation with ICSU
and its member associations, in particular COSTED, and with concerned
international organizations some of which have already expressed interest

(a) Village self-expression and information transfer

A variety of activities in this field are undertaken or supported by international and national organizations. an interesting example is provided by an ESCAP supported project: village women in Thailand and South Korea who have themselves started quality-of-life-enhancing and income-generating activities have been encouraged, so far in a limited manner, to travel to other villages so as to share with other women their experiences, successes and difficulties in organizing and carrying out these activities. Other examples include the use of traditional performing arts (e.g. Wayang plays) for the dissemination of information and knowledge at the village level. Recently, the ITU has shown an increasing concern for rural tele-communications: in this area there are new opportunities for low-cost, locally operated and sometimes even locally manufactured system providing communication within and between villages and small communities.

The intention is first to undertake exploratory and evaluative studies of a selected number of relevant activities to ascertain their effectiveness and value to participants and the possibility of extending such networks and exploring other dimensions of village-to-village and transfer of locally originated and oriented information.

(b) Village video networks

In the exploration of how different communication modes and technologies can be used to help villagers to express and exchange information and to communicate with the authorities, one of the early projects concerns the use by villagers of simple, easily operated and maintained light-weight video equipment to record by themselves their experiences for use by other villagers and by planners. The use of this technology in the village network mode will also be related to other activities undertaken by the UNU so that the results of projects such as those on rural energy, nutrition and primary health care, social and human development can be disseminated among those directly concerned. In 1982, the exploratory phase was built on experimental activities already undertaken by the UNU and other organizations and comprised collection and analysis of information on current activities in various countries and the organization of a workshop/task force, in Bamako, Mali. (October, 1982).

The workshop included participants from countries such as Egypt, Jamaica, China, Zimbabwe, India, Nigeria, Guyana, Indonesia where light weight video equipment has already been used or is being introduced for village level and development purposes in such areas as health and family planning, rural biogas energy systems, literacy campaigns and promotion of women, etc. The workshop agreed on a preliminary programme for i) extension of local activities and ii) the first phase of a loosely organized transnational network of village and local development video groups. Consultations and discussions are under way to consider appropriate organization and activities as well as future UNU involvement.

In general, there has been a favourable, even enthusiastic response
to the idea of this Archive. Preliminary contents often have been taken
with some relevant institutions and a consultant (Dr. Umar Kayam, Yogyakarta)
will work specifically on this proposal. In keeping with the concept of
a decentralized institution, it is foreseen to undertake in relation to
the project on Transfer of scientific knowledge for self-management at the
local level, exploratory activities to experiment with new forms of exhibit-
ing and demonstrating traditional, simple technologies.

order" in various international organizations, the need to maintain the defense of human rights, or the perceived risks of new and serious international controversies over the regulation of transborder data flows. Likewise, perceptions concerning developments in microelectronics and new generation computers range from forecasts of a total reorganization of industrial structures to fears of widespread unemployment or of new forms of technological dependence.

The analysis of the impact of the developments which are subsumed under such expressions as the "information society", the "communication revolution" or the "global village" suffers from conceptual disorder. The effect of this confusion is reflected in the difficulties experienced at the national level in drawing up an adequate research agenda, in policy-making and planning, and in the negative, sometimes dangerously divisive international debate. Much analysis and research only concerns special sectors or interests, and policy is more often than not based on hasty reactions to uncontainable technological or social pressures. Often countries suffer from a lack of social preparedness with regard to issues which arise at the international level; this has particularly serious effects for developing societies.

The proposed activities therefore concern analysis and research both at the national and international level, with due regard to the different but equally critical situations of industrialized and developing countries.

Attitudes to the emerging information society range from wholehearted acceptance of a perceived shift to a service and information oriented economy to fears of major dislocations in employment, unacceptable high levels of new social vulnerability and the creation of new patterns of dominance between highly industrialized and developing countries. There are in this field apparently inextricable linkages between national and international policies - and politics - the risk for new divisive confrontations are already appearing in such areas as transborder data flows. In order to counteract such risks, there is a need to describe, analyze and compare the different concepts of current developments and the major issues as perceived by institutions and groups in various countries. In a preliminary analysis, a number of countries have been identified where such studies might be under-taken, in terms of their importance in the communications/information field and of interesting work already having been undertaken. Also, consultations and contacts are under way to identify research institutions in these countries that would be interested and capable of undertaking work according to an internationally agreed agenda and methodology. Preliminary contacts in some countries have been encouraging and once sufficient support has been enlisted a task force will be convened to decide on the organization of work.

At the international level, the current debates clearly reflect the difficulties of achieving even conceptual consensus at the national level. In addition, each culture and ideology brings its own bias - as each profession, discipline and social sector brings its specialized preoccupation, outlook and terminology. The emergence of the information age has also created a major new issue area in international relations and politics: conflicts

trend towards a larger concept of literacy. Traditional "literacy" in the sense of the ability to read spatial forms, to interpret features of the natural and social environment is now complemented by the expressed need for new modern forms of literacy: visual and audio-visual literacy, computer literacy or over-all media literacy, as well as the reading of what in a print-oriented culture has been called "the silent language" (Hall). The reasons for these new concerns are to be found in the recognition of the changing information environment and the risk for socially disruptive new forms of "illiteracy" particularly in a culturally more interpenetrated world.

These issues are closely linked to another set of problems centred on the effects of the increasing speed of information transmission. Modern communications are abolishing the cushion of time and space which formerly separated countries and cultures. Thus learning and decision-making processes are contracted to the point where action and reaction become almost inseparable: the impact on such UNU concerns as conflict resolution has yet to be adequately studied. There are other related questions: what are the effects of "television diplomacy" which raises new problems of political management; what is the significance of banks, commodity merchants and currency sharks being able to circumvent national finance authorities (ministries of finance, central banks) through high-speed data networks?

It is often said that the telecommunications network functions as the nervous system of society or that the computer represents an extension of the human mind. If these images are valid, one would not be too off the mark by stating that in both cases we seem to be faced with serious malfunctioning. In addition to the present unequal distribution of technology, two issues that might appear contradictory are raises which will provide the basis for the first activity in this subject area: information overload, saturation or pollution; on the other hand the difficulty of access to timely and relevant inforamtion in a form which is user and need oriented.

Thus, the increase in the volume of information produced and distributed, in the speed of transmission and in the variety of modes for the handling of information has created new opportunities but has also sharpened old problems and given rise to new ones.

Following discussions with the General Information Programme, UNESCO, it is planned to undertake co-operative activities in this area under the heading: Information overload and information underuse. A preliminary identification of issues to be addressed include the concurrent difficulties in dealing with an oversupply of information, the low use or even refusal to use information and the provision of and access to relevant user and need oriented information. Included will also be the study of information gaps within and between societies, and obstacles to the flow and use of information, as well as the biologically and socially determined conditions for and limits to human information handling and learning capacity. A joint workshop/task force will be organized in 1983 (probably in September) which will comprise experts from such fields as information systems and networking, computer science, learning and education, neurophysiology and applied psychology, cognitive studies and communications research.

Pending further consultation on the conceptualization and formulation of possible projects in this area, available expertise will be included in the project exploration in co-operation with UNESCO mentioned under the previous heading.

From a different perspective, directly related to projects in the other Divisions of the University on security, vulnerability and violence, a study will be undertaken on the portrayal and transmission of images of violence and non-violence in relation to comparative studies on violence at the community level.

(iv) From the economics of information to the information economy

"One should hardly have to tell academicians that information is a valuable resource: knowledge is power. And yet it occupies a slum dwelling in the town of economics." (G. J. Stigler) This statement dates back to 1961 and to a large extent is still true. What in fact do we know about the costs of different communications services to society and to the individuals? Very little it seems. What we know quite well are isolated facts such as the cost of broadcast network, of a film production or a computer. And if we turn the question around, we seem totally ignorant: what is the cost of not having information? What are the global costs of, say, farmers in a given country not possessing information important to them and to the economy?

It is an amazing fact that despite our obsessions with the modern media there are almost no studies on the macro-economic aspects. Nor do we seem to have arrived at generally acceptable concepts concerning the role of communications in economic development processes: is the development of communication a prerequisite for economic development or does it follow? There is thus a need to develop indicators which can be used to measure, in a normalized and systematic fashion, the role of communications/information in economic and social development and the relative economic importance of different communications and information processes.

There is, though, one exception to the neglect of information in economics: the grand new mode in economic analysis which started in 1962 with the publication of Fritz Machlup's study on "The production and distribution of knowledge in the United States." The object of study in this mode is no more and certainly no less than the aggregated inforamtion activities in society. The results of this appraoch seemed staggering: according to one evaluation, all the activities that are subsumed under this broad definition have already grown to the point of being the third largest in the world economy and represent almost 50% of the labour force and of GNP in certain industrialized countries.

Studies using the same approach have been made in other high-technology societies and, perhaps not unexpectedly, the results are to a large extent similar. In the last few years more sophisticated approaches point to a correlation between the size of the information sector and such generally unexplained phenomena as stagflation. In another approach, the OECD has tried to measure the inforamtion sector and analyze the macro-economic implications in relation to: productivity and economic growth, demand, employment and the structure of the industrial sector.

(v)   Computer developments: micro-electronics, fifth generation computers.
        robots

        The unexpectedly rapid developments in this field offer great
opportunities, present a series of complex challenges and have also raised
expectations to the level of an almost reckless euphoria. Analysts seem
to agree though that changes in micro-electronics have been so rapid and
result in such significant cost reductions and performance improvements
that they are bound to have great impact on society to the extent that
they become widely diffused and adopted. While changes in the hardware
technology are dynamic, it is generally recognized that software constitutes
one of the major bottlenecks.for wide acceptance.

        It seems generally agreed that the critical issues in micro-electronics
are not technical but economic, social and political. This area is of
particular importance to developing countries which have to weigh the
undeniable advantages of micro-electronics with new implications: in the
present situation decentralized patterns of use are combined with highly
concentrated patterns of production which might imply new patterns of
dependence.

        Attention should also be given to the application of sophisticated
technology to mass-produced, low-cost items that can meet the needs of
rural people. These should preferably be capable of local assembly, using
available materials, of use in combination with already available items
(for example, a cheap cassette voice playback module for educational
purposes).

        In such countries as Japan, USA as well as within the EEC plans are
now being discussed for the development of so-called fifth-generation
computers which are expected to further automate work in factories, and
offices and to provide ways of processing information, using techniques of
"artificial intelligence." Major areas of concern are the needs for highly
trained specialists, the effects on employment and socio-economic dislocation.
Similarly, the relations between a few technologically advanced countries
and all others, in particular developing countries, will be affected.

        The selection of feasible and useful projects in this area is not
easy and requires further consideration and consultation. One possibility
might be to focus on a user-oriented, social policy assessment activity
under the aegis of the UNU.

(vi)   Appropriate software development

        The crucial and most challenging aspect in the use of computerized
information systems is the development of and access to appropriate software.
Major computer companies sell total packages of hardware and software which
are often not based on specific user requirements and in particular not on
the special needs of developing countries.

        As a first concrete activity, the Global Learning Division will, in
co-operation with the Institutional Planning and Resource Development Division,
support training courses in the analysis and development of appropriate
software for instructors from developing countries at the International Centre
for Theoretical Physics at Trieste. Explorations are under way concerning
further co-operation with the Trieste Centre.

have been linked to a specific technology or level of technology. Relevant legal rules are often inadequate when faced with a rapidly changing technology. The legal framework antedates such processes as outer space activities or the "communications revolution." The adaptation to changing circumstances is mainly patchwork. The often piecemeal approach has resulted in the adoption of legal rules that cover limited, almost arbitrarily, selected aspects, that often are in the interest of particular institutions or social groups or represent hasty responses to technological and social pressures.

The lack of consistency and coherence in legal concepts and applicable provisions is also conditioned by another set of historical circumstances. Important branches of functional international law such as telecommunications regulation and copyright, were first developed in the mid-1800's while others are based on more modern legal approaches. In the early areas of international functional law, the original concepts and rules were formulated by a limited number of mainly European countries; more recent applicable branches of law such as space law have developed in a wider international context.

Also, a closer analysis of issues and positions that are discussed purely in political terms reveals the impact of basic - often implicit - assumptions in different legal traditions. An analysis of these assumptions would greatly assist in clarifying complex and controversial issues.

However, traditional international law has developed mainly on the basis of the Western legal tradition. The development of international law will in the future have to be conditioned not only by differences in socio-economic systems and policy objectives but also by consideration of a plurality of legal traditions (Islamic, Hindu, Chinese, African law). The main challenge to traditionally conceived international law is the need to go beyond a mere amalgamation or combination of approaches drawn from different legal systems. The need is for the development of legal regimes designed to serve global purposes and needs.

Projects in this area will in the first instance be related to activities under the Sub-programme on Peace and Global Transformation. Two projects are foreseen:

a) A study of conflict resolution in relation to shared, physical resources as in the case of the mountain region shared by countries of the Indian sub-continent (river resources); this study will be conducted within the Regional and Global Studies Division.

b) A study of potential conflict, conflict resolution mechanisms and international law in a new resource area falling under the concept of global commons; an expert scholar has been identified who will prepare a project proposal for activities in the period 1983-85.

(ii) The management of complexity: emerging models and approaches

The concept of the "management of complexity" was mentioned earlier, as were some current sources of this concept. In keeping with basic, underlying concern of the University with the management of increasing complexity and

Thus, science in ferment, at levels of discourse which concern the basic perceptions of and about scientific enterprise. Questions are raised that concern all disciplines, that require the contributions from all cultures. The UNU seems uniquely placed for such work. A continuing and continuous reflection in a world-wide and multi-disciplinary perspective on the most basic and the most far-out questions of science requires the courage and imagination to map unknown territory. Possible activities in this area require further exploration and consultation before definite projects can be formulated.

1. **UNU Outreach**

(i) Dissemination of UNU generated information

International organizations and academic institutions tend to emphasize the production of knowledge and information while the distribution and dissemination aspect is often given short shrift. In many cases useful information only reaches the end user for whom it was intended in a diluted or inappropriate form, or not al all. This shortcoming is generally caused by a faulty understanding of the communication process and the role of information sharing which are regarded as accessory phenomena and not as an integral part of the over-all knowledge process.

In the University, one method to fulfill the mandates of the Charter and to improve the dissemination process is to consider the dissemination, thus the communication and information aspects already at the planning stage of any new project. Such planning could also assist in providing a sharper focus on the potential beneficiaries of a project, or the audience for which knowledge is intended and on the selection of methods and techniques for dissemination in relation to subject matter and audiences.

Thus, the Global Learning Division will provide advice and, if required, assistance for the planning and implementation of the dissemination aspect of projects undertaken by the University.

In addition to publications, the feasibility of using new methods for the distribution of information on UNU activities will be explored. Such new methods will include sound and video tapes or cassettes, insertion of information on teletext and videotex systems, computer conferencing, partication in established or emerging specialized information systems, and others.

(ii) Extension of network activities

The extension of network activities will necessarily take many different forms, and involve all Divisions and units of the University. One such activity concerns the development of the ASSET network and is described in the report of the Development Studies Division, as is the Food and Nutrition Bulletin project.

In connection with selected projects and network activities, inter-divisional discussions have begun to explore means of extending networks, and of studying in co-operation with the Regional and Global Studies Division, the communication system composed of the world academic and scientific community with a view to supplementing the communication system of the UNU networks.

The Global Learning Division has begun to establish new networks in connection with its various activities, including institutions, scholars and experts previously not connected with the University. These efforts will continue as an integral part of the Division's activities. A number of the activities that are being explored under the two Sub-programmes of

2. New modes for sharing knowledge

The global learning process as conceived in the UNU Medium Term Perspective is based on several considerations: conventional systems of learning can no longer absorb the range of knowledge available, disseminate it in the usual educational time-span or respond adequately to the demands for equitable and widespread access to knowledge and information and to the learning needs caused by the rapid outdating of knowledge. New modes of learning and of sharing knowledge are therefore needed, at all levels of society, using a wide gamut of approaches and techniques.

In developing new modes of learning and knowledge-sharing, all applicable methods and means of communication and information transfer should be considered, from basic inter-personal modes of communication, via traditional forms of expression to the most advanced technologies available. It is also necessary to go beyond the conventional categorization and compartimentalization of relevant activities so as to draw upon all the resources represented by communications, information, education and the arts. The failure of traditional systems of learning - and of international organizations to respond effectively to the current needs of knowledge dissemination partly depends on failure to consider which communication channels people actually use and how they use them. Thus, the academics often neglect "low" forms of communication which made them disregard such phenomena as the role of sound cassettes in the Iranian revolution or the use of popular music as a means of communication among young people all over the world, and as a means to create a feeling of belonging to certain groups and determine the values of those groups.

For activities in this area, it is essential for the University to define more clearly both intended audiences and the methodologies to be used in relation to defined audiences. Equally important is the need to distill basic ideas from the knowledge and information generated by the UNU and present them in a manner appropriate to and in different cultures. At this stage, the focus is on a few selected concrete activities which will be supplemented by the exploration of other approaches.

(i) UNU Annual Lecture Series

Of the various proposals submitted to the Council in June, the choice has been made to proceed with the planning of an Annual UNU Lecture Series. As stated, it is planned that such a series would be based on a five year programme, the subjects for each year being related to one of the five themes of the Medium Term Perspective. The lectures would be organized in different countries and one suggestion is for a UNU lecture per month in these various locations. Assuming a normal lecture text of approximately 25-30 pages, twelve lectures a year would give a substantial publishable volume in print. However, publication should also take place in other forms such as sound cassettes in the first instance.

The plan for this Lecture Series will be drawn up following further consultations within the UNU - both centre and networks.

(iii) Advanced Seminar on Global Problems

In the Medium Term Perspective an activity is noted under the title Advanced seminar on global problems. Following consultations within the University and with outside experts, a planning meeting will take place immediately after the current Council session.

To date the following objectives have been suggested in exploring and planning the proposed Advanced Seminar which is primarily intended to prepare mid-career leaders for effective participation in national and international decision-making:

1. To contribute to UNU's efforts to enhance knowledge and awareness of the multiple dimensions and complex interrelationships of global problems at various socio-political levels and their uneven impact upon regions and peoples, and of various approaches to the solution of those problems.

2. To examine selected studies on global and national problems proposing concerted decisions and actions in response to those problems, and seeking ways of mobilizing the needed governmental and popular support, nationally and globally.

3. To contribute to the UNU's efforts to integrate its research and dissemination of knowledge on pressing global problems and their regional, national, sub-national, and longer-term dimensions, including studies on leadership roles, leadership training, education and service.

4. To help examine the policy and other practical applications of the results of UNU research and related knowledge to policy-making at national, regional and global levels.

5. To help in UNU's collaboration with variuos research and training institutions concerned with.regional and global aspects of development and public policy in addition to their national and local dimensions, with a view to securing their co-operation in developing training methodologies and materials, and dissemination of knowledge of global problems to a wider public in various parts of the world.

A major task of this planning meeting is to determine feasible objectives that should guide the development and conduct of the Advanced Seminar.

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Notes

The document discusses knowledge, learning and information sharing as facets of a process, comprising the production of knowledge, its evaluation, dissemination and application.
With related correspondence transmitting the document to RRN Tuluhungwa, UNICEF Hq, requesting his response.

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