

THE STRUCTURE OF THE I.U.B.E.

[Mike Awua-Asamoia](#)

Director, Deputy Secretary General
WFUNA Africa Regional Office
Ghana

The destruction and pollution of the bio-environment constitute a great threat to the survival of the human race and also to a great number of the animal species. Whereas this threat is grave in the context of the Third World, the environmental crisis facing Africa is catastrophic. Many African countries are caught within a network of contradictions faced with the realities of their abject underdevelopment. On the one hand there are people condemned to experiences of disease and squalor who need development. On the other are the leaders and governments of such people, who, determined to improve the lot of their deprived constituents, face a lucrative yet dangerous option to development. Essentially, many are made to accept foreign funds in order to allow the destruction of the African environment through the acceptance on African soils of nuclear and other toxic wastes.

Furthermore, others do not see anything wrong with the outright cutting down of the African rainforests in the name of "timber exports abroad for scarce foreign exchange." Unfortunately, these are slowly yet surely depleting and destroying the African environment. Indeed, other areas of unpardonable violation and degradation of the environment are assuming such a serious dimension in Africa that a close analysis of the situation is necessary.

In essence, it is from the above perspectives, therefore, that I welcome the initiatives of our Bios meeting, its `ab initio'. I wish to suggest the following for inclusion in the curriculum of the proposed International University for the Bio-Environment (I.U.B.E.).

- A. Environmental degradation and depreciation, with an emphasis on activities of timber and lumber companies
- B. Inadvertent destruction of the environment
 - 1. traditional slash and burn farming practices
 - 2. bushfires
 - 3. wood for charcoal
 - 4. construction effect of earth moving machines on tropical rainforests
- C. Trade in toxic substances and toxic waste disposal in Africa:
 - 1. lack of resources to deal with toxic waste
 - 2. lack of technical skills in toxic waste management
- D. Environment resources management
 - 1. tree planting programmes
 - 2. bushfires fighting squads
 - 3. good drainage and sewage system
 - 4. better urban planning

On the issue of the structure of the I.U.B.E., I would suggest that at least a permanent site should be selected with a vice-Chancellor or Rector, as the case may be. With limited resources, one could use the United Nations University Structure as a model at the initial stages and later perhaps, move forward from there. In this way, students could enroll with the I.U.B.E. from their various locations throughout the world and contribute their thesis and research findings to I.U.B.E. publications. Generally, it is expected that heads of the various faculties would be experienced environmentalists with the appropriate qualifications.

Mike Awua-Asamoia, Secretary-General of the UN Association of Ghana is currently with the School of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, England, researching into questions of "Peace Perspectives in Africa", a work to be published. Since early 1990, he has been directing the African Peace Research Institute in Lagos, Nigeria, and was selected by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament and Research (UNDIR) as researcher and participant in the Conference of African Peace Researchers and Institutes on African Position on Disarmament, held in Algiers in March, 1990.

