

THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FOR THE BIO-ENVIRONMENT-GOALS AND PRIORITIES

[Dr. Liduvina R. Senora](#)

Executive Secretary
UNA Philippines
Philippines

As the Biopolitics International Organization enters its fifth year of operation in promoting international cooperation for better understanding of bios and providing a unifying force to protect all forms of life as well as a harmonious future legacy for humanity, we have come to realize that the world is truly becoming one global community, with common goals and global interests and problems concerning bios. Consequently, these issues must be addressed as international problems which cannot be solved in an independent isolated fashion, but must be approached from a cooperative effort through a wider, unified perspective, as they are problems of all living things.

Significantly, according to Dr. Agni Vlavianos-Arvanitis, founding President of the Biopolitics International Organization: "Because of the increasing dangers and signals of alarm for the extinction of plant and animal life universally, we need to think for the survival of many species for a brighter future of the generation to come and bridge the gap between technological progress and societal values."

It is in this context that the Biopolitics International Organization has launched the establishment of an International University for the Bio-Environment (I.U.B.E.) with the end-in-view to preserving the bio-environment. Transparently, the Biopolitics International Organization is one of the credible organizations in the world working very hard for the prevention of the degradation of our planet and serves as an ideal pathway to improving the balance of the ecosystem and the quality of life of humankind.

State of the global environment: a situational analysis

The world is divided into various states and nations and most of its environmental problems are caused by patterns within the fabric of national, political, economic and social life. Today carbon dioxide released in one nation can change the climate of another nation; chemicals released into the atmosphere or into the water systems can damage both human health and economic development across borders. These dangers make nations dependent upon one another for environmental security and survival.

Human modification of the environment has occurred for millennia. A new fact of profound importance is that these modifications are now beginning to have significant consequences on a global scale. Problems created by human beings upon the environment for centuries have frequently been pushed off to another place either downward, downstream, over the fence, or across the border. Responsibility has also been pushed to a later date in time on the shoulders of the succeeding generation.

With the emergence of worldwide environmental problems that are virtually related to the geosphere and the biosphere it no longer makes practical or moral sense to wait before attempting to begin prudent response. Changes of the Earth's atmosphere cannot be displaced, and according to research findings are occurring at an unprecedented rate by pollutants caused by human activities, inefficient and wasteful fossil fuel use, and the rapid population growth in many regions. These changes definitely represent a major threat to universal safety and are having evident consequences over many parts of the world.

Greenhouse gases, ozone layer depletion, and widespread acidification are but three of the more prominent global changes that are now occurring. Their proximate causes are intimately interlinked with the process of desertification, deforestation, industrial development and the use of fossil fuels. Fundamentally, these processes in turn are linked to world trade, world debt, the arms race, as well as the global macroeconomic situation. Conversely, these are linked to issues of equity between peoples and nations of the present as well as future generations, and to the potential of science and technology to change the pattern of industrial development. Therefore, the problem of equity between peoples and nations now and in the future can no longer be safely avoided. This situation creates a serious danger not only to the environment but also to the universal security of humankind.

Realistically, most political leaders and commentators have focused on and emphatically criticized the effects of degradation rather than the causes. They have seemingly stressed the areas of forest loss, rates of species extraction, levels of pollution in air and water, but have forgotten and overlooked the reasons behind the symptoms of management. To the extent that people are admittedly the causes of these problems, people must also be the solution. In this connection, preventive measures should be emphasized and implemented, prevention is getting at the roots of the real problem.

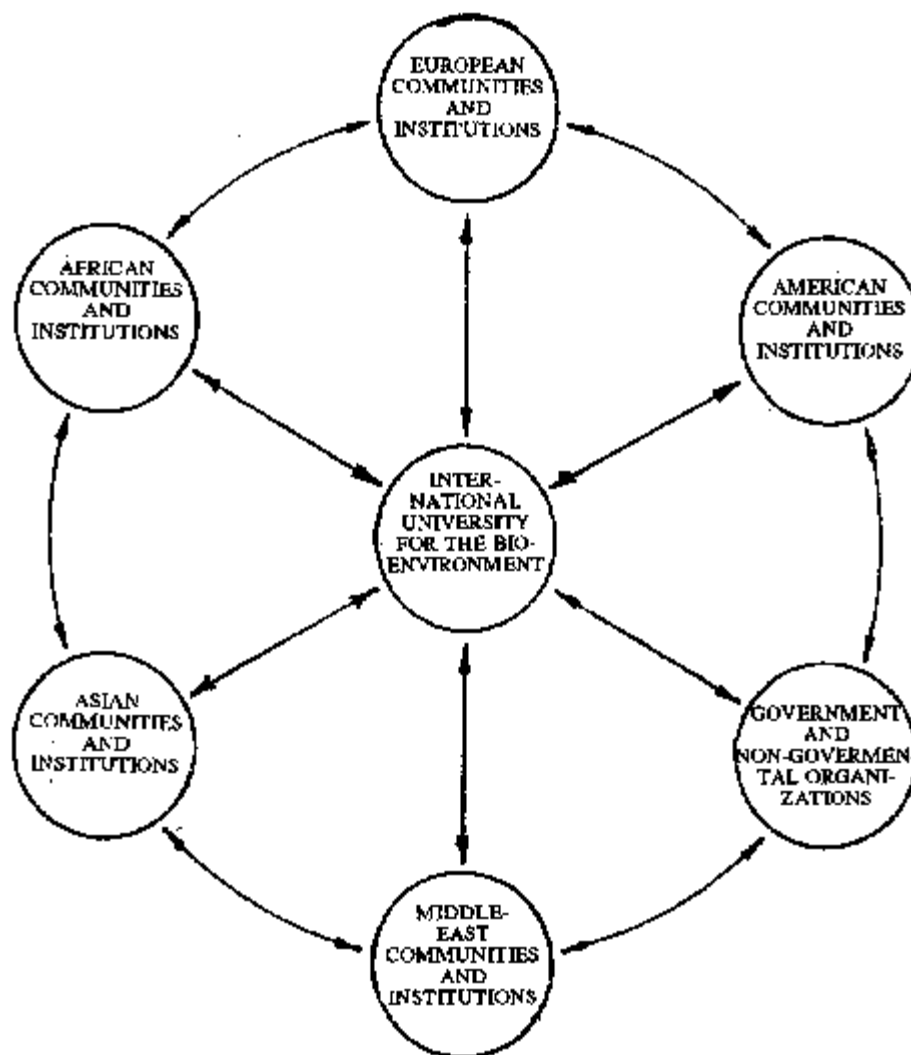


Figure 1: A conceptual framework of the structural organisation of the proposed International University for the Bio-Environment. The Flow Chart indicates the coordinative function of the I.U.B.E. in all levels among nations, governments and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the Global Community with no intervening variables to impede the free flow of communication and information to attain the mission and goals of the University.

Creation of the I.U.B.E.: a universal educating and monitoring system

The rationale for launching an International University for the Bio-Environment with a flexible structure and a new vision is postulated to allow for gradual changes in the attitudes of peoples throughout the world by creating an awareness of existing threats and raising the respect and understanding of bios. It is grounded in the belief that international education is an urgent prerequisite in order to achieve the challenge of safeguarding the bio-environment in the next millennium.

It is apparent that humankind is faced with a new environmental dilemma. All nations and all peoples share in the responsibility of this crucial problem. Solutions to such a problem require scientific management which calls for collective international action. To resolve these problems, offer answers and implement positive changes requires the involvement of the world community. Certainly, the I.U.B.E. is one of the answers to this grave responsibility. The common welfare and moral solidarity of all living species are at stake. In order to succeed, it is only reasonable and logical that those best able to bear the cost should be prepared to help those least able.

As an Asian belonging to a developing nation, permit me to present some personal, open-ended views as "food for thought", which may be enriched with viable ideas on the creation of the I.U.B.E. institution as a universal monitoring and implementing educational system.

How will the I.U.B.E. establish its organizational structure? The creation of a Governing Board (G.B.) headed by a President and composed of distinguished scholars representing the geographical regions of the world is highly recommended. The G.B. shall be responsible for the direction, administration, programming and coordination of the I.U.B.E. including the formulation of its principles and policies. The President may be assisted by a vice-President or an Administrative Officer to help in its efficiency and effective functioning. For its technical modalities, consultants coming from the United Nations system, such as the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), Food Agricultural

Organization (FAO), UN Center for Human Settlements (Habitat), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Council on International Law (ICEL), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), Man and Biosphere Programme of UNESCO, UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), World Health Organization (WHO), World Fund for Nature (WFN), and other Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) at the local, regional, and international levels are urgently needed to help in the coordinating, monitoring and programming in areas of mutual interests and concerns.

Where shall the campus be located? Will it collaborate with international associated institutions and centres for its worldwide networking, or will it be totally independent by itself? The I.U.B.E. may function through central headquarters which may act as the coordinating body with a network of research programmes and projects located in developed and developing nations. In achieving its priorities, the proposed I.U.B.E. may be staffed by an international community of scholars who will be engaged in multi- and inter-disciplinary research components devoted exclusively to the improvement and preservation of bios. It should also be responsible for the worldwide dissemination and implementation of findings in the furtherance of the goals and philosophies behind its creation.

What courses of degrees shall it offer? Will it grant formal degrees for regular students or will it offer scholarships and/or fellowships as well? Short-term, in-service training programmes as continuing education in the form of seminars, workshops, and conferences may be some of the meaningful and relevant strategies used to update graduate and post-graduate managers, specialists, scientists, scholars and researchers who may, in turn, diffuse ideas acquired in their respective communities.

Who shall be the target clientele? Will teachers in the elementary, secondary, tertiary and continuing education personnel be involved? If international commitment is to be attained by the Biopolitics International Organization, perhaps it is imperative that the expanding environment theory of concepts should start at the pre-school level, gradually spiraling to the elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels, notwithstanding the out-of-school youth who may be the beneficiary of the non-formal education content. A university charter as a guideline to govern its rules and standards is crucially needed to direct the total I.U.B.E. system as well as to publish the purposes, definitions, organizational structure, functions of the governing board, personnel and recruitment, status and authority, courses and degrees to be offered, programmes and projects, networking and finally finance and budget which is the pulse and heartbeat of the I.U.B.E.

Conclusions and recommendations

It can be safely inferred that the creation of the I.U.B.E. could trigger a powerful force operating at a global level. This could be attained through a collaborative dimension by incorporating the joint efforts of diverse technical, cultural, social, economic, and political viewpoints as well as the experience of specialists from many geographical regions. The crucial issue of the social and environmental degradation caused by the increasing poverty in the world also needs to be identified and studied accompanied by scientific solutions-and be incorporated as part of the implementing measures and responsibilities of the I.U.B.E.

One important action of the I.U.B.E. may be to concentrate on how to perceive and deal with divergent socioeconomic strata of different nations. A relevant area of its programme may be concerned with approaches on ways of integrating global responsibilities and obtaining the participation of governments into action-oriented policies and programmes.

In a similar manner, the I.U.B.E. should be concerned with the recognition on the part of nations' economies and cultures of the world-wide impact of human activities. This may require a greater degree of education and analysis and the adoption of multilateral strategies to improve human welfare and manage humanity's relationship with the earth as one of the basic human rights of all generations.

Finally, a humane and knowledgeable management, in addition to adequate funding for the support of the total budgetary outlay of the I.U.B.E., surely is the key factor to affect the environment at present as well as in the next millennium. This is the legacy of the Biopolitics International Organization.

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Dr. Liduvina R. Senora holds a Ph.D. in educational management and supervision. She is Executive Secretary of the UN Association of the Philippines, president of the National Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Associated Schools in the Philippines, and vice-president of the Asian Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Associations in Tokyo, Japan. She has published several books dealing with education and social studies and has been a member of the Executive Committee of the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs and Associations. In recognition of her efforts for the realisation of world peace, international understanding and co-operation, Dr. Senora has received many national honorary awards.