



PRESS INFORMATION

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INRA

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UNU COUNCIL ESTABLISHES AFRICAN NATURAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE

TOKYO -- The Council of the United Nations University, meeting at its twenty-eighth session at the Tokyo Centre, has decided to establish an Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (INRA) as a research and training centre of the University. The main headquarters of INRA will be in Yamoussoukro, capital of Côte d'Ivoire.

The launching of INRA has been made possible by financial support totalling nearly US\$16 million from the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia and France, the United Nations Development Fund, and the OPEC Fund. Expressing his appreciation for this support, the Rector of the United Nations University, Soedjatmoko, said that the establishment of INRA followed four years of study of the proposed institute by some of the most distinguished scientists in Africa, and extensive consultations by the University with government leaders and national and international organizations and institutions.

"Clearly, the African continent as a whole sets great store on the establishment of this UNU research and training centre, the first it has established in the Third World," the Rector noted. "This was amply demonstrated by the strong endorsement of INRA by the Organization for African Unity at its summit meeting in July 1985. It is seen as an urgently needed response to the stark and tragic disparity between the rich natural resources of the African continent and the general poverty of its people."

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has pledged US\$5 million to the UNU endowment fund for the new African institute and agreed to provide premises for its main centre at the Institut national supérieur de l'enseignement technique at Yamoussoukro, a newly constructed educational complex which includes a range of well-equipped laboratories, workshops, lecture halls and computer facilities.

The Government of Zambia has pledged US\$2 million to the endowment fund for INRA and will provide premises for a mineral resources unit of the institute at the School of Mines of the University of Zambia in Lusaka. The Government of France has pledged 20 million francs

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(approximately US\$3 million) for the establishment and operation of INRA over a period of 3 years. UNDP has agreed to provide project funding of US\$5.6 million over a five-year period. The OPEC Fund has made a grant of US\$175,000 for laboratory equipment at INRA's mineral resources unit in Zambia.

The total financial resources so far committed to INRA thus stand at US\$15,775,000. The Council expressed its profound appreciation for all these offers of support for the institute. It noted, however, that for the long-term success of the new institute, greater financial resources must be mobilized as soon as possible, and it appealed to governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, foundations and other funding sources to contribute to the endeavour.

One of the major objectives of INRA is to strengthen scientific and technological capacities in Africa. INRA will seek to assemble a "critical mass" of researchers and facilities needed to achieve a sustained scientific effort with a continent-wide focus on natural resource problems. In addition to its core academic staff, it will allow scholars from all over Africa, through the mechanism of a college of research associates, to participate in its work without leaving their own countries and thereby creating a brain drain within the continent. The institute will also respond to the pressing need of African countries for highly trained specialists capable of initiating and carrying out advanced research and development in fields such as land use, water-resources management, minerals development and energy resources.

With formal Council approval of the establishment of the new African institute, it is now expected that a Director and members of the Board of INRA will be appointed within the coming year and that the institute should become operational by early 1988.

INRA will be the second UNU research and training centre. The first, the World Institute for Development Economics Research in Helsinki, was established in 1984 with the support of the Government of Finland.

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