



International Conference, 13-14 December, Jakarta, Indonesia

**Corporate Social Responsibility and Combating Malnutrition: Obtaining
Millennium Development Goals in Indonesia**

(Speech at 14.00)

Dear Professor Baswedan, thank you for your kind introduction.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon. Please allow me to express my gratitude to the Conference organizers for their invitation to UNU to address this distinguished Conference on such a pressing issue as the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in combating malnutrition.

Let me emphasize that CSR represents one of the crucial tools to achieve not only the first Millennium Development Goal - eradication of poverty and hunger - but also the other seven.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) embody the dignity and opportunity that all humans deserve and their achievement by the target date of 2015. will require accelerated global action by all actors. The private sector is one such crucial actor, the driver of innovation, investment and job creation. The UN Global Compact,



the world's largest CSR initiative with 8,000 signatories in over 135 countries has undertaken many MDG-related actions and made some significant recent commitments – a multi-million dollar contribution towards education technology solutions, an inclusive business model for financing and training of farmers in Pakistan, a public-private partnership on health and safety practices in African clinics, the commitment by CEOs to advance gender equality in their companies and practices. Ten years after the adoption of the MDGs the results, unfortunately, are still far from satisfactory. There is still a long road to go as to close the remaining gaps and report achievements in 2015.

A month ago at one of our conferences we concluded that business and society are inextricably linked – neither of them can progress in the long-term without the strength of the other. The private sector is increasingly recognizing that investing in impoverished regions and creating jobs can bring people out of malnutrition and in long-term expand the markets. Therefore investing in human capital, in social sectors such as health, nutrition, education promotes economic growth.



I mention in my opening remarks this morning that the solution of the problems of malnutrition will not come from transporting food from rich to poor regions, the solution will be a result of investments, education, jobs, women empowerment.

Many companies around the world take CSR seriously, they engaged in research and development and provide communities in poor regions with access to agricultural innovations and technologies, education, health, clean water, sanitation. But some business people still regard CSR simply as another 'tax', an inevitable 'cost' to pay as to have a 'better image'. This is a wrong perception. Engaging in CSR, contributing to clean environment, improving community infrastructure and human life would increase, not reduce the profits. CSR would bring up educated healthy young people to the job market, employable and skilled to raise future business profits.

CSR is not a charity, although the donations of some wealthy individuals were instrumental in helping addressing particular problems in particular situations, such occasional and non-structured activities are not enough. CSR should become an



inherent corporate culture, an integral way of business life. CSR should not be in the expenses' part of the companies' annual accounts, rather in the investment part in the business plans. CSR is not a philanthropy, it is a long-term profit-making exercise. The primary goal of the corporate world is to maximise profits, the CSR is first of all 'corporate', so, it is a profit making strategy, it creates a clean environment, availability of resources, including human resources - educated workers, and aims to maximize business effectiveness in the future.

The history shows that businesses that deny ethical considerations in the pursuit of profits usually corrupt and fail. On the opposite, conducting business in a societal responsible manner, paying respect to human rights, labor conditions, environment protection usually pays back. CSR has been the winning strategy of many business leaders, who supported sustainable practices and made essential social investment and engagement to raise awareness and help local communities to address development priorities. I mention this morning and would like to re-emphasize the importance to link CSR programmes and official development aid (ODA) programmes. They naturally co-exist and the best way



ahead would be not to compete or duplicate each other, rather to enhance a sustainable synergy between them.

Our Conference today and tomorrow can become a building block of a future foundation - a Global Corporate Alliance against Malnutrition, to inspire and unify the efforts to combat malnutrition, reduce hunger, vitamin and mineral deficiency through further scientific research and practical implementation of innovative agricultural and food technologies.

This morning in my opening remarks I mentioned that the UN University and in particular the Institute for Sustainability and Peace in Tokyo under my leadership is developing research and education projects, related to the MDGs in finding solutions to global problems, such as poverty, hunger, diseases, food security. Let me now list few of our concrete projects, relevant to malnutrition and diseases.

We conducted a study on the effects of birth-related factors on the nutritional status of rural Sundanese in West Java (the second largest ethnic group in Indonesia) at the Department of Human



Ecology, School of International Health, the University of Tokyo, where I served as a Vice President for International Relations and as a coordinator of the whole project. PhD student at that time Makiko Sekiyama and her supervisor at that time Prof. Ryutaro Ohtsuka published the results of the study showing that although the health and demographic indicators have markedly improved during the last few decades, the Sundanese are still characterized by high fertility due to early marriages and short birth intervals. Based on an anthropometric measurement and interview survey of 310 children aged 5–12 years in a Sundanese village, they examined the relative significance of biological effects and health behavioral factors on the children height and weight. Three biological factors - birth interval, birth weight and mother's body weight, and one social-economic factor - mother's occupation, were selected as predictors of the height and weight scores by regression analysis, indicating more significant effects of the biological factors than other factors. The study therefore showed that 5-12 years old children suffer no less than under-5-year-old children from the same village from long-lasting effects of birth-related biological factors. One of the main conclusions was that insufficient nutritional status tends to damage growth and health in



adolescence and adulthood too, not only among children under 5. The study recommended to continue research and monitoring of both social-economic factors such as parents' occupation, household income and biological factors such as birth interval, birth weight, mother's body weight in different age groups.

Another study by the same research group looked at the effect of fasting during Ramadan on the child growth and nutrition in rural West Java. With both parents' consent 88 children between 6 and 14 were recruited for the study, 72 of them completed 29 days of Ramadan fasting and the study showed average decrease of 0.92 kg weight and lower than normal height gain. Children re-gained their weight one week after Ramadan. The study concluded that communal nutritional habits can play a significant role for child growth and child health.

A third project by the University of Tokyo's Integrated Research System for Sustainability Science (IR3S) (I am serving as the Deputy Executive Director) in collaboration with the Faculty of Agriculture, Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia looked at the medicinal plants used by the villagers of the Sundanese



community in West Java, Indonesia and the links between their health and the traditional agriculture

In 2008 I joined UNU and integrated the two previous academic programmes into a joint Institute for Sustainability and Peace (UNU-ISP), encouraging scholars from natural sciences and from social sciences to integrate their research and education activities. The UNU has developed several projects relevant to food and malnutrition: in 2008 one team (Popovski, Aginam) co-organized in Tokyo in collaboration with the PA International a Conference on Food Safety and Food Security and as a result published a policy brief, recommending governments and international organizations to consider further codification and implementation of stringent food safety international standards for all parts of the food production chain.

Another UNU project 'Agro-diversity for Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa' is aimed at providing technical advice to local population, developing innovative agricultural strategies and ensuring holistic outcomes in land management. The project is currently tested and implemented in Ghana. A third project is



looking at the Rural Sustainability in Fragile Ecosystems, focusing on mountainous regions of South East Asia and Eastern Himalaya in partnership with Yunnan University Nationalities Research. I would like to invite all those interested to visit our website WWW.ISP.UNU.EDU and partner with us, if you identify interest for joint research activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by saying that the complexity and magnitude of combating malnutrition demand the private and the public sector, the civil society and the academic community to unify their efforts.

Thank you for your attention!