R. DE MOOR

(Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of Social Studies)

Opening speech of the Conference

We are very appreciative that so many international scholars have accepted our invitation to attend this conference, held to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Institute of Social Studies. To each and every one of you I extend a most cordial welcome.

I should like to refer to the moment, now twenty-five years ago, when the Institute started its programme of development studies. In January of that same year, 1952, the Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation (NUFFIC) was instituted on the recommendation of the Committee de Vries-Woerdeman, set up in 1950 by the Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences, 'to make recommendations on all matters pertaining to the adaptation of scientific education to the needs arising from closer international cooperation.' NUFFIC was a joint creation of the Netherlands' universities and its first task was to establish an international academic institute that would concentrate on the social sciences. This was to be the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), whose first course was opened on October 4, 1952 by Prince Bernhard.

On the tenth anniversary of the Institute in October 1962, the then President of the Board of Trustees, Mr M. de Niet Gerardzoon, recalled the following:

The early organization bore all the marks of being a venture. The first Rectors, Professor Hofstra and the late, deeply mourned, Professor Duyvendak and his deputy Professor Berg, undertook the leadership of the Institute as a sideline to their normal work. The same applied to Professor Vlekke and Dr In 't Veld, who bore the burden of an interim parttime assignment. The teaching staff consisted almost exclusively of visiting professors from the Dutch Universities.

In 1954, after reviewing the results so far attained and on the recommendations of leading foreign experts, a start was made with giving the Institute a limited but adequate permanent staff. Two years later, when the Institute's
programme had increased to such an extent that it prevented NUFFIC from carrying out its other important activities, the ISS was established as a separate corporate body. Although, as I have indicated, the Institute’s original charter was a cooperative endeavour by the Dutch Universities, many years were to pass before a really viable relationship evolved.

The Board of Trustees has formed one sort of successful relationship; another has been the joint influence exerted on the selection of course participants; and a third has been created by individual members of university staffs who teach at the ISS.

The Institute’s relationship with the universities, although rather loose and informal, has slowly developed into one in which university and ISS staff members supplement one another when and where necessary. It is our hope that this will continue in the future and even be strengthened, for we have noted with satisfaction that the interest shown by Dutch universities in problems of development cooperation and technical assistance has increased strongly during the last decade.

During the 1950s and ‘sixties the dissolution of colonial systems led to the creation of numerous new nations, many of which had insufficient trained manpower and little more than embryonic universities. Confronted with the challenge to provide training for high-level manpower in a situation in which facilities both in developing and in developed countries were limited and rarely appropriate, the Institute of Social Studies, a pioneer in the field of development studies, acquitted itself of the task by providing a varied range of courses whose alumni are now to be found in most parts of the developing world. Over 2,800 students from 114 countries have attended courses at the ISS and have appreciated its international character. Successive generations of students have found one of the most positive aspects of their stay the fact that they could exchange views about the nature of concrete problems in an extraordinarily wide range of other countries, and exchange these views also with members of the same profession who had come to The Hague from all over the world.

Enough about the past: the Conference now starting has as its title: Development, the next twenty-five years. This is a period of major change in the interpretation of development problems and the perception of priorities. Also, it has become increasingly clear to those engaged in development work and development studies that there is a correlation between the problems of developing countries and those of industrialized nations. This is well understood by the Institute of Social Studies. Its Research Programme, published earlier this year, mentions the question of policies that should be adopted by industrialized countries and their implications for the developing world as a priority area which the ISS intends to study. In January 1977 the ISS organized a special conference on ‘Adjustment Policies’, and a series of Public Lectures on ‘Problems of Overdevelopment’ will soon be held.