

## SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS

Opening Plenary

Saturday, September 11, 1993  
09:55 - 12:45

### International Context: Strategic Alliances and Global Changes

In this session, representatives from Europe and Asia shared their views and experiences. Current European trends in human resource training and education clearly show that new and stronger partnerships between universities, government and business are imperative. Education is now a central element of European integration. Training has always been considered a social investment. However, a new awareness of the interaction between cultural, socio-economic and technical factors is exerting a profound change on university policies and outlook. Moreover, training and retraining the labour force should receive more emphasis since six to seven career changes during a lifetime will soon be the norm. European programs such as COMETT and BRITE help develop alliances between universities and enterprises in recognition of the complementarity of their interests.

The Japanese model of strategic alliances between educational institutions and enterprises was noted. In Japan, the employer undertakes training of new graduates in practical applications of what they learned in college and university. This practice may contribute to lifelong employment in the same organization.

The representatives agreed that increased international cooperation in higher education is essential and that it is a fast growing area. There was also a

consensus related to the importance of partnerships between institutions of higher education and business.

Representatives from the North American Task Force on Higher Education, Research and Training presented their vision of North American developments in the global context. They discussed benefits and impediments to increased interaction among the three North American countries. For example, a recent survey of academic linkages among the three countries (see Summary, Appendix III.iv.) found three major impediments to faculty and student mobility, namely:

- lack of information about academic opportunities, especially in the 'non-elite' institutions;
- problems of credit recognition and transfer; and
- limited financial resources.

In the discussion on strategic alliances, recurrent themes were the financial constraints of governments and the asymmetry of resources among the three nations. It was recognized that to work with the private sector, educational institutions need to adapt existing programs and curricula, and encourage faculty participation and the leveraging of resources.