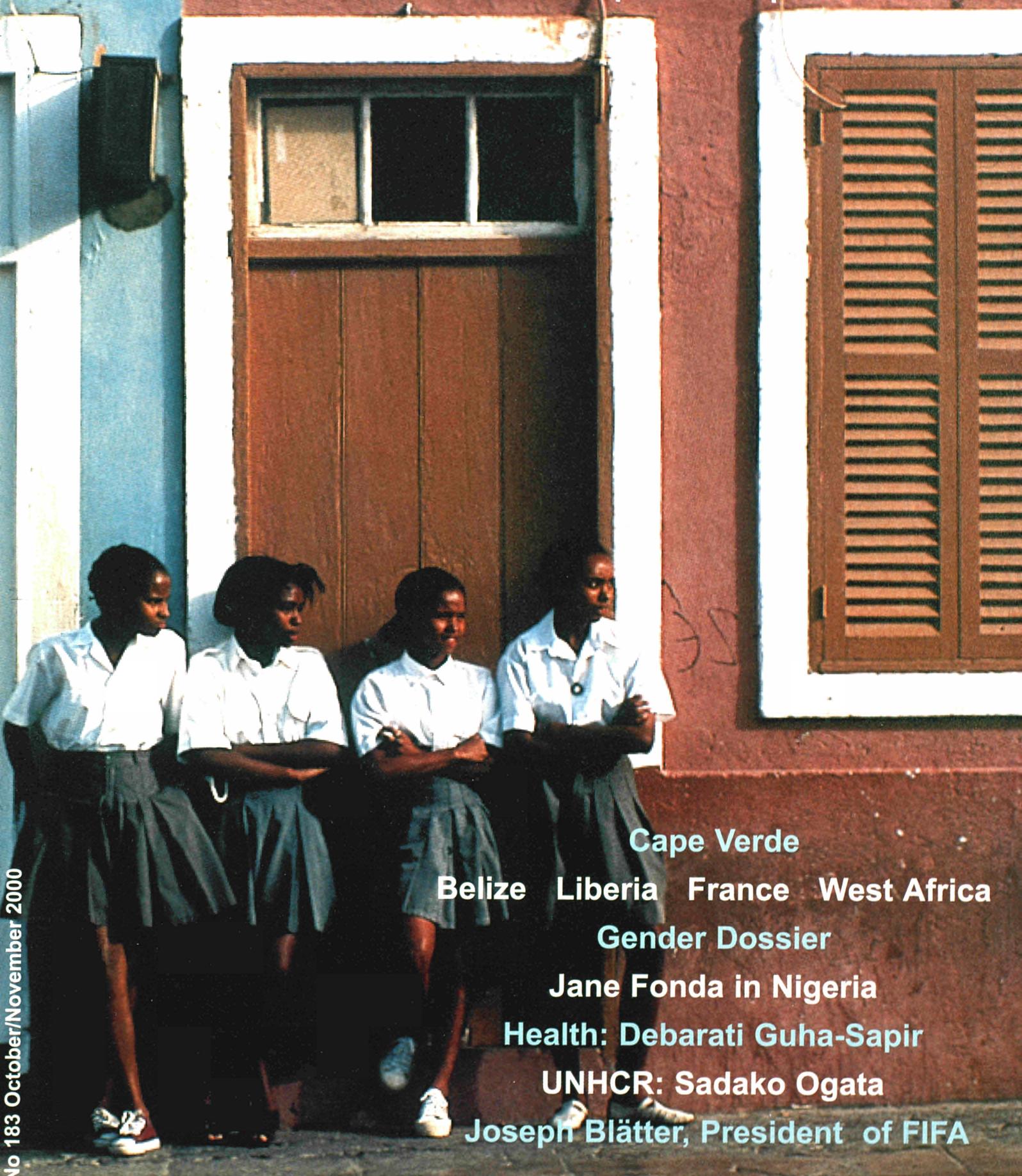


the Courier

the magazine
of ACP-EU development cooperation

No 183 October/November 2000



Cape Verde

Belize Liberia France West Africa

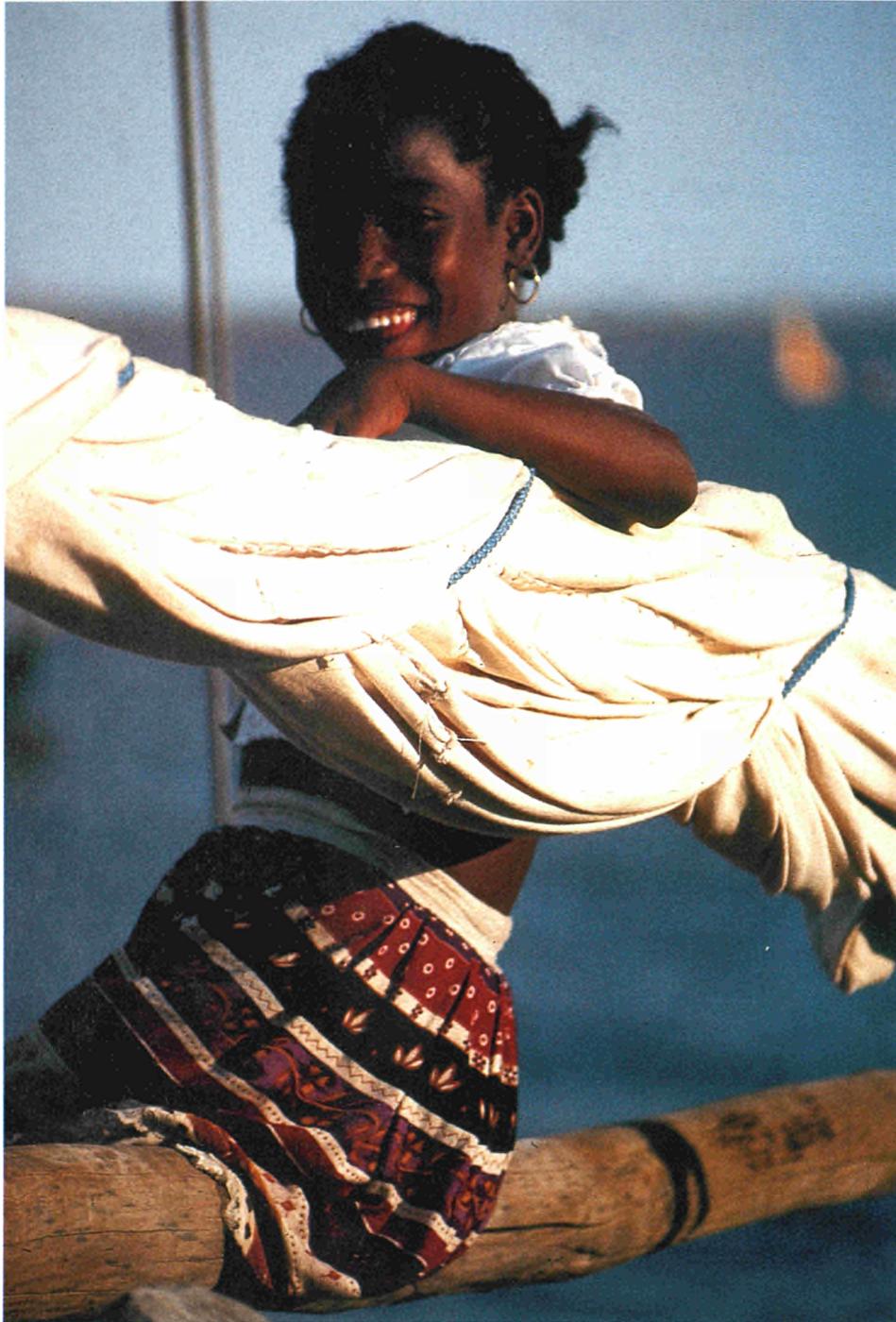
Gender Dossier

Jane Fonda in Nigeria

Health: Debarati Guha-Sapir

UNHCR: Sadako Ogata

Joseph Blatter, President of FIFA



Laurent Duvalier

Gender has a social, economic and cultural dimension which cuts across all areas and sectors of development, and has serious implications for all development activities.

Effective long-term development impact requires the integration of gender issues in Community Development Cooperation. Women's ability to contribute to and benefit from development policy changes and the outcome of projects on

an equal footing with men, are determined not only by their biological sex but also by their roles and their relations with the community.

This depends on culture, traditions, law, prejudices and expectations. In this Dossier we cover general gender issues, and specifically those in Cameroon, Bangladesh, Nigeria and the Pacific...

DG Development Unit A/2

http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/sector/social/gender_en.htm

Postal Address

The ACP-EU Courier
European Commission
200 rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Address for visitors

12 rue de Genève
Evere 1140
Brussels
Belgium

Publisher

Athanassios Theodorakis

Editor/Designer

Sylvia Howe
+ 32.2.295.2631

Managing Editor

Dorothy Morrissey
+ 32.2.296.8330

Journalists

Aya Kasasa
Dorothy Morrissey

Production

Anne Steger
+ 32.2.299 4858

Subscriptions

fax: +32.2.299.3002

Web Page

http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/publicat/courier/index_en.htm

e-mail

name.surname@cec.eu.int or
development@cec.eu.int

Cover

Cape Verde

Credit: Global Pictures/Grandadam

Published in English and French.

Authors are responsible for the content of their articles.

The Courier should be credited if articles are reproduced.

the ACP and Europe

- 2 Jean-Robert Goulongana, ACP General Secretary
- 6 African voices at the Millennium Summit
- 9 France's Development Aid

focus on development

- 13 Mayan temples in Belize
- 17 Liberia's battlescars
- 20 Griots in West Africa carry on singing their praises
- 23 Country Report: **Cape Verde**
 - taking stock ● economy ● education ● cooperation ● decentralisation
 - foreign affairs ● opposition ● women ● music ● profile
- 41 Dossier: **Gender**
 - beauty in the eye of the beholder ● rural development
 - women soldiers in Bangladesh ● male marginalisation
 - transgender in the Pacific ● preferring career to marriage in Cameroon ● Jane Fonda in Nigeria ● microfinance ● Beijing +5
- 75 books on development

face to face with...

- 3 Dr. Debarati Guha-Sapir - public health issues
- 66 Sadako Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees
- 69 Joseph Blätter, President of FIFA
- 71 **news**
- 76 maps of EU and ACP countries

T h e A C P - E U C o u r i e r

is the main publication of the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and the European Union. The EU provides ACP countries with preferential access to EC markets and substantial development assistance (some two to three billion Euros a year). The ACP and EU cooperate at a political level and engage in a continuous political dialogue: in trade, to promote the integration of the ACP countries into the World Economy and in development assistance, with the clear objective to promote sustainable development and the reduction of poverty.



by **Jean-Robert Goulongana**
 Secretary General
 of the ACP Group

We must not trivialise the ACP-EU partnership.

After more than two decades of cooperation and in spite of successive Lomé conventions granting this preferential access, there has been no great increase in ACP produce on the EU market. Most of the ACP countries remain largely dependent on the export of a limited number of staple commodities which are subject to constant fluctuations in market price.

Under these circumstances, ACP countries need to diversify their production bases in order to increase their exports to Europe and to the rest of the world, and to adapt their trading practices so as to keep up with the changing international situation. This is why the Cotonou Agreement makes provision for ACP-EU trade relations to change radically in the years to come.

Painstaking preparation is required if this transformation is to yield the desired results. The right conditions must be created to improve the production, supply and marketing capacities of the ACP countries and to attract new investment. This needs to be done within each country nationally and also at regional level, in order to exploit better the advantages to be gained from the economies of scale which help with market expansion and integration of products on the market.

All these issues require very close analysis. The ACP Group is due to begin preparing for trade negotiations

with the EU in September 2002 and, as part of this preparation, it plans to hold a series of meetings especially to involve the regional integration organisations which are to have an enhanced role in the dynamics of future trade agreements. Equally important will be the meeting of the trade ministers, at which agendas will be set and strategies determined.

During this same period, the ACP Group must strengthen its participation in the activities of the World Trade Organisation, where international trade regulations are drawn up, so that its own interests can be more fully taken into account. In this respect, the Cotonou Agreement's provision for the establishment of a genuine strategic partnership with the European Union will be most beneficial. The opening of an ACP representation in Geneva in the next few months, backed by the EU, is intended to strengthen dialogue, not only amongst the ACP countries but also between them and their European partners. This will be the first step on the long road ahead. The construction of this partnership is an ongoing process, and we must not trivialise it or underestimate its value for both parties.

The Cotonou Agreement, with its bold innovations and extended timescale - a factor that is essential for ambitious projects such as this one - presents sufficient guarantees to allow us to remain optimistic.

Face to face with disease

The darker side of globalisation

by Dianna Rienstra

Dr Debarati Guha-Sapir is a specialist in health systems and operations research, socio-economic correlates and determinants of health, epidemiologic methods, natural disasters and civil conflicts. Here she outlines several serious public health issues that need to be addressed as we embark on the next decade.

Everyone who has met Dr Guha-Sapir is struck by her intensity, compassion and commitment. She is a public health professional and advocate with attitude. Her frank commentary and analysis, makes it easy to share her outrage over injustice.

There are a lot of issues to be outraged about as we look to the next decade. According to Guha-Sapir they must be addressed immediately - such as how the richer countries ignore the poorer ones and what happens to people's health as a result. Or how privatisation has affected public health, how development aid and health care support is not working, how governments and donors hide behind a shield of money without tackling the root causes of disease, the number of children dying from preventable diseases and how mental illness is stigmatised and neglected.

What is particularly outrageous is that, in most instances, the solutions are very simple. What is unconscionable is that there is little or no political will.

The poor world sneezes, the rich catch a cold

"We have globalised everything except the health of populations," she says. "The globalisation of disease is a very real threat that just about everyone is ignoring."

The statistics are chilling. The west ignored tuberculosis as long as it was officially



considered eradicated. Even though reports since the early 1990s from Russian prisons, often compared to death camps, warned of an imminent epidemic and growing incidences of multi-drug resistant TB, the concerns of doctors and humanitarian agencies such as Médecins sans Frontières were disregarded. TB is thriving in New York City and flourishing in Portugal, where 20% of the cases are multi-drug resistant.

Ignoring the threat will not make it go away. Already we are seeing the effects. Perhaps now politicians, policy makers and decision-makers will take notice. Malaria, multidrug resistant tuberculosis and other diseases are finding their way into Europe and North America.

Waking up to the darker side of globalisation

There were 10,000 cases of imported malaria in the UK last year. In August 2000 the Geneva-based World Health Organisation (WHO) issued a warning about "airport malaria". France leads the world with 26 cases since 1970, a few of them fatal, among people who had never visited a malarial country but who lived near airports or worked at them. They were probably bitten by stowaway mosquitoes disembarking from flights



from West Africa. Last year there were 62 cases of the West Nile virus in the New York area; seven proved fatal.

Guha-Sapir is worried about large regions in Africa that are "black holes" in terms of disease surveillance.

"We have no clue about what's going on with new and old diseases or who is contracting them," she says. "With mutations and genetic transformations, who knows what awaits us. The world is too small. We can't afford to ignore diseases. The west is slowly realising that the threats posed by poverty and poor living conditions in developing countries are indeed its business."

In the last two years, 13 new viral diseases have emerged.

Another growing problem ignored by the west is that of spurious drugs. Fake anti-malarials are being produced in Thailand and Vietnam then sold in familiar generic packaging to unsuspecting practitioners in developing nations.

"The irony is that we ignore these problems, but as the incidence of disease in the west is showing us, the chickens are coming home to roost," says Guha-Sapir. "In most cases, this is happening because of lack of regulations and control."

Wake up call privatisation eroding public health

In regions of India where health care has been privatised and liberalised, a study has shown that many people choose to pay for a private

health care provider rather than make the journey to a public clinic or hospital.

This could be because private practitioners are more thinly spread out and save people a half-day's journey - often by foot - to a public facility. Or it could be a result of simple amenities offered at the private facility, such as a receptionist or a bench to sit on.

Whatever the reasons, Guha-Sapir believes public sector health care services must improve and become more competitive. The lack of regulation in countries such as India, Vietnam and Cambodia means there is little control over quality of care or medicines administered.

"Unless privatisation and liberalisation are accompanied by strong regulatory mechanisms, there is going to be a decrease in the health status of the population, guaranteed," she maintains.

Wake up call mental illness a public health issue

Guha-Sapir believes the issue of mental illness, traditionally dealt with through medical intervention by psychiatry and psychiatrists, must be addressed. Mental health is a public health issue, she says, and it is a growing phenomenon in the developing world where it is both stigmatised and neglected. It is particularly destructive when it occurs in women with young children because it can devastate a family.

"We don't know the statistics because they are hidden, but its prevalence is higher than we thought," she says. "This issue must be brought into the public health dimension. Mental illness has to be looked at as a community based problem, not an individual one."

Mental illness is pervasive in areas of conflict, such as Cambodia, where Guha-Sapir witnessed the traumatic reverberations of war. Rwanda, Bosnia, the former Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Chechnya and hundreds of other nations destroyed by conflict are no exception. In many of these countries, children are growing up permanently scarred by their experiences. What kind of society can we expect them to build?

She reminds us that 50% of African nations are either in conflict or are bordering on a conflict area.

Wake up call band-aids don't work

Guha-Sapir believes people tend to throw money at problems - an old, bad habit that should be broken. Health care is problematic because of its complexity, because it involves poverty, malnutrition, ignorance and taboos.

"Whenever there is a complex problem, there is a tendency to hide behind a shield of money," she says. "It's not about money. We need more equitable and well-thought-out international policies. There is a vacuum in both development aid and the health sector."

In the health sector this phenomenon is particularly outrageous because "we have the technology, the techniques and the knowhow to prevent diarrhoea and measles, the diseases that kill children. Nonetheless, every day 2,500 children die of measles in India, a disease that is easy to prevent with a vaccine that is almost 100% effective and inexpensive. Oral re-hydration therapy, consisting of salt, sugar and water, costs next to nothing, yet diarrhoea remains the second biggest killer of children.

"Politicians apply band-aids, but we need a global response," she says. "It's easier to throw money at a situation and take a curative approach than it is to take a preventative one, which is much more difficult and much less visible. It certainly doesn't attract media coverage. The solution lies in making preventive health care and childhood diseases a priority."

Shipping vaccines and medicines is much easier. It creates profits for drug companies and the Feel Good Factor for donors. According to Guha-Sapir very little is done to improve the fundamental health status of people worldwide.

"At the same time there are very big commercial interests involved in non-preventive care. Think of the money involved in constructing hospitals, buying equipment, drugs and pharmaceuticals," she adds.

A possibility for hope

Guha-Sapir believes that reconstruction out of the ruins of conflict is an opportunity to wipe the slate clean and start with a new model based on a good understanding of what people need and can afford. A population's epidemiological profile - a history and calculation of the burden of the disease as well as risk assessment - must also be considered.

"Risk assessment, what people are likely to be ill of, is key to a coherent health plan and it is different everywhere," she insists. This is especially true in African countries, such as Rwanda, where most of the health infrastructure has been destroyed. Here lies the opportunity to create a strong foundation for a healthy society.

"We must fight against taking the easy way out by reconstructing what existed before, because it

may not have been appropriate," she says. "It could very well have been a dinosaur from colonial times."

Solutions at grass roots level

Problems are manifest at community level so this is where solutions must be implemented.

Guha-Sapir points out that WHO has been pushing family and preventive care against such formidable odds as strong medical lobbies headed by health ministers, drug companies and medical associations. In many instances the minister of health has a surgical background, yet public health problems cannot be solved with surgical solutions.

A typical donor response is to build hospitals. But most people need simple health care services and outreach available in their villages and towns: "It's typically the rich who use hospitals and people living in urban areas."

Cuba's successful public health system is a case in point, where basic preventative care, including school health and disease control, is exemplary. According to Guha-Sapir, the Cuban government has defined the right priorities and incorporated them into the system.

"It was a political decision to provide health care at community level," she says. "All over the world, the quality of health care is about politics influenced by commercial interests. The balance tips in different ways."

The balance of these two critical factors, aided and abetted by inertia in the international aid and development community, is likely to be the single biggest challenge of the next decade.

Undoubtedly, Debarati Guha-Sapir will ensure there a voice that is both frank and compassionate to try and strike that balance.



Dr Debarati Guha-Sapir is a professor at the University of Louvain in Belgium, in the Epidemiology Unit, Department of Public Health. She is currently on a Senior Rockefeller Fellowship at the World Health Organization (WHO) until December 2000. She is an Adjunct Professor at the Tulane University School of Public Health in New Orleans, US, and Director at WHO's Collaborating Centre on Research and Epidemiology of Disaster.

African voices at the Millennium Summit

By Kenneth Karl

There were about 150 of them, heads of state and senior politicians, who came together for three days to look at the world's problems and to draw up new priorities for the United Nations. At the dawn of the new Millennium, the UN stands on the brink of reform, which is inevitable but vital. Instigated three years ago by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, this Summit, held from 6 to 8 September 2000 certainly lived up to expectations according to many observers. Although its true success will only be judged by the results of the measures implemented to resolve the wide range of problems facing the world, this event will go down in the annals of the UN due to its highly symbolic importance. Few international conferences have managed to assemble so many politicians at this level. One after another, the different Presidents stepped up to the podium to plead with almost one voice for a fairer, more peaceful and more just world, with one main objective - substantially to reduce poverty in the years to come. They were almost unanimous in reaffirming their commitment to maintain and strengthen the UN. This institution has been disparaged for its multiple shortcomings and lauded for its sporadic successes, and has been trying, ever since its creation 55 years ago, to ensure that our world enjoys maximum stability.

Escaping the poverty trap

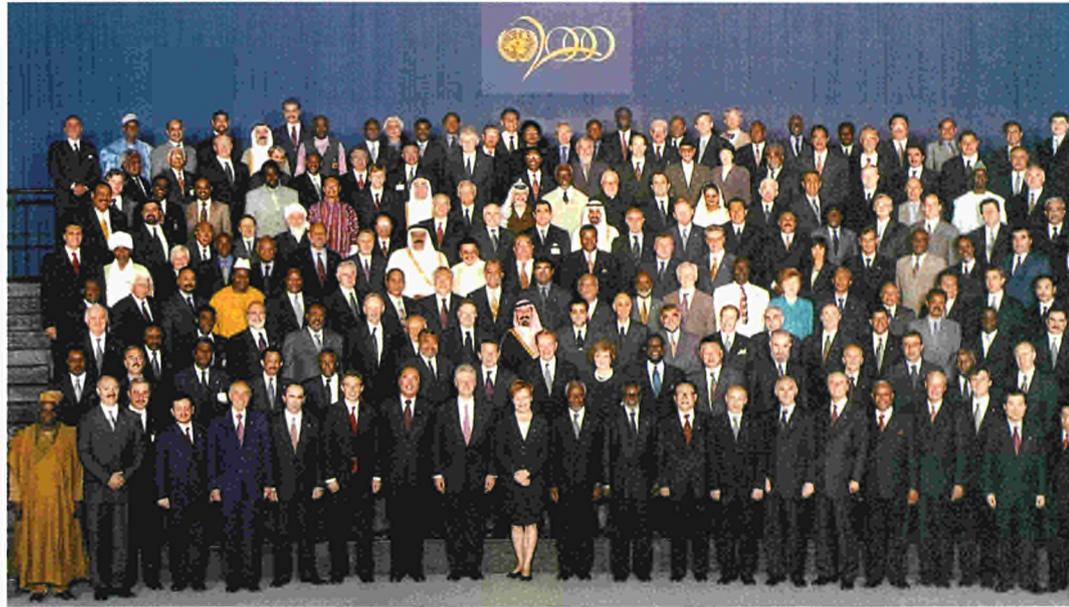
Africa is the focus of many of the problems to which the UN must try to find solutions in the next few years, and its representatives voiced major concerns at the Summit. A total of 35 out of 53 heads of state, including one king (of Swaziland), went to New York to protect the interests of their continent. According

to some participants, even more heads of state would have been preferable, to draw the international community's attention to Africa and the many problems it is experiencing in adapting to the changes which have transformed the international arena since the Berlin Wall fell. These difficulties are the clearest illustration of the marginalisation which has resulted from the acceleration of globalisation. Though it has brought hope to some, this phenomenon has caused a great deal of anxiety to others. Africa's spokesmen called for a world without hypocrisy, and particularly for the mobilisation of the developed countries to eradicate the relentless progression of poverty, both its causes and its consequences.

Although progress has undoubtedly been made in some countries, generally the advances in terms of socio-economic development remain well below expectations. The figures released on the evolution of poverty in the world, in particular those published by the World Bank in its most recent report, are sadly at odds with the economic progress we have witnessed over the last 50 years. There are 2.8 billion human beings who live on an income of less than two dollars a day, and 1.7 billion live on less than one dollar. In Africa, approximately a quarter of the population lives below the threshold of extreme poverty. *Per capita* income rose by 1.5% in the 1960s and by 0.8% in the 1990s, but it went down by 1.2% in the 1980s. As a number of studies of all the low- or middle-income areas in the world show, Africa underwent its slowest economic growth in the 1990s. Numerous sectors of society are suffering from a chronic lack of funding and assistance required to increase

capacities, a fact which the President of Ghana, Jerry Rawlings, emphasised in his speech. He believes, for example, that at least seven billion dollars will have to be spent on primary education over the next 10 years to meet the needs of the 130 million children who are at present excluded from it. The burden of debt in African countries is becoming increasingly difficult to bear, and the measures taken at international level in recent months to ease this situation are still too tame. In his report to the Millennium Assembly, entitled *We the peoples - the role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*, the UN Secretary-General submitted a series of proposals for the approval of the heads of state, the most significant being to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the world's population (currently 22%) existing on an income of less than one dollar a day. The Millennium Forum's declaration and plan of action suggest that the United Nations create a world-wide fund for the elimination of poverty, which would guarantee access to credit for the poor and which would be financed, *inter alia*, by contributions from governments, companies and the World Bank.

Another major problem preoccupying those who took



Belga, EPA/AFP Photo. EPA.POL

part in this Forum was the spread of the AIDS virus. Presiding over the Summit, Sam Nujoma, President of Namibia, was quick to point out that the total number of cases of people carrying this virus in Africa is estimated to be more than 60% on a continent comprising only 10% of the world's population. The heads of state of the worst-affected countries drew attention to the alarming risks of demographic fracture and destabilisation, combined with the social consequences and economic costs of this epidemic for Africa - but also for mankind as a whole. There are many countries which simply do not have the means to fight this disease effectively. They cannot afford to buy drugs, while wealthy countries now have innovative treatments such as combination therapy, which can be very

useful in controlling the disease. The heads of state have therefore made it their objective to reduce by 25% the rate of HIV infection in 15-24-year-olds by 2005 in the worst-affected countries and by 25% worldwide by 2010. There are also plans to increase prevention and awareness among the populations most at risk by improving access to information. Within a year of the Summit, a National Plan of action is to be set up in the most severely-affected countries. The UN Secretary-General also proposed that parallel research be conducted into other health problems which affect 90% of the world's population, such as malaria, tuberculosis and pneumonia. The ravages of AIDS must not be allowed to overshadow these diseases which are still rife on the African continent.

Towards reform of the United Nations and a place for Africa on the Security Council ?

Although this historic Millennium Summit focused mainly on the problem of world poverty, there was also room for discussion of the in-depth reform of the United Nations in order to adapt it to a changing world and make it a more effective tool for responding to the various expectations of different nations. Having just welcomed its 189th member with the arrival of Tuvalu, the institution needs to readjust its decision-making mechanisms, as advocated by the report commissioned for the UN by Lakhdar Brahimi, former Algerian diplomacy minister. This report, the broad outlines of which were approved by the heads of state, opens up the debate on extending the Security Council, which is in charge of peacekeeping. We had grown accustomed to the debate about opening the Security Council to Germany or Japan, a move called for by many countries wishing to see them fully assume their role as major powers. By requesting a place for Africa within this body, the leaders of this continent hope to increase its influence at the UN, and there is no shortage of arguments in favour of such a move. In 1945, when the UN was created, two thirds of its current Member States did not exist as independent states, and the world population stood at only 2.5 billion. Today it is in the region of 6 billion. The continent of Africa alone has 700 million inhabitants and includes 53 of the 189 States which belong to the UN. More than a third of the questions discussed by this Council directly concern Africa. Some hold the view that the shape of this narrow decision-making framework needs to change to reflect a new, more balanced form of representation. How, and by whom, will this representation of Africa be conducted, once the idea has finally been accepted ? This is a question which, as the African contingent was pleased to announce, should not pose any great problem. Could it be that the African Union, which came into being at the OAU Summit last July, will allow Africa greater influence on the international stage ?

The heads of state also discussed the reinforcement of the financial, military and logistic resources of the UN to enable it to carry out its assignments successfully, in particular its peacekeeping operations. Many meetings were also held and bilateral contacts made with the different heads of state on the fringes of the Summit in an attempt to find solutions to specific problems. As the proceedings drew to a close, one question lingered on everyone's lips : will the good resolutions listed in the final Declaration of the Millennium Summit actually be implemented? Whatever happens, as is true of many meetings of this type, these resolutions will be heavily dependent upon the political will of those making them.

Declarations from on high at the Millennium Summit

Sam Nujoma: President of Namibia and co-President of the Millennium Summit

"Underdevelopment represents the biggest threat to peace. Our number one priority is to eradicate poverty, ignorance and disease and to generate more choices which allow the individual to flourish, based on equal opportunities for men and women."

Kofi Annan: Secretary-General of the UN

"If we want to grasp the opportunities of globalisation, while at the same time containing its negative effects, then we must learn to govern better and to govern together."

Abdelaziz Bouteflika: President of the Republic of Algeria

"At the dawn of the 21st century, it is with the utmost uncertainty, and not without anxiety, that we wonder what part our countries will play in tomorrow's world, a world founded on the inexorable law of power and subject to the inflexible rules of the market place."

Alpha Oumar Konaré: President of Mali

"We must have a clear, unambiguous common stance with regard to the condemnation of all violent interruptions of the democratic process."

Gnassingbe Eyadema: President of Togo, serving Chairman of the OAU

"We think it is high time to review the composition of the Security Council so as to admit new permanent members from among the new economic powers which have emerged since the Second World War, along with the regional powers from developing countries."

Pierre Buyoya: President of Burundi

"He who goes to sleep on an empty stomach wakes up with a heart full of hatred."

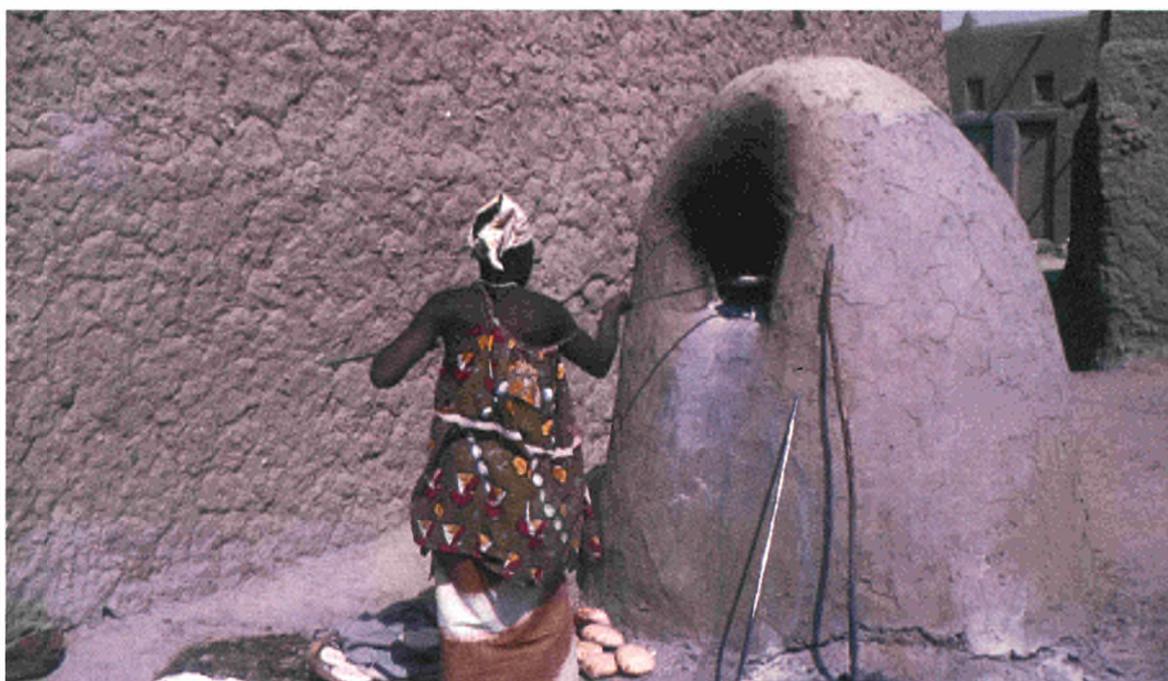
Omar Gueleh: President of Djibouti

"The bush fire sweeping through our world today is called globalisation."

Towards more coherent development aid

by Sue Wheat

Although France's aid projects work extensively with local partners, debt relief may eat into a budget that has already fallen from its 1999 peak



Bread oven in Timbuktu, Mali

Photo: JP Mesguen/Min.Coop/MAE

The fact that France still ranks third among the 22 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in terms of the absolute amount it gives in official development assistance (ODA), sounds pretty good. To make it even better, if you calculate its ODA as a percentage of gross national product (GNP), France's performance in 1999 put it in first position among the G7 countries.

But statistics are not enough to make a good ODA strategy, and France has found itself under the spotlight this year after a fairly finger-pointing OECD/DAC peer review and a highly critical review in *The Reality of Aid 2000*. As a share of GNP, French ODA has fallen from a peak of 0.64% in 1994 to 0.38% in 1999. France may hold first place amongst the G7 countries but, as one OECD representative points out, this is no

great honour as only one or two can be considered good performers and overall the G7's aid has fallen sharply.

France seems to have abandoned the UN target of 0.7% of GNP being allocated to aid, and critics point out that the focus of French aid is more on supporting Francophone countries and French overseas territories than on the DAC-agreed objective of reducing poverty in the poorest countries. French aid figures currently include aid to the French Overseas Territories with French Polynesia and New Caledonia taking first and second place, each accounting for around seven per cent of bilateral aid. The rest of the top 10 are all ex-colonies in Africa, apart from Egypt, and receive around 50% of the bilateral aid, the other 50% being scattered amongst 130 countries.



Adding ink at a printing press

Photo: Schnerb-Cancel/Min. Coop/MAE

Development priorities

The influence of France's trade and foreign policy over the direction of its development policy therefore creates tension. France's development priorities, as summed up by the Cooperation Minister when he introduced his budget for 1999 are: "to build up our capacities for influence abroad; to identify and anchor elites in our partner countries; to confirm our position in development cooperation; and to associate civil society with our ambition." But as the peer review points out, the first two objectives and the second two are mutually exclusive.

On the positive side, France has been praised for undertaking a major reform of its aid strategy, started in 1998, based on a DAC peer review in 1997. The reform is designed to simplify and increase the coherence of the institutional system of development assistance, making it more effective and more transparent. It is a response to the need for better linkage between the different types of aid, consolidation of scattered operational services, more emphasis on the basic social sectors and gender equality.

"The move," says the peer review, "is a move

in the right direction but is taking some time to become operational and produce results". Olivier Blamangin, author of the France chapter in *The Reality of Aid*, is more critical, pointing out that consecutive delays have hampered the reform and that "it is primarily an administrative effort targeting the rationalisation of the cooperation structures. It will not have great meaning without the definition of a coherent and mobilising strategy for French cooperation." He continues, "ultimately, one can only wonder about the direction of a reform of the cooperation system which is happening in the context of significant erosion of the resources devoted to ODA."

The reform has involved the dissolution of the old Ministry of Cooperation and Development and the restructuring of the system around two cores - the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry for Economic Affairs, Finance and Industry (MEFI, or the Treasury), with one main operating agency, the AFD (French Development Agency). To strengthen coordination between departments - which has traditionally been weak - an Inter-ministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID), chaired

by the Prime Minister, has been created to lay down policy guidelines, ensure consistency and assess compliance with targets set. A High Council for International Co-operation (HCCI) has also been set up which should help bring civil society more fully into the debate on development assistance.

Administrative reform

Many commentators see the restructuring as too complicated: "The Direction Generale de la Cooperation Internationale et du Developpement (DGCID) - which is now the unit within the MFA responsible for development co-operation functions - is a monster which is divided and has difficulties with its two conflicting roles of developing cultural influence and fostering development," explains one official commentator. Having the Treasury control so much of the development budget also creates difficulties and vast problems of policy coordination. "For instance, the French representative in DAC is appointed from the Treasury. This is bizarre - no other country does this. And it means that when the DAC approves policies, like the *Shaping the 21st Century* policy or guidelines on gender mainstreaming, the French treasury representative agrees them, but when you speak to people in the MFA or the embassies, most don't even know what the DAC is, let alone



the policies that have been signed up to."

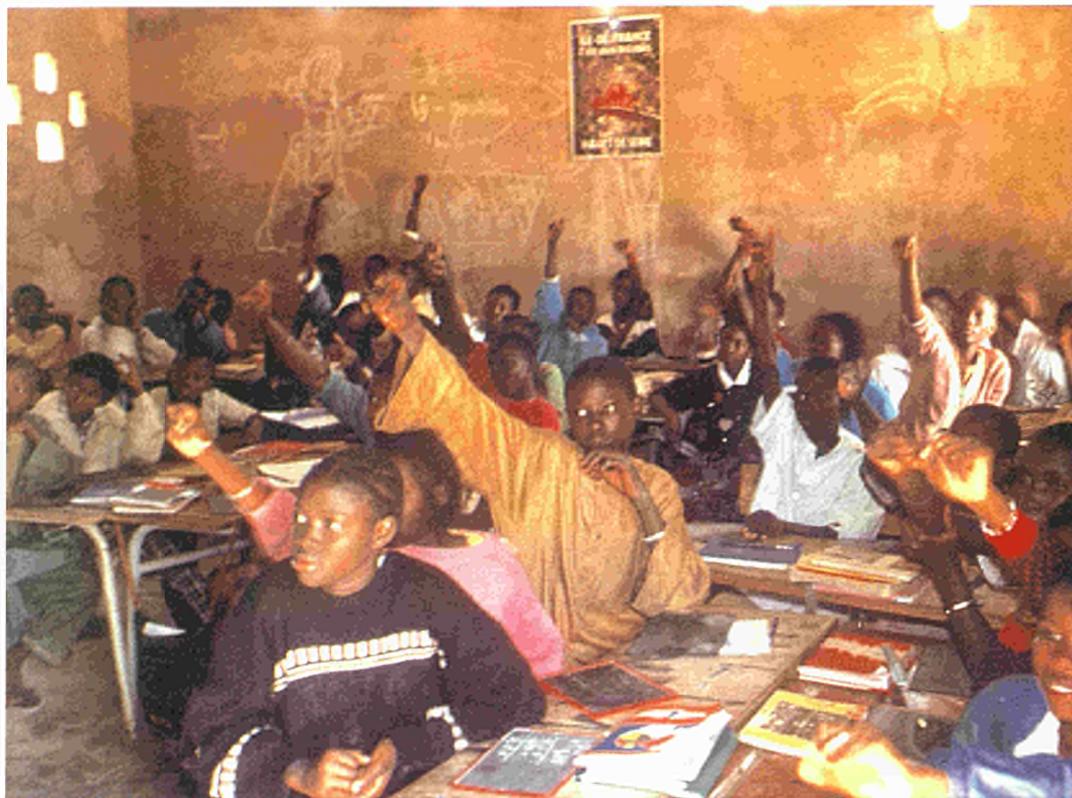
Government officials vehemently disagree and are positive about the reform. "Dissolving the Ministry of Cooperation and Development and setting up aid management between the different ministries is the exact opposite of the system that the British, Germans and Dutch have, but I think it was necessary in the context of French aid," says Evelyne Decorps, Division Chief with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "The Ministry of Cooperation and Development was only operating in a narrow geographical area - mainly Africa and some parts of the Caribbean - resembling the old colonial ministry and we had to erase this image."

Issues raised by the review include the need for more gender mainstreaming, untying

more aid, a stronger environmental emphasis, improved evaluation of aid, and most of all, a stronger focus on poverty alleviation. "Within project aid, the reduction of the assistance supplied by MEFI, under financial protocols with essentially commercial objectives, could be used to increase ODA for basic social sectors, currently too weak an element in France's ODA," says the peer review. "To date there has been no directive to build the aim of poverty reduction into project choice and design."

The French Government has generally welcomed the recommendations, although some emphases have been countered quite strongly. "I think it was a problem of presentation more than anything," says Evelyne Decorps. "We didn't include the word 'poverty' in everything and we didn't have a

A rural dispensary in Benin



A school at Ziguinchor, in Senegal

Photo: Schnerb-Cancel/
Min.Coop/MAE

stated anti-poverty strategy, but we were focusing on improving administration, health systems, education, all of which help to alleviate poverty." Similarly, France has been criticised for prioritising aid for tertiary and secondary education (notably in scholarships for French universities) over primary education. "We consider that helping tertiary education is part of development," says Mme Decorps. "Like the World Bank, we consider that if a country doesn't have the opportunity for students to go further in education then you have a narrowing of education within that population."

Increased poverty focus ...

One major aspect of the reform which aims to sharpen the focus on poverty has been

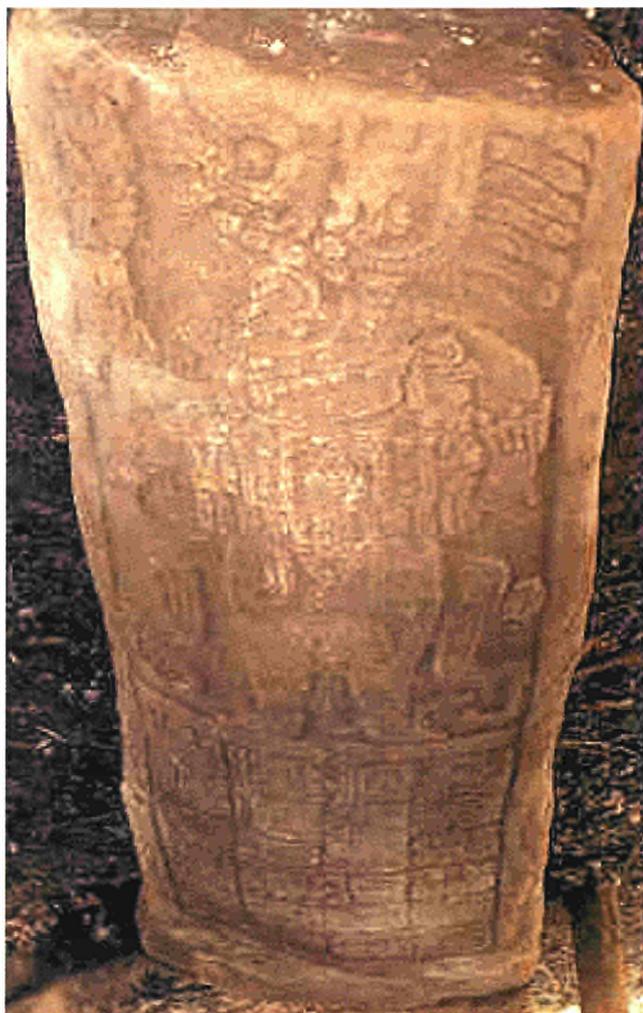
the establishment of a new Priority Zone for Solidarity (ZSP) which includes some 60 countries, most being former colonies plus other African countries, particularly from sub-Saharan Africa, the Maghreb countries, Lebanon and Palestinian territories, the Indo-Chinese peninsula and the Caribbean. But as the peer review points out, "Although the ZSP includes most of the least developed countries, overall they receive only 22% of France's ODA, and far smaller amounts of ODA *per capita* than some countries with high *per capita* GNP. The ZSP could well be tightened, accordingly, so as to concentrate aid on the poorest countries and those pursuing appropriate policies, including good governance."

This is happening, says Philippe Coquart, responsible for designing AFD's local development, decentralisation and poverty policy. "The AFD now intervenes in non-Francophone countries such as Ghana, Sudan and Uganda. I'm not saying the share of our interventions is large, or even enough, but they have begun."

... but also increased debt relief

France provides a substantial portion of its aid in the form of debt relief, and this will rise further when new debt reduction operations are implemented. What is uncertain however, is whether the move from loans to grants for HIPC countries will mean that there will be a crowding out of project aid by the increased debt relief. While the government maintains this will not happen, it is a very definite concern highlighted by the peer review. "One of the strongest points about French aid is the long experience and first hand knowledge France has of a number of countries and the professionalism of the teams working in them," explains one of the OECD officials who worked on the peer review. "Projects are usually good and many are implemented by local partners, which favours ownership by aid recipients. It would be a pity if support for such projects were reduced because of large debt relief payments."

Stelae, Bones and Standing Stones



Nim Li Punit, Stela 21

by Juan-Luis Bonor
and Anouk van Opstal

The forgotten cities of Lubaatun and Nim Li Punit have been discovered in Belize, the only ACP state in Central America. They lie silent, deep in the jungle at the foothills of the Mayan Mountains in Southern Belize, with the Caribbean coast on their eastern side. Both are important archaeological sites, containing many ancient Mayan buildings - some of them 1600 years old.

But these sites are slow to give up their secrets. A recent EU-funded project has unearthed large numbers of standing stones and large carved stones (stelae) from mounds masked with fungi under enormous trees.

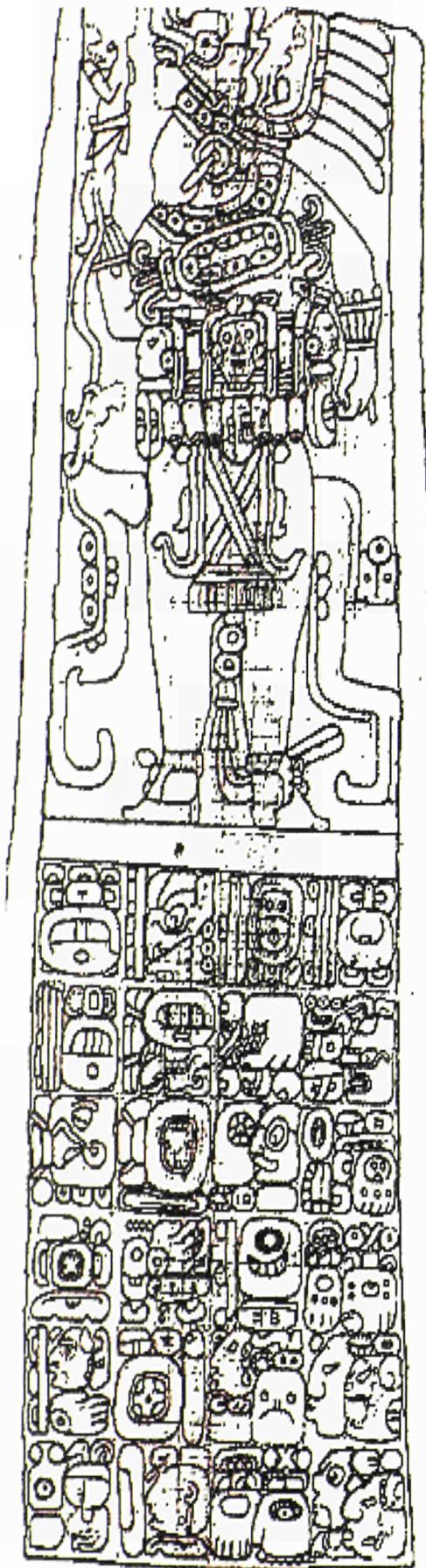
Greater sensitivity needed

Restoration of an ancient structure is specialised and demanding work. It has to remain within what is strictly evident. An archaeological site cannot be recreated. Visitors should be able to view and appreciate what has been restored without seeing any additions invented through guesswork.

But most of the archaeological projects intended to enhance tourism in the Maya region have turned out to be inappropriate for the sites. Reconstruction efforts have not respected the architectural authenticity and sacredness of ancient Maya buildings. Careless restorers and

consolidation experts have failed to take into account the past and present importance of these sites for Maya culture, so have all too often rebuilt structures only to create pretty areas for folk dancing.

Nevertheless, a degree of success in restoration with full respect for authenticity has been achieved at two important sites. Lubaatun, the Place of Fallen Stones, is said to have been where the Crystal Skull - a quartz crystal artefact representing the human skull - was found in 1924. Nim Li Punit is a major Classic Mayan settlement, first discovered in 1976, which holds Belize's largest collection of ancient stelae.



Uniqueness of Lubaatun

Lubaatun is known for its unique dry-stone structures and for its beautiful natural surroundings in an area of remarkable anthropological interest. This ancient city was built over a period lasting a century during the Late Classic Period (AD 730 - 860). First excavated in 1915, then in 1924 (when much was unintentionally destroyed due to the use of dynamite), the present site comprises 11 major buildings grouped in five plazas. Three ballcourts are situated to the east, west and south of the major religious buildings.

At the beginning of our excavations in February 1998, everyone agreed that Lubaatun lived up to its name - The Place of Fallen Stones. They were lying all over the place, and there was an enormous amount of work to do to remove the tonnes of debris left over from previous excavations and to rescue the original walls from the rubble that covered them. All cut stone blocks from various structures had to be duly noted before being removed, in order to restore them later to their original positions. More than 60 labourers, masons, draftsmen and archaeologists laboured on this project until mid-March 1999. While we could not undertake the restoration of the whole city, the areas we did restore were much more impressive than we had anticipated. Once the structures had been restored and the plazas cleaned, the open spaces of Lubaatun began to reveal a powerful administration that had observed all the rituals and religious rites of its time.

The stelae of Nim Li Punit

Major settlement at Nim Li Punit began during the Middle Classic Period (AD 400 - 700), continuing until or into the Post Classic Period (AD 800 - 1000). It lay hidden from view until 1976, when it was uncovered by prospectors looking for

"The stela describes a blood-letting or scattering of incense ritual for the celebration of the end of the eighteenth K'atun. Ka'tun endings were regarded as very important calendrical cycles by the Maya and celebrated with great feasts. In this case, the Nim Li Punit Lord K'awil Hat K'inich went to Copan, Honduras, in order to conduct rituals in the company of the king of Copan. This is not only one of the best preserved stelae from Belize but also an important document of ritual and political interaction during the Terminal Classic period, a time when Mayan culture everywhere in the Lowlands was exposed to severe stress that eventually led to the famous Maya collapse."

Nikolai Grube

minerals. More thorough investigations began in 1983. The archaeological community had been greatly surprised by the number of carved stelae found at the site. These, together with the discovery of an E-group (assemblage of buildings from which to observe the heavens) and a ballcourt, indicate that Nim Li Punit was an important centre of social and religious life for the ancient Mayas of Southern Belize. Archaeologists believe that the two cities may have been interdependent, with Lubaantun regulating trade and commerce, and Nim Li Punit handling religious and political matters.

To protect at least some of the stelae from wind and water erosion, and also from vandalism, five of them were transported to a purpose-built centre on site. The experience of moving these stones made us realise how many people would have been required to erect them in the first place. For example, Stela 14 is 9.5 m long and 80 cm wide, and it took 15 days for 10 men equipped with two five-tonne pulleys and a tractor to move this stone just 300 m to its new location.

Distant links revealed

Over the years, the stelae at Nim Li Punit have all been drawn, photographed, studied and interpreted. Uncarved stelae that were in good enough condition were returned to their original positions; those that were cracked were reconstructed, using steel rods and epoxy glue.

However, one stela had lain face down, undisturbed for over 1200 years. It was only when a team of workers was digging a hole in order to pass lifting ropes underneath it that one of them saw the carvings on the hidden face. Once it had been lifted with the help of a five-tonne pulley, Stela 21, Belize's best-preserved carved stela, saw the light of day.

The inscriptions were not only beautiful - their glyphic text provided proof of the ancient links, hitherto only suspected, between Nim Li Punit in Belize and Copan in the Honduras. Dated 7 October AD790, Stela 21 gives evidence of religious, cultural and family ties between the two



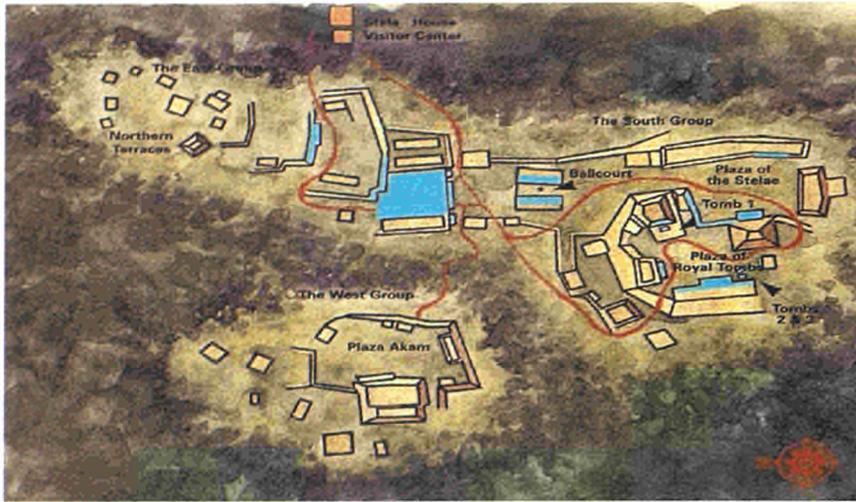
**Lubaantun, South East Side Structure 104
Before (top), After (bottom)**



cities that archaeologists now accept as fact. According to Nikolai Grube, a well-known expert on ancient Mayan writing, Stela 21 has much to reveal.

Ancient bones

The best surprises of archaeological projects usually come at the season's end. Working in what we now call the Plaza of the Royal Tombs at Nim Li Punit, a team was already consolidating Structure 8 when workers noticed a few stone tablets. These turned out to be the capstones of a new tomb, and while this was the wrong moment to start new research, it would have been irresponsible to leave the tomb unprotected from possible vandalism. The decision was taken to excavate it. The eastern side had collapsed,

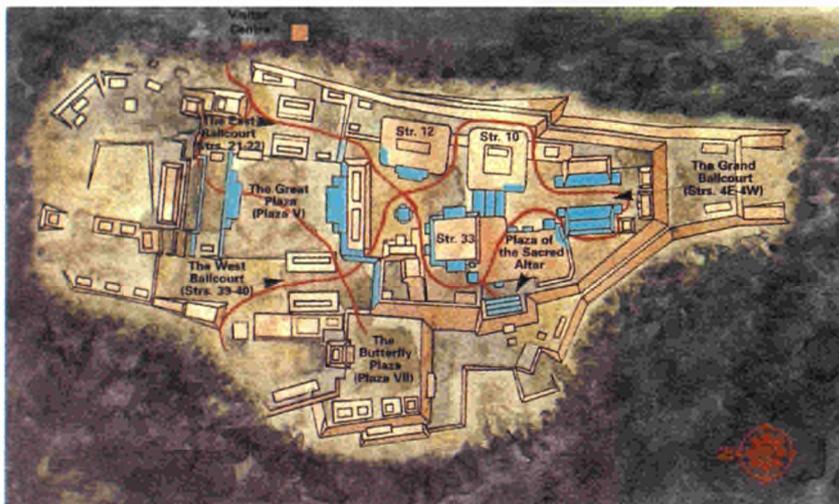


Nim Li Punit, "The Big Hat"

Blue-shaded areas indicate the consolidated structures

so reconstruction work there was halted until the tomb excavation was complete. The capstones were cleaned, the western side was almost finished and - another tomb appeared.

The rainy season did not help. The soil was extremely wet, rendering the already delicate job of excavating human even more difficult. The first newly excavated tomb was found to be almost empty, apart from two ceramic artefacts, several marine shells and a number of stalagmites, probably of local origin. The second tomb yielded the remains of six individuals, all in a bad state of conservation made worse by the heavy rains of end October 1998 that heralded Hurricane Mitch. These human remains had been found piled up



Lubaantun, "Place of Fallen Stones"

Areas in blue represent the structures on which restoration was completed

in different parts of the tomb, evidence of the Mayan custom of repeatedly moving aside the remains of a previous burial to make room for a new body.

While the pottery objects from both tombs have not yet been analysed, they and the stalagmites indicate that the individuals buried there had been prominent members of society. The position of the Plaza of the Royal Tombs, located southwest of the city centre on a naturally elevated terrain in a private enclosure suggests that this may have been a restricted area used exclusively for the tombs of Nim Li Punit's royal family. One of its tombs, already excavated in the mid-1980s, contained artefacts of ceramics, plates, jade and polished stones, all signs of affluence.

Government support

The costs of the excavation programme were borne by the Maya Archaeological Sites Development Programme (MASDP) together with funding from the Belize Government and the European Development Fund. The total costs between 1997 and 1999 were just over €880,000 for monitoring and evaluation, of which the Belize Government contributed €131,000 and the EU gave €750,000. The work programme budget was €661,000, to which the EU contributed €530,000. The MASDP aim is to develop tourism in Belize by improving presentation and infrastructure at selected archaeological sites to attract more tourists to specially prepared Visitor Centres, while respecting the preservation needs of the ancient monuments themselves.

Much more than expected

The original MASDP objectives for excavating and restoring Lubaantun and Nim Li Punit as tourist sites have been surpassed. Both sites now possess new infrastructure and the flow of visitors has already increased (up nearly 32% to Lubaantun and up 76% to Nim Li Punit between 1997-1999). The structural stability of their architecture is greatly improved and their environmental appearance enhanced. The ancient history of both cities is now being brought to light.

EU suspends new aid to Liberia

by Bram Posthumus

Last June, the European Commission and the European Council agreed to delay the signature of the new National Indicative Programme (NIP) for Liberia, worth 50m Euros. This measure was requested by Great Britain, which alleged complicity between the

government of Liberia and the rebel movement in Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), in perpetuating diamond smuggling and war in Liberia's neighbour. This story explores the background of the move and its implications, especially in Liberia itself.

Bram Posthumus



Links between Liberia's president Charles Taylor and the now imprisoned Sierra Leonean rebel leader Foday Sankoh date back to the time when their respective core armies were being trained in Libya. The civil war that destroyed Liberia in the 1990s spilled into Sierra Leone from Liberian soil, most likely with the consent if not the active help of Taylor's forces. So the new intelligence that the British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook produced last May about Liberian complicity in the illegal exploitation of Sierra Leone's diamond fields by Sankoh's men and the transshipment of these diamonds through Liberia

to Antwerp came as no surprise. It would probably not have raised many eyebrows nor led to any actions had it not been for two significant changes. First, the British had become involved in solving Sierra Leone's highly complicated and unpredictable political crisis. By sending troops there for limited but nevertheless real peace-keeping work, Britain had made Sierra Leone a foreign policy priority. Second, a campaign against the sale and end-use of so-called "conflict diamonds" had begun to gather momentum. The campaign, led by a group of European NGOs, was aimed chiefly at reducing the trade in

One of the many private homes looted in one of the three battles of Monrovia (1990, 1992, 1996)



Bram Posthumus

A billboard's bright promises in Monrovia

diamonds coming from rebel-held territory in Angola and Sierra Leone. It received a timely boost in the shape of an unusually undiplomatic UN report, which confirmed long-held suspicions about the presidents of various West African states, including Liberia and Burkina Faso, who were linked to the illicit trade in diamonds coming from rebel-held areas in Angola and Sierra Leone. These developments helped clear the way for the steps taken by the European Commission.

While the decision to delay the signature of the new NIP does not have any immediate consequences for EU projects going on at the moment, it could lead to an interruption of essential services in a few months' time.

EU drinking water project

By far the most eye-catching of these is the drinking water project in Monrovia. Every day, large tanker trucks carrying the familiar blue logo with the yellow stars drive through the streets, delivering clean, safe drinking water to many distribution points around this sprawling city. It is about the only functioning basic service in Monrovia, which prior to the war held some 500,000 people but is now home to well over twice as many because of the massive influx of internal refugees during the war. Some 40,000 used to live dangerously in unfinished or bombed-out high-rise buildings in the centre, but they have since chosen to return home of their own free will, or have been evicted from their shelters by the police.

Thousands more have decided to stay. These are the poor city-dwellers who profit most from the scheme. It can be safely said that the EU clean water project has spared Monrovia the ravages of water-borne epidemics like cholera.

The only other source of reliable drinking water is a tiny and noisy factory in the centre, where bottles of water are sold for 20 Liberian dollars, about €0,60. Few Monrovians can afford this, so if they are too far away from a EU distribution point they get their water from the neighbourhood pump, where you can get a bucket-full for as little as L\$5. Only the rusty and redundant taps remind them that there was a time when they had running water coming into their homes.

Other basic services don't exist

The war has transformed them from sophisticated city dwellers into reluctant and ill-adapted villagers. After a brief spell of optimism immediately after the end of the war, they have lost all hope of a transformation that would restore their life to what it was.

Providing basic services to the people is widely regarded to be the responsibility of the national - or local - government and here Liberia's record over the last three years is very poor indeed. Little infrastructure has been repaired so far, and most of the repairs were either carried out or funded by donors.

Apart from some areas in the centre, Monrovia has been without electricity for the past decade and visitors are well advised to bring torches and generous amounts of batteries. Billboards around town depict spotlessly clean streets lined with lamp posts blazing with light. In reality, one has to pick one's way carefully around the unevenly-surfaced streets and avoid falling into pits while being blinded by oncoming headlights. Promises about restoring the city's sewage systems have remained equally hollow. The health system is near collapse; soldiers returning from renewed fighting in the northern province of Lofa County took to raiding the country's largest hospital in order to get treatment. Ordinary people must bring money if they are to be seen by a doctor at all. National telephone traffic does not move beyond the city limits and making international telephone calls is an uphill battle at the best of times, especially after a fire gutted part of the international exchange earlier this year. Liberia is one of the very few countries in the world that is almost completely cut off from the Internet.

Resettlement of refugees

Another part of the humanitarian aid programme that will for now remain unaffected by the EU's decision to delay signing the NIP is the support that goes into the resettlement of refugees. Returnees are equipped with basic farming implements so they can clear the bush which has overrun their fields and get back to work on the land. Liberians living in the interior are farmers; theirs is a country where sufficient rainfall and good soil fertility ensured in the past enough basic food provision. The war changed all that and hunger still stalks the land. Returnees have lost all their farming implements and are trapped: they need food to eat and to barter for other products, but the land produces nothing. In order to have the energy to start clearing the land they need food, which they cannot get. Families live on one meal a day or less.

Fortunately, Liberia has been spared the scourge of large-scale landmining by opposing armed forces, but some parts of the country, especially Lofa County, remain highly volatile and tens of thousands of refugees have decided to stay put in neighbouring countries. Reports in August claimed that some 30,000 people had been newly displaced by fighting around Voinjama, the capital of Lofa County.

The suspension of aid will affect new money earmarked for development projects to be carried out in the next few years. The EU has already started to scale down some of its other operations in the south-east of the country, where it was engaged in the kind of projects that have become the hallmark of EU reintegration and reconstruction work: agriculture, road and bridge repair school and clinic renovation.

The innocent victim?

The Liberian government has responded to the British allegations that led to the administrative delay in aid disbursement by perfecting its image of the innocent victim. Image is everything to the government, from the billboards in the streets to the diplomatic kudos it earned at the time when its president, Charles Taylor, secured the release of around 500 UN peacekeepers deployed in Sierra Leone and held hostage by the RUF. Maximum capital is made out of these accomplishments while allegations of diamond smuggling or aiding the RUF rebels are met with howls of indignant denial. Tangible action on the ground to restore the services that Liberians have either been denied for a decade or have never seen at all could prove more convincing. But that would require a move away from spin-doctoring and towards real work. There are no signs of that happening yet and the mood in the country is getting grimmer and gloomier with every passing day.

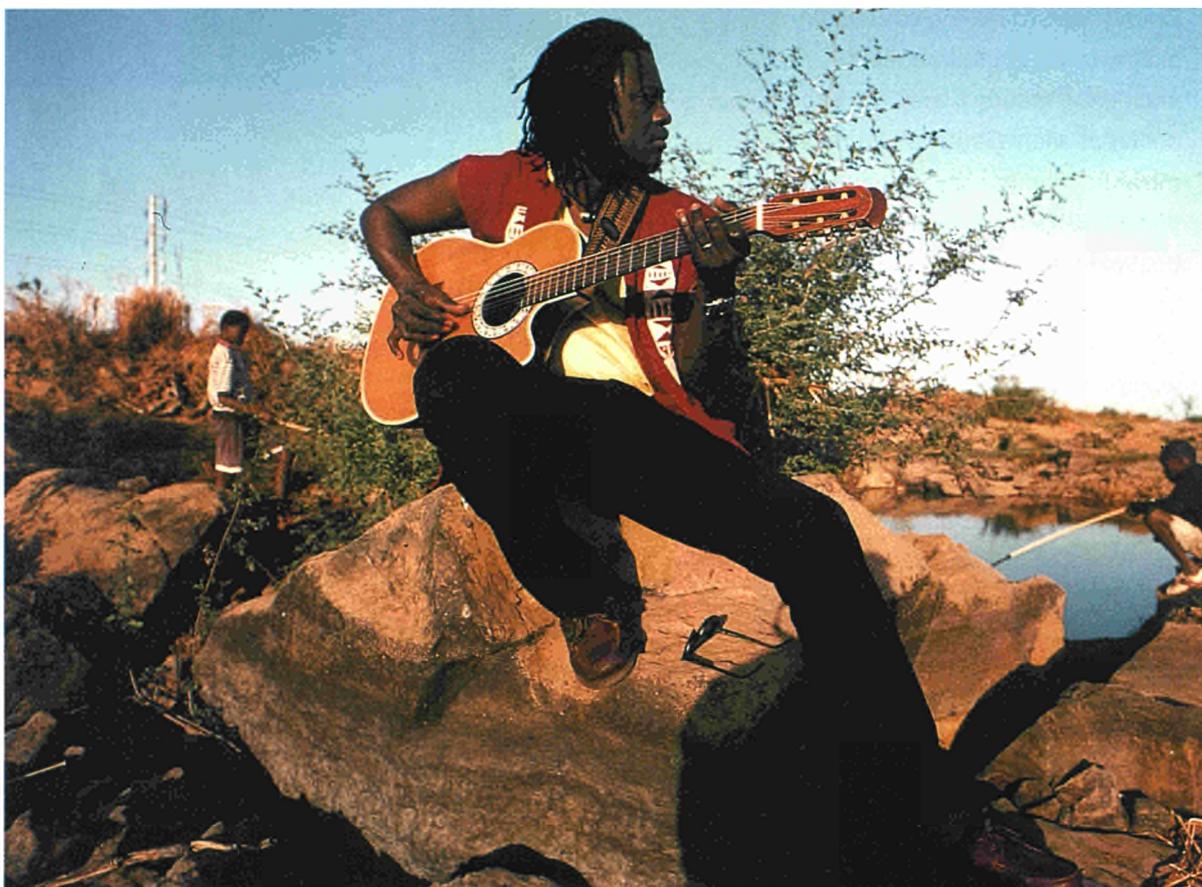
"How's life?" is no longer answered by the familiar "Thank God!" but by an ubiquitous "It's hard!"

Griots - singing their praises

by Ruth Evans

Griots, or praise singers, are the repository of West Africa's past, especially in areas that are primarily Islamic. The griot tradition is found across Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Niger and Mali, and in each place they

form a distinct social caste. In Mali, they are said to provide this largely illiterate society with its moral roots, and provide an oral library of Mali's immensely complex and proud culture of great empires that have come and gone.



Mali: Habib Koite, one of the country's leading musicians, is from a griot family

Rhodri Jones/Panos Pictures

The first commercial recordings of West African griot music were issued by the French ethnomusicologist Tolia Nikiprowetzky back in the 1960s, at a time when few people in the West had heard of griots. In answer to the question, "What is a griot?" he

wrote, "The griots are above all professionals who represent, as a group, a well-defined social caste. Their role is multifaceted: as historians and genealogists they are the chief repositories of the history of a region and its designated chroniclers. As musicians their presence was

traditionally required at all celebrations and rituals."

Griots are an essential element at all the great rites of passage in West Africa, at weddings, circumcision ceremonies, births, honours and funerals. They are generally paid well for their services - so much so that,

according to Nikiprowetzky, in Senegal it was commonly held that griots' "exorbitant fees" were the reason "the ceremony of marriage has become, without doubt, the most financially ruinous of all traditional ceremonies."

Wider knowledge of the griots' role came largely through the international best seller and TV series of Alex Haley's *Roots*, in which he describes a journey to West Africa and, with the help of local griots, traces his family tree back to a particular village. Through the oral history of the griots, Haley said he had discovered how his ancestors had been tricked and sold into slavery. It was a highly emotional, if - as it turned out subsequently - only a partially true and embellished version of events, but it struck a chord with many Afro-Americans in search of their ancestral past, and brought the griots onto the international stage for the first time.

Even in modern Mali members of the noble caste often have a personal praise singer to remind them of their ancestry. Amadou Maiga, bottom right, who runs one of Bamako's numerous radio stations, may play hip-hop on air, but he's also accompanied to the office each day by his personal griot. In white robes and a red cap, the elderly griot punctuates Maiga's day with shrill cries reminding him of his ancestral past and obligations as a noble. It's an incongruous juxtaposition of the old and the new, the traditional praise singer popping up beside his bopping boss.

It isn't just a one-way relationship however. Amadou is, at times, clearly in awe of his praise singer, who will, he says, pull him up short if he behaves in a way that isn't becoming for his noble class.

Griots are thought to have strong magical powers and their skills are passed down from one generation to another. Their education and training involves a lengthy apprenticeship under the direction of a teacher, usually a father or an uncle. Amadou Maiga's griot is the son of Amadou's father's griot. The two families' histories are intertwined and inter-dependent, back to the mighty Emperor Askia Mohammed.

Some griots have found fame exceeding that of their patron's. Today, music is one of West Africa's best known exports with many griots, like Salif Keita, Kandia Koyate and Ali Farke Toure becoming big international stars. Their music has been popularised and commercialised, and sometimes they can earn much more than their traditional noble patrons.

In a fairly ordinary-looking unmade street in Bamako, an old white horse stands tethered beside a rather newer looking Mercedes in front of some iron gates. It's the only sign that someone special lives here - one of Mali's best loved and most revered griot singers, Amy Koita top right.

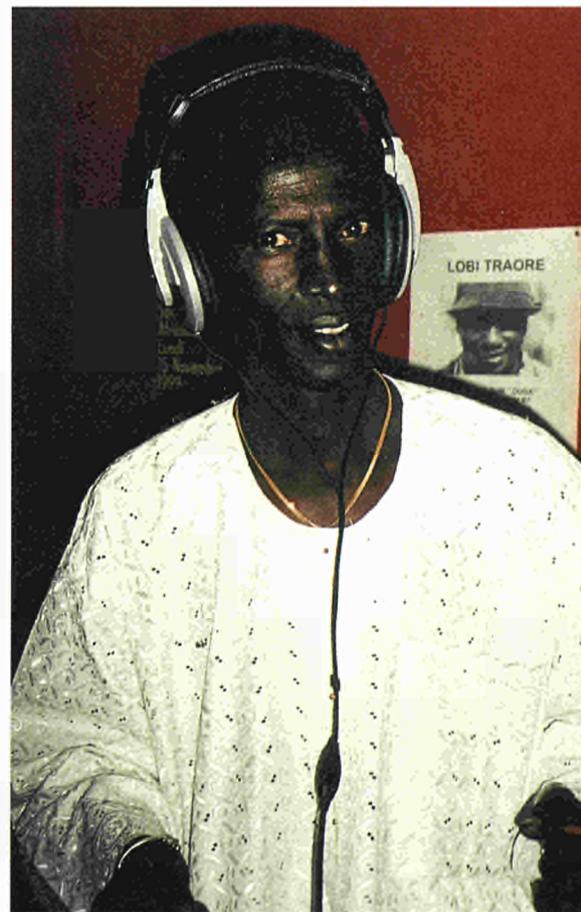
Amy Koita herself is illiterate, but speaking in Bambara through an interpreter she told me that traditionally it was not unusual for women to be griot singers or *jelimuso*.



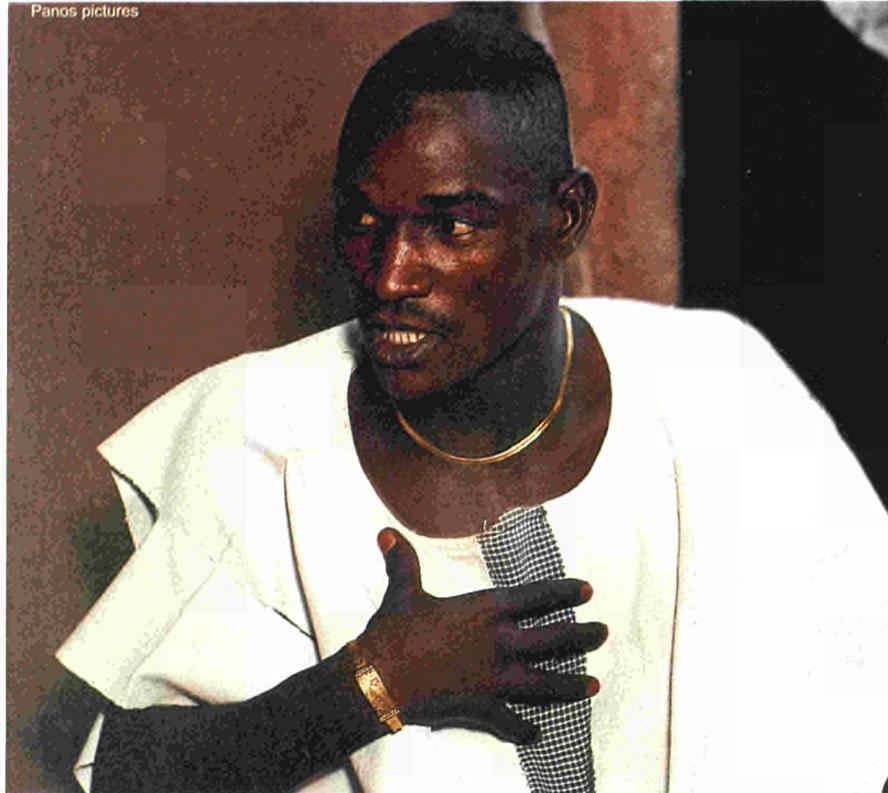
Ruth Evans

Amy Koita

Amadou Maiga



Ruth Evans



Mali: Young emerging musician explains the importance of his griot heritage

"It started with our ancestors. Men would recount history, and the women would sing. My mother and my grandmother still sing."

The songs are no ordinary songs. "When I sing, people expect my songs to have profound meanings," Amy Koita says. "In the olden days it was like the king having his advisers or counselors around him. That was the role of the griot."

Despite her enormous popular appeal, Amy Koita still sings the same things that her mother and grandmother sang about. "My grandmother sang songs about human nature and gave lessons about what to do and what not to do. My songs use the same themes, but I've also used violin and other western instruments, so the style has changed. They may be played in nightclubs, but still use the same themes as the songs of my mother and grandmother."

The song that helped launch Amy Koita's international career was called *Love*. I asked her whether it's possible for Malian women to talk about love in a situation where marriages are still largely arranged. "Yes, on the contrary. Love can be talked about because, even where there are

arranged marriages, it can make people think about forced marriages, and can trigger lessons. I think things have evolved. In the past there were forced marriages, today this is less so. When we sing songs like *Love* it sends out messages to the villages and questions some of those traditions."

But what is the role of the griot in modern Africa? Is it still to document the past, or are they a harbinger of the future?

It isn't a griot's job to criticise, merely to be an upholder of tradition, says Amy Koita. "What I would say to young children is think about tomorrow and preserve your traditions. Our role is to educate people and those who come after will also challenge things that we have accepted. I sing about a lot of things in my songs, about selfishness, about the relationships between men and women and the need to get on, and I also sing about children because you are a child today but an adult tomorrow."

One of the most controversial issues in Mali today is that of female circumcision, and Amy says she would not shy away from addressing even this taboo subject in her songs. "I am against circumcision and I think it's in the interests of society not to practice circumcision. The role of a griot is to tell the truth and I would sing against it, but not in a way that would shock people. You can say the truth, but without hurting people's feelings. There are ways of saying everything."

Amy Koita has received many presents from admirers, money, gifts and even children to bring up in her household. Such patronage is very liberating as it means she doesn't have to depend solely on recording contracts and the pressures of commercial sales. She says there is an important role for griots to play, even in modern Mali. "The traditional things we are talking about will not disappear. With the help of radios and other modern communications griots will survive."

ROGARIA CENTRAL

Cape Verde

by Dorothy Morrissey



Taking stock

Cape Verde celebrated 25 years of independence this year, so now is a good time to step back and see how the country has shaped up.

At independence in 1975, there was a certain trepidation as to whether the country could survive. For this, in the words of writer and historian Basil Davidson, is "a country where people have learned to survive on stones." Not just to survive, but to forge an identity as a country with a renowned cultural richness, a stable post-independence period, and good relations with its diverse international partners and neighbours.

The country has faced formidable obstacles. Deprived of natural resources, it has a land area of only 4,033 km², most of which is unsuited for agriculture. Situated some 500 km west of Senegal, it is a maritime extension of the desert and suffers from periodic drought. A series of devastating famines hit the country throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, killing between 10-40% of the population) and opening the flood-gates of emigration.

At independence, the country presented a pitiable picture, by all accounts: the countryside abandoned, a largely illiterate and impoverished population, its young people seeing emigration as the only escape. There was little infrastructure, no public health service, few doctors. All it had was hope, a certain vision and determination to carve a state from these inhospitable islands.

Help soon came from various international partners. The World Food Programme brought in food - lack of rain in the first few years of independence had scuppered any chance of subsistence. This was the beginning of a long relationship with its international partners,

during which Cape Verde has earned a reputation as a country where aid has had tangible and visible effects.

Cape Verde was to show much diplomatic skill in maintaining good relationships with partners from both sides of the political divide during the Cold War, receiving assistance from the USSR and China, yet inspiring enough confidence in the US that it too rallied to the country's side.

Ballot box rules

Many observers see Cape Verde's development since independence in cycles. The first was from 1975 to 1990, when the country was run as a constitutional one-party state by the PAICV (*Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde*). During this period, the nucleus of the state emerged. Infrastructure was put in place, a national health service was set up, planned reforestation began, efforts went into water conservation. But political change was in the air, and in 1991 the constitution was changed to allow opposition parties. The first multiparty legislative elections were held in January 1991, and resulted in the opposition party - MpD (*Movimento para Democracia*) - winning the majority of seats. For the first time in sub-Saharan Africa, a single party government was voted out of power. The following month, President Aristides Pereira was voted out of office. The transfer of power was peaceful, and the new government was formed in February 1991.

Then began the second cycle, with the MpD ruling until the present day. The second general legislative elections were held, amidst predictions that the MpD would lose ground. In fact the results were quite similar, with MpD gaining an absolute majority (50 seats out of 72), and PAICV gaining 21. A new party emerged, the *Partido da Convergência Democrática* (PCD), formed by ex-MpD members, gaining one seat. The two other parties are not represented in the National Assembly.

The French and German embassies share the same building in Praia



The MpD, led by Prime Minister Carlos Veiga, moved Cape Verde towards a market-based economy. They have tried, with some success, to attract foreign investment, and have launched a privatisation programme. Great strides have been made in increasing access to education, and increasing compulsory basic education to six years. Infrastructure - airport, port, and telecommunications - have expanded. Social indicators have improved, life expectancy has risen, and Cape Verde has improved its rating in the UNDP's Human Development Index.

Concerns remain

While progress has been made in the political and economic sphere, Cape Verde is not yet out of the woods. Poverty levels remain high, with estimates of 30 - 40% of the population living below the poverty level. Unemployment persists at about 25%, and many still depend on remittances from abroad. With only about 10% of land capable of sustaining agriculture, food aid is still important. There is still much which could be done for water conservation, and irrigation, but the cost involved is likely to be high. The country continues to be dependant on external assistance, and the tendency of donors to withdraw aid is worrying. Tourism is a sector with potential which is beginning to take off.

Cape Verde is included in the



list of Least Developed Countries, even though its *per capita* income and quality of life indicators exceed the cut-off point. The country remains structurally vulnerable.

A certain dissatisfaction persists, and the MpD has been affected by internal rifts. Municipal elections held in February had a low turnout, which observers believe is an indication of a level of dissatisfaction. The ruling party retained eight municipalities, while PAICV increased its number to six. A political crisis was unleashed when Prime Minister Carlos Veiga announced in July that he was suspending his mandate until the presidential elections, for which he is a candidate. The acting Prime Minister assumed the executive of the country, but his caretaker government was unable to take certain decisions. Reaction was critical, especially from opposition parties, and tension was high. This has been the first ripple on the calm water of Cape Verde's democracy, which

some observers viewed with trepidation, seeing it as a situation of irregularity, where the acting government couldn't function normally, and where the image of the country could suffer. Others saw the situation as not unusual in a new democracy still finding its feet. Mr Veiga has subsequently handed his resignation to the President.

The political landscape is again undergoing a transformation, and two new parties, raising new issues, will contest the next legislative elections, foreseen for January 2001. These are the *Partido de Trabalho e da Solidariedade* (PTS), founded by the mayor of Mindelo, Onésimo Silveira, and the *Partido da Renovação Democrática* (PRD), led by ex-MpD Jacinto Santos.

It remains to be seen what the next cycle of development will bring, but it is clear that remarkable progress has been made against the odds, a tribute to the resilience and creativity of its people.

Only 10% of Cape Verde's land is arable

Economy - a complex reality

Interview with Antonio Gualberto do Rosario

Acting-Prime Minister and National Authorising Officer of the EDF

Compared to other countries in the region, the standard of living in Cape Verde is appreciably higher. According to this year's UNDP Human Development Report, the *per capita* GDP for the country is \$3,233 compared to only \$616 in Guinea Bissau, and \$1,301 in Senegal. In the sub-Saharan Africa region, Cape Verde comes third after South Africa and Seychelles in its level of human development, according to the UNDP, which takes into account life expectancy, adult literacy, and *per capita* income.

In the economic sphere too, Cape Verde is one of the countries in the region with a real positive growth rate, estimated at eight per cent this year.

Yet the country is classified as a Least Developed Country (LDC). Isn't this a paradox?

"I don't think so," says Antonio Gualberto do Rosario, Cape Verde's acting Prime Minister and National Authorising Officer (NAO). "First of all, economic growth is not a sufficient indicator for classification. Unfortunately the indicator which has been retained by the international community is the *per capita* income. If one analyses only that, obviously Cape Verde would be classified as a country in transition. But there are other elements which are taken into account, such as the insularity of the country."

"There is also the problem of being an archipelago, which imposes a series of major constraints, such as the size of the markets, and environmental problems, which in Cape Verde are extreme, because of the geographic situation in the Sahel."

Recurring drought is a problem that has haunted Cape Verde throughout its history, causing major demographic changes, through famine and emigration. Drought cycles have caused havoc in agricultural production and loss of livestock, with consequent negative effects on the economy.

In any analysis of Cape Verde, the influence of the diaspora has to be taken into account. The 2000 census estimates that the number of Cape Verdeans living abroad exceeds the number living in the country. Ties remain close, and private transfers of funds have been a significant factor. But this revenue is uncertain, diminishing as emigrants become settled in their new countries and ties with home weaken.

The high volume of aid which the country receives can also skew the picture. Estimates are that aid contributes on average 18% of GNP. Key to this, says do Rosario, is "the sound management of the aid received." Aid certainly seems to have been put to good use. Cape Verde has made enormous strides since 1990 in the provision of infrastructure, airport, port and telecommunications, as well as access to basic education.

"But Cape Verde is not now independent of aid. For me, it is important that we are building a country which will have sustained development, and which in the future will not need international aid. The situation is not the same as it was five years ago; there has been a reduction of dependence on aid. The macro-economic, social and political environment has encouraged investment, especially foreign, in tourism, light industry and services. This has been vital for reducing unemployment, which is very high in the country."

Trust Fund

The Trust Fund is a mechanism introduced to the country to diminish domestic debt: the proceeds from privatisation, along with donor support, are placed in the Fund, which is available to reduce the domestic debt. "It is an important innovation, in its originality and its global conception," says do Rosario. He is enthusiastic: "the solution we have adopted allows us to reinforce the macro-economic conditions and reduce the domestic debt without macro-economic risks related to inflation, exchange rates, investments etc. Cape Verde shows clearly that it is a valid solution, which I recommend to other countries."

Currency

The Cap Verde *escudo* has been pegged to the Portuguese *escudo* since 1998, which has brought clear advantages, according to do Rosario. "Our inflation rate is the lowest ever, and economic growth the highest. These two elements alone are enough to say that it is a very important solution. Our currency is protected by this mechanism, and the macro-economic effect of introducing the Maastricht criteria has been to protect the economy from a series of risks, even political risks, temptations which can arise at certain moments of political life, for instance before elections." He believes it is essential for ensuring sustainable economic development. It is not without difficulties, which EU countries who subscribe to Maastricht have also experienced. Higher inflation in Cape Verde put pressure on the exchange rate, and made exports to EU markets less competitive. The fall in inflation this year - the average rate fell to around two per cent - will ease pressure on the exchange rate. "Our difficulty is the impossibility of assuring the Maastricht criteria because of the macro-economic structure of the country, especially if there is a significant reduction of external aid."

Cape Verde's economic model is in transition, says do Rosario, and the difficulties of balance

of payment should be seen in this context. He says there are some positive indicators which validate this new approach. "There can be a normal tendency for Cape Verde, as for any other country at a similar stage of development, to experience a deterioration of the trade balance. Importation of technology is high, without the immediate compensation of exports."



Cotonou Agreement

The Cotonou Agreement specifies that the 9th EDF will be based on the government's strategy. "We agree with the criteria, and Cape Verde can make the necessary adjustments. But this government is not in a position to do that. We are at the end of our mandate and it is not legitimate to agree on a strategy with our partners, at a moment when the people are asked to vote. We have our approach but we will keep it for the post-election period."

There is still a long way to go to get over the structural constraints of the country. "Today more than ever we need external aid. It is not the moment to cut off the supply of petrol to the engine, when it is just about to take off.

"Cape Verde could be an example of a country with severe constraints, but which, with support from its partners and determined efforts, managed to overcome those difficulties."

Cape Verde	1990	2000	
Population	341,491	434,263	
	1991	2000	
Emigrants	479,000	500,000+	
Continent	America	Europe	Africa
Emigrants	255,000	151,000	72,000

Source: INE - Instituto Nacional de Estatística

Investing in education

"Education is not a way of escaping the country's poverty, but of fighting it"

Julius Nyerere, late President of Tanzania

Cape Verde faced formidable hurdles in the field of education, with illiteracy levels of up to 75% before independence in 1975. By 1998 illiteracy was estimated at 16%. In the last 10 years, remarkable progress has been made in increasing access to basic education, with high levels of compulsory attendance. At seven - the compulsory age to start school - there is virtually 100% attendance, a remarkable achievement considering the geography of the country.

The government gives education high priority: in 1990, it got 14% of the budget, in 1999, 19%. With a population growing at the rate of 2.3%, many young people (45% less than 15 years old, 55% less than 20) and fewer possibilities of

emigrating, the system has to provide for growing demand.

Education is free and compulsory at basic level, for six years. There has been a school building programme, with international aid.

Free school meals are provided under the WFP, but the future of this programme is in doubt, as donor food aid diminishes.

A problem confronting primary school is the lack of trained teachers. About 60% are qualified, and are often attracted to other, better-paying alternatives.

The ministry says that more than 60% of primary school children go on to

secondary level. Each municipality has a secondary school, major progress when one considers that, in the past, children who wanted to continue to secondary often had to attend school on another island.

While increasing attendance is welcome, it is difficult for the existing infrastructure to cope. Often schools are overburdened, and not enough teachers are available. Classes are sometimes held at different times, say 8.00 to 10.30 for one class, and 10.30 to 13.30 for the next.

There was an attempt to nationalise the curriculum in the late 1980s, to modernise it and make it more relevant. But the resources are not available to develop this idea, or produce schoolbooks tailored to the country's reality, which continues to use Portuguese schoolbooks.

Girls' participation in all levels is virtually equal, with girls outnumbering boys at secondary. One explanation given for this is that there are more employment opportunities for boys at this age.

Adult education too, has a place, and there are centres around the country teaching adults literacy and basic mathematics. Information campaigns in newspapers get the message across about education and more recently, have taken advantage of the flowering of local radio. An education journal, *Alpha*, is an important instrument in the fight against illiteracy.

There are several post-secondary institutes, such as those for training marine officers, and for agricultural research. In April this year, a law was passed to create a university of Cape Verde, uniting the existing institutes.

Cape Verde is taking seriously the commitments of the World Conference on Education for All, and has set up its own programme - Education for All - to increase and improve access to basic education.



Improving the quality of life

While its name may conjure up images of verdant greenery, Cape Verde is so called because of its proximity to Cap Vert in Senegal. The country is in the Sahelian zone and suffers badly from lack of water, and an undependable rain supply which is rarely adequate for

self-sufficient agriculture.

Cape Verde joined the Lomé Convention two years after independence, in 1977.

Under the 8th EDF, €30 million is available, and one of the main focuses is to improve basic infrastructure.

The city of Praia has a special status, as a capital city, as a municipality, and the largest urban centre in the country. Its population - now 106,000 - has increased by 65% since 1990. Urban poverty can be more extreme than rural, and the city infrastructure is not prepared for such a large population. The EU's focus in Praia is to tackle the problem of water supply and sanitation. Important for its impact on health and quality of life, and for the natural environment; without a city sewage system, untreated waste flows into the sea.

Under an earlier phase of the project, a network of pipelines was laid, providing water to a part of the town. This network has to be extended to cope with the rising number of people. The second phase of the project is now under way, and completion is expected by mid 2002. It will extend the network of pipelines, and build more reservoirs. The project works hand-in-hand with the Praia Guideline Plan, the municipality's long-term planning strategy for the city.

This phase of the project will also tackle the sanitation problem, installing a sewage network. This is a particular challenge in a city which has spread rapidly, into the hills, and often without planning. The engineers estimate that 40-50 kilometres of drains and pipelines will be needed.

This network will be connected to the treatment plant, situated close to the coast, which was built during the first phase. The planners had a long-term vision up to 2040, to take into account population growth. It is now possible to extend the

plant, because the potential to cope with 250,000 people was factored into the original design.

The engineer explained the task ahead to connect the new network: a paved road leads to the treatment centre. Burying the drain will entail digging eight metres deep into the rock, and it will take up to four months to complete one kilometre of road.

Liquid waste, after treatment, will flow into the sea, while solid waste will be treated, compressed, and used in agriculture, making a complete life cycle.

The laying of drains will of course cause a certain disruption in the city, but this will be carefully planned to minimise inconvenience. What city is without its works, which in the long run vastly improve the quality of life!

Supporting local development

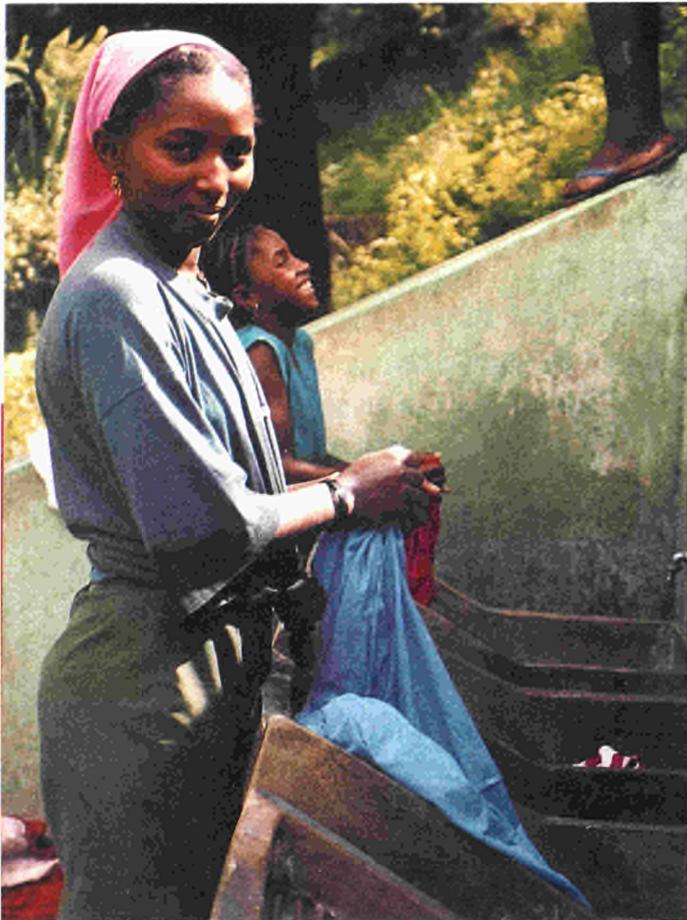
Under the 8th EDF, the EU has made €2m available for microprojects. This programme tries to reach the most disadvantaged layer of society, the most vulnerable. 30% of the population lives under the poverty threshold, living without basic infrastructure in health, electricity, transport, education, water. They have few work opportunities, and risk being excluded from development.

The microprojects programme reaches out to this population, supporting local development. It aims to contribute to the current decentralisation process, by working with local authorities.

The programme is relatively new in Cape Verde, in existence for only four years, but the need is clear: the microprojects office is currently

Luisa Maria Gomes des Reis Afonso, leader of the local association





The laundry area has washbasins and taps with running water, and makes washing clothes easier for everyone, above

Five women own the company Petitosa, which sells local preserves, below



dealing with 200 requests, stretching their resources to the limit. They try to reach all the islands, and all sectors, including water, sanitation, education, kindergartens, as well as revenue-generating activities such as abattoirs, and irrigation projects.

"The advantage of the system is its flexibility and accessibility, the speed with which projects can be identified and funds released," explains Charles Yvon Rocha, director of the microprojects programme, whose office is attached to the prime minister's. This is an advantage, in Mr Rocha's view. "We are closer to the decision-makers, so the administrative

constraints are fewer."

"There is enormous need, and we try to reach the whole country, the most isolated areas. It is a strategy of going to those who are most in need, not concentrating on urban centres." This is indeed a challenge when one considers the geographical constraints of the country.

Travelling north outside the city of Praia, it is another world. Taking the route to the Pico do Antónia, a towering mountain covered with luscious vegetation, cool and deliciously scented air - a world apart from the desert landscape of flatter islands such as Sal. Here lives a scattered community of some 1000 people. The community wanted to tap the rainwater resources available, by building a dyke, so that it could be used for drinking, washing, and irrigation. Before, people had to travel to the water source, also used for washing, animals, etc. Pipes were laid to take the water down the mountain to a central location. The site was chosen by the local agricultural association. Luisa Maria Gomes des Reis Afonso, leader and founder member, explained that the landowner, after discussion with the community, ceded a part of his land to the local community free of charge. A plaque testifies to his generosity. When something belongs to the community, she explained, they look after it. A laundry area, complete with

washbasins and running water, makes life a little easier.

The supply of water means that the area is a centre for horticulture.

Nearby, in the town of São Domingos, a small company, PetitOsa, was set up with support from the microprojects programme. Five local women preserve the local fruits and vegetables. These women, the main breadwinners for their families, were previously unemployed. Now they have a source of income. The women received training in production methods, accountancy, and marketing skills. Operating for one year now, it is hoped that the model can be used elsewhere. A similar project in Santo Antão, *Doces et Licores*, employs 10 women, producing fruit-flavoured liqueurs, as well as jams and pickles. The liquor uses *grogue* as its base - the locally-produced spirit made from sugarcane.

Innovative in Cape Verde is that the programme tries to work closely with the municipalities. Mr Rocha says that 80% of the projects are municipal and relate to local development.

"In the beginning there was a certain reticence on the part of the municipality, to working with civil society, but more and more the municipality is the interface, especially with associations. The programme tries to work with the municipalities' own local development plan."

Local power

"One of the most authentic creations of Cape Verde is decentralisation"

Cape Verde has seen a strong movement in decentralisation in the last 10 years. Mayors and municipal assemblies are elected by universal suffrage, in periodic elections just like the presidential and legislative. There has been a transfer of a whole series of powers from central government, and there is a finance law on local government.

It is often said that a test of real democracy is the level of local government, and the extent to which central government is prepared to devolve power and resources. In theory, decentralisation brings government closer to the people, and policies are more likely to be tailored to local needs. It is a means of representation and consultation, and ideally government and region act in partnership.

After independence a level of local government was introduced through a network of local councils, but they were designated by central government, and not elected representatives. The real change came with the introduction of multiparty democracy, when the country engaged in a series of reforms to strengthen local government.

There are now 17 municipalities, local councils under local administrators. Mayors are powerful figures, and the success of the municipality can depend on their dynamism. Municipal elections - the third since the introduction of multiparty democracy was introduced in 1991 - were held in February.

Finance

The municipality's budget is partly derived from its own resources, such as taxes, levies and fines, and partly from transfers from central government. 7% of the state's total receipts are destined for the municipalities. To this can be added external funds from international partners; for instance the EU's microprojects programme; the major infrastructure project in Praia.

"It is clear that the law on local finances does not satisfy the expectations or the needs of the municipalities," says Felisberto Vieira (Filù), Mayor of Praia since February. "There is a proposal to revise the law. This is fundamental, and would strengthen decentralisation."

Areas of responsibility are defined: "In legal terms, the municipality has responsibilities in education, infrastructure, health, constructing basic health and educational infrastructure," says Filù. But in practice they are hampered by lack of financial and technical resources. "Local power here is very real. But there is a great distance between what is physically real and institutionally real." He puts this down to the constraints of the country. "Economically vulnerable, there are structural problems which are not yet resolved, and the local authorities suffer from this." There are also "government limitations with regard to regular and effective transfer of funds."

The geography of Cape Verde lends itself to decentralisation, he believes. Being an archipelago, the central government is far away from many of the islands.

How far does it go?

"There is a degree of decentralisation" agrees Onésimo Silveira, who was elected for the third time mayor of Mindelo. "But centralisation is stronger, especially for those municipalities where the mayor is not of the governing party. There the central control is stronger." Local power is minor, he believes, and cannot be called autonomy. "It is the government which directs."

A similar point of view came from Jacinto

Onésimo Silveira,
Mayor of Mindelo





Felisberto Vieira (Filù),
Mayor of Praia

Santos, ex-mayor of Praia.

"One of the most authentic creations of Cape Verde is decentralisation, with political, judicial, and institutional autonomy. But now there is stagnation, and even, in some areas, a step backwards, with a more centralist tendency and even competition with the regions in investment projects.

"There is a tendency to suffocate the local authorities financially, to limit their natural protagonism. Transfer of competence should not depend on political fluctuations. Most local authorities use more than 50% of funds transferred to them by the state to finance running costs. Most do not have money to make investments - they are dependent on the state. They have no law defining clearly how the local authorities have public resources to finance local investment.

"The municipalities are a kind of government agency where contracts are concerned. The principle of subsidiarity is not accepted; the state defines the criteria," he says.

The budget they receive is not sufficient - half of it goes on basic running costs, such as salaries. Twinning with other town councils can bring significant support, and this is particularly true in Mindelo.

Indebted

Some municipalities have serious financial problems.

"I inherited a debt of about 350,000 contos, more than half the total budget, which is 600,000,"* says the new mayor of Praia. "We are on the verge of bankruptcy, and other municipalities have even more serious problems.

"It is indispensable that the Association of Municipalities, the government, and those international partners who support decentralisation, carry out financial reform."

"I hope that there will be a period of grace, a

moratorium, so that the municipalities' debts to the state can be subsidised. There could be external financing for this, so that we can finance projects, and have an investment policy for development projects. In Praia I have difficulties, because of the debt, to finance infrastructure in education, sport, health, and so provide work for the population."

"To sum up, there is no problem from the point of view of the reality of legislation, the delimitation is clear. But because of the national financial situation, the country is being strangled."

National Association

There is a National Association of Municipalities, which has just had its congress. Its president is Jorge Santos, mayor of Ribeira Grande. Its advantage is that local authorities can discuss together, and negotiate with the government, act as a counterweight. This is important, says Mr Santos, because government tendency is to decentralise problems to the local authority! A National Decentralisation Plan, which is looking at financial reform and new legal instruments, has been in place since last year. The Association also keeps in touch with organisations elsewhere in the world, to share experiences. Reform is on the cards, different models suit different countries, and Mr Santos told us that they are studying models in other countries, such as the Canary Islands, where there is a lot of autonomy, and France.

"The Association is viewed positively by the central power," says Filù, "because it is a partner. The Association wants more power, resources, more institutional capacity, while the government wants to centralise power and resources as well as institutional capacity. It is a struggle for balance, which is in my view healthy and beneficial. It depends on the negotiating capacity and the unity of the municipalities."

* 1 conto = 1,000 escudo



Contributing on the international stage

Rui Figueiredo Soares, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Communities

Cape Verde has a voice in the world which seems out of proportion to its small size. It maintains excellent relations with a broad range of countries, and has had a significant role in the UN Security Council. Its opening to the outside world can be explained in part by the fact that there is a Cape Verdean community scattered throughout the world. Cape Verde's location places it strategically between Africa, Europe, and America.

"After the Cold War the world took on a different shape," says Rui Figueiredo Soares, Minister for Foreign Affairs. "Countries are now considered as entities, able to assert themselves on the international stage. Groups of small insular countries defend their common interests in the UN, especially regarding environment.

"Cape Verde belongs to other groups, such as the group of Portuguese-speaking countries, with 200 million people, including Brazil. We also belong to the group of French-speaking countries."

He is concerned at the paradoxical situation of Cape Verde, where statistics such as *per capita* GDP may give the impression that all is well.

"Cape Verde is known for its good management of development aid and it is being punished for this. Public aid is diminishing on a global level, and certain partners are withdrawing. Our social indicators have improved but Cape Verde is very fragile, very vulnerable, deprived of natural resources. We are explaining to our partners that the criteria of vulnerability has to be taken into account. We are asking them not to leave us just as we are beginning to show sustainable development, because of our policies of economic, political and social reform. We offer a strategic partnership in development, a broader approach, not just government-to-government cooperation, but which includes all the actors." The country is at a crossroads, now transforming public development aid into a relationship where all the partners can benefit.

Regional organisations

Cape Verde is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose brief is to establish a common market and customs union. "It is one of the most successful examples of regional integration." It is not without difficulties. For instance, Cape Verde is physically separated from the other countries. "ECOWAS is based on the principle of economic integration, an economic free trade area, free movement of goods and people. Some countries are more advanced than others, and there are different currencies." He cites also the instability in the region. "It is one of the regions in Africa with recurring conflict, which diminishes ECOWAS' effectiveness. A single passport for the region is at an advanced stage. Infrastructure is needed to link the countries, and, on the political level, a parliament needs to be set up, so that the organisation can take on a more significant role."

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was set up in 1963. "The OAU was greatly taken up with self-determination and independence. Now reform is the issue. In what sense should it evolve? It has been very involved in conflict resolution, which unfortunately has been a major obstacle to development on our continent. It has to take a step forward, and the Syrte Declaration in 1999 was a step towards a constitution. But things can't be done rapidly. Other cases of integration, such as Europe, took a lot of time and there are still questions about it.

Being on friendly terms with many diverse countries has not prevented Cape Verde from taking a firm position. East Timor, linked by history as an ex-Portuguese colony, was firmly supported by Cape Verde in its struggle for independence.

"Peace, democracy, justice and respect for human rights... these are the areas where we can contribute most on the international stage."

"A pragmatic and realistic policy"

Time for dialogue

"Parties are the soul of democracy"

From independence in 1975 until 1991, Cape Verde was a constitutional one-party state, ruled by the PAICV, (*Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde*), the party which had fought for independence. The constitution was amended at the end of 1990 to allow opposition parties. These first multiparty elections, held in 1991, voted the ruling party out of power. This resulted in a peaceful transition of power to the opposition *Movimento para Democracia* (MpD), which still governs the country.

"Our philosophy is still social democracy, and our support comes from all social classes," says Mario Matos, Parliamentary leader of PAICV. His party, with 21 seats in the Assembly, is the second major political force in the country.

"PAICV was in power for 15 years in a one-party system, and in 1991 we lost the election. Contrary to other countries in Africa, it was a normal transition. There was a strong tendency to stigmatise PAICV, because of its past. But now people are tired of this message."

He explains the sort of country his party inherited at independence: "There were about 15 doctors, perhaps six economists, almost no infrastructure, no businesses, the countryside abandoned...I think we can say PAICV built a country, despite being one-party, with honesty and good management, with our international partners.

"We defend our message, that all parties are useful in a democracy, they are the soul of democracy, but difference doesn't make enemies, but adversaries. They should dialogue to intensify democracy - we have a deficit of democratic culture.

"There is an imbalance, we have 21 seats, the PCD one seat, and the ruling party has 50... they can even change the constitution without our approval. We haven't got power to block; laws

pass without our intervention. In the past 10 years there has been contempt for the opposition. Proof of democracy will come when there is more parliamentary equilibrium, an obligation to dialogue and mutual recognition of the political parties. In Parliament there is a low-intensity democracy."

Democracy finding its feet

"We are in a process of learning democracy, it is not always easy to listen to the other, respect their difference. We have difficulty getting information from the government to carry out our role, and that is a constitutional obligation. The opposition should have information on the state of public events, for instance to carry out fiscal checks.

"There is also a control of communication, especially television, because of its impact. There is unequal treatment, of news, of government and opposition information.

"There is an abnormal relationship between the government and those municipalities which the PAICV won. The transfer of funds is always late, works in the municipalities which are the government's responsibility are late, contracts are not signed."

But isn't there macro-economic stability, and international confidence?

"The image of Cape Verde is an *acquis* since independence. Recently an international seminar was held, to reflect on 25 years of independence of Cape Verde, attended by eminent economists, lawyers and so on. One remark was that all is not as it should be on a macro-economic level. There is a problem in the treasury, no money to pay for public works. Public debt has increased. The government says unemployment is 25%, but there has not been a valid survey. But one carried out in 1996 revealed that average unemployment was 38%."

Testing time

Antonio Pedro Mauricio dos Santos, *Partido da Convergência Democrática* (PCD); "Cape Verde is going through a very difficult moment. There are things which are not clear, but we don't get all the information, the affairs of state are not clarified. The press is almost completely dominated by the ruling party.

"We want a state which can avoid social dissension and balance development, to benefit all the people. 40% of the population lives in total poverty, without the minimum to survive."

There were two periods in Cape Verde after independence, he believes. The PAICV didn't take try to create local economic forces, capable of sustaining development. Instead they concentrated on mobilising aid, and didn't create conditions for autonomy.

The second period is the current government; "one of the positive things was that they tried to reduce the state's role in the economy; to create conditions where private forces could manage activities which would sustain future evolutions. Now we need a government which understands the situation of Cape Verde, which has a very clear strategy. This government has overstepped its possibilities, it hasn't got the imagination to go on to the next phase."

Aid will continue to diminish, making it imperative to attract foreign investment. "But it is much more important that the economy is subject to rules.... we must recuperate national morality."

Integration into the world economy is essential. "We were a bit closed, isolated, and that is not the solution. The fundamental point is to improve the quality of life of the people.

"We need total integration with the

world, it is the only way we can survive, but that will never touch our identity."

Balanced growth

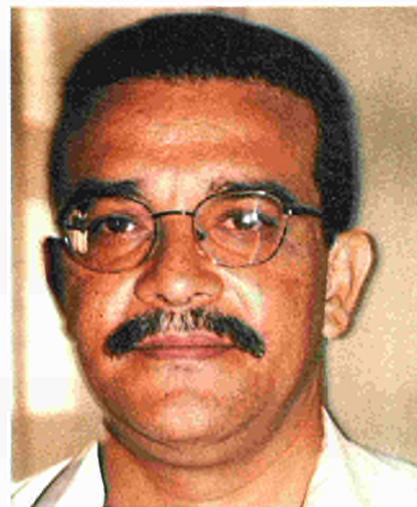
Jacinto Santos recently split from the ruling MpD, to create a new political party, *Partido da Renvacão democrática* (PRD). He left because there was "a deviation from the initial ideals of the movement. Especially in the past three years, there has been a "neo-liberal orientation, which Cape Verde, as a new country, is not capable of supporting, especially considering the level of poverty. We believe in a more balanced policy, that economic growth means more access for people to social assets, a policy with strong ideals and practices, to guarantee the stability of economic growth.

"The role of the state is to mitigate liberalisation, to assure social equilibrium, and avoid a situation where there are two worlds, one where wealth is concentrated, and the other disadvantaged."

He is wary of statistics which do not correspond to people's daily reality. "Included in these figures is international aid, transfers by the Diaspora. Growth is not due to a real evolution in the economy, and now Cape Verde is being penalised because of these statistics, despite the very deep poverty here."

"Too many people depend on the state, there is a problem of freedom of expression, the system is too rooted in the administrative machinery.... But you have to take risks for democracy!"

Another party which will be contesting the elections is *Partido da Trabalho e da Solidariedade* (PTS), founded by the popular mayor of Mindelo, Onésimo Silveira, elected its president in late August. Thus seven political parties are now in the ring.



Mario Matos, Parliamentary leader of PAICV



Antonio Pedro Mauricio dos Santos, PCD



Jacinto dos Santos, PRD

Slow change coming

"The principal and most dynamic agent in the fight against poverty"

There are more women than men in Cape Verde, an important human resource whose contribution is crucial. Family life centres around women, not just in the household, but often as the principal breadwinners. A phenomenon in Cape Verde is the high number of mothers who are both head of household, and the only breadwinner. This can be as high as 39% in some islands, and a big proportion of these are *solteiras* (single mothers).

Maria Madalena Tavares, president of *Organizaçao das Mulheres de Cabo Verde* (OMCV), Cape Verde's oldest women's organisation with 10,000 members, explains:

"In colonial times, many children were born in very difficult circumstances. There are many women household heads, especially in rural areas. It is also a cultural question; marriage wasn't obligatory." Exacerbating the problem is the high number of men who emigrate, leaving the women behind with the children.

"Now no child can be registered without the name of the father. He is obliged to support the child....but that depends on whether he works, and how much he earns.

"The government has done a lot for women. If the question of women is analysed only from the point of view of legislation, then one could say all is well, because we have the most modern legislation on our continent. But women still have health and educational problems, and are more often illiterate. Our woman is very discriminated against, she suffers from great economic and moral poverty.

"Violence is a fact here, we can't hide it. For a long time

women didn't say anything. Now they come and talk to our lawyers, who defend her. They dialogue with the authorities on her behalf, explain her right to get support for her children. "Machismo is a cultural question. The situation has improved, with much work, but it continues ... not only in our society, but in many societies worldwide. In European societies, too, there is still machismo."

Women are enormously creative and are always looking for ways to cope, to feed their families. "They are the principal and most dynamic agent in the fight against poverty. But their life is difficult. The women in the market, the street sellers - sometimes they haven't earned enough to give their children a glass of milk at the end of the day."

Access to rural women can be difficult. "Sometimes it takes us hours to get to their house, to speak about their rights. They have no water, no wood for cooking, no time to talk to their neighbours." Health services are rudimentary in many rural areas: "We work in areas where no nurse comes, it is OMCV that gives the information about family planning. Health services are very weak, very poor, in rural areas, because the communities are very dispersed."

Evelyne de Mello Figueiredo, president of the NGO Morabi, explains: "more women than men are unemployed, more are illiterate. The young are OK, it is the women who are heads of families, this is where professional training is important, for generating revenue."

Women often have children with different men, because "they think that each one will give them something, but they give nothing." It is difficult to change this mentality; Cape Verdean women work a lot, a lot... the children, fetching water, the informal sector, it is women who do all this. It is a very slow change, but it is changing."

Streetsellers sometimes haven't enough to give their children a glass of milk at the end of the day



Music strikes a chord

by Jan Fairley

Musically Cape Verde has been placed well and truly on the map by one woman and one woman alone - barefoot diva Cesaria Evora. Discovered in Lisbon in her mid-40s, in just over 10 years she has recorded eight albums, selling more than a million copies world-wide. Her fourth album, *Miss Perfumado* (on the French label Mélodie) sold more than 500,000 copies. Her songs are in the everyday language of Kriolu, a creole language which blends old-style Portuguese and West African languages. Many of them capture Cape Verde's painful history.

As Cesaria says, "It was in the middle of trade routes to the Americas and back, and the music has all those flavours in it. From West Africa it was for centuries the main stopping-off point for

ships taking slaves to the Americas and the Caribbean, so it has all that tragedy in it."

It is a music shot through with what the Portuguese call *saudade*, a bitter-sweet emotion which fuses a sense of dreams, melancholy and loss with memory. For Cesaria, "the music has many feelings in it, the lives and experiences of so many people are there. I think that is why many people tell me they feel the music touches their skin as well as their hearts."

This emotion of *saudade* is encapsulated by *morna*, one of the main types of music Cesaria sings, capturing the notion of sailors longing for their land; of lovers longing for their beloved; of womenfolk waiting for their men who have emigrated for work; of men thinking of home. The lyrics of *morna* are part of a poetic tradition

Lusafrica



Barefoot Diva Cesaria Evora. Her career really took off when she left Cape Verde and reached a wider audience

Simentera, a group founded by professional artists and musicians, has played a key role in revitalising Cape Verdean music



Lusafrica

which emerged early in the 1800s. Some say the name *morna* evolved from the word "mourning" used by British sailors, who mixed with merchants and travellers of all nations in the bay of Mindelo, on São Vicente island. At the end of the 19th century, when the Portuguese were dominant in the maritime world, sending fleets to Japan, Brazil or Angola, they used Mindelo bay as a stopover point on the way to Cape Town, filling its warehouses with merchandise and food products. There was money around and as a port Mindelo had a vibrant night life: music was everywhere.

Today Cesaria sings many *mornas* written by her uncle, the late disabled composer, B. Leza, including the haunting *Mar Azul*. A classic *morna* text

is Leza's *Lua nha testemunha* into which he poured feelings about his own difficult life: "Moon, solitary companion, who knows all of my life? All that I have suffered, from distance and from absence? The world plays with me some kind of game of hide and seek. Every turn it does, it brings me new pain, that carries me closer to God."

As well as *morna*, there is the more up-beat and jaunty-rhythmed *coladeras*, a dance of tight embrace which has its own undertow of wistfulness. Both *morna*, and to a certain extent *coladera*, have undoubtedly absorbed influences from other port music: the lamenting Portuguese *fado*, jaunty Brazilian *choro* (which literally means sobbing), the more percussive Angolan *lundum* (itself

an influence on *fado*), and Argentine tango. These are all music of *ida y vuelta* - of going and returning - emerging from the lives and experiences of emigrants and those on maritime journeys passing through numerous ports.

What sets Evora apart is her warm rich voice. It sculpts the phrases with gently nuanced intonation and a deft light touch. She never allows it to over-charge words by lingering, and keeps clarity of tone by using only an occasional flicker of natural vibrato. The classic arrangements for many of her infectious songs pivot round the flinty, metallic tones of the *cavaquinho* (the Portuguese ukele) and the percussive, tinkling sounds of the piano, a timbre central to the aesthetic of the many piano bars in which

Cesaria has sung. Most of her songs have tripping, syncopated rhythms, with phrases often beginning with a long held note, which can make you feel as if you are circling around a dance floor. Even when the message of the song is sad, as it often is, the music has a cathartic, embracing quality.

Like many Cape Verdeans, ultimately to achieve her late success Cesaria had to travel abroad. "I always knew that if I left Cape Verde there was a possibility that something could happen," she recalls. "I could tell people loved my music from the reception visitors gave me, but artists don't have much of a future because the public is too small. I left for the first time in 1985 and that's when my career really became interesting."

Cesaria Evora is not the only singer to emerge from Cape Verde. When José da Silva, the man who has master-minded her success, first heard her, Cesaria was singing at a Lisbon restaurant belonging to Bana, fondly known as the father of Cape Verdean music. Bana is a singer with a magnificent voice. For many years he worked with Cesaria's uncle, B. Leza, driving him from concert to concert. Other well-known *morna* singers include Ildo Lobo, one time leader of the group Os Tubaroes, as well as female singers Maria Alice, Celina Pereira, Titinha and Saozinha.,

and also Tito Paris, Boy Gé Mendes, Bau and the wonderful Teofilo Chantre.

A group which has played a key part in the revitalisation of Cape Verdean music at grassroots level is Simentera, founded by professional artists and musicians in 1992. They have updated traditional music with modern arrangements, and researched and revived forgotten genres. In search of a more natural sound, they have pioneered the revival of acoustic instruments. Until the advent of electric instruments in the 1960s, *mornas* were performed by a solo singer, accompanied by *cavaquinho*, guitar, perhaps violin, bass, piano or accordion. On occasion the *cavaquinho* is supported alone by the viola, the 12-stringed Portuguese or tenor guitar. Contemporary groups variously play clarinet, flute, sax, trumpet, electric guitar, piano, synthesiser, strings, drums and percussion.

Many Cape Verdean songs have separation as their theme. As Cesaria Evora says, "It's to do with emigration; it's a way of life. And when a couple separate (one of them, usually the man, leaves Cape Verde to find work), it's the same thing to be separated from love as it is from the country."

For Evora, fate and country are intertwined, as illustrated by *Sorte* (Chance) a key song by Teofilo Chantre and Nika Sicile on her latest album *Café*



Atlantico. A tribute to her success late in life, it is a love song to Cape Verde, with which her fate is linked. Luck is imagined "landing on me like a butterfly/ I welcomed you with open arms, to share you with my people/Thanks to you, the entire world has honoured me, I have spread the reputation of my land/ Thanks to you, I have carried the message of our poets around the world, I have sung *sodade* for those who have left, I have sung *regreso* for those who have returned/ Good luck to me, good luck to my country, good luck to all

Bana. A singer with a magnificent voice who is known as the father of Cape Verdean music

PROFILE

Cape Verde



General Information

Area	4,033 sq km
Coastline	965 km
Population	435,000 (mid 1999)
Population growth rate	2.1% (2000)
Main towns	Praia (capital) pop. 100,000. Mindelo pop 60,000
Date of Independence	5 July 1975 from the Portuguese
Languages	Portuguese, Crioulo
Religion	Roman Catholic (97%), indigenous beliefs

Economy

Currency	Cape Verde escudo (CVEsc). 110,265,000 CVEsc/€. Since 1998 the Cape Verde escudo has been pegged to the Portuguese escudo US\$3,233
GDP	6% (1999)
GDP growth	6.5% (1999)
Consumer price inflation	As % GNP: 52.5%
Total external debt	Services (68%), agriculture and fishing (12%); industry (18%)
Main sectors	Fuel re-export, footwear, clothing, fish, bananas, hides
Main exports	Foodstuffs, consumer goods, industrial products, transport equipment, fuels
Main imports	Portugal, Germany, France
Main trading partners	

Government

Type	Republic
Executive	President Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro (Head of State) Prime Minister (Head of Government); Council of Ministers
Legislative	Unicameral National Assembly or <i>Assembléia Nacional</i> ; 72 seats (66 deputies elected in Cape Verde by popular suffrage; elected by Cape Verdeans living abroad)
Elections	December 1995 (legislative) and February 1996 (presidential); next elections due in 2001 (legislative by January; presidential by February)
Main political parties	Seven political parties are registered. <i>Movimento para Democracia</i> (MpD); <i>Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde</i> (PAICV), <i>União Caboverdiano Independente e Democrática</i> (UCID), <i>Partido Social Democrático</i> (PSD), <i>Partido da Convergência Democrático</i> (PCD), and <i>Partido de Trabalho e da Solidariedade</i> (PTS), <i>Partido da Renovação Democrática</i> (PRD).

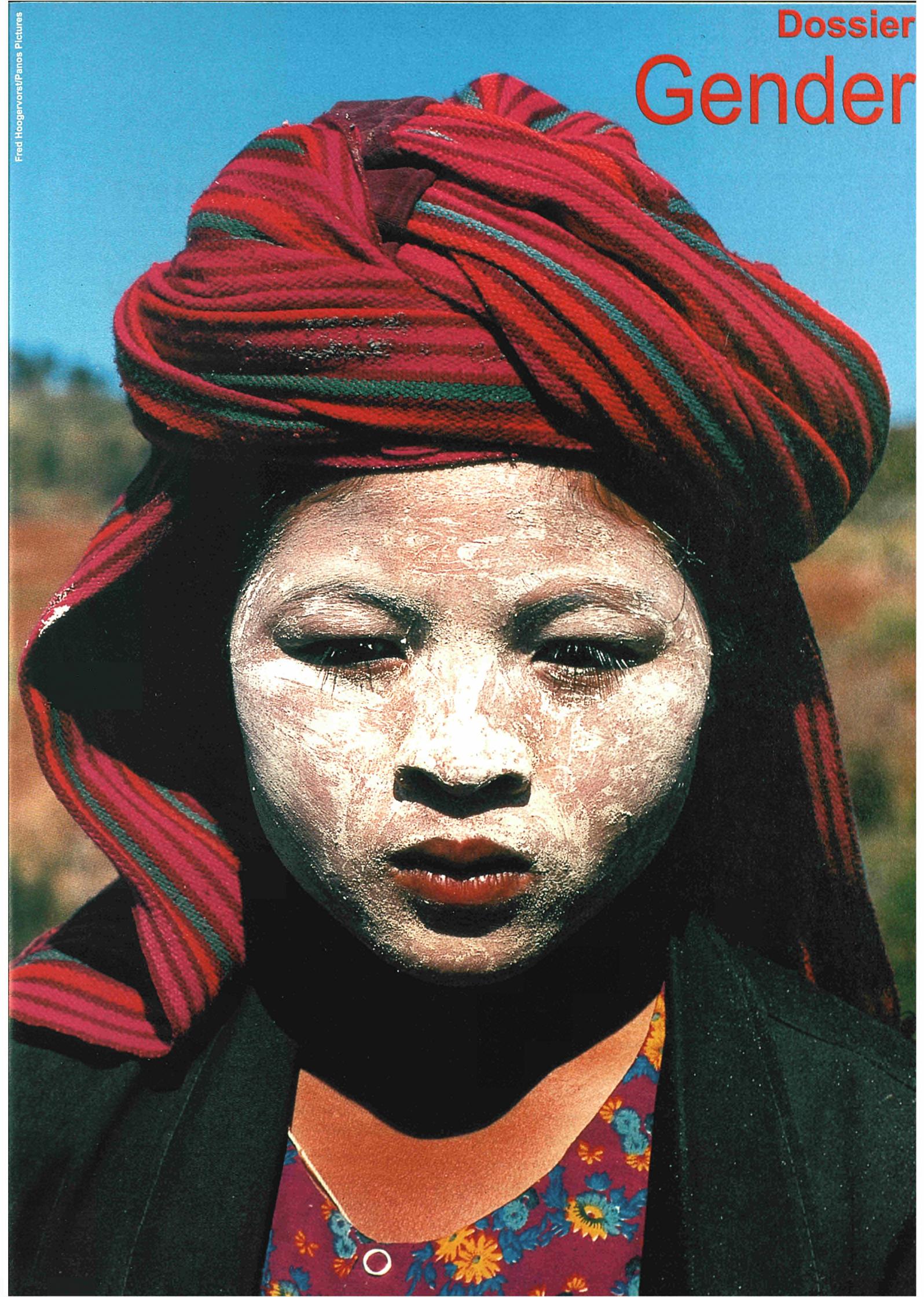
Social Indicators

Life expectancy	69 years
Infant mortality	54/1,000 live births (1998)
Education	78% enrolment (combined primary, secondary and tertiary)
Adult literacy	72.9%
Pop. with access to safe water	35% (1998)
Human development index rating	0.688 (105th out of 174 countries)

Dossier

Gender

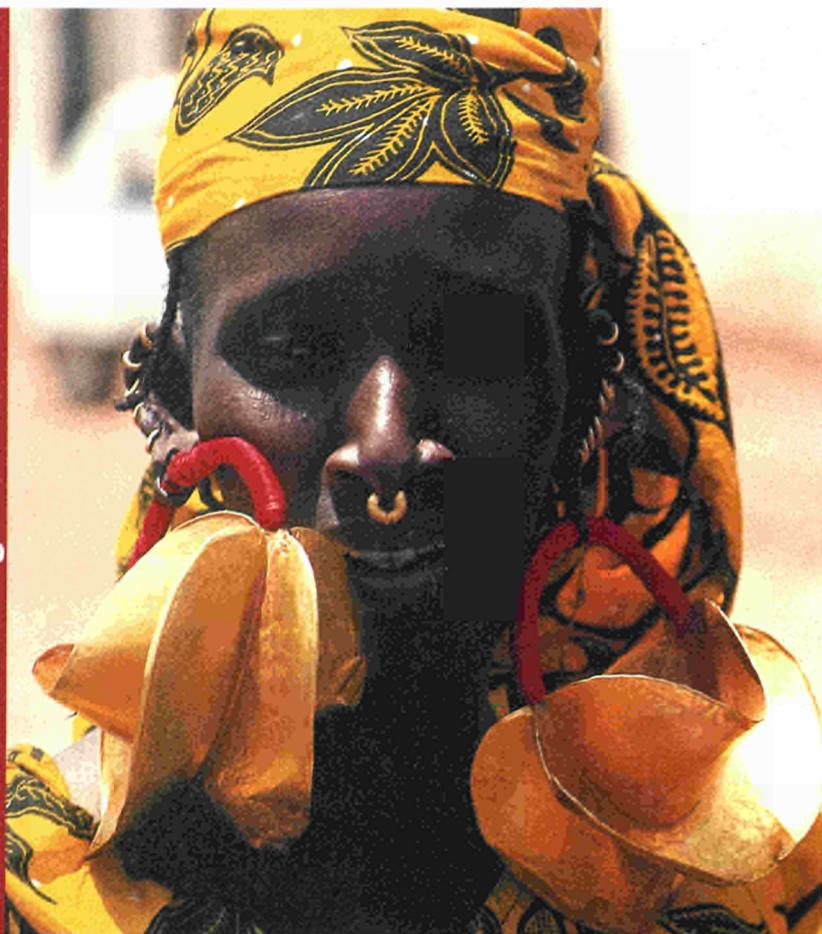
Fred Hoogervorst/Panos Pictures



Just in the eye of the beholder?

by Sue Wheat

Beauty is a strange concept. Of course, it is in the eye of the beholder, but what makes the beholder see in a certain way? Is it just personal aesthetics or are there deeper psychological influences?



"thin and beautiful", yet all over Africa, the Caribbean, much of the Pacific and elsewhere, thin is considered ugly - fat is beautiful - and it's not just a confidence-boosting slogan, it's a definite state of mind.

"True beauty is that of a woman who is herself," writes Egyptian feminist writer Nawal El Saadawi, author of *The Hidden Face of Eve*. "Beauty comes above all from the mind, from the health of the body and the completeness of self." She is right, of course. People at peace with themselves and happy in life do radiate a certain beauty, whether or not their features are aligned in a conventionally beautiful way. But it is not the full story. Some people are considered more beautiful than others, no matter whether they are healthy or happy, and attaining socially-acceptable beauty can be a highly destructive process, both physically and psychologically. Because of the pressure in many societies for women to be attractive in order to get a man and survive economically and socially - the need to put out the right physical signals is overpowering.

"A girl feels that her life and future depends on the length of her nose and the curl of her lashes," says El Saadawi. This is undoubtedly a psychological phenomenon shared by women worldwide, but El Saadawi argues it is particularly powerful in Arab societies where women often have little power to express themselves verbally. The woman is "discharged of her responsibility as a human being of the core of a human being's personality". Without this inner core she is "left only with her outer skin, or envelope".

It is not just the shape of the features on that outer skin, but its colour which is seen in many

On the Thai-Burmese border the Padaung women lengthen their necks by layering metal rings between their collar bones and their chins. To outsiders it looks freakish and painful, to the Padaung the longer the neck, the greater the sense of beauty. In Brazil, a big bottom is considered the height of sexiness, yet in Europe and the US, women will spend many sweaty, angst-ridden hours exercising to get rid of a large behind. Similarly, thousands of Westerners are suffering from eating disorders in order to be

cultures as a definite manifestation of beauty. When an Egyptian friend of mine told me she doubted her potential to marry because she was ugly, I was astounded. This woman was constantly admired for her beauty by those who met her in England, where she now lives. I saw her denial of it as an indication of her low self-esteem. However, when I met an Egyptian friend of hers I found that in Egypt she was indeed considered ugly because her skin colour, although only light brown, was considered too dark.

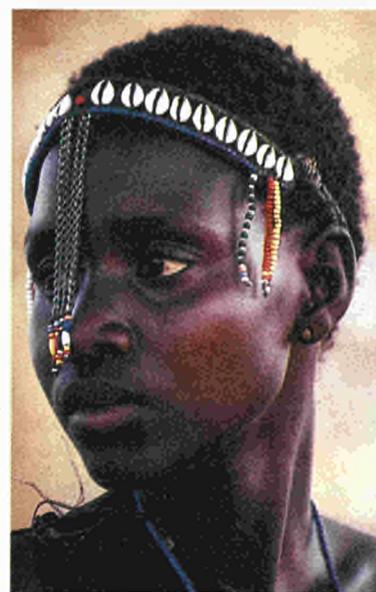
In Egypt, as in many countries, pale skin is emblematic of beauty. It indicates wealth and status. It shows you are rich enough not to have to work outside, and also connects you to those in power both in the past (the colonialists) and the present (white Westerners). The racism inherent in colonial and post-colonial societies has favoured those with paler skin, and that legacy lives on in the collective unconscious and consciousness of much black society. Black American writer Toni Morrison wrote about the psychological trauma behind this racism in *The Bluest Eye*, a novel based on a real experience of hers when a black school friend declared she wanted blue eyes. The novel was, she says, her effort to convey her realisation that "beauty was not simply something to behold; it was something one could do... Implicit in her desire (to have blue eyes) was racial self-loathing. And 20 years later I was still wondering about how one learns that. Who told her? Who made her feel that it was better to be a freak than what she was? Who had looked at her and found her so wanting, so small a weight on the beauty scale? The novel pecks away at the gaze that condemned her."

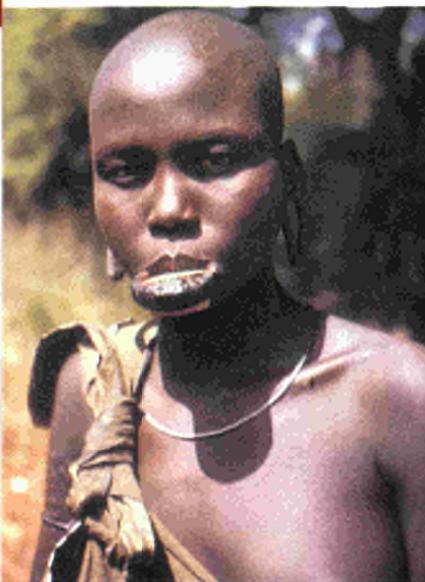
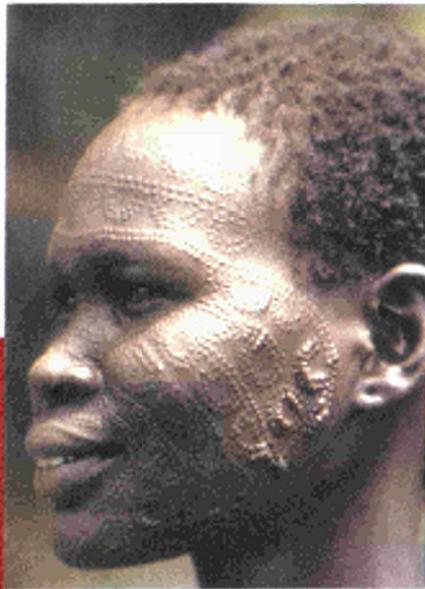
Frantz Fanon, a French-Caribbean psychiatrist and writer, contextualised this desire for white skin historically in *Black Skins, White Masks*. Colonialism denigrated all things black

and its psychological legacy lives on in millions of people. "The effective disalienation of the black man (Fanon uses "man" for both genders) entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process - primarily economic, subsequently the internalisation - or better, the epidermalisation - of this inferiority." So, if you switch on the television in many parts of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean you are likely to see a pale-skinned and even blonde-haired presenter or newsreader, despite the fact that the norm in those regions is black hair and dark skin.

The extreme value placed on having pale skin has had tragic consequences throughout black communities, particularly in West Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, with the high use of skin-bleaching products. These have led to disfiguration, skin diseases and cancer. Many commercial skin-bleaching products have now been banned, but the force of the desire to be pale is evident from the fact that many black women continue to make their own skin bleaching products, even using toilet bleach. "It's a colonial legacy which has also been boosted with the advent of Western culture through TV and magazines and billboard advertising," says Sarah Mukasa, UK Programmes Manager for the women's rights organisation, Akina Mama Wa Africa.

Media campaigns informing women of the dangers of skin-whitening have been far-reaching, and the problem has subsided in Africa, say other commentators. "In some circles - generally the older generation - being "too dark" is still perceived as unattractive, but generally it's not an issue - as long as the skin is smooth and looks healthy," says Ilse Mwanza, who is active in women's rights and anti-AIDS organisations in Zambia.





Beauty, then, is a social construct in that certain features associated with power become deeply ingrained in a society. "In African countries beauty was and is associated with wealth," says Ilse Mwanza. "Only wealthy men can afford to "keep" their wives well, that is, give them enough to eat, don't work them too hard in the fields, and let them concentrate on home and children."

This is true of body size, as well as facial features, she points out.

"Unlike in the West, slim is often thought of as unhealthy, especially in these times of Aids. Aids is known as "the slim disease" because people lose weight fast with it, so to actually be slim is a sign of ill-health and people avoid looking too skinny if they can help it." She points out that, in the West, body size holds economic and social tags, but in reverse. "In the West, slim is also considered beautiful because it costs a lot. One has to be well off to afford the slimming/low-fat foods and treatments and to have the time to spend on making your body beautiful. Poor people are often fat because they lack the knowledge - education costs money, and inclination - there is less

social pressure to be fashionably slim and to avoid cheap junk-foods."

Art and literature are crucial in emphasising attitudes to and concepts about beauty, as well as more modern forms of communication such as TV and advertising. In Arab society, songs, poems and novels portray beauty in women in terms of flowing hair, long eyelashes, full lips and breasts. At the same time, advertising billboards show similarly "romantic" pictures of women in skimpy clothes, pouting at the camera, advertising beauty products that will give women that hair, those lashes, lips and breasts. These romantic images however, directly contradict the messages Arabic girls are given in daily life, which are to cover up. "Many girls end up with psychological disorders because of the severe contradictions to which she is exposed," says El Saadawai. "If they react to the messages they are severely punished."

Anyone who has seen the Disney cartoon *Little Mermaid*, will know that such attitudes are limited to an oppressive Arabic culture. In this popular children's film, a wicked witch mermaid grants the Little Mermaid a wish that she might have legs in order to

get closer to the handsome sailor she has fallen in love with at first sight. The condition is that her voice be taken away and the witch presents her with a challenge: to make the sailor fall for her in 24 hours despite being mute. The power she is left with is purely physical, not mental: You can use your eyes, you can use your hips, you can use your body... says the witch and the beautiful (auburn-haired, white-skinned, hour-glass figured) Little Mermaid promptly does - and wins her man. The messages this puts out to children around the world (Disney is after all a global phenomenon) contradicts the fundamental rules many adults give their children such as not to speak to strange men, and offers destructive paradigms of physical beauty advising physical self-exploitation to be happy and successful. Inevitably, this sailor was the Mermaid's ticket out of boredom and familial restraints - a common route into marriage for women world-wide. Beauty, we are still being told by one of today's most powerful global corporations, is definitely more than skin deep and carries the key to prosperity and happiness.

All photos from Panos Pictures

Fa'afafine, fakaleiti and mahu

by Paul Miles

In Samoa, it is often said "the most beautiful women are men."



Samoa, as with all Polynesian countries, has a lively culture of cross-dressing men. It has shocked, bemused and enchanted foreign missionaries, traders and tourists for many years. And sometimes, no doubt, frustrated them.

At the end of the 18th century, a British merchant ship stopped at Tahiti, then known as Oteheite, to take on provisions. Local people arranged feasting and dancing for their guests. One of the ship's officers, George Mortimer, wrote in his journal "Attracted by the sound of drums and a great quantity of lights, I went on shore one night with two of our mates to one of these exhibitions. We seated ourselves among some of our friends whom we found there; when one of the gentlemen who accompanied me on

shore took it into his head to be very much smitten with a dancing girl, as he thought her, went up to her, made her a present of some beads, and other trifles, and rather interrupted the performance by his attentions; but what was his surprise when the performance was ended, and after he had been endeavouring to persuade her to go with him on board our ship, which she assented to, to find this supposed damsel, when stripped of her theatrical paraphernalia, a smart dapper lad. The Otaheiteans on their part enjoyed this mistake so much that they followed us to the beach with shouts and repeated peals of laughter." (*Observations and remarks made during a voyage*. London 1791.)

Today, many tourists watching dance performances in Aggie Grey's Hotel in Apia, or even

Photographs:
Paul Miles



strutting their stuff in the night clubs of Auckland, are unaware that many of the graceful, long-legged Polynesian women dancing so elegantly are, in fact, men.

But, of course, they're only biologically men. These people, referred to by anthropologists as gender liminal (liminality is an anthropological term meaning free of restrictions), mostly prefer to consider themselves women rather than gay men or as a third gender.

"I am a woman" said Melanie, defiantly, when I asked her what people thought about see-

ing a man in a dress. With modern medical advances, a few are now taking hormones and having sex changes, but this is still rare.

In French Polynesia and Hawaii such transgender men are known as *mahu*, in Samoa as *fa'afafine* and in Tonga as *fakaleiti*.

Both these last words mean "like a lady". Using equivalent western terms is something they often object to.

"To label a *fa'afafine* as gay, transvestite or transexual doesn't fit what a *fa'afafine* is," says Tuki, a Samoan *fa'afafine*

in the documentary film *Paradise Bent*. The more outrageous ones, in Samoa and Tonga at least, are however today often referred to in island society by the English term "drag queens". Some of the older generation say that this is a result of acculturation.

"Western culture has changed the *fa'afafine* culture into something very showy. They're in competition today: who's going to be the queen? That was never heard of before."

They hold annual beauty pageants, have serious netball

teams and take part in weekly dance shows at hotels.

Despite this extension of their culture, in many ways they are still integrated into modern island life, even dressing up smartly in their best frocks to go to church on Sundays.

"Ministers don't care what you are or what you wear, as long as you go to church," says Tanya, a Samoan *fa'afafine*. *Fa'afafine* even teach in Sunday schools.

Traditionally their role in the home, where they had a reputation for excelling in chores such as weaving mats, cleaning, cooking and child care, was especially valued. In Tonga at least, they were known as *tangata fakafefine* (a man behaving like a woman) rather than the comparatively recent *fakaleiti* which is often shortened just to *leiti* (lady).

Not all "dress like a woman"; some prefer to just "behave like a woman". And there can be some curious in-between stages, such as a *fakaleiti* I met in Nuku'alofa, Tonga's capital. She wore lipstick and eye-shadow, but had a few days' coarse stubble, very hairy ears and wore rugby shorts and a singlet.

Whatever they wear, many still stay at home to do household chores and are highly valued for their contribution to the family.

"Whatever they do, they maintain a level of excellence

in their work that exceeds the norm. They are feminine men who can do both (male and female) sets of chores, which is one reason they are adored by their families," says Palantina Toelupe, Head of Samoa's Health Education Unit*.

In Tonga, the Tonga Leiti's Association, which has as its Patron the eldest granddaughter of the King, does a lot of care work in the community. "We reach out to our community and work together with them in cleaning the elderly peoples' homes and villages, helping the handicapped children's school, joining the National Youth Congress and also other community services such as the Tonga Red Cross, Tonga's Womens Association and other non-government organisations," says Joey Mataele, the kingdom's most famous queen, leader of the Tongan Leiti's Association and creator of the annual Miss Galaxy Pageant.

In modern urban island society the distinction between men's and women's jobs is disappearing. Today more educated *fa'afafine*, *fakaleiti* and *mahu* work in teaching, sales or hospitality with some, such as Joey, holding powerful positions in government or NGOs.

The convergence of men's and women's jobs and the influence of western society mean that many *fa'afafine*, *fakaleiti* and *mahu* are adopt-

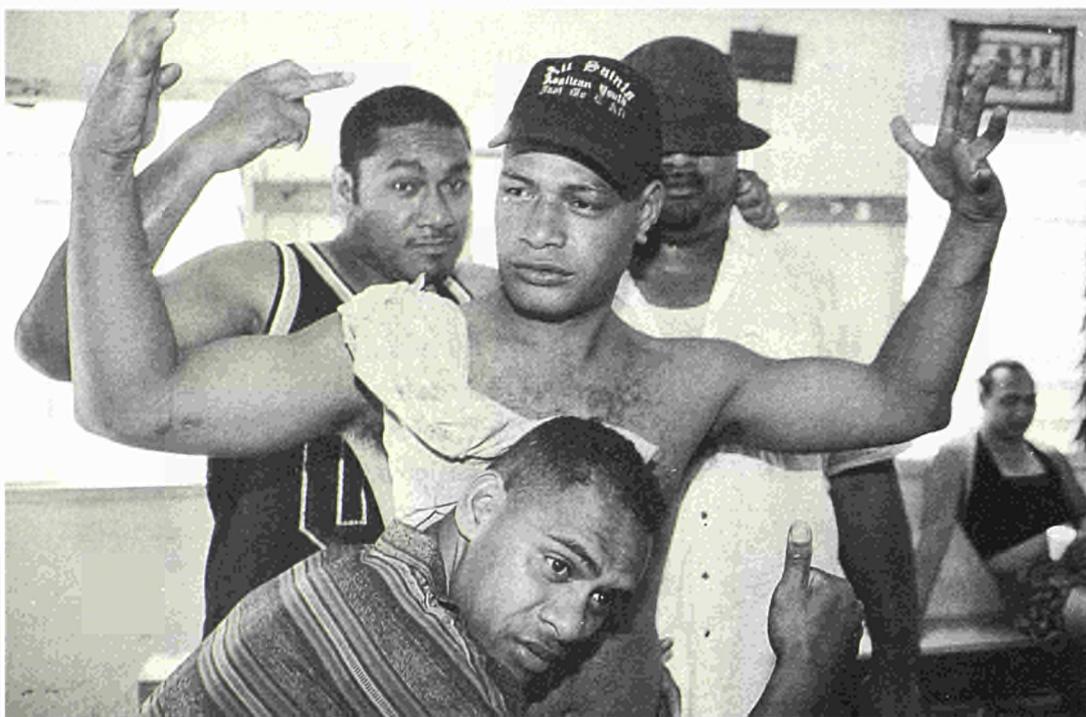
ing even more feminine identities. Some anthropologists see this as a way for them to be defiant in the face of macho men who sometimes have a reputation for being drunkenly aggressive towards transgenders.

"The difficulties of constructing a viable identity as a Tongan man today, in contrast to the continuities of Tongan womanhood, might encourage effeminate boys to accentuate their feminine characteristics and gain thereby a social identity and the protection of older women against the hostility shown towards male effeminate boys by masculine men in Tonga," says Kerry James of the University of Hawaii.

While the status of being *fa'afafine* (or *fakaleiti* or *mahu*...) is sometimes assigned early in life, there is no doubt that most, if not all, gender liminal men in Polynesia today are homosexual. In other words, sexual preference is sometimes a consequence of gender liminality rather than the reason.

But it is the sex, not whether a man wears a dress, that can sometimes be taboo in today's Christianised South Pacific - the opposite of the most liberal European countries.

There are varied accounts of how acceptable homosexuality was in the days of early contact with the west, but as many were written by missionaries, they are not objective.



The more tolerant are perhaps most believable.

In 1789, William Bligh described "a class of people common in Otaheite called Mahoo... These people...are particularly selected when Boys and kept with the Women solely for the carnasses [sic] of the men...The Women treat him as one of their Sex, and he observed evry restriction that they do, and is equally respected and esteemed."

While homosexuality was probably socially acceptable for most of Polynesia in precontact times, there are differences of opinion about whether acceptability was confined to transgenders. Many modern writers assume this to be so.

"Gays...were accepted in an effeminate role. They were not expected to behave as equals to heterosexual males," says Pacific journalist Julio Muao.

However, Bengt Danielsson, one of the crew of the *Kontiki* and an author with a keen interest in Pacific sexual mores, reports that "the missionary Crook, who lived in the Marquesas Islands for a year and a half towards the end of the 1790s, states that homosexuality was common even among many men who were not transvestites (sic)."

Of course, homosexuality still is common among "men who are not transvestites" but, due to the extent of acceptance of *fa'afafine*, *fakaleiti* and *mahu* as women, the sex is often not regarded as being homosexual by either partner.

"We only have sex with straight men," says Moisha, a big, netball-playing *fakaleiti* in Tonga. "To have sex with another *leiti* - that would be lesbianism!" she jokes.

Many transgender men see themselves as performing a useful sexual role in society - to satisfy frustrated single or married men. In a culture where an unmarried girl's chastity is often highly protected by her brothers, and being unfaithful with real women is very unChristian, the *fa'afafine*, *fakaleiti* and *mahu* provide a guilt-free, convenient outlet for many straight mens' sexual needs.

This does mean that most transgenders find it difficult to have long-term stable relationships. Physical abuse from the men with whom they have sex is common.

"Gay men end up with straight men who beat the hell out of them," says Peni Moore, Director of the NGO Womens Action for Change in Fiji.

Many gay men see foreign tourists or expatriate workers as a possible way out of the cycle of domestic abuse and eagerly try to form relationships with overseas gay men.

"It'd be so great if we could have gay clubs like they do overseas and resorts where we could meet overseas gay men," says Solomoni, a gay man from Fiji.

But if NGOs and Governments were to recognise the contributions and needs of the *fa'afafine*, *fakaleiti*, *mahu* and gay men in the South Pacific, then they may not feel they have to escape.

* In an interview with Chris Peteru for PIM



Sexism in rural development

by Chikondi Maleta

Malawi's population statistics show that women do indeed form more than half the population. Case history research classifies women as enduring, resourceful and hardworking, which makes the persistent sexism and neglect of women's roles in rural community development all the more galling. It leads to regression instead of progress in development.

Advocacy on gender issues

Integration of both sexes in communities is one of the markers of community development. Much as advocacy on gender issues is healthy, its pragmatic influence will be changing what has over a long time been considered a tradition: sex-defined roles, social norms, chauvinism and so on. As a result, gender issues become sensitive and prone to conservative and chauvinistic reactions, so there is a need for careful and calculated advocacy.

Contrary to what would have been a positive approach, radical feminists have tackled gender issues aggressively, thereby rendering their campaign less effective due to the defensiveness of conservatives, as shown in the social survey I carried out among the *yawos* of Wisi Village and villagers elsewhere in January 2000.

Much as activists struggle for recognition, they must work parallel to the promotion of decentralisation and gender-sensitive policy and decision making. Furthermore, advocacy must be complemented by action and show some drive for economic competition, power and influence.

It must above all be rational rather than

emotional. It must not antagonise rural beliefs if women are to attain positive integration of sexes in rural communities and thus enhance positive progress in economic rural development.

Solidarity among women

Various research findings show that women in third world countries have a tendency to be either spoken for, through what they consider the liberating voices of indigenous male culture, or tied to a kind of national feminism that prevents them from challenging the very particular and familiar

source of their disadvantage - the patriarch thinly disguised as tradition and authenticity (Rey Chong 1991 - adapted from Henry Sapuwa's unpublished article on gender equality at Chancellor College - a critical view).

Substantiating these findings is the popular belief mentioned by Paul Banda, a Malawian singer, in one of his songs on gender equality: most women feel

"A person does not walk very far or fast on one leg, so one cannot expect men, who form only half the population, to develop a nation alone."

Julius Nyerere, 1987

at home with a man as a leader rather than a woman. Undoubtedly, most uneducated women - and even some he educated ones - consciously or unconsciously do not believe in their own capabilities despite the much vaunted equal opportunities. This mentality has increased the women's undermining of each other so much that it has damaged solidarity and created antagonism between themselves in women's development groups.

Consequently, women have lost ground even within families, the heart of community development, affected as they are by determined oppression, subordination and cultural prejudice.

Moreover, the cultural climate in the rural areas where I have carried out my research shares the traditional ideologies that blame family instability on including women in development projects that generate income. Thus they are restricted to domestic chores, which maintains their lowly role, and find little solidarity or chances to seek it out, or achievement of ultimate rural economic independence within and between communities (as echoed by Chief Chitera of Chiradzulu in *Face to Face* with Seodi White).

Emphasising all these points, advocacy on gender issues should promote confidence and provide reasons to search for solidarity that will aid integration into rural development programmes and encourage efficiency and progress in development. However, the rural populace must be educated about the concepts and significance of solidarity in rural economic development if they are to find a meaning to their lives, which are at present poor and miserable, beyond any rational definition of human dignity.

Sexism

No country can any longer afford to ignore the vast potential represented by women (from *Building Whole Communities*, by Simon Muzenda, Zimbabwe University Press, 1984).

Lack of solidarity among women and the aggression employed in advocating gender issues has allowed sexism to flower and has helped in the division of social roles on sexist principles, restraining women to household chores and basic agricultural labour such as land preparation, planting, weeding and so on. Women in rural areas see this as their heritage, and see men as job hunters.

Malawi is a country with a top-down development structure, so men drift to urban areas looking for work. Women

Humanity is like a bicycle.

One puncture upsets everything

are left to assume the leadership of the family, an unfamiliar role. Their responsibilities increase, leaving little time for participation in rural development projects. So the rural areas remain undeveloped and the economically unhealthy development structure persists.

Sexism finds its way into policy-making. There is often one beneficiary: most women are left below the poverty line while a few reach the top. This is unhealthy in a developing country like Malawi, where women are more development conscious than men, as shown in my findings in a social survey on the *Perception of Gender Equality in Rural Areas*, conducted in districts including

Mchinji, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Salima, Dedza, Mzimba and Chitipa. The social survey was conducted from November 1998 to May 2000, in groups of three, using interviews and questionnaires, with a bit of archival research and non-participant observation.

Rural economic community equality will only be achieved if gender-sensitive methodologies in planning development programmes are adopted to encourage women to participate. Furthermore, there must be promotion of equal opportunities and creation of an environment where quality and responsibility are strengthened by legislative changes.

Emphasis should be placed on equality, so a rational approach should not be sacrificed to emotion. Ideally, of course, everything should be based on merit.

This subject is very wide. So many areas have been omitted and remain a challenge for someone else. Nevertheless, if the recommendations proposed above are implemented, Malawi will become a nation with both legs healthy and working, moving forward strongly and swiftly. If Malawi is to be truly democratic, there must be a new approach to citizenship that is neither sexist nor gender insensitive. There must be some provisions for social protection of women against acts of discrimination or crimes against them.

Changing the realities of girls' lives

by Geoffrey Knox

In May, actress and advocate for young girls, Jane Fonda, visited Nigeria as a photojournalist to interview and film leaders, participants, communities, and government officials who have created innovative approaches to girls' empowerment.

In collaboration with the International Women's Health Coalition, a US-based NGO that supports women's organizations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, Ms Fonda created a documentary film, *Generation 2000: Changing Girls' Realities*.



The film was shown for the first time at the United Nations to an audience of ambassadors, diplomats, officials, and leaders of NGOs, foundations, and other international agencies working to promote women's empowerment and rights. Its purpose was to foster a positive start for final negotiations at the UN's five-year review of progress since the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women. Jane Fonda has long been active in addressing the reproductive and sexual health and developmental concerns of young women in the US and internationally.

The Courier talked to Ms Fonda about her recent trip to Nigeria and her work with adolescents.

Why are you working to focus international attention on the needs of adolescent girls?

Adolescent girls are invisible, especially in the international policy arena. But we have the largest generation of girls aged 10-19 the world has ever known - more than half a billion. What opportunities are available to them - whether they have the right to choose who, when or whether they marry, how many children they have, whether they can grow up free of violence and sexual abuse, whether they will be able to go to school, whether they will be able to find jobs - all these factors will determine not only their future but ours as well. You know, I believe adolescent girls are the fulcrum of change. So we must

understand their realities and give them the support and opportunities they need.

I'm not alone in this belief. All the world's governments and international agencies have agreed that you cannot end poverty if you don't improve the lives of women. That improvement needs to start with girls.

What kind of changes are you looking for in international policies that affect girls?

Adolescence is difficult for everyone, but boys don't experience it the same way girls do. For a boy, adolescence usually means increased sexual and social power, more access to education and employment opportunities. For a girl, adolescence is often a time of loss, a loss of her voice, a loss of options, a loss of status. That's what I'd like to see changed. I want a girl to be able to find and keep her voice as she grows, to have just as many opportunities as a boy - no matter where she lives.

In the US state of Georgia where you live, you run the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention. Why go all the way to Nigeria to make a documentary film about adolescent girls?

I know that many of the problems that girls face in Georgia are the same problems girls face in the rest of the world.

I was in Beijing in 1995 for the UN's World Conference on Women where governments produced a Platform for Action to improve the lives of women and girls. This year, world governments got together to determine what progress has been made and how to move the agenda forward. The UN's Secretary General asked me to get involved and help the process along. So I went to the International Women's Health Coalition and said, what can I do? They suggested that I go to Nigeria with a few of their staff to make this documentary on girls.

Why did the International Women's Health Coalition choose Nigeria?

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. It's not only large, it plays a leadership role for the continent. WHC supports programmes there that are really changing the lives of young girls. I wanted to hear the voices of girls there and find out what their lives are like. What I found was that there are high incidences of unwanted pregnancy, rape and sexual abuse. Child marriage is quite common. Girls are married off, 10, 12, 14 years old to much older men. They have children when they're still just little girls themselves. And there are very few, if any, opportunities to be educated. Of course, if they're illiterate and uneducated, it's hard for them to earn a living.

But it doesn't have to be that way. I saw that in the extraordinary programmes I visited - The Girls Power Initiative in Calabar, the Adolescent Health Project in Lagos, and the Adolescent Health and Information Project in Kano in the north of Nigeria.

What makes these programmes in Nigeria so extraordinary?

A programme like the Adolescent Health Project in Lagos provides a place for girls and boys to come and learn about their bodies, about sexuality, about gender power in relationships. What became so clear in filming there is that when you give young girls information about something so central to their lives, their sexuality, their bodies, how they can stand up for themselves and protect themselves, it empowers them. And when you empower these girls, and it's true in Georgia as well as in Nigeria, that ripples out to their siblings and to their mothers. These girls are clearly going to have a different life than their mothers did, because they feel strong.

How do you answer the critics who say that if you start talking to these girls at a young age about sex you're fostering promiscuity?

All the research shows that's not true. Decades of research, including from the World Health

Organization, show that giving accurate, age-appropriate information about sexuality to young people does the opposite. It tends to make them postpone the time when they will become sexually active. If they're already sexually active, it will help them to practise safer sex.

One of the leaders of Girl's Power Initiative in Calabar, Grace Osakue, told me that in Nigeria's society, sex is not talked about, but they have a high rate of teen pregnancy and girls are dying from unsafe abortion. So just because we're not talking about sex doesn't mean that teenagers are not sexually active. In the last five years, no GPI girl has had an unwanted pregnancy or an unsafe abortion.

How do the parents feel about their young daughters going to such programmes?

What was so interesting in Nigeria is that we talked to many parents who said that yes, they were nervous in the beginning when their daughters began going to these meetings and activities. But as one father, Samuel who lives in Calabar, said to me, "I've changed my mind because I've seen the good that has come out of the Girl's Power Initiative. I'm not afraid. Now my daughter knows her rights and she can defend herself as a woman."

Many young girls in Nigeria go out with fruit on their heads or different goods that they're selling - they're called hackers. And very often men will say, you know, step into my home and I'll buy your oranges. Girls that have been in a programme like Girl's Power Initiative will say, "Are you kidding? Not on your life. You buy my oranges out here." Girls now know how to protect themselves.

And it's not just girls we're talking about. A young boy who goes to the Adolescent Health Project in Lagos every day after school was telling me that his whole idea about his mother and his sisters has changed. He said he shows more respect to them because he understands the consequences of the things they face in society. So we're changing young boys as well.



Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria talks to Jane Fonda about what needs to be done to improve girls lives in his country

How does the government of Nigeria feel about these programmes empowering young girls?

I went to Abuja, the capital, to talk to government ministers and found that they were supportive of programmes like the Adolescent Health and Information Project in Kano. I was able to interview Nigerian President Obasanjo who was quite open to their work. He admitted that the taboo in Nigeria about talking about sex and providing sexuality education was harmful to young people. He said, "If you don't talk about sex, there's danger that the adolescents may even make mistakes about it. They must talk about it, they must know about it." And with the input of the leaders of the programs I interviewed, Nigeria is working on a comprehensive sexuality education curriculum for all their schools.

Did the film you made have the impact you wanted at the Beijing Plus Five Review?

I was just part of an incredible effort by women and NGOs to influence the negotiations in a positive, progressive way for women. And yes, we achieved a lot in the face of organized opposition from conservative forces. The document that was produced has strong language on adolescents and their right to sexual and reproductive health information and services. We also made the point that these programmes are effective in changing adolescents' behavior and are creating greater gender equality. We showed that governments cannot ignore or deny sexuality.

That's real progress.

Geoffrey Knox writes on issues concerning women's health and rights.

Career before marriage in Cameroon

by Séphora Kengne*

Cameroonian women are increasingly opting for the single life. In the towns, this gives them the freedom to fulfil themselves socially and professionally. In the countryside, they would rather do without husbands who are often of no real help to their wives and children.

W I have absolutely no desire to tie myself down. I want to pursue a career without saddling myself with a husband and children. The plain fact is that I believe I can achieve a great deal as a single woman." Rose Bimbe, a 35-year-old computer engineer, prides herself on being a liberated woman. Dressed in a bright red suit with a short skirt, her expression is hard, her manner resolute. She is tough - her colleagues have nicknamed her Stone - and her unmarried status is seen as an asset, enabling her to achieve her professional ambitions. "Marriage", she says, "comes second. These days we no longer accept that sort of imprisonment. Women must first of all seek to be financially independent, show what they are capable of and make their mark on society."

A glance at the records in some of Yaoundé's register offices is enough to confirm this trend towards the single life. There are currently, on average, 100 marriages a year in a population estimated at 500,000 individuals. From 1980-87, the number was four times higher. In recent years brides have also been marrying later, between the ages of 27 and 37, as opposed to 21-30 during the eighties.

The image of women as seen on foreign television channels or at the cinema is extremely high status. They are portrayed as dynamic go-getters very much in control of their own lives and successful in climbing the career ladder. Many Cameroonian men, however, have great difficulty in accepting this image. They are still of the opinion that a woman's place is at home looking after her children. Work and marriage are

therefore incompatible. In the words of Jessy, who manages a tapas bar, "having a position of responsibility means sometimes working very long hours, and men simply will not put up with it." Marthe Tapa works for an auditing firm in Douala. Her fiancé is threatening to leave her if she does not give up her business trips abroad.

"There is no way I'd leave work for a man", she snaps, "My career comes before anything else."

Inadequate fathers

In the villages, there is another reason why women are staying single. They do not feel that men are doing their job as fathers. Thérèse, the wife of a polygamist, wishes things were different: "If a child is sick and needs looking after, he's not interested. Sending our child to school is my job. Feeding him is also left up to me. Husbands are only there in name - you certainly can't rely on them."

Better to do without them altogether, then. Thus more and more women are choosing not to marry, even in the villages, long considered to be the last bastions of tradition. According to estimates from the Ministry for Women's Affairs, nearly 10% of those who live on the land do so in single-parent households. Those who do marry are doing so later and later: between the ages of 20 and 30 instead of between 15 and 20, as was the case from 1980-87.

Anne and Evelyne Nana are two spirited single women, aged 26 and 22 respectively, who live in Nkongsamba, a village about 100 km from Douala. They were thrown out of the family home by their parents for refusing to be married off very young to dodderly polygamists. Determined

to put up a fight, these dynamic women now run a small shop each, with a capital of about CFAF 500 000 (FF 5000). By the end of this year, they hope to be able to buy some land on which to build their own house. Anne confides: "My mother suffered greatly in her marriage because she had nothing, and her powerlessness had a very negative effect on us. I am not prepared to allow the same thing to happen to me. That's why I am trying first of all to be self-sufficient. Then, if I do happen to get married later on, my husband can't mess me around!"

Faced with the magnitude of this new social phenomenon, the churches are beginning to voice their concern. In July 1999, the International Army of Christ, a Protestant association, organised a national conference in Yaoundé for unmarried Christian men and women.

Reverend Father John Stephen laments the disappearance of the values of yesteryear and the harm this is doing to the holy estate of matrimony. A Yaoundé clergyman comments: "At our monthly meetings, we try to show them the dangers of such a situation in their lives as Christians and citizens".

Respectability and the single woman

Traditional society, for its part, champions the family because marriage is its means of survival. In some areas, unattached women are not permitted to speak at traditional ceremonies. Robert Elong, a traditionalist, believes that "a woman is only really respected if she is married. At that point, she becomes responsible". Agreeing wholeheartedly, a patriarch from Baham, West Cameroon, adds: "A woman who isn't married by a certain age is looked upon as a woman of easy virtue. She isn't respectable".

This is not always true. An unmarried woman also commands respect by virtue of her achievements. At 40, Marie-Thérèse Ayoung is not married and yet she still plays a vital part in her family's decisions. She has made her mark by building a property for her relations in the village and looking after them financially. As her sister



Costia.

comments, "she always has the last word. When she speaks, no one answers back".

At variance with those who uphold traditional values, the advocates of modernism believe that no Church or State dictate has the right to tell people how they should live their lives. Destin Ndoutoumou, a person of high standing in Kribi in the south of Cameroon, acknowledges: "The advent of democracy has also taught us that women must assert themselves both politically and professionally in Cameroonian society. That is what it really means to be a woman. Not being married is no longer an obstacle."

*InfoSud

Women answer the call to arms

by Tabibul Islam and Carole Vann*

After India and Sri Lanka, Bangladesh has become the third country in the region to train female officers. Of the Muslim countries, only Sudan, Libya and Iran have already taken the lead. Candidates are jostling to be selected for the first 40 posts.

Fifteen thousand volunteers have already responded to the appeal by the Bangladeshi army, which has just cleared the way for women to achieve the rank of officer. This represents twice as many women seeking to gain their stripes as their male counterparts, a fact that has taken the military recruitment service completely by surprise. In this overwhelmingly Muslim country, where fundamentalist movements are increasingly gaining ground, the rush for military careers is a sign of women's longing to cast off the traditional yoke. On a visit to Bern in 1999, barrister Sultana Kamal painted an eloquent picture of the situation in her home country. Every year, more than a 100 women suffer

The Bangladesh government has for a number of years shown real will in advancing the position of women

disfigurement as a result of having acid thrown in their faces for having dared to say no to a husband. This figure does not include so-called crimes of honour.

A first-year student of political sciences in the capital Dhaka, Rubi desperately hopes to be among the first group of some 40 women which will be in operation from 2003. She is not intimidated by the intensive two-year training: "It's true that life in the military is hard. I am perfectly aware of the risks and I am ready to take them".

After India and Sri Lanka, Bangladesh has become the third country in the region to admit female officers to the army. Of the Muslim countries, only Sudan, Libya and Iran allow women in the forces. The Bangladeshi government has for a number of years shown real will in advancing the position of women, a political choice not unconnected with the current Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, who has a reputation for being a "feminist". The 1999 local elections saw 14,000 women elected as councillors. 10% of civil service positions (60% in primary education) are now reserved for women.

Women can already join the police, and women's movements had long been making demands for women to be able to join the army.

In a radio interview, a spokesperson for the United Women's Forum confirmed that this new initiative was set to considerably raise the status of women in the country. Shamsunnahar Joshna, Secretary General of the Women's Socialist Forum declared that the decision would "shift the physical and mental barriers between men and women." Previously, only nurses and doctors could become officers and in fact made up one third of the military medical corps.

The candidates see earning their stripes as "honour and prestige for the family" and one recruitment officer told us: "We have also seen parents encouraging their daughters to take up this unconventional career." Nonetheless, Bangladesh still has a long way to go in the emancipation of women: the country has twice as few literate women as men and women make up less than one tenth of the 1.1 million civil servants.

*InfoSud-IPS

A step too far?

by Ruth Evans

The 23rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly met in New York in June to review the implementation of the conclusions of the Beijing Conference and set further priorities for achieving equality between men and women. But one of the themes that emerged at a preparatory meeting of

Visit Barbados in July, and you will witness a veritable army of 14 and 15-year-old boys disgorged into society after the school exams, hanging out on street corners, unemployed and eventually unemployable. As they have few educational or vocational skills, society is unable to absorb them or give them a meaningful role in life. At the same time, the traditional mass migration outlets for Caribbean unskilled labour have now largely dried up, leaving a generation of boys with nothing to do and nowhere to go.

Past trends of Caribbean male migration have had a significant economic and social impact on society. According to the World Bank, the Caribbean had the highest rate of migration in the world in the first half of the 20th Century and this contributed to the large numbers of households headed by women and to women's comparative economic autonomy.

In the 1980s, Jamaica, Grenada, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago all set up state mechanisms to monitor gender inequalities for women. Several countries also passed legislation against the more blatant aspects of discrimination against women.

Caribbean women began to enter the labour force in larger numbers and to take advantage of educational opportunities.

Now, however, with traditional migration outlets

Commonwealth Ministers responsible for women's affairs, held in New Delhi in April, was that in some parts of the world the pendulum of gender empowerment may have swung so far towards women that men now feel dangerously marginalised and alienated.

closing down, there is a growing popular perception that the pendulum of gender empowerment may have swung so far towards women that men now feel dangerously marginalised and alienated. By the end of the 1990s, the backlash was under way, with a fear that Caribbean states had gone too far in addressing the interests of women at the expense of men.

Public commentators have held women responsible for the destruction of families, high divorce rates and the poorer comparative performance of boys at every educational level. Newspaper articles and editorials have warned the public of the damage done to boys raised in female-headed households and attending co-educational schools, being taught by teachers who are predominantly female.

The thesis of male marginalisation emerged with Professor Errol Miller of University of the West Indies. He argues that, because of the recent empowerment of women, many Caribbean men are being set aside or marginalised in certain areas of life, in the home, and in some professions and that men are now suffering because of this. He sees the problem as being a direct result of the empowerment of women.

"The description of Caribbean societies points to lower-strata men's marginal positions in the family, role reversal in a small but increasing number of households, boys' declining



participation and performance in the educational system... the decline in the proportions of men in the highest-paid and most prestigious occupations and the decrease in men's earning power relative to women's, especially in white collar occupations. While some men, particularly in the highest social strata, have been able to maintain their traditional position in the family, educational system and labour force, the majority are being eclipsed by women rising in all these areas."

In Miller's view, the African-Caribbean working class man has become the victim of a female conspiracy designed to punish men.

"Primary school teaching and teacher education shifted from being male dominated to being female dominated as a result of the intention of those holding central positions in the society to restrict black men to agricultural and industrial labour; to stifle the possible emergence of militant, educated men who could possibly overthrow the power structure; to loosen the hold of the church on the educational system; and to limit the upward social mobility of black men in society. In a real sense the black woman was used against the black man."

His thesis has sparked a fierce academic debate about the role of men in Caribbean society. Barry Chevannes, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of West Indies, is one of those who disagrees with Professor Miller's thesis.

"Are males being marginalised? Certainly not, if the main factor being considered is power. Despite the increasing percentage of women at the University of West Indies, it is still the men who are elected to the seat of student power...and as far as the churches are concerned, the women's over-representation in the membership and ministering groups but under-representation in the leadership echelons is well documented."

Dr Daphne Phillips, Minister of Culture and Gender Affairs in the government of Trinidad and Tobago, says, despite the popular perceptions of male marginalisation, there is actually little



All Photos: Panos Pictures



Panos Pictures - Marc Franck

empirical evidence so far to support this view. In most areas of society in Trinidad and Tobago men are still dominant and women have not displaced men in significant areas. But in some significant areas such as teaching, women are becoming more dominant. More significantly, she says, there is a contradiction between images of masculinity, with men as head of households, and the reality, which is often very different. This has led to a crisis of identity for men, who are no longer assured of their roles within society. This insecurity has, she says, manifested itself in an upsurge in domestic violence against women and children and also in an increased number of men taking their own lives.

"It threatens the whole concept of masculinity in our society. Some of the young boys don't know who they are and what it is to be male. And that also results in gang behaviour such as gang rape and gender hatred. It may also result in people in power and positions of responsibility shifting resources from areas in which women were benefiting into other areas, so it has severe implications."

Wider issues such as globalisation also undermine many of the traditional ways in which people have been able to gain employment and the types of work they do. Obviously these trends will affect both men and women, but, says Dr Phillips, women often respond differently, adapting more easily by improving their education and training and pushing forward to take advantage of the new circumstances.

Dr Phillips is not unduly worried by talk of a backlash against women's empowerment in some parts of the Caribbean. "I think if we understand what is happening, we can address it. Indeed in my ministry we have changed our name in response to this. We used to be the

Ministry of Women's Affairs, but now we are the Ministry of Gender Affairs. We have also started a training programme for men as well as for women and we are trying to address issues of gender conflict and concepts of masculinity. We are trying to shift them somewhat from one of dominance to one of cooperation and collaboration in the home and family."

Her Ministry is now embarking on a pioneering project, working through schools to try to bring about changes in attitudes and understanding between the sexes. Ten pilot programmes have been set up in primary and secondary schools to try to get the children to think more about how they relate to the opposite sex. The

results will be closely monitored. There are also drop-in centres for adult men, with councillors and advisors trained to deal with gender issues. These run monthly meetings to discuss issues and give men a forum for airing their views. Finally, a popular cultural programme aimed at "young men in crisis" that uses drama, theatre, art, pan playing and calypso to give expression to their hopes and fears. Although so far limited in scope, Dr Phillips says that this has been an effective way of helping people to recognise that gender roles are changing and that men and women are partners in the community - so popular, in fact, that "girls are demanding them too."

A path out of poverty?

Microfinance has its enthusiastic supporters, but there are still questions. Without help from government and the big banks, can it be sustainable? Sue Wheat investigates

Evangelism. That was the word often associated with microfinance when it became such a hot development topic in 1997 after the first International Microcredit Summit, held in Washington.

The summit had been organised by a number of very committed people who believed wholeheartedly in a vision: that microfinance could be one of the most powerful routes out of poverty the world has seen. Microfinance does exactly what its name suggests - it provides small loans and other financial services, particularly savings, to poor people who would not normally have access to banks. A goal was set "to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially the women of those families, with credit for self-employment and other financial and business services by 2005." In 1996, the estimated funds allocated to supporting microfinance were around \$200 million; since then they have been increased dramatically.

According to the Microcredit Summit Campaign, 1065 microfinance institutions (MFIs) are now reaching 13.8m people, up from 7.6m two years ago, 75% of whom are women. As women make up around 70% of the world's poorest people, targeting women makes sense. Strategically it is also wise as women have been shown to be much more reliable at repaying their loans than men, and are also more likely to use the income they generate in a way that optimises benefits to the family.

Amazingly, repayment rates for the MFIs are high, often around 95%. Many MFIs are replications of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, in which groups of women work in solidarity groups, encouraging and keeping an eye on each other as all members of the group are financially liable for any member defaulting. African schemes are

often slightly different, using Revolving Grassroots Savings and Credit Associations. Here a revolving savings fund is built up from which members of the group take turns to take out loans with interest.

Income generation

Microfinance as a means of income generation is now central to projects funded by donors and NGOs throughout the South. The Bolgantanga Basket Weavers Association in northern Ghana is a typical beneficiary. Oxfam has provided loans to groups of weavers, mainly women, in order to buy materials and to travel to markets several hundred miles away. "Farming is so terrible at the moment, we can hardly survive," says one weaver. "I supplement our household income through doing the weaving, but I could never have afforded to buy the materials without a loan and no bank would give me any money."

Oxfam combines the loans and savings scheme with training in marketing, which is essential if the women are to compete with the many other basket weavers selling throughout Ghana, and provides them with Fairtrade retail outlets.

So has the microfinance dream been realised since the heady days of 1997's Microcredit summit? There is no doubt that providing loans and savings facilities to the poor can provide a route out of poverty and is empowering women, giving them independence and power within their families and communities, and increasing their health and well-being. In countries where Aids is a big issue, life insurance schemes are being set up.

The benefits of microfinance are now also going beyond ordinary development work. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for instance is giving loans to refugees

and returnees to help get them back on their feet and be more self-sufficient: "It might seem paradoxical to draw a parallel and build linkages between refugees and microcredit, sustainability and emergency," notes Larbi Mebtouch, Senior Economist and Planner for the UNHCR. "But in reality, microfinance is very important to UNHCR's work because it promotes durable solutions." Mebtouch cites vivid examples in Rwanda where microcredit has helped bring together divided communities. The training component, present in many of microcredit programmes, also helps refugees prepare for their return.

But the honeymoon period for microfinance is certainly over, and research and experience is showing that sometimes the reality is not as perfect as first thought.

Reaching the poorest

Whether microfinance reaches the poorest of the poor is the most fundamental issue. This can be a problem of management, institutional structure, or pressure from donors for institutional financial self-sufficiency. A study by KREP in Kenya found that loans were not reaching the poorest of the poor and that the average loan size was drifting upwards.

"One mistake we made was to allow that anybody, after successfully completing their loan, could double their loan size and then double it again," explains Aleke Dondo, KREP's General Manager. "So there were a few people who may not have been very poor originally, but posed as such. They came in and were able to pay within three months, then doubled the loan, paying again within three months; eventually they were getting very high loans.

"Poorer people were actually leaving the programme because they faced a great deal of tension with others in the group whose loans were much bigger than theirs."

Linda Mayoux, a British consultant on gender and microenterprise, has researched microfinance and empowerment. She studied 15 MFIs



A basket-weaving group in northern Ghana, composed mostly of women

in Africa for the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). DFID allocated around £50 million (US\$80 million) to microfinance in 1999, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Mayoux' research, while revealing the great benefits of MFIs, also showed that most programmes were not reaching the poorest women, even when it was their stated aim. In fact, some MFIs explicitly exclude the poorest women by focusing on existing women entrepreneurs with proven business records. Some groups also self-select to exclude the more disadvantaged, so that they would not endanger future larger loans to their members.

Mayoux and other researchers point out that much of this diversion away from the poorest comes from the pressure by donors for MFIs to attain institutional financial self-sufficiency, particularly The World Bank's Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP) which holds many of the purse strings. CGAP has invested \$31m in MFIs since 1995. Between 1995 and 1998 an estimated 1.6 billion was disbursed by CGAP's member donors (27 bilateral and multilateral donors in all). As part of this drive, CGAP also has a strong focus on encouraging the large commercial banks to invest in microfinance.

"CGAP's focus on financial sustainability has meant that MFIs have been asked to expand too rapidly in order to get economies of scale," says



Mayoux. "In order to become sustainable, the MFIs have to cut the costs of delivery. In order to increase the volume of work by participants, cut training and set "a realistic interest rate", which in some parts of Africa can be very high. These sorts of pressures are not necessarily empowering."

Donors are now focusing on how to improve targeting of the poorest, but it may be that doing this and being financially sustainable is a very tall order. Many commentators are convinced it is possible and already happening. For instance, the Foundation

for International Community Assistance (FINCA Uganda), a village banking programme based in Uganda with over 20,000 borrowers, achieved operational self-sufficiency (OSS) in 1999 for the first time, while also providing 67% of its loans to the poorest.

What is needed for more of this to happen is sufficient government support of policies and regulatory frameworks in each country says David Gibbons, Managing Director of CASHPOR Financial and Technical Services. "At a minimum, this requires the removal of any interest rate caps on doing business with the poor and provision of a suitable legal identity (and regulation) for MFIs. Under these circumstances, commercial banks should be interested in funding microfinance for the poor and poorest, thereby removing the final constraint to its expansion."

The benefits associated with increasing women's incomes through providing microfinance is certainly not disputed. ACORD-Port Sudan programmes have reported a typically high success rate, for instance, with some individuals nearly doubling their overall household income. And the Self Help Development Foundation in Zimbabwe found that average net additional income came to 152% of loan amount, adjusting for interest repayments.

This income generation for women is vital, not only financially but personally, as women are often treated with greater respect by men when they gain some financial power. There are downsides however - women's already heavy workloads increase and they could be making rods for their own backs by becoming the households' main bread-winners, thereby absolving men of their domestic financial responsibilities.

"In the work I did in Zimbabwe and Niger, women said that if they did not find an income their husbands would simply look for another wife," says Mayoux. "And in two ACORD-sponsored programmes in Uganda, some men were leaving all household expenditure to the women, once they had funds." Mayoux also showed that women's expenditure patterns may replicate rather than counter gender inequalities. In Cameroon, for example, although many women are spending some of their loans on school fees for daughters as well as sons, others are employing daughters and daughters-in-law as unpaid family labourers to maximise profits. In Uganda, the group-based system has often led to the exclusion of AIDS sufferers, and in Cameroon and Zimbabwe committee members were sometimes found to be using their comparative wealth and influence to get priority loan dispersal.

Microfinance, it seems, is at something of a crossroads. While it has proved itself to be a highly effective poverty-alleviation tool, it is still not clear whether it will be the ideal model of market-enterprise to bring prosperity to 100 million people while drawing in the big commercial banks to fund it. The evangelism is still there but it has become rather less fervent.

The Microcredit Summit Campaign:

www.microcreditsummit.org

CGAP: www.cgap.org

An Africa Regional Microcredit Summit is being held in Zimbabwe: 8-12 October 2000

africadm@icon.co.zw

Women want words and action

by Françoise Girard

"Will we continue to talk about women's human rights for another quarter of a century, or will we take the opportunity to act now?"

This was the question posed by Mary Robinson, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to the 180 government delegations assembled at the UN's **Beijing Plus Five** progress review, held in March and June 2000 in New York, five years after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

Beijing Plus Five highlighted actions taken since 1995 to ensure equality between women and men and to guarantee women their rights. "Abuses and neglect that once were ignored as routine are now under challenge everywhere, and that is major progress," said Charlotte Bunch, the Executive Director of the US-based Center for Women's Center for Global Leadership, at the conclusion of Beijing Plus Five. Violence against women is now widely recognised as a human rights violation, and a number of states have taken measures to stop it and provide assistance to women and girls who suffer its consequences. The 1999 Statute of Rome creating the International Criminal Court includes gender-based crimes against women. The human calamity of trafficking is now of active concern to governments and international organisations alike. And the HIV/AIDS pandemic has forced the international community to acknowl-

edge the nexus between gender inequality, violence, sexuality and health.

However, Beijing Plus Five also made clear that much remains to be done to translate words into action. Only 13% of members of national parliaments worldwide are women. Poverty and illiteracy continue to affect women disproportionately. Globally, 600,000 women still die every year due to preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth, and some 18 million are left disabled or chronically ill. WHO estimates that 330 million new sexually-transmitted infections occur annually, at least half of these among young people. HIV/AIDS alone accounts for six million new infections every year, with young girls and women at greatest risk in many parts of the world. Sexual violence is endemic and lethal, both within and outside marriage.

Debates on a set of new agreements to redress these persistent inequalities were, to say the least, arduous and chaotic, held up by "a tyranny of a minuscule minority" of conservative states trying to force a return to the pre-Beijing world, as described by Gita Sen, a women's rights advocate and economist at Bangalore's Indian Institute of Management. Governments, from the North and South suffered periodic bouts of lack of "political will", with some delegations even

arguing that this phrase should not appear in the final document (it does).

Nevertheless, the final agreements reached by governments are quite positive, and reflect many of the concerns that women's groups from all over the world had put forward.

Women's roles

As in Beijing, debates focused on women's roles in their communities and families, and on sexuality. Once again, a few conservative governments, led by the Holy See, sought to insert into the final agreements a vision of women as mothers to the exclusion of their other roles and aspirations. They also promoted amendments supporting the nuclear family based on a man and woman united by marriage and their children. North American right-wing groups actively lobbied for this agenda inside and outside the negotiating rooms. In March, the right-wing group Real Women of Canada even

Earth Times





Easth Times

obtained UN passes for 30 Franciscan monks, thus providing delegates with the curious spectacle of bearded Real Women in cassocks and sandals sporting Motherhood buttons...

Many Southern delegations, as well as women's groups, fought hard against these positions, arguing that the nuclear family is not the norm in many parts of the world, and that many families are neither safe, particularly for young girls, nor models of gender equality.

Feminist groups were better organised in New York than at Beijing at building effective lobbying coalitions - such as the Coalition for Health and Rights (CoHR), comprised of 67 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from every region of the world, and the Coalition in Support of the Beijing Platform for Action, made up of more than 300 groups.

Many more feminist activists were members of government delegations in New York than five years ago, whether as representatives of non-governmental organisations or of their

government. Finally, Latin American governments (except for Nicaragua, Honduras and Argentina), joined by most countries of the Caribbean, formed a negotiating bloc known as SLACC (Some Latin American Countries and the Caribbean), which articulated positions supportive of gender equality as well as economic justice. SLACC worked closely with South Africa, the bloc of Southern African countries known as SADC, certain other African countries such as Cameroon, Ghana and Kenya, as well as India - highlighting the extent to which progressive positions on women's rights have gained ground at the national government level since 1995. This development stood in sharp contrast to Beijing, where many Latin American delegations had put forward conservative views, particularly on sexual and reproductive rights.

Violence

Amongst other important advances, the Beijing Plus Five Document states that all forms of violence against women should be treated as a criminal offence, including marital rape. New agreements identify for the first time forced marriage and honour crimes as matters requiring state intervention. In doing so, the Document profoundly contradicts the fundamentalist vision of "the family" as a sacrosanct, private unit where the State may not intervene. Like the original Beijing agreement, the Document recognises the various forms of the family, and calls for

measures to support women to choose other roles besides - or in addition to - that of mothers.

Trafficking

Faced with a tremendous increase in trafficking of women and girls, governments agreed to design comprehensive strategies to combat this scourge, and to provide economic alternatives to women and girls who were at risk of being trafficked. The Document also states that trafficked women and girls should be protected from prosecution, since they are victims of exploitation.

Health

Regarding health, governments withstood right-wing attacks, and re-affirmed that adolescents, particularly girls, should have access to sexual and reproductive health services, as well as sexuality and lifeskills education. They once again agreed that these services and programmes must be designed and run with the full involvement of adolescents, respecting their human rights and maintaining confidentiality. After much heated debate in small negotiating rooms, conservative states also grudgingly agreed that education programmes should be provided to enable men to practice safer sex. They decided that priority should be given to the development of microbicides and HIV vaccines, and to providing female condoms. Finally, they acknowledged that reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity must be made a health sector priority at the national level. Importantly,

governments re-affirmed the forward-looking agreements reached at the 1999 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Plus Five review, which included indicators and time-bound targets on sexual and reproductive health.

Abortion

On the ideologically-charged subject of abortion, governments could only agree to reiterate their Beijing agreement to "consider reviewing laws containing punitive measures against women who have undergone illegal abortions..." They also re-affirmed the ICPD Plus Five agreements to "train and equip health providers... to ensure that [legal] abortion is safe and accessible..."

Debt relief and overseas development

The North-South debates on debt relief and overseas development assistance were repeated at Beijing Plus Five, with the added dimension of globalisation. In the end, governments agreed on the need to recognise the negative impacts of globalisation on women, and to ensure equal access of women to social protection systems. Governments more easily reached consensus to promote and implement women's right to inheritance and their property rights - subjects that had been highly contentious five years earlier.

Human and sexual rights

In the field of human rights, women's groups had hoped that governments could do better than agree to create a non-discriminatory legal envi-

ronment "as soon as possible, and preferably by 2005." However, the Document's recognition of gender-related persecution as a ground for asylum is an important development.

Conservatives mounted a concerted and effective effort to keep the phrases "sexual rights" and "sexual orientation" out of the Document. But the content of these concepts is included, as a result of strong pressure from the EU, Turkey, South Africa, the negotiating bloc known as JUSCANZ (Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), and Cuba. As in Beijing, the agreements on non-discrimination include terminology such as "and other status" and "full diversity of women's conditions and situations" to cover sexual orientation.

Support by the EU, SLACC, JUSCANZ, Turkey and Southern African countries ensured that the Beijing agreement on the human rights of women "to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, free of coercion, discrimination and violence..." was repeated verbatim.

As in every negotiation, there were of course disappointments. NGOs had worked for a document focusing on concrete benchmarks and time-bound targets - of which very few new ones were agreed. A number of the agreed paragraphs are so general as to provide little additional guidance in accelerating implementation of the Beijing agreements.



Earth Times

Women will not be turned back

But the advances of Beijing Plus Five go well beyond the negotiated word. The large number of women of all ages from every region of the world who came together at Beijing Plus Five shared experiences and strategies, built new alliances, and re-affirmed their solidarity and unshakable will to fight for economic justice and the human rights of all women.

The challenges posed by implementation continue to loom large. In many cases, substantial resources will have to be allocated by governments and the international community to turn the Beijing Plus Five - and Beijing - agreements into reality. In other cases, such as repeal of discriminatory laws, much can be done without spending a lot. The Beijing Plus Five review made it clear that feminist organisations from all over the world will continue to press governments and the UN for change, and for the necessary resources to make change happen. As the final communiqué of the Coalition in Support of the Beijing Platform put it at the end of the review, "women will not be turned back."



Sadako Ogata **UN Commissioner for Refugees**

Eva Kaluzynska spoke to the quiet dynamo working for the world's refugees. She was in Brussels to ring alarm bells about Africa

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees barely paused for breath as she reeled off facts and figures about the continent's current trouble spots where her organisation is carrying out its biggest emergency operations this year. When UNHCR launched its appeal for the year 2000, there were six million refugees and displaced people in Africa needing help. The situation had, if anything, got worse over the year amid continued volatility and fragile peace accords.

Ms Ogata had just met European Commissioner Poul Nielson, and I caught her for a few minutes before she boarded a flight back to base in Geneva.

There were, she said, half a million refugees from Sierra Leone in Guinea. In the Horn of Africa up to 90,000 refugees from Eritrea had found their way to Sudan. The situation there continued to be unpredictable and the war was not entirely over. There was the ongoing conflict in the Great Lakes region, triggering flows of refugees both into and out of the Democratic

Republic of Congo: within Congo there were 200,000 refugees from neighbouring countries, while 200,000 refugees from Congo itself had dispersed among the neighbours.

As for Burundi, the peace process appeared to be moving ahead at time of writing, with the assistance of former South African President Nelson Mandela. If a lasting solution is found to a conflict that has left a quarter of a million people dead since 1993, up to 350,000 Burundian refugees in Tanzania may be able to return home. In Southern Africa, escalation of the conflict in Angola is once more producing refugees, fleeing into Zambia, into Namibia, into Congo. The problems, she said, were continent-wide, and her organisation was first in line to help organise relief for all of those who had fled violent conflicts.

So which of these crises was her priority? "All of them," she replied without hesitating. "I went on field visits to all of them for a whole two weeks, just recently."

Now in her early seventies, the High

Commissioner may be in her last year in the job she has held since 1991, but she still keeps up a schedule that officials half her age would find punishing. She has, if anything, stepped up her programme of field visits this year. She may be based in Geneva, but she probably spends as much time on planes as she does at HQ. Her officials may have a hard time keeping up with her, but they do so out of respect for her great sense of integrity, and out of appreciation for her style of treating everybody the same, irrespective of rank.

The diminutive, softly-spoken former Japanese diplomat had just briefed Nielson about her mission to Africa when we spoke. She was asking for his support for her organisation - in practical terms, that meant both political support and hard cash.

Nielson, formerly Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, is Commissioner for both Humanitarian Aid and for Development. He has consistently argued for better linkage of the two. In the previous European Commission line-up, the emergency relief and development sectors were treated separately under different Commissioners. Ogata knew she would in Nielson find a sympathetic ear for her own dedication to building development potential into emergency relief.

"The Commissioner was very interested, especially in the



Burundi process. He wanted to make sure that if a new phase of repatriation from Tanzania develops, the Commission would be able to help, not just with emergency assistance but also with repatriation."

Ms Ogata hopes a similar process may take place in Eritrea eventually.

"Wherever there is peace, there is a possibility for linkage, and that is why I count on the Commission to be able to link emergency relief to a rehabilitation and reconstruction phase much more quickly. This linkage I have been advocating, I hope it becomes a kind of system."

In the meantime, one of her major practical concerns is to secure money from donors in response to the UNHCR's appeal for the year 2000. The

European Commission plus the European Union's individual Member States are the organisation's biggest voluntary donors. Between 1994 and 1998, the Commission alone contributed 17% of UNHCR's funding. Still, as at mid-August, the organisation was 36% short of its target of US\$977.6 million for the year, taking into account funding made available from all sources.

As for Africa, UNHCR's main theatre of emergency action this year, shortfalls were even higher. For the Great Lakes, East Africa and the Horn of Africa, West, Central and Southern Africa, the figures averaged well over 40% short of target.

"The situation does not look very good," Ogata summed up

quietly. She may not be outgoing, but she is certainly effective, possibly all the more so because of her understated style.

UNHCR expects between US\$40-50 million in funding from the Commission this year, with a relatively good geographical spread covering crises that are not in the headlines, as opposed to high-profile trouble spots that generate widespread interest and responses in cash and in kind. However, UNHCR plans its activities on a programme basis at the start of each year, while the Commission makes funding available only on a project-by-project basis. Nielson has already indicated to Ogata that he is sympathetic to finding ways of adjusting the Commission's procedures to make them more compatible with UNHCR's needs, but this may take time.

"The Commission's slowness in approving projects and disbursing is serious, and these are the questions I brought to Mr Nielson's attention - he's going to try to look into it," she

said. "When there is a serious emergency, I want to make sure that my office is there early, effectively there to help in the initial phase, and for that our emergency capacity has to be strengthened."

Over the course of Ogata's mandate, the conflicts that have generated flows of refugees have got dirtier, with deadly consequences for civilians. As a result, her concern for the security of UNHCR staff has grown, along with the rise in casualties among UN and other humanitarian staff in conflict zones. "They have to be on the front line, because the refugees are in very dangerous places, and the only way you can help them is to be near them, to have access."

She has been appealing to donors to help her to ensure better security cover to ensure the safety of UNHCR staff.

As her mandate draws to a close, she expressed fears about unfinished business elsewhere in the world where uncertainty reigns for refugees and displaced people: in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran,

in Chechnya, and elsewhere in the Soviet Union.

She would like to see the European Commission support more political initiatives to help resolve the conflicts that give rise to the refugee flows her organisation struggles to manage.

"The solution is always political, and the Commission can help accelerate this process by assuring us of its support."

Sadako Ogata may be bowing out as UN High Commissioner this December, but no-one expects her to retire from active life or from campaigning on behalf of the world's refugees. She is seen as being too energetic, too dynamic for that. A former professor of international relations who was educated in the United States and won her PhD on Japanese foreign policy from University of Berkeley, California in 1963, she still feels very much at home in an academic environment. Withdrawing from an operational functions may finally give her time to write about her experiences. Watch this space.

Eva Kaluzynska was ECHO Press and Information Officer at time of writing

The successor to Sadako Ogata is Rudolphus (Ruud) Lubbers.

1973 to 1977 Minister for Economic Affairs in the Den Uyl government: a member of the Catholic People's Party (KVP).

1978. Senior Deputy Parliamentary Leader of the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), the alliance between the KVP and the other two main denominational parties.

Prime Minister of three Lubbers governments. Currently teaches Globalization Studies at Tilburg University and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University

September 2000

Three UNHCR personnel - from Ethiopia, the United States and Croatia - died in Atambua, West Timor on 6 September 2000. They were beaten to death and the UNHCR office reportedly trashed and burned. It was the worst ever single attack on UNHCR staff. The deaths of the three international staff members were confirmed by UNHCR colleagues evacuated on Wednesday evening to Dili, East Timor. All other UNHCR international staff were reported accounted for. Mrs. Ogata said she was deeply disappointed at the failure of Indonesian authorities to

honour their commitment to protect humanitarian staff in West Timor, where there have been repeated security incidents over the past year.

UNHCR had suspended its operations in West Timor following a 22 August attack on three staff members who were severely beaten by suspected militiamen near the town of Kefamenanu, 180 km east of Kupang. The agency resumed activities on 29 August after Indonesian authorities had arrested two of the alleged assailants and agreed to increase security for humanitarian workers.

Development and football - a winning team

by Stéphane Brunie

Goal is the latest development project at FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Associations). Launched last year, *Goal* aims to provide long-term support to the most needy of FIFA's member national associations.

Goal is not the world's first football development project. This was in 1975, when Brazil's Joao Havelange, then FIFA President, asked Joseph Blatter - the current President - to oversee the project. Over the last 25 years more than 30,000 trainers, players, referees, sports doctors and administrators have benefited from FIFA's logistical and financial support.

Goal has two primary objectives: to ensure the autonomy of each national federation, and to provide assistance tailor-made for the specific needs of the different associations. These objectives find practical application in various areas: helping, for example, to structure a football association, or training coaches, referees and doctors. Emphasis is also placed on the development of youth football, with the training of youth coaches and the setting up of training centres. *Goal* can also help with infrastructure, construct-

ing or renovating stadiums, training centres and office premises.

The *Goal* programme has a budget of €100 million, most of which comes from the sale of the television rights for the 2002 and 2006 World Cups. FIFA is not, however, directing the programme from its Swiss headquarters in Zurich. Instead it has set up 12 regional Development Offices around the world. The African Development Offices are in Cairo (Egypt), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Gaborone (Botswana) and Yaoundé (Cameroon). The Caribbean Development Office is in Port of Spain, and the Oceanian Office is in Auckland.

As Joseph Blatter has pointed out, France was "the first country to dig deep into its pockets". The president of FIFA and the French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, signed a framework agreement in Paris aimed at promoting football in developing countries. France is committed to contributing more than €2 million, which will be used specifically to build football grounds, to train managers and to spot young talent.

A whole series of pilot projects has already been

FIFA/Kurt Schorrer



As Fifa President, Joseph Blatter runs the organisation, and ensures that Executive Committee decisions are properly carried out

announced for the year 2000. However, in the second half of the year, as Joseph Blatter explained, help will be given to 20 or so countries to identify their individual priorities. The aim is to give every association its own football ground, of a size in keeping with its capacities. Besides France, several other governments are setting aside funds for football development programmes. The FIFA President maintains that football is a sport with important social and cultural aspects, adding that the Saudi Arabian Football Association has, for example, made 350,000 dollars available to FIFA for development projects in the Arab circle of countries affiliated to the International Federation. On the African continent, speculation is rife: which countries will benefit from the framework



agreement signed in Paris? A *Goal* project is already under way at the Antoinette Tubman stadium in Monrovia, Liberia, which is where its national championship matches are played. The first part of the project, a plan to install an artificial pitch, has been successfully completed. Joseph Blätter believes that a natural pitch is too high-maintenance and can't always be used when it rains. Liberia is still suffering the consequences of its civil war, but football remains the nation's favourite sport.

Madagascar is the other African country at which aid is being targeted. An isolated island, it is experiencing problems in organising a championship and coping with the administrative management of football. The *Goal* project plans to build premises for the Madagascan Association, and possibly also to construct a football ground. But, as

Joseph Blätter explains, "there are other countries in Africa which merit FIFA's attention, for example Mauritania, Chad and Mozambique."

In the Caribbean, Antigua and the Bahamas feature on FIFA's list. In these two countries there is stiff competition from other sporting disciplines such as cricket and baseball. Their football associations do not have their own premises or pitches, so FIFA has decided to address this problem first. Finally, in the Pacific region, the Samoas and the Solomon Islands should also benefit in the long term from the *Goal* programme. On the sports field, Samoa is best known for the prowess of its rugby team, which obviously leaves football at a distinct disadvantage. Despite its many fans, soccer is still struggling to gain recognition. Thanks to FIFA, the Association now has the

chance to build a sports ground and an administrative building within the precincts of a large sports complex. The Solomon Islands is home to many talented young athletes. Every morning, hundreds of young children and teenagers make their way to the stadium in the capital city of Honiara to play football. The pitch is now in a state of disrepair through overuse, and maintenance work is badly needed. In addition, the national Association has no premises. *Goal* intends to alleviate both these problems.

Next October, a conference lasting several days is to be held in Zurich. This will be the first opportunity to take stock and participate in an initial exchange of views on a global scale. This is a chance to review the work undertaken, to get an update on the projects currently in progress and to assess what still needs to be done. For the managers of the 12 development offices and the confederation officials, it is a perfect opportunity to lay the foundations of their collaboration and ensure that *Goal* is an effective programme making an impression on the minds of all those who take part in it. It is in this spirit that the *Goal* project has been launched - a golden goal, we hope, like the one France scored against Italy in the final of Euro 2000. Let's just hope that we don't have to wait too long for a result.

Pesticides initiative

The issue of pesticides is a priority not only for EU countries but also for ACP countries in the horticultural sector.

According to the COLEACP (Europe-ACP Liaison Committee), an ACP-EU inter-professional association, consumer safety in the field of food and respect for the environment are two decisive and major factors of evolution in terms of the production and consumption of agricultural produce. The European Commission has begun to review its regulations to take into account this serious aspect of market trends.

The most important point seems to be minimising pesticide residues in foods offered for sale in the EU, leading the latter to embark upon work in two principal areas: (1) the harmonisation of European regulations in the field of maximum pesticide residue levels on the surface and inside food produce, with a view to offsetting the disparity

which exists between regulations in the various European countries, and (2) a review of marketing authorisations for pesticides in the EU, in order to establish a single list.

These measures naturally relate also to imports from third countries. The ACP countries are particularly concerned in this matter, since their climates encourage the proliferation of parasites, and they have little choice but to employ pesticides given their current produce-production and shipment conditions. Initial impact studies arising out of the new European regulation on pesticides indicate that, under current production and export conditions, the horticultural sector of such countries is particularly vulnerable. Indeed, responsibility for food safety falls increasingly to private businesses, with European purchasers demanding more stringent guarantees from their ACP suppliers. Substantial efforts

have already been made in recent years to improve ACP horticultural production standards, much of the work being carried out by small producers. Any action providing experimental data on tropical crops which can be used, under import tolerance regulations, to establish maximum pesticide residue levels that reflect Good Agricultural Practice in tropical regions, will help to prevent this happening. The adoption by businesses of practices which comply with new regulatory requirements must be encouraged, and it is with this in mind that DG DEV has decided to launch the action plan to assist the ACP countries in their efforts to adapt to changes in European regulations on pesticides.

COLEACP, 5 rue de la Corderie
centra 342 -
94586 Rungis Cedex France
Tel: +33 1 41 80 02 10 -
Fax: +33 1 41 80 02 19
E-mail: coleacp@coleacp.org -
Website: www.coleacp.org

2004: Deadline for the ECOWAS single currency?

After launching the ECOWAS traveller's cheque, West African financial experts are now discussing the launch of a common currency by 2004. Its success depends on convergence efforts set in motion by states which are not members of the WAEMU. In principle, the new currency will take its inspiration from the CFA Franc, and Ghana and Nigeria envisage setting up a currency zone in order to merge with the WAEMU in 2004. These two countries must therefore bring their inflation rate below two percent, reduce their budget deficit and adopt greater rigour in the management of public finances.

In-depth reforms of their economies remain to be undertaken. As regards the tagging of the new currency to a strong foreign currency, some experts are of the opinion that the fixed exchange rate system should be retained, for example with respect to the US dollar or special drawing rights. A flexible exchange arrangement is not excluded, but this would mean investors placing all their trust in this currency, which would require strict adherence to certain preconditions at economic and regulatory level.

Source: *Courrier d'Abidjan*

Private sector

The Zambian government and the European Commission have decided to implement a private-sector development programme within the context of the national indicative programme. This development programme, endowed with a budget of €8 million, will be spread over four years. Its general objective is to assist the development of a strong and adaptable private sector and the creation of more jobs.

The programme comprises a number of aspects devoted specifically to the development of micro-enterprises and SMEs in the financial and institutional sector. The infrastructures proposed are both financial and non-financial. One of the most important aspects of the programme is the supply of direct technical assistance to SMEs, for which a budget of €2.3 million has been allocated. This will be managed by the CDI

(Centre for Industrial Development), soon to become the CDE (Centre for Enterprise Development), which has an acknowledged depth of experience in the development of industry and enterprise in the ACP countries.

**Info: Tommy Pedersen,
Projects and ACP
networks division,
Tel: +32 2 679 19 40,
Email: Tpe@cdi.be**

Behind the children

The representatives of the United Nations High Commission Refugees and the Save the Children Fund Alliance have submitted a report on an action programme to address the issue of abandoned children seeking asylum in Europe. This report evaluates the situation in the EU's 15 Member States and Norway, and formulates a set of recommendations for action both at European and national level. It covers children and young people under 18 living outside their country of origin, without parents/relatives or anyone to help them and who, for the most part, have fled their country in order to escape persecution, violations of human rights, armed conflict and generalised insecurity, trafficking for sexual exploitation, or extreme poverty.

According to the UNHCR, the abandoned children who are seeking asylum have no legal protection or adequate care. At European level, these issues receive practically no treatment in either legislation or policy, and the legal basis for action in this field is precarious. This is why the report requests the development and application of appropriate policies in the EU and in the Member States.

Debt alleviation was addressed in Japan by representatives of developing countries (G77) and the industrialised countries (G8). The developing countries called upon the industrialised countries to adhere to the undertakings of the Cologne Summit one year ago, when the G7 announced \$100 billion in aid for debt reduction in the poorest countries. "It's no longer a matter of wondering what is to be done, as we all know what has to be done. The question is one of knowing whether the political will exists," the Nigerian President told us at a press conference. The EU mentioned the fact that it is now the principal contributor to the fund for debt relief.

Bananas

A joint EU-Caricom committee is to look at technical problems and concerns raised by the so-called first-come first-served mechanism envisaged for the distribution of import quotas under the new Community strategy aimed at settling the dispute. This arose from a working meeting between European Commissioners Franz Fischler and Pascal Lamy with the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sir James Mitchell, who is President of Caricom.

The "first-come, first-served" formula, which might make it possible temporarily to maintain a contingency system within the framework of a global solution to the banana dispute, is currently only an idea, according to common trade policy sources. However, many fear that there will be a mad scramble to secure shares in the Community market, and this would ultimately exclude small producers to the benefit of the multinational banana import/export companies. Other banana-supplying countries, also concerned about the Community reform required by the WTO, will be invited to technical discussions on the operation of this mechanism, for which three options are currently open.

Fiji

The EU states that it is satisfied with the successful outcome of the hostage crisis, and that the hostages are safe and sound, but remains concerned at how events have evolved. There is still a lack of constitutionality and the situation is unstable and precarious. It deplored the removal of President Mara and the replacement of the democratically elected government of Mahendra Chaudry, and is horrified at the repeal of the 1997 constitution. According to the EU, it is essential, for the rule of law to be re-established and for the political rights of all elements in Fijian society to be respected on the basis of a democratic constitution and a democratically elected government that truly represents the country's actual circumstances. If these conditions are not fulfilled as soon as possible, the EU will look at appropriate measures and may be obliged to reconsider its policy vis-à-vis Fiji, particularly in the field of cooperation and development. Within the context of the Lomé Convention, this could involve the application of the provisions of Article 366a.

News from Europe (with Agence Europe)

the results of the G8 meeting in Okinawa

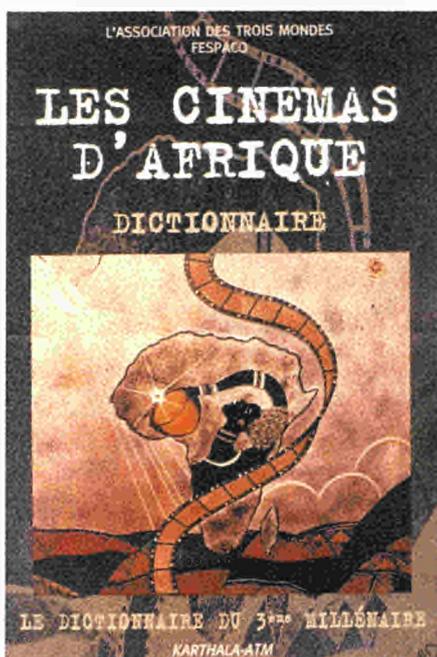
The President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, was very pleased at the results of the G8 meeting in Okinawa on projects close to his heart. In a communiqué, he confirmed that discussions at the G8 Summit reflected the concerns expressed in recent months by the Commission regarding contagious diseases (AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis), food security, information technologies and world trade. These topics may appear unrelated but demonstrate that G8 leaders have to act responsibly in order to reduce the intolerable gulf separating the haves from the have-nots. Romano Prodi also added that Europe and its partners would act rapidly to implement the decisions adopted by the Summit. The Commission highlighted five areas supported by Romano Prodi in Tokyo, on which the G8 announced new initiatives: 1) a new strategy aimed at combating infectious diseases, together with financial undertakings which would be specified at a conference in Japan in autumn 2000; 2) the setting-up of a panel on global food security; 3) the adoption of an Okinawa Charter on the "global information society", rejecting the "digital divide"; 4) an undertaking to intensify efforts at the WTO to launch a new round of negotiations "before the end of the year"; and 5) an undertaking to establish a "new partnership" with countries not belonging to the G8, civil society, private sectors and the NGOs.

Diamonds

The European Commission is implementing the UN Security Council resolution by adopting a Council proposal aimed at preventing the importing of diamonds from Sierra Leone. The Commission proposes that sanctions be applied in the event of violation of this measure.

Combating poverty

Poverty is still on the agenda for decision-makers: on the eve of the World Bank's Annual Meeting in Prague, the Bretton Woods institution has published a damning report. Dealing with the ongoing struggle to eradicate poverty, it presents much bad news: the average income of the 20 richest countries is 37 times as great as that of the 20 poorest, ie the difference has doubled since 1960. It appears that the World Bank has discovered that growth and the opening-up of markets is not sufficient, and development is no longer regarded here as a law of economics. How can the world's poorest people benefit directly from growth, health, education and infrastructures? The World Bank emphasizes the importance of public and social institutions, viewing them as essential elements in poverty eradication. The report also underlines the importance of making use of local know-how, of focusing attention on local populations, of decentralisation towards society's smallest players, and stepping up state assistance. The World Bank sees civil society as the safeguard against corruption and unbridled misappropriation of funds, with civil society itself being consulted to a greater extent and, ultimately, being listened to. Finally, the report advocates that pressure be placed on international institutions, with the World Bank standing apart from the IMF, the WTO and other bodies where the world's poor have problems in making themselves heard. Is this a step towards greater realism?



African cinema in focus

This Dictionary of African Cinema, produced by the Ouagadougou Pan-African Festival of Cinema and Television and the Three Worlds Association, reviews the filmographies of more than 400 film-makers from the 54 countries of Africa and the French-speaking Caribbean. The work covers an enormous variety of artists and supplies all the available information on over 3,600 films, with data sheets, film summaries and two subject indexes. This reference book is a must for all aficionados of African cinema and represents a mark of respect for African film-making at the dawn of the new Millennium.

Les cinémas d'Afrique [African cinema]

Éditions Khartala-ATM, Paris 2000 - 592 pages
FF190/€29

Spotlight on globalisation

Giving an account of the debates raging on the subject of cooperation in development, the texts collected in this volume open the way to alternative thinking on North-South relations and on the relationship to economism and culturalism in all parts of the world. They throw light on the

All about trees...

A practical guide to the land, aiming to identify native trees by giving their pilot names. It is intended for all those who live and work in the forest, for ecological surveys and more specifically for forest inventories.

This guide describes the 220 most important species in the mainland forests, which can generally be classified as tall trees.

The language is clear and concise, avoiding excessive use of technical jargon. The botanical terms are explained in an illustrated glossary.

Les arbres de la Guinée Equatoriale - Région continentale [The trees of mainland Equatorial Guinea] by

Chris Wilks and Yves Issembé.

Produced as part of the CUREF project, financed by the European

Union, sold by SECA - Parc

Scientifique Agropolis, 34397

Montpellier Cedex 5, France ; tel :

+33 4 67 04 59 01 - 570 pages

Price within France : FF90 + P&P +

VAT: outside France : FF90 + P&P

... and animals

This book aims to help anyone who keeps livestock and those who help, advise or teach others how to keep their animals healthy in tropical countries, especially in Africa.

It covers a wide range of topics that affect the health of

livestock, from diarrhoea to rinderpest, from helpful traditional remedies to the uses of modern medicines and vaccines. It includes advice on the care, feeding, and handling of animals. By describing the signs of disease to look out for, it helps readers to work out what is wrong with an animal and advises them what to do about it. Special emphasis is placed on preventing and controlling diseases and problems.

This book is an essential tool for farmers who live far from a vet, but also for teachers in rural schools, NGO/or agricultural extension workers who advise farmers on how to look after animals, and also vet assistant and other skilled workers.

This book is clearly written by an experienced vet and farmer who has travelled and worked in 16 countries in Africa and Asia. It has over 400 drawings as well as a word list and index to assist the reader.

Where there is no vet

by Bill Forse

co-published by Macmillan

Education, CTA and OXFAM c/o

BEBC Distribution, PO Box 1496,

Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 3YD,

UK, tel : +44 (0) 1202 712933, fax :

+44(0) 1202 712930 : price for

Europe : £5.50, rest of the world :

£8.50

ISBN : 0 85598 409 0

et du culturalisme [Cultural diversity and globalisation.

Beyond economism and culturalism]

Edited by Henry Panhuys and Hassan

Zaoual - 214 pages - FF120 - published by

L'Harmattan, 5-7, rue de L'Ecole

Polytechnique, 75005 Paris, France ;

e-mail harmat@worldnet.fr

Tel: +33 01 40 46 79 20

ISBN 2-7384-9078-6

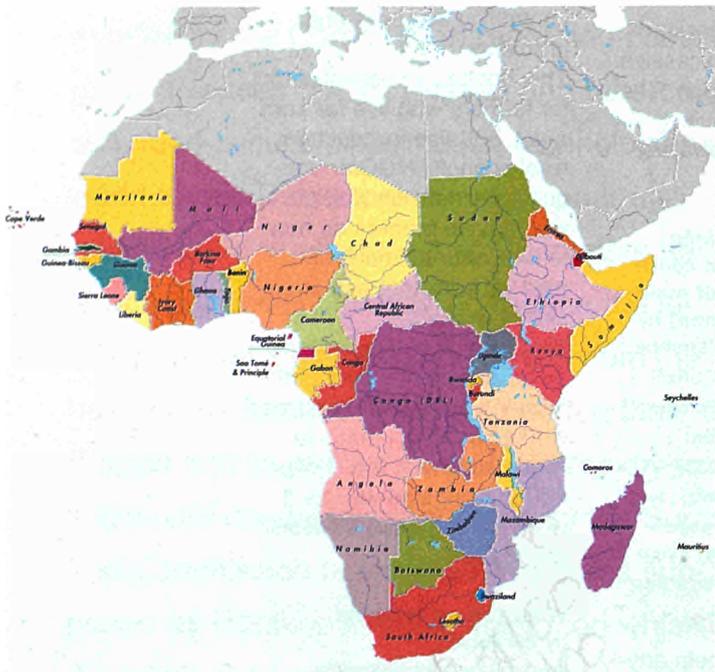
successive failures of development and globalisation from the perspective of a decompartmentalisation of disciplines and cultures, with a view to encouraging a more flexible approach, more in tune with the values, representations and real-life experiences of players at grass-roots level.

Diversité des cultures et mondialisation. Au-delà de l'économisme



- Austria
- Belgium
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Ireland
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Portugal
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- France**
- Territorial collectivities
- Mayotte
- St Pierre and Miquelon
- Overseas territories
- New Caledonia
- and dependencies
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic territories
- Wallis and Futuna islands
- Netherlands**
- Overseas countries
- Netherlands Antilles:
- Bonaire, Curaçao, St Martin,
- Saba, St Eustache
- Aruba
- Denmark**
- Country having special relations with Denmark
- Greenland
- United Kingdom**
- Overseas countries and territories
- Anguilla
- British Antarctic Territory
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Cayman Islands
- Falkland Islands
- Southern Sandwich Islands
- and dependencies
- Montserrat
- Pitcairn Island
- St Helena and dependencies
- Turks and Caicos Islands

The European Union



The 77 ACP States

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Angola | Equatorial Guinea | Mali | Seychelles |
| Antigua and Barbuda | Eritrea | Marshall islands | Sierra Leone |
| Bahamas | Ethiopia | Mauritania | Solomon Islands |
| Barbados | Fiji | Mauritius | Somalia |
| Belize | Gabon | Micronesia | South Africa |
| Benin | Gambia | Mozambique | Sudan |
| Botswana | Ghana | Namibia | Suriname |
| Burkina Faso | Grenada | Nauru | Swaziland |
| Burundi | Guinea | Niger | Tanzania |
| Cameroon | Guinea Bissau | Nigeria | Togo |
| Cape Verde | Guyana | Niue | Tonga |
| Central African Republic | Haiti | Palau | Trinidad & Tobago |
| Chad | Ivory Coast | Papua New Guinea | Tuvalu |
| Comoros | Jamaica | Rwanda | Uganda |
| Congo | Kenya | St Kitts and Nevis | Vanuatu |
| Congo (ex-Zaire) | Kiribati | St Lucia | Zambia |
| Cook Islands | Lesotho | St Vincent and the Grenadines | Zimbabwe |
| Djibouti | Liberia | Samoa | |
| Dominica | Madagascar | Soa Tome and Principe | |
| Dominican Republic | Malawi | Senegal | |



Surrounded by water but nothing to drink!

This was the case of one of Cape Verde's islands - São Vicente - whose drinking water had to be brought by ship from neighbouring São Antão island and stored in a reservoir in Mindelo. From there it was sold to the islanders.

Today the water seller is no longer necessary - the island has several sea-water desalination plants, and this statue has been put in her place.



printed on environmentally-friendly paper



Published by the Directorate General for Development, EC, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels
Printed in Belgium NH-AA-00-006-EN-C