



Dimitra Newsletter

RURAL WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

NEWSLETTER N° 5 – BRUSSELS, NOVEMBER 2000

foreword

Dear Readers and Friends,

We have now reached the evaluation phase, and we thank you all for contributing to the evaluation survey of the Project by replying en masse. We have actually received 500 evaluation forms (i.e. almost 20% of the total number sent out), and the vast majority are very positive about what the Project has achieved. We value your responses, which are important in the context of the general assessment of the Project.

In the present issue, a large proportion of the columns will be devoted to the Reflection and Self-Evaluation Workshop held in Brussels on 16-18 October with the partners of the Dimitra Project. We hand over to the partners, who have drawn up two documents on the proceedings of the workshop: one reviews the effects of Dimitra Project

participation, and the other draws conclusions and makes recommendations for the future of the Project. These two documents will be backed up with extracts from the reports drawn up by the partners for the Workshop. We are also publishing the address delivered by Ms Marie Randriamamonjy on Day 3 of the Workshop in the presence of Mr. Eddy Boutmans, the Belgian Secretary of State for Development Cooperation. And there are further articles on the impact of the Dimitra Project in Algeria and Senegal.

The Fourth Meeting of the ISC took place in Dakar from 22-24 November. The main theme was "Rural women's access to and control over productive factors".

We then go on to describe some projects of particular interest from the point of view of biodiversity, gender and food security. We would remind you that these projects – and

hundreds of others – can be consulted in the Project database (see our website: <http://www.fao.org/sd/dimitra>). This database presently contains information on 841 organisations, 1894 projects and 820 publications.

The forthcoming Dimitra Guidebooks – on Africa and the Near East – will be available in the course of 2001, but the database itself has already been extensively updated and can be researched on the Internet.

Thank you for visiting the Dimitra website and checking the correctness of your particulars. In case of error or change, please advise us as soon as possible.

We hope you will enjoy reading this Newsletter. □

<http://www.fao.org/sd/dimitra>

content

- 1 Proposals for the future
- Reflection and Self-evaluation Workshop of the Dimitra Project
- 3 – Summary
- 4 – Benefits and Problems
- 6 – Recommendations
- 7 The impact of the Dimitra Project:
 - in Algeria
 - in Senegal: Establishment of a National Network of Rural Women
- 8 Fourth Meeting of the ISC
- 9 Project examples on biodiversity & food security
- 11 Ghana: Grascutter Domestication
- 11 New Books

Proposals for the Future

Mr. Secretary for Development Cooperation, Ladies and Gentlemen Representatives of the Belgian Government, Mister Representative of FAO, Ladies and Gentlemen Representatives of the NGOs, Dear friends and partners of Dimitra,

It is a great privilege and a great pleasure for me to be in the company of the men and women without whom this Project could never have been realised. I thus wish to thank the Belgian Government, and in particular the Directorate General for International Cooperation of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, External Trade and International Cooperation, the King Baudouin Foundation, our 8 field partners, the coordination team in Brussels and our colleagues at FAO in Rome.

I would like to take this opportunity to renew FAO's commitment in its efforts to fight poverty and to seek to ensure food security for all. The Dimitra Project is directly in line with FAO's mission and priorities included in the strategy adopted by the Conference in November 1999. Back in 1996 during the World Food Summit, the Heads of State and of Government undertook to ensure a political, social and economic environment based on the full participation of men and women on an equal basis.

Address delivered by **MARIE RANDRIAMAMONJY** Chief, Women in Development Service of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) (at the Reflection and Self-Evaluation Workshop of the Dimitra Project on 18 October 2000)

Representatives of our partner organisations have already reported in full on the results the Project has achieved. I shall thus merely mention the most salient features. Through its networking activities and publications, Dimitra has succeeded in highlighting and developing the role played by rural women, who are invisible, but essential, development actors. At the same time, Dimitra has provided a means of promoting awareness of the broader issue of gender amongst development actors, and in particular amongst policy-makers and planners, with a view to promoting equality between men and women, and to achieving a fairer and more equitable development.

Dimitra also falls within the framework of the FAO Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development. One of the main lines of action in that Plan concerns the availability, validity and use of data and of quantitative and qualitative information on rural women.

■ **FAO Strategy for Action**

The Strategy for Action which was drawn up at the High-Level Consultation on Rural Women and Information in October 1999 has underlined the importance of producing and disseminating information and of the possibility of accessing it. Dimitra played a remarkable role in that event by contributing the testimonies and expertise of its partners in the field. Women, particularly in the developing world, generally benefit little from the means of exchange and mobilisation which information technologies provide and the opportunity they bring of opening up to new arenas. I would cite amongst the many reasons for this the lack of training in how to use these technologies, the low percentage of women staff in the media, the physical, social and psychological isolation of women, the absence of infrastructures, and the limited financial resources. Dimitra has taken these problems into account and endeavoured to find a solution. Of course, Dimitra is no panacea but this Project has helped move things in a rather unique way

■ **A unique project**

- Unique, for in the FAO it is the only network of this scale dealing with the role of women in food security and rural development.
- Unique, because it has promoted an interface between 3 partners: NGOs, rural women and government institutions.

The information supplied by Dimitra is not only provided through traditional media such as the 6-monthly Newsletters and the Guidebook; it is also available on the FAO website. And thanks to the new information technologies and the advantages they bring, the database on projects, methodologies and publications is regularly updated.

Dimitra has been careful not to widen the gap which would have separated users and those who are the most in need and have no access to new technologies. The Project has thus endeavoured to equip local partners with information management tools and to train them in how to use them. These efforts will have an even greater impact in the next phase of the Project, since information management will be decentralised and transferred to the regional level.

- Unique because it has provided a means of bringing obscure development actors to the fore. "Partnership" and "participation" are two keywords which have enabled Dimitra to highlight the grassroots organisations which carry out the projects.

By using this proactive method the Project has been able to ensure visibility at the national, regional and international level for all participant organisations, even the most modest. More than 600 organisations in Africa and the Near East have already taken part in the Project to date, and their information will

be disseminated on the FAO website and in forthcoming publications.

Networking, sharing information and making information more accessible are also objectives set in the "Strategy for Action - The role of Information - Gender and Food Security" adopted by 130 countries in Rome in 1999. Dimitra will continue to support these efforts. For what is important is to keep the information up to date and to provide a means of even more extensive exchange.

■ **The results of the Workshop**

I would like to go back to the results of the brainstorming session to underline several key points which prompt us to pursue the Dimitra experience and to share this conviction with our bilateral and multilateral partners.

Despite the sometimes difficult operating conditions, all of the parties involved agree that on the whole the objectives of the Project have been achieved. It is always a pleasure to talk about success unanimously. And above all, Dimitra has provided a means of ensuring greater visibility for the contributions made by rural women and of promoting gender awareness amongst development partners. One of the partners talked about giving "a voice to the voiceless" .

■ **The benefits of the Project**

One of the major contributions of the Project has been to create networks for exchanging information, in particular on good practices. Local know-how has also been developed through the Project, and the information sources and internal capacities of the partners have been enhanced.

A further major contribution has been the creation of networks for exchanging information, which have led to specific activities such as the organisation of inter-institutional seminars or brainstorming sessions or the launching of a national network of rural women's associations. Dimitra has also facilitated the creation of networks for exchanging publications and documentary donations.

I am delighted to say that the traditional networks have expanded and have been dynamised through Dimitra. For they have become more visible, their membership has increased, and new partnerships have been set up.

Networking has enabled the partners to compile a very large amount of information both efficiently and selectively. They have thus filled a gap and met a very real need. They have also trained their staff, who are now better prepared for collecting information and organising conferences.

Dimitra has helped to increase the visibility of the partners and participating NGOs at both national and international level, to improve their lobbying power and to build up the institutional capacities of the weaker NGOs.

The problems and solutions mentioned by our partners for improving any subsequent phase of the Project will of course be taken into account.

I shall conclude with several wishes for the future.

■ **Update of the database**

If the Dimitra database is to stay alive, we must continue to update it. We are relying on our partners to pursue this task, and we assure them of our support for carrying it to a successful conclusion. The same applies to the networks, which must be strengthened and sustained. These last days, we have talked a lot about the "Dimitra spirit" which must be kept and disseminated. We have had requests to extend the geographic and technical coverage of the activities of the Project.

■ **Extension of the Project**

On the strength of our experience in Africa, the Near East and Western Europe, we would like to extend Dimitra's activities to Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia. We must thus identify new partners and train them so that activities can be decentralised to the best possible advantage. It would indeed be of advantage to organise meetings and/or seminars at the national and regional level to share information and propose training sessions.

Dimitra could continue to play its role as coordinator and provider of technical assistance putting organisations that are seeking partnerships in touch with one another. The FAO will continue to place its unique expertise at the disposal of the member countries and partners as well as its database on agricultural and rural development, enhancing it with their contributions on the one hand and using its own networks on the other.

As the executing agency implementing the Dimitra Project, the FAO is convinced of the need to continue it for simple, fundamental reasons relating to the threefold function of information as a decision-making tool, as a tool for empowerment, and as a tool for gender planning.

Mr Secretary for Development Cooperation, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dimitra has opened up a new field of hope and more promising prospects for rural women. For once, on the information superhighways they have not been abandoned by the wayside. It is up to all of us to see that this rich adventure continues for the well-being of all mankind by participating, each at a different level, in the establishment of a more equitable and sustainable development.

I thank you for your attention.

Summary of the Reflection and Self-evaluation Workshop of the Dimitra Project:

At the conclusion of Phase 1 of the Project, after 18 months of collaboration, the 8 Dimitra partners in Africa and the Near East and FAO had great pleasure in meeting in Brussels from 16 to 18 October 2000 for a Reflection and Self-evaluation workshop. Ms Marie Randriamamonjy, Chief of SDWW (Women in Development Service), Ms Sophie Treinen, SDWW Information Officer, and Mr. Andrea Vietri from WAICENT (World Agricultural Information Centre) of the FAO also took part in this meeting. Mr. Eddy Boutmans, Belgian Secretary of State for Development Cooperation, did us the honour of concluding the working session on the last day.

■ The contributions of the Project have exceeded all expectations

The purpose of this meeting was threefold: to mention the experience gained by each partner in collaborating on the Project, to share ideas on the effects of the Project within each of the partner organisations, and to endeavour to measure the impact on the quality of the dissemination of information and on the improvement of the visibility of regional expertise in the various countries and sub-regions.

In preparation for their participation in the workshop, the partners had each drawn up a document reviewing their experience with the Dimitra Project in full. The compendium of these reports will be available shortly in English and French. The discussions were lively and always extremely interesting. They revealed that, above all, the Project's contributions had by far exceeded what was initially planned and that the partnership dynamic established by the Dimitra Project had triggered a whole series of favourable "side effects", which had not been anticipated.

On the basis of the discussions held, the participants drew up 2 documents which you will find on the following pages. To sum up the essential points, the partners considered that, on the whole, the objectives of the Project – helping to ensure greater visibility for the contributions of rural women and to promote gender awareness amongst development actors – had been achieved.

■ Enhancement of the know-how of rural women

The partners first emphasised the favourable contribution of the Project as regards enhancing the know-how of rural women, awareness of their status, the important

Partnership and Participation: "the Dimitra Spirit"

role played by project descriptions, which provide greater visibility of the work done by rural women, and the highlighting of the numerous roles they play.

■ Extension and dynamisation of networks

The second major aspect underlined in the debates concerned the extension and dynamisation of the existing networks and all the benefits which were triggered off by this: exchange of information on good practices and experiences, development of local know-how, identification of resource persons, new contacts, enhancement of information sources and organisation of specific activities such as participation in a seminar on the working conditions of domestic workers in Tunisia (Crédif) or a brainstorming session with a view to launching a national network of rural women in Senegal (Enda-Pronat), organisation of exchange fellowships (Algeria), etc.

■ Involvement of stakeholders

The third aspect, which is fundamental and particularly encouraging and which was underlined by all of the partners, concerns the greater involvement of the stakeholders, i.e. grassroots organisations, which, thanks to the Dimitra Project, have found a means of making themselves known and making their voices heard. This particular component also had the effect of increasing the membership of the partner networks, notably changing the profile of the members by increasing the number of grassroots organisations. And finally, the partners were keen to underline that the quality of information and its dissemination had been improved by the Project due to a better understanding of the importance of information as an instrument of power. The dissemination of information on experiences and the sharing and pooling of information by NGOs, researchers and governments is a further positive effect of the work carried out.

■ Heightened visibility

A further factor noted by all of the partners was the strengthening of the institutional capacities of the partner organisations' structures. The national and international visibility provided by the collaboration in the Project and the use of an international network was considered an important as-

set adding to the credibility of the partner organisations.

Despite the general satisfaction, it was not always easy to carry out the activities, and although the overall results are very positive the Dimitra Project encountered several problems: difficulty in accessing information, withholding of information, various administrative delays, under-estimation of the time needed for information collection, under-estimation of the budgets needed for raising awareness and collecting information effectively, lack of institutional support, the need to improve the questionnaire, and, lastly, excessive expectations on the part of a number of NGOs in relation to the possibilities of the Project.

■ The Project must continue to play its role as catalyst

All of these factors were taken into account by the group as a basis for drawing up "Recommendations for the Future", a text which underlines the role of catalyst and facilitator which the Dimitra Project plays between the NGOs, the networks, the focal points, and the partner organisations.

■ Strengthening the "Dimitra Spirit"

The group recommends that the "Dimitra Spirit" be strengthened, that the central coordination of the Project be continued and that the Project be extended geographically to cover other regions of the world. It also recommends that the activities of the Project be gradually decentralised and that measures be taken to strengthen a network of Dimitra partners and to "repackage" the information collected according to the needs of the end-users. The group suggested that efforts be made to keep up the momentum of the Dimitra spirit by organising meetings on specific issues at the national and regional level which would bring together local expertise, by continuing to exchange information through the development of a site for decentralised information management, and by continuing to use traditional means of dissemination at the same time.

This workshop provided a wealth of ideas and exchange, and we hope that it will be possible to continue the Project along the lines defined by the group. □

Reflection and Self-Evaluation Works with the Partners of Africa and the N

EXTRACTS OF THE REPORTS OF THE DIMITRA PARTNERS

■ Increased visibility of the contributions of rural women

«The Dimitra Project has also provided us with an opportunity to facilitate the collection of information aimed at contributing to the improvement of the lives of rural women through the dissemination of information on the importance of their contribution.» ZWR CN

«The activities carried out in the form of projects for promoting rural women are not known - even locally. Where available, the information on the activities of rural women is sporadic, and it is not always easy for those who are interested in it, such as NGOs, sponsors, students, consultants, researchers, and public authorities, to easily find and obtain what they are looking for.» CREDIF

■ Extension of the network

«As a result of this interaction, there is a number of organisations that have become members of the Forests, Trees and People Programme (FTPP) which is hosted by FAN. This includes the Centre for Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa - Uganda Chapter (CEEWA-Uganda) and VECO-Uganda. Within this programme, other members like World Vision Uganda, who were no longer receiving the FTPP Newsletter, asked to continue being on the mailing list of the same.» FAN

«We did come across a few organisations which we had no knowledge of prior to the commencement of the Dimitra Project. Our involvement in Dimitra enabled us to expand and consolidate our focus, as we discovered new organisations and contacts, and undertook visits to the other countries.» PRODDER

■ New partnerships

«FAN has been able to develop a partnership with AT-Uganda and presented a proposal on strengthening rural women's economy through the promotion of trade in non-timber forest products. FAN has also drawn resource persons from some of the contacts in the region for some of their activities like monitoring and evaluation.» FAN

■ Better knowledge of local expertise

«The projects described by the organisations contacted cover a wide range of subjects: economic activities, crafts, literacy training, awareness-raising, social, health and environmental education, gender awareness action, etc. This contributes to the enhancement of local know-how and the dissemination of information on good practices to promote rural women in the Maghreb countries.» CREDIF

«We also became more knowledgeable regarding specific activities relating to rural women, whether it is a project teaching women how to start crop growing, how to read and write or how to manage a revolving fund. We have a better understanding of what is being done and by whom in each country (except Angola) to improve the livelihood of rural women. Obviously our involvement in this project highlighted programmes and projects specifically involving rural women.» PRODDER

■ Avoid duplication of activities

«The lack in information sharing has often led to duplication of activities or "re-invention of the wheel" as organisations attempted to fill the perceived data gaps. Thus, the database to be produced by the Dimitra Project can be used by other organisations to avoid duplication of activities. It also could be used to dialogue on the best ways to carry out activities and programmes that can benefit rural women.» ZWR CN

Summary of the Benefits Derived and

The 8 partners of the Dimitra Project came to the conclusion that the main objectives of the Project have been met: to contribute to the increased visibility of the contributions of rural women and to raise the awareness of development actors to the gender approach.

I. BENEFITS

■ Greater visibility of rural women at the national and international level (reinforcement of the importance of their role)

- enhancement of the know-how of rural women
- awareness-raising on their status
- contribution to a greater visibility of the work of rural women thanks to the description of projects implemented by them
- highlighting the multiple roles of rural women (through the gender approach)

■ Enlargement and redynamisation of the existing networks

- establishment of links and contacts between networks
- networking among participating organisations
- enlargement of partnerships (information exchange, training and expertise)

■ Creation of an information exchange network which promotes

- the exchange of good practices and experiences
- the avoidance of duplication of activities
- the identification of resource persons
- a better knowledge of on-going projects
- the identification of new contacts
- the enrichment of information resources and their easy updating
- a better knowledge of local expertise

■ Sensitisation and greater gender awareness

■ Improvement of the quality of information and of its dissemination

- enhancement of the existing used and unused information
- greater opportunities for exchange and for the development/implementation of common projects
- highlighting of innovative projects which fight against the poverty of rural women

Problems Encountered: Adopted text

- better information on the major fields of activities of NGOs
- awareness-raising and enhancement of the role of information and its effects
- dissemination and exchange of information:
 - dissemination of experiences
 - transfer of information (to governments, NGOs and researchers)
 - use of information for lobbying purposes

■ Impact of the Dimitra database which

- is a tool for searching information on gender
- is a tool for the identification of new partners
- is a tool for disseminating organisational techniques
- has ensured the international visibility of grassroots organisations
- provides an overall view of issues confronting NGOs working with rural women

■ Greater involvement of the stakeholders

- more information on grassroots organisations, their projects, activities, etc.
- more possibilities to obtain this information
- introduction to new organisations previously not known to the partners (NGOs, peasants organisations, research centres, women's organisations, etc.)
- some partners have witnessed the emergence of peasant organisations through institutional support, for example, the creation of a network of rural women in Senegal
- redynamisation of traditional organisations: value given to the associations engaged in traditional activities (e.g. tontines, etc.)

■ Impact on the partner organisation (capacity-building) and its structure

- recognition of the role of the partner as an actor of development
- greater international visibility
- contribution to the regional networking effort
- improvement of the functioning of programmes/internal activities
- reinforcement of capacities through training
- reinforcement of logistics
- enlargement of own databases: enrichment and updating of the sources of information

EXTRACTS OF THE REPORTS OF THE DIMITRA PARTNERS

■ Better knowledge of the activities of other NGOs

«The process that we used to gather the information for the Project took us at times out of the scope that we have been working in. This has certainly given us a wider understanding on the activities being undertaken by other organisations. We now know more about the work carried out by other NGOs working with women. Other NGOs have also expressed an interest in the work that we are doing. We will certainly hope that this information will enhance our networks.» ZWRCN

■ Improvement of the quality of the information and its dissemination

«In the process of collecting information, FAN not only learned what others are doing but also the approaches they are using in their work. This puts it in a very unique situation linking up the needs of those seeking for particular information and also determining future collaborators and partners. Most development workers find themselves overwhelmed with pertinent issues to tackle on the ground. This includes food security, nutrition, a healthy society, human rights, economic empowerment, and environmental conservation. The networking and linking up is very important to be able to effectively provide the services to the grassroots communities, target groups and members.» FAN

■ New exchange projects

«FAN has now organised for an exchange of publications with ISIS-WICCE (Uganda) and IRIS, Interlink Rural Information Service (Kenya).» FAN

«Concrete examples of exchanges resulting from the Dimitra Project:

- the organisation of a seminar by the Commission Nationale des Femmes Travailleuses de Tunisie on the working and living conditions of domestic helps, who generally come from a rural background, has been an opportunity for this Committee to benefit from the experience of an NGO (Club du 13 août), which will give an account of its activities and put forward suggestions for enhancing the forthcoming debate on the subject;
- a young woman working as an executive officer in the association Al Wifak will be able to attend a 3-week training in Nice on women and the environment. This has been made possible thanks to the training network of our partner in Algeria, AREA-ED, which is coordinating this operation;
- CREDIF is often asked to supply Tunisian and foreign NGOs with information on organisations working in rural areas.» CREDIF

■ Redynamisation of traditional groups

«Through the descriptions of specific projects the various organisations taking part in the Dimitra Project are able to underline existing potential in the various fields of activity, and the value of similar activities can also be enhanced. Creating a network of organisations will promote expertise in the countries concerned. And lastly, the network can provide a vehicle for the emergence of peasant organisations, bringing empowerment through the strengthening effect it can have. This institutional capacity-building will tend to redynamise traditional groups, furthering the establishment of management and inter-village committees.» ENDA/PRONAT

■ Greater international visibility

«PRODDER's funding basis was also expanded as a result of the Dimitra Project. PRODDER benefited in the sense of international exposure through contact with the FAO, publicity in the Dimitra Newsletter and through this visit to Brussels.» PRODDER

II. PROBLEMS

■ Difficulties linked to the access to information

- physical problems: lack of operating communication tools (e-mail, postal services, war situations, etc.)
- withholding of information, suspicion, lack of time, lack of interest
- "questo-phobia": questionnaires not returned, or returned while incomplete or badly filled-in
- lack of awareness of the value of information

■ Financial problems

- under-estimation of the available budgets (for example for awareness-raising missions)
- late payments

■ Timing problems in terms of duration and personnel availability (e.g. concerning follow up)

■ Lack of institutional support

■ Inadequacy between the expectations raised by the project and its actual possibilities (for funding purposes)

■ Questionnaire to be reviewed and improved

■ Questo-phobia

«There were not many difficulties experienced, but it is important to mention the ones we came across. As always where questionnaires are concerned, it took an effort to encourage organisations to return them. In some cases returned questionnaires were not complete and we had to arrange for the omitted information to be sent to us separately. A specific question that posed a problem was the Project Description. Some organisations did not complete that question, even after numerous telephonic requests and they were therefore excluded from the project.»

PRODDER

«Organisations were unwilling to fill in the questionnaires because of what we may describe as "questionnaire fatigue". The usefulness of filling a questionnaire which did not immediately bring benefits was difficult to perceive. This could be attributed to past negative experiences of some organisations, which perceived the exercise as a waste of time.»

POSDEV

«Some organisations have developed a negative attitude against questionnaires, 'questo-phobia', which they have filled in the past but have not seen the outcome of. Others pegged a cost to the time spent in filling the questionnaire and they felt that they are held accountable by their organisations.»

FAN

Recommendations for the Future: Adopted text

The Dimitra Project has emphasised the role and contribution of NGOs, community-based organisations and farmers' organisations.

The information provided has also proved useful for governments and policy-makers in the evaluation of the civil society sector through

- dissemination of information,
- exchange of experiences,
- transfer of knowledge and skills,
- institution strengthening.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE GROUP

I. FOR THE CENTRAL COORDINATION LEVEL

- Consolidation of the "Dimitra Spirit"
- Continuity of the central coordination:
 - to maintain the website and initiate the process for the development of a decentralised Internet portal
 - to update the Dimitra database
 - to expand the impact of the achievements of the projects
 - to increase personal contacts to reinforce training in information processing, etc.
 - to geographically expand to other African countries and to Latin America, Asia, and Central and Eastern Europe to further promote interregional linkages
 - to increase contacts with multilateral and bilateral organisations.

The role of Dimitra has been confirmed to be a catalyst for facilitating linkage between network focal points, their members, partners and grassroots organisations. The "Dimitra Spirit" needs to be reinforced and enlarged.

II. FOR THE PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- Permanent focal points in each country:
 - progressive decentralisation of information processing and dissemination by partner organisations for increased ownership
 - create/reinforce a network of DIMITRA partners at national and regional level, leading to increased national and regional exchanges, e.g. workshops
 - repackaging the collected information for lobbying, advocacy, research, and identification of best practices.

III. A COMMON STRATEGY

- Maintain the momentum of the "Dimitra Spirit" through:
 - national meetings with all Dimitra partners, community-based organisations (CBOs) and government representatives (on critical issues)
 - regional meetings and exchanges to make the programme more proactive and more responsive
 - continued exchange of information through various means.

IV. RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Adequate human and material resources will need to be allocated in order to im-

plement the activities foreseen for the future.

The following specific activities have been

recommended through this evaluation:

- allocation of full-time human resources for central coordination and partner organisations
- development of the decentralised information management system and website
- decentralisation of the publication of the guidebook
- transfer of skills in repackaging of information to suit various end-users
- increase the frequency of Dimitra newsletters
- strengthening information and communication channels and tools of partner organisations
- accessing gender training from FAO in gender diagnostic awareness
- focusing on critical issues and capitalising on research findings and development of research-action in collaboration with appropriate research centres and universities
- activating interregional cooperation and networking through exchange of experiences. □

The impact of the Dimitra Project in Algeria

The experience of AREA-ED

We did not hear about the Dimitra Project on rural women until May 2000, when Ms Mabrouka Gasmi (CREDIF Tunis) contacted us to ask us to collaborate in the context of the Dimitra survey on the North African region and more specifically on Algeria. But it was in particular as the result of Ms Gasmi's visit to Algiers and the launching of the operation to collect information and to raise awareness in the beneficiary organisations that the advantage of the Project became more obvious.

We started off on the basis of a directory of some 20 associations with which we have permanent contacts in the context of the network for fighting desertification (CNAA, National Committee of Algerian Associations) and several women's associations in Algiers as such as SOS Femmes en Détresse or RACHDA.

To begin with we didn't think that there would be many associations concerned with the broader issue of promoting rural women, since Algerian development associations - all fields combined - are located in major cities on the whole and devote their efforts essentially to the problems of urban populations.

However, when we went into the matter more thoroughly and thought about it we were surprised to find that several fairly recent associations devote their activities to the rural world with a relatively large component concerning women and that the activities of the associations in the cities benefit to some extent to the promotion of rural women. This is the case, for example, with SOS Femmes en Détresse,

whose refuge centre often shelters women from rural areas, and the same can be said for associations which work on legal issues or those that are fighting illiteracy.

As far as our association is concerned, we reckon that on the whole our participation in the Dimitra Project has enabled us to discover a field, which we were not aware of up till now. We have met a large number of activists from associations, and the information we obtained at those meetings goes beyond the objectives of the Dimitra Project.

Through the accounts given by the activists of the associations we have been able to measure the distress of the populations in rural areas and in particular of women and young people. We have come to realise that many efforts must be developed to benefit the rural world, which has been so hard hit by the precarious security situation as well as the economic crisis.

The immediate impact of the Dimitra Project on our day-to-day activities, on the other hand, has been more concrete.

**By Mounir BENCHARIF,
Programme Coordonnateur
AREA-ED, Association de Réflexion,
d'Échange et d'Actions pour l'Environnement et le Développement**

30, chemin Mokrane Aoues
El Mouradia, Alger - Algeria
Tél: 213-2-302415 / 698580
Fax: 213-2-302415
E-mail: area@wissal.dz

The contacts which Ms Mira Chatal, who runs the AREA-ED Documentation and Information Centre (CDIE/AREA-ED), has had with the leaders and members of associations have enabled her to promote the CDIE, to create an exchange network and to assess demands as well as fields of interest. This will enable her to answer specific demand more efficiently, which is one of the main objectives of the CDIE.

In the case of our programme on the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, establishing links with organisations which work on rural areas enables us to more effectively prepare the organisation of awareness and education campaigns and/or of forums for consensus-building.

The Dimitra Project also provides AREA-ED and its international partners with the opportunity to work on a field undeveloped yet on the elaboration and implementation of sustainable development projects and programmes.

We have also observed that many of the associations we have met have considerable deficiencies in terms of organisation and methodology and that their staff, in order to prepare their activities more effectively, need specific training in providing extension services, implementing participatory or gender approaches and using the logical framework. It would therefore be of advantage if the Dimitra Project could help to organise training cycles and series of visits to projects for the benefit of the personnel of associations working to promote rural women and of the populations concerned. □

The Establishment of a National Network of Rural Women in Senegal

The Dimitra Project in Western Africa was launched in March 1999 in 7 countries of the sub-region: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea (Conakry), Mali, Mauritania and Senegal and it is coordinated by the PRONAT programme of ENDA Tiers-Monde, which is based in Dakar.

On 8 August 2000, ENDA/PRONAT organised a brainstorming session with several organisations taking part in the Project including the Ministry of the Family and National Solidarity, the Federation of NGOs in Senegal (FONGS), and the National Association of Rural Family Houses (ANMFR, Association Nationale des Maisons Familiales Rurales). The objective of this brainstorming session was to exchange views on the aims of the Dimitra Project and

think about future prospects. The participants at the meeting looked at the Project together, shared information on the experience gained in the field and were thus able to define guidelines for further action - hence the subject matter of the present report, which is structured as follows:

■ Aims

- greater visibility of rural and peri-urban women as local actors;
- empowerment of rural women;
- pooling and utilisation of the acquired skills and experience of rural women to best advantage;
- networking and partnership amongst rural women.

■ Objectives

- to strengthen grassroots organisations (training/information);
- to highlight the value of the local know-how and skills of rural women;
- to present detailed information on the experience gained in projects carried out with and for rural and peri-urban women and on the methods used by development organisations;
- to contribute to the promotion of dialogue and to the exchange of information amongst NGOs, research institutions, information and training centres, national or international development agencies, and all development actors in general.

■ Strategies

- elaboration and/or further development of training programmes for women;
- lobbying/advocacy (sponsors, policy-makers, development partners);
- action to make new information and communication technologies accessible (costs/content) by using the experience gained by organisations such as ANID and the Africa Association for the Development of Education and Training in Africa (ADEF/Africa) and others to be defined;
- definition of appropriate methods (languages) to help rural women obtain information;
- ownership and gender approach in the development policies and programmes;
- action to promote exchanges and partnership by using arenas such as International Rural Women's Day, International Women's Day (8 March), and Women's Fortnight (in Senegal);
- creation of a specific database (gender and sector desegregated data, particularly in the agriculture sector).

■ Actions/Activities

- a) *Awareness-raising/dialogue*: elaboration of teaching tools (translation of documents

into the local languages spoken by the grassroots actors), land laws, the Family Code, the Forestry Code, new information and communication technologies, dissemination of information (on experiences/local products);

- b) *Training*: cooperative management, new information and communication technologies, functional literacy and post-literacy training;
- c) *Socio-economic activities*: action to launch and/or develop integrated projects; support for income-generating activities;
- d) *Exchange and partnerships*: action to create or strengthen mutual learning mechanisms; relations between organisations in the North and South; relations amongst organisations in the South at both national and sub-regional level (small-scale fairs).

■ Means of implementation

Establishment of a National Network of Rural Women:

- *Profile*: rural women, farmers' organisations, supervisory ministry, grassroots organisations, NGOs and other institutions.
- *Human resources*: synergism of the skills of the network, action to seek the skills required depending on the respective activities.

- *Financial resources*: members' fees, action to seek funding, entrepreneurial activities, donations, subsidies.

■ Conclusion

The 15 organisations present have decided to set up a Committee on Initiatives with a view to building up a National Network of Rural Women, which was already under preparation in the Federation of NGOs in Senegal (FONGS). This network will unite all of the rural women's organisations as well as the NGOs, the supervisory ministry and other development institutions. ENDA/PRONAT, FONGS, ANMFR, the Ministry of the Family and National Solidarity, and the African Network for Integrated Development (ANID) undertake to pilot reflection on its implementation. □

By Fatou SOW

ENDA-PRONAT

B.P. 3370

Dakar - Senegal

Tel: +221-8-225565

Fax: +221-8-235157 / 222695

E-mail: pronat@enda.sn

dimitra@enda.sn

Website: <http://www.enda.sn/pronat>

Fourth Meeting of the International Steering Committee (ISC) for the Economic Advancement of Rural Women in Dakar:

The members of the ISC appealed to all governments and peoples throughout the world to promote rural women

The Fourth Meeting of the International Steering Committee (ISC) for the Economic Advancement of Rural Women was held in Dakar on 22-24 November 2000 in the presence of HM Queen Fabiola of Belgium, ISC Patron, and Mrs Viviane Wade, First Lady of Senegal and President in office of the ISC. A number of African and Asian First Ladies also attended the meeting as well as representatives of international organisations, NGOs and rural women's groups. Mrs Marie Randriamamonjy, Chief, Women in Development Service, represented the Director General of FAO.

The main theme of this meeting was "Rural women's access to and control over productive factors: a necessity for sustainable development". In her opening speech, Mrs Viviane Wade launched an urgent appeal to the political authorities to create incentives and facilitate access to land for women through awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts. She also urged rural women to have confidence in their own abilities and to assert themselves by showing their determination to fight prejudice. Mrs Wade

stated that "Poverty amongst rural women is a heavy burden and an obstacle to development".

Mrs Wade and the First Ladies who addressed the meeting all underlined the importance of the socio-economic strategies to be adopted for women to be able to play their role in development to the full: new approach to microcredit instituting links with the classical banking system, efforts to build up the capacities of rural women and to strengthen their leadership, networking, effective implementation of laws and regulations which are favourable to women, training, education for girls and boys, establishment of training programmes that are adapted to the specific circumstances of the rural environment, access to new information and communication technologies, etc.

Access to information for rural women, one of the main topics of the meeting, was highlighted by the presentation of the FAO Strategy for Action on the Role of Information and emphasised by the Dimitra

Project, which is part of this strategy, at one of the workshops.

Four workshops, each chaired by a First Lady, worked on the following issues: "Access to land for women", "Access to credit and other resources", "Strengthening women's capacities and institutional mechanisms" and "Rural women and information".

The ISC concluded its proceedings by presenting a Resolution comprising all of the recommendations issued by the workshops.

HM Queen Fabiola announced that she was resigning from office as Honorary President of the ISC due to her commitments in Belgium, but she assured the assembly that she would remain an ardent advocate of the International Steering Committee and of rural women.

The next ISC meeting will be chaired by Princess Lalla Fatima Zohra Abdel El Aloui of Morocco in 2002. □

Project examples on biodiversity & food security

Guinea

Local participatory management of natural resources by women

The objectives of the project are to fertilise the soil, to conserve agricultural biodiversity and to improve living conditions.

Activities:

1. identification of 5 villages and forming of 5 groups of rural women, who collect farm manure and local seeds in the market gardening project; the development of these products helps to improve families' living conditions;
2. training of the women in manure conservation and sowing techniques in order to prevent loss of the nutrients contained in the manure and to guaran-

- tee (conserve) the germinal properties and quality of the seeds;
3. extension of these practices to other villages and efforts to seek market outlets;
4. organisation of an organic fertiliser production and seed network. □

APAB/GUINÉE

Association pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture Biologique en Guinée

B.P. 13, Kindia – Conakry
Guinea

Tel: 224-610876 – Fax: 224-610254
E-mail: pride.train@eti-bull.net

South Africa

Sustainable livelihoods for all

The Suid Bokkeveld community comprises landowner households and a large number of landless households. Landless people find employment as herders and seasonal labourers. The main farming activities are the production of indigenous rooibos tea and sheep-farming. For many generations, the people of the community have lived in harsh climatic and social conditions, marginalised by the former regime on the basis of racial classification. Compounded by the marginalisation of the majority of 'coloured' landowners and tenants by former governments, this has resulted in widespread poverty. Infrastructure in the area is underdeveloped, with poor roads, lack of a reliable water supply, a lack of community facilities and no grid electricity, poor access to information, physical isolation from markets and social marginalisation; all of these factors combined prevent the local rooibos tea producers from realising a viable price for their tea, the mainstay of the local economy. Landless people, and particularly women, who have precarious livelihoods and are employed as tea-pickers on a seasonal basis, suffer serious economic consequences. This in turn has a negative impact on the social fabric of the community, and is associated with alcohol abuse, violence against women, out-migration of young people and unravelling of the social fabric.

Project Components

EMG is facilitating the community development process. Some programme components include:

- *Biodiversity*: to enhance soil and plant biodiversity. Local knowledge of the environment will be enhanced by scientific research.
- *Soil and water conservation*: to restore and enhance soil and water resources.
- *Agriculture and ecological (organic) farming*: to promote organic rooibos tea production and explore more natural systems of production which retain the biodiversity of the environment.
- *Marketing and small business development*: to provide information and support for the development of business enterprises (e.g. rooibos tea) to enable other members of the community to use the opportunities for marketing other products.
- *Community capacity-building*: community empowerment in terms of establishing effective functioning of local organisations; measures to initiate a learning programme with other communities on agricultural systems and tourism opportunities for the area.
- *Appropriate energy*: to promote access to adequate energy resources for all members of the community and explore

Ghana

Rehabilitation and community management

The main objective of this project is to facilitate the protection and wise use of the Nyanya Lagoon/Wetlands and resources for the conservation of biodiversity and to provide alternative (renewable and sustainable) means of income generation beneficial to the community as a whole, thus reducing the stress on the lagoon and its environs. The restoration of the wetland biodiversity is done through the planting of economically beneficial tree species (coconut and cashew) and the establishment of wood lot farms to serve the fuel needs of the local people. Environmental sanitation is being improved by the provision of a public place of convenience and alternative sites for garbage collection and disposal. Women benefit most from this project, as it seeks to alleviate problems in the acquisition of fuel wood and the maintenance of sanitation in the homes. □

GEO, Green Earth Organisation

P.O.Box AN 16641, Accra-North
Ghana

Tél: 233-21-232762 – Fax: 233-21230455
E-mail: greeneth@ncs.com.gh

alternative energy sources (solar and wind).

All of these components are ensured a gender-sensitive approach as well as a participatory process wherein all members of the community contribute and benefit from the project.

Various degrees of progress have been made on several of the components. The capacity-building has developed into a 'Community Exchange and Training Programme' to facilitate information exchange between communities. Research is being conducted into the impact of trade on the community and its livelihood - relating specifically to rooibos tea.

Target group & beneficiaries: local Suid Bokkeveld community and service providers (District Council, Dept. of Agriculture and others). □

EMG, Environmental Monitoring Group

P.O.Box 18977, 7824 Wynberg
South Africa

Tel: 27-21-7610549

Fax: 27-21-7622238

E-mail: emg@global.co.za

Website:

<http://home.global.co.za/~emg/>

For more details, visit our website:
<http://www.fao.org/sd/dimitra>

The Netherlands

Gender and Biodiversity Management Research programme

The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed at the Earth Summit in 1992 to deal with the rapid and large-scale loss of the world's plant and animal genetic resources, comprises three broad objectives:

- (a) conservation of biological diversity;
- (b) sustainable use of its components;
- (c) fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

However, the significance of gender inequalities in relation to these objectives is conspicuously absent from international discussions. This omission is beginning to be recognised: the Leipzig Plan of Action has been amended to include additional reference to gender, and the IPGRI and FAO, together with the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources, elaborated a draft Plan of Action on gender and biodiversity in November 1997.

However, the research basis for policy action and intervention on gender and biodiversity is widely lacking.

Research on gender and management of biodiversity will analyse:

- the relevance of gender and other socioeconomic and cultural factors in informal plant genetic resource management, conservation and exchange systems, as well as changes in cultural practices or socioeconomic conditions affecting knowledge, access and use of genetic resources;
- relations between induced change in plant genetic resource management and existing local systems of management and use of biodiversity, as well as the significance of gender in these relations;
- engendered politics around genetic resources at national and international levels. □

**Department of Gender and Agriculture,
Wageningen Agricultural University**
Hollandseweg 1, 6706 KN Wageningen
The Netherlands
Tel: 31-317-483374 – Fax: 31-317-483990
E-mail: gender.studies@alg.vsl.wau.nl
Website: http://www.sls.wau.nl/crds/cent_gs.htm

Tunisia

Project to encourage rural women to make a proper use of pesticides in the agricultural sector

Given the importance of the role played by rural women in development, FNAT is interested in integrating the rural women component into its programme on the utilisation of pesticides in cooperation with FAO in the context of its activity to protect vegetation and the environment and also with a view to encouraging the women to apply its programmes. In view of the dangers of pesticides for human health and for biodiversity, FNAT plans to carry out the following action:

- to conduct a survey through young women skilled in agriculture with a view to identifying plant diseases (collection of samples);
- to organise training and information days for the analysis of the results of the survey and for agricultural extension purposes.

This is a pilot project on the use of pesticides by women. FNAT plans to commission experts to carry out a feasibility study.

FNAT, Fédération Nationale des Agricultrices Tunisiennes

c/o UTAP, Union Tunisienne
de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche
Rue Alain Savary - Cité EL Khadra
1003 Tunis, Tunisie

Tel: 216-1-800800 – Fax: 216-1-797292
E-mail: utap.tunis@email.ati.tn

Gabon

Agricultural extension activities

In October 1997, ACF decided to support the population most affected by the civil war in Anuradhapura. The main objective is to improve the food security of more than 5,500 families by reactivating and diversifying local food production and through research into food self-sufficiency. This is translated into the distribution of seeds and tools for vegetable gardening, training in market gardening techniques, water management, the fight against parasites, storage, and sensitisation to the nutritional advantages that result from these activities. Among the 5,500 targeted households, priority for the distribution of tools (machetes and hoes) and seeds have been given to widows and single women. □

ACF, Action Contre la Faim

4 rue Niepce, 75014 Paris
France

Tel: 33-1-43358888 – Fax: 33-1-43358800
E-mail: info@acf.imagenet.fr
Website: <http://www.acf-fr.org>

These activities are used to improve the traditional system of subsistence agriculture - only aimed at survival - in the marginalised rural areas. The objectives are:

- (1) to increase agricultural productivity or profitability by using organic fertilisers and appropriate technologies which are respectful of the local ecological situation;
- (2) to improve the nutritional level of food intake for the farmers (women and children in particular) by introducing new crops and preserving crops which are dying out.

The agricultural extension work takes place in the form of training seminars and field visits. Since it is the women who take care of this subsistence agriculture at the village level, they are the primary beneficiaries of the extension activities. But the men are also involved and are called upon to help the women and alleviate their heavy workload. □

FENAMODEV, Fédération Nationale des Mouvements de Développement Villageois

B.P. 86, Mimongo/Ngounie
Gabon

Grasscutter* domestication

Contribution to household incomes and nutritional needs

In Nsukwao, a suburb of Koforidua, capital of the Eastern Region of Ghana (about 60 km from Accra, the nation's capital), live Madam Esther Eghan and her husband Mr. E.Y. Sefa-Asante, owners of Beenu Yena Enterprise, a grasscutter/livestock concern which they have ran successfully for the past 30 years. Madam Eghan is in formal employment as well as running the farm. This story focuses on the grasscutter rearing aspect of their business concern.

Grasscutter meat is a delicacy in Ghana. Local restaurants, popularly called chop-bars, attest to the extent of demand for this meat. Slightly gamey in taste, the meat is usually smoked over wood fire, skewered and sold whole. It is usually used for soup making and is a favorite accompaniment to fufu (a doughy local staple made of cooked plantain and cassava or yam).

As a result of concerns raised about the methods of trapping which include various forms of ingenious traps, trenches baited with feed, smoking out the animals which often causes bushfires (with its negative environmental consequences) or chased and caught by dogs – which indiscriminately trap the animals, including the young and pregnant females – grasscutter domestication is being actively encouraged by the Animal Research Institute of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (ARI-CSIR) in collaboration with some NGOs such as Heifer Project International Ghana.

Madam Esther Eghan has seen her farm go through several transitions. Starting with two grasscutters in the 1960s, the farm grew to 300-strong animals in the late 60s and throughout the 70s. However a surfeit of grasscutter meat collapsed the market for her product and she shifted to poultry keeping for the better part of two decades.

In 1992, an officer with ARI-CSIR who was investigating baseline management practices in grasscutter production and domestication, was told of her long experience in this area. He contacted her and encouraged her to go back to rearing grasscutters. This was in the light of the existing situation that saw a shortage of wholesome grasscutter meat on the market. She followed his advice and the rest, like they say, is history.

A typical day in Madam Eghan's life begins 4:30 a.m. She wakes up and feeds the animals that are kept in cages in batches of a maximum of 5 (at most four females and one male). From experience, there is only one male to several females

since the males fight each other viciously when put together. The animals are fed elephant grass, leaves of certain leguminous plants, maize husk, yam, cassava and sweet potato. These leaves and tubers contain the required nutritional needs and the animals are not fed any nutritional supplements. They are fed twice a day and given water as well.

The animals can get quite vicious when mating and often hurt themselves by biting each other. Bites and open wounds are treated with local herbal concoctions that have no side effects and work very quickly to heal wounds.

On average, female grasscutters have 4 offspring per litter and are capable of bearing their young twice a year. The females can be mated when they are 8 months old while the males are ready to cross the females when aged between 12 – 18 months.

Minimal overheads coupled with sustainable environmental practices help this family business to thrive and flourish. Madam Eghan and her family have obtained economic as well as nutritional security for themselves by ensuring full participation by all members of the family in the business irrespective of their sex. □

* *Otherwise known as cane rats, these rodents are widely distributed and valued in West and Central Africa. In the past this animal has been hunted extensively although, in the savanna area of West Africa, people have traditionally captured wild grasscutters and fattened them in captivity. More recently, intensive production of grasscutters has been undertaken in several countries in West and Central Africa.*

Article by **POSDEV**,
Pan African Organization
for Sustainable Development

P.O.Box 0273, Osu, Accra
Ghana

Tel: 233-21-244177 / 223031

Fax: 233-21-244155

E-mail: posdev@africaonline.com.gh

15 October

World Rural Women's Day

World Rural Women's Day takes place each year on the 15th of October, and celebrations and events are held in more than 80 countries. The theme for 2000 was "The voices of Rural Women for Peace and Development". The purpose of the Day is to provide rural women and their organisations with a focal point to: raise the profile of rural women, sensitise both government and public, to their crucial, yet largely unrecognised roles, and promote action in their support in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation.

new books

Guide de la Femme Rurale en Tunisie

On 29 September 2000, the Tunisian Ministry of Women and the Family has organised a meeting at CREDIF's premises (partner of the Dimitra Project for the countries of the Maghreb) to present this Guidebook and to ensure a better use and dissemination of the book amongst field workers.

The Ministry invited NGOs and institutions which have programmes aiming at the promotion of rural women in Tunisia as well as journalists, to ensure that this action would receive proper media coverage at the national level. The invitation of the coordinator of the Dimitra Project for the Maghreb countries was another occasion to present the Projet, and to publicise this activity at the international level through the Dimitra Newsletter.

The publication of the *Guide de la Femme Rurale* is part of the policy of the Ministry to participate to the implementation of a national strategy aiming at highlighting and reinforcing the role of rural women to development. The Guidebook, which constitutes a general action tool and will be put at the disposal of all field workers (social and agricultural extension workers, etc.), has as its main objective to inform rural women of the services and opportunities available which favour their integration in the development process.

The Guidebook consists of 10 thematic chapters: Rights and institutional mechanisms; Education and schooling; The national strategy to fight illiteracy and promote adult education; Training; Economic activities (income-generating activities); Basic and reproductive health care; Rural women and the environment; Social services and programmes; The organisational fabric; Educational and cultural extension work.

The Guidebook is only available in Arabic. For more information, please contact: Le Ministère de la Femme et de la Famille 2, rue d'Alger – 1000 Tunis, Tunisia
Tel: +216-1-336721 or +216-1-335066
Fax: +216-1-349900 or +216-1-350202
E-mail: maff@email.ati.tn

Caroline Sweetman, 1999

The delivery of new technologies to poor communities has been hailed as the key to economic and social progress. However, although technology can help women overcome barriers to economic and political participation, it can also consolidate existing imbalances of power. Articles in this volume consider the impact of a range of technologies, from treadle pumps to the Internet, on urban and rural communities. Topics range from the specific to wide-ranging 'conceptual' concerns, with detailed case studies from Africa and Asia.

Order from: Oxfam GB
Tel: +44-1202-712933
Fax: +44-1202-712930
E-mail: bebc@bebc.co.uk
Website: http://www.oxfam.org.uk

**Reclaiming Women's Spaces:
New Perspectives on Violence Against
Women and Sheltering in South Africa**

This is a pioneering book exploring the nature of gender violence in South Africa. It brings together for the first time the collective wisdom and wealth of experience of activists, academics, experts, and survivors who have fought to end gender violence in South Africa. The book provides a truly indigenous analysis of violence against women and seeks solutions that are realistic and responsive to the South African context. The book is indispensable to anyone seeking to understand the history and context of disempowerment and to anyone asking questions about how to build a future for women in this country.

Order from:
Nisaa Institute for Women's Development
P.O.Box 1057, Lenasia,
1820 Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: +27-11-854 5804
Fax: +27-11-8545718
E-mail: nisaa@sangonet.org.za

**Organisations et Réseaux
d'Appui aux Femmes
Palabres/Palabras n°6**

This issue is the follow up of the second workshop that Palabras has organised in December 1999 in Brussels. The participating groups define themselves as being support organisations for women's groups. These structures assist women and implement empowerment and training projects: they work as a network, disseminating information and ensuring awareness raising sessions as well as training on gender equality for women empowerment. They met and realised that they face com-

new books

mon obstacles in terms of gender approach within their organisations as well as in the methods used for empowering women. They aim at reinforcing their visibility and increasing their possibility to speak up, within their structures, in their environment and in society in general, in order to ensure a balanced vision of gender relations. This reinforcement is concretized through setting up training sessions, information dissemination and common actions with other groups. This collaborative work is of paramount importance: it is done in specific ways depending of each country but also through North-South networks. The importance of networking has thus been put forward.

Available in French and Spanish from
Le Monde selon les Femmes
Rue de la Sablonnière, 18
1000 Bruxelles, Belgium
Tel : +32-2-2230512
Fax : +32-2-2231512
E-mail: monde.femmes@skynet.be

**Le Genre: un outil nécessaire?
Introduction à une problématique**

Jeanne Bisilliat & Christine Verschuur
(Eds.), *Cahiers Genre et Développement*
n°1, 2000

This first issue of the *Cahiers* is a collection of documents on the notion of gender and development. It gathers for the first time, in French, a large choice of fundamental texts, written mostly in English, which have constituted history for this new field of knowledge. The originality of this book lies in its goal, which is to create a space for knowledge around major aspects of gender and development issues so as to provide landmarks for all those trying to grasp the formidable complexity of development.

Available in French.
ISBN: 2-7384-8855-2
Order from:
L'Harmattan
5-7 rue de l'Ecole-Polytechnique
75005 Paris - France

**Female Genital Mutilation:
A Guide to Laws & Policies Worldwide**

Nahid TOUBIA & Anika RAHMAN

The authors describe female circumcision/genital mutilation, its history, its consequences for health and the reasons used to justify it.

They examine the history of the movement working to combat it and present

data from 40 country studies, North and South, covering prevalence, legal measures and other state steps towards eradication, campaigns and prosecutions. They also suggest solutions through human rights treaties, and recommend actions by governments, the international community, and NGOs. There is information on practice in Australia, Belgium, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, France, The Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Italy, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Sweden, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, UK and USA.

ISBN 1856497739
Order from:
Zed Books,
Tel: +44-20-7837-4014
Fax: +44-20-7833-3960
E-mail: sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk
Or from the Africa Book Centre,
38 King Street, London, WC2E 8JT,
United Kingdom
Tel: +44-20-7240-6649
Fax: +44-20-7497-0309
E-mail: orders@africabookcentre.com

CONTACT US!

Eliane Najros, Project Coordinator
Tel: 32-2-5490310
Maartje Houbrechts, Project Officer
Tel: 32-2-5496168
Fax: 32-2-5490314
e-mail: dimitra@dimitra.org
FAO Dimitra Project (GCP/INT/673/BEL)
21 rue Brederode
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium

With the financial support of the DGCI, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, External Trade and International Cooperation (Belgium) and of the King Baudouin Foundation

The content of the articles does not necessarily reflect the views of the FAO or the Dimitra Project

Design: Atelier voor grafische & aanverwante toepassing, Gent
Printed by édition et imprimerie, Brussels

Editor: Eliane Najros,
FAO Dimitra Project, 21 rue Brederode,
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium



**FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**