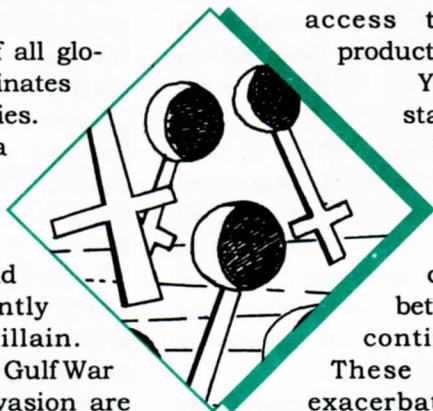


corresponding lack of interest in and/or ignorance about issues in developing nations.

News concerning the latter are mostly those concerning disasters, calamities and in general those labelled as "bad news."

Ninety percent of all global news, in fact, originates from only four countries. So it is not much of a surprise that during times of global conflicts, only one side is played up and the other conveniently portrayed as the villain. Media coverage of the Gulf War and the Panama invasion are classic examples.

Source: IBON Facts and Figures, "Who owns what?" Vol. 19, No.11, 15 June 1996



development (IWD) were initiated. The whole point was to find solutions that would do away with two major constraints on the expansion of women's activities both in rural and urban environments, namely, access to credit and to production means.

Yet, in 20 years, the status of rural women has evolved very little.

Governments continue to give priority to cash crops. The inequalities between men and women continue to be ignored.

These two factors have exacerbated the imbalances between the sexes, whether in decision-making, in the appointment of work and profits, or access to resources.

Unaware of Technologies

And yet, a large number of technologies aimed at easing domestic and agricultural work have been invented or modernised, including grain mills, improved cooking bobs, hydraulic pumps, wheelbarrows, trolleys, solar-ray captors, processing and conservation equipment for food products and oil extraction presses. When questioned, some women say they are unaware of these technologies. Others, on the other hand, complain about the high cost of these technologies or that the implements are difficult to use. Also, spare parts for tools and machine-tools are not always available in the countryside. The slightest breakdown is a problem and it is sometimes necessary to go to the nearest large town, or even as far as the capital located hundreds of kilometers away, to find a repairman.

Moreover, some of these technologies, because they are ill-suited or costly and are limited in use, have only resulted in increasing the workload of women. Studies also revealed that, due to the inequality of relations between the sexes, it is not always in the interest of women in some societies to gain access to technology which allows them to increase their productivity and, hence, their income. Why? Because the men who control the women keep the extra money generated in this way for themselves.

Finally, structural adjustment policies have resulted in the withdrawal of government incentives that promoted private initiatives to support women's agricultural activities. As a consequence, women are finding it even more of a problem to gain access to technology and credit. The development of popular initiatives is therefore an even more pressing item on the agenda than ever before.

Source: AIRD News, March 1996

BARE HANDS

by Codou Bop

Women peasants play a vital—though unseen, unpaid and undervalued—role in agriculture.

The majority of women in the South live and work in a rural environment where they play a vital role in agriculture, frequently a dominant sector in the economy of countries in the South. Yet, women rarely have access to credit and production means. According to an estimate by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), women's agricultural work contributes from 60 to 80 percent of food production. Apart from food, women are also present in the cash crop sector.

As if to acknowledge this vital role of women in agriculture, the year and then the decade for women was proclaimed in 1975. Policies for the integration of women in