

## WORKSHOP ON RURAL SOCIOLOGY AND FARMING SYSTEMS

A workshop on the role of rural sociology and anthropology in farming systems research took place at the Ridgeway Hotel, Lusaka, from 27 to 29 November 1984. The government of the Republic of Zambia, with technical support from ODI (Overseas Development Institute, London), undertook local organisation through the farming systems team (ARPT: Adaptive Research Planning Team) in the Research Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Development. CIMMYT (International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre), through its East Africa Economics programme directed by Dr Mike Collinson, provided financial support as a part of its regional networking activities.

Participants were practising rural sociologists and anthropologists drawn largely from Southern, Central and East Africa. Each of the full participants presented a paper relating to the main theme of the workshop. A list of possible topics was circulated in advance and participants selected a topic from the list on which to prepare a short working paper. Working papers were discussed in small interdisciplinary groups which included agriculture scientists and agricultural economists. The findings of the small groups were then presented for further discussion at plenary sessions. The final afternoon was spent discussing specific topics (indigenous knowledge, defining units of analysis, bias against women, and interdisciplinary cooperation) selected by participants with a view to formulating general guidelines for practice.

Arrangements are in hand for a selection of the papers to be published. For further details, contact the organisers: Dr A. J. Sutherland and Mr C. K. Chileya, ARPT Rural Sociology Section, Mount Makulu Research Station, Private Bag 7, Chilanga, Zambia.

## THE BOOK FAMINE IN AFRICA

On 14 October 1985 the International African Institute organised a one-day symposium in London at which the current, very grave, crisis in the supply of books and journals to Africa was examined. The emphasis throughout was on the academic and tertiary-level. The symposium was chaired by Professor Michael Crowder and the subject was introduced by Dr Arthur Porter, former Vice-chancellor of the University of Sierra Leone. Other speakers included Ian Willison (head, English Language Branch, British Library), Alastair Niven (former Director of the Africa Centre, London), Gillian Dickinson (British Council), Peter Scopes (Education Adviser, Overseas Development Administration), Professor Roland Oliver (SOAS), Paul Richards (Review Editor, *Africa*), Michael Twaddle (Editor, *African Affairs*), James Currey, Peter Warwick, Christopher Hurst and Mark Cohen (all in Africanist publishing).

The tragedy of Africanists divorced from the material needed to pursue their studies, to maintain their understanding of developments taking place in their disciplines elsewhere in the world, and to keep their teaching up to date, was explored. Many such scholars can no longer write for international journals, nor offer papers to international conferences, through lack of access to recent publications. Publishers who, a few years ago, were publishing widely for the African market can no longer afford to do so. The market has contracted so severely that