ship with colleagues in sub-Saharan Africa, is trying to foster electronic networking there.

In selecting candidates for pilot networking projects, AAAS is using simple guidelines:

- The electronic network must be driven by demand, and a natural affinity group of users should already exist.
- A local champion of the concept, willing to work hard to overcome the inevitable hurdles, must agree to cooperate.
- The technology mix selected should be appropriate to local conditions and rely on tested equipment. It may range, for example, from packet radio to satellite lines.

We welcome suggestions for pilot projects. Some are already under consideration, among them:

- Collaborative effort with the Association of African Universities to develop an electronic network among selected member universities.
- Obtaining BITNET access for key African universities, which could then serve as nodes for others.
- Linking selected Nigerian universities via packet radio to demonstrate a within-country academic network.
- Linking more institutions to the existing EARN node in Abidjan.

Support for the initial phases of this work is being provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

We have learned from all of our sub-Saharan Africa programs that intangible and unforeseen consequences of our efforts are often as important as the specific intended activity that we are carrying out. Our visits and correspondence with colleagues in Africa help them sustain a high morale and positive spirit under very difficult conditions. The AAAS presence in Africa, and the fact that we recognize our colleagues there as serious scientists and seek partnerships with them, results in recognition and support from their own governments.

This they desperately need, but often lack. A Ghanian minister told us once, "It is sad that it takes recognition of our scientists and engineers by groups from outside Ghana before we can recognize the talent we have in our own countries."

■ **BARRY GOLD, Directorate for International Programs**

## Sri Lanka Bound?

AAAS is seeking a representative to attend the 45th Annual Session of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science, set for 4 to 8 December 1989 in Colombo. The AAAS delegate has been invited to give a lecture and to visit research institutions in the country.

AAAS members who plan to be in the area, or who know of colleagues who might, should contact Laura Mann, Office of International Science, 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, 202/326-6400, before 30 September. Please include a curriculum vitae. AAAS cannot pay travel expenses but will provide per diem for the meeting.

## Repairing Equipment

Imagine you are a scientist in a tropical region of the developing world, conducting research with a highly sensitive instrument. What with constant humidity and frequent voltage fluctuations, it breaks down yet again. You need a spare part, but the manufacturer's representative serves two other countries and is not due back for a month. You cannot order directly from the manufacturer because of hard currency restrictions. The repair manual is in English and your lab technician knows only French. So you grind your teeth and put the experiment on hold.

This is a frustrating but familiar scenario at developing country research facilities. Equipment sits rusted, broken, improperly calibrated, and underutilized. Recognizing the importance of this issue, AAAS has just completed a study to develop a comprehensive and cost-effective approach to equipment maintenance and repair. Financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the study identified several commonsense ideas. It suggested that scientific and engineering societies around the world could, through a communications network, address equipment procurement procedures, advise users on maintenance, and create a model equipment procurement policy to be adapted to specific countries.

As part of the initial study, the China Academy of Medical Sciences surveyed equipment in Chinese medical schools. The objective is to initiate a pilot training program there, expand it to cover other Chinese research institutions, and then transfer it cooperatively to other developing countries, particularly in Africa. The Association of African Universities has found that, in some labs, 75 percent of equipment is broken. "Equipment," one correspondent told us, "spends more time in the storeroom than in the laboratory."

Members of the AAAS Consortium of Affiliates for International Programs participated in the study and will be important players as we take the next steps. AAAS is also working with regional scientific and engineering groups in developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and with counterpart groups in Europe.

■ **SANDRA BURNS, Directorate for International Programs**

## Seen Any Good TV Lately?

You can help select the best TV and radio reports about science to receive the prestigious AAAS-Westinghouse Science Journalism Award for 1989.

Broadcast entries range from DNA fingerprinting to space flight to ecology to how the mind works, and must be screened for scientific accuracy.

If you live in the Washington, D.C., area, or will be traveling here during late August, we need your help to review broadcast entries in your discipline at AAAS headquarters. Call 202/326-6440 by 15 August.

■ **JOAN WRATHER, Office of Communications**