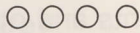




ence policies: "When these men are deciding on some of the issues which really concern women, there must be women to enlighten them. If there are no women, they won't make the right decisions."



Without political and legal changes the situation of Namibian women will never improve, says Nelago Kasuto. "There are many national issues. But they should start with the laws. Most laws are really horrible. They must change the laws that discriminate against women. This include written laws as well as customary laws, such as those that say when a woman's husband dies she will get nothing."

Ms Kasuto added that women must strive for more representation in political positions. "We must get fifty per cent in the various government offices and also top jobs if we are qualified. I cannot see how women can be given only two minister's posts. We are more than 50 per cent of the population."

Ms Kasuto is convinced that strong women's organisations are necessary to improve the situation of women. The YWCA itself is in the process of becoming stronger and welcomes new members. Any girl or woman from the age of 12 can join if she accepts the YWCA's constitution. *If you are interested to become a member, you can phone YWCA's National Office at (061) 63484.* ●



## Status of the Women Worldwide

In spite of some improvements in the past two decades, women remain substantially disadvantaged as compared to men. The majority of women still get unequal pay for equal work: a global average of 30% less.

And as urban women make gains, the lives of rural women - particularly in Africa - are deteriorating. These and other findings appear in *The World's Women, 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics*, the first ever United Nations global report on women.

"The book zeroes in on crucially important issues, finds numbers to illuminate them, and uses words to interpret the numbers. It is written with a forthrightness rare in UN documents", wrote one book reviewer.

"Getting the statistics from 178 countries was no easy task" as director of the UN Statistical Office, William Seltzer, told the Associated Press. "A classic example: A woman in the Third World carrying a baby on her back while feeding chickens. Is this a motherhood statistic or an agricultural one?"

The book also reports that most countries do not keep statistics on violence against women - an issue transcending class or racial boundaries, and prominent in both developed and developing countries.



One of the most obvious differences between men's and women's worlds is women's child-bearing role and their near-total responsibility for family care and household management. Many societies see reproduction as a woman's main function, but they fail to provide the essential health care to make the function a safe one, the study said.

*The World's Women 1970-1990 is available from: United Nations Publications, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.*