ing this productive experience

the army can earn for them-

selves a considerable part of

their budget. The national bud-

get, thus, will be relieved of

some pressure. The experience

of the Chinese army is that they

earn a lot of money by running

mills and factories, leasing out

shops in their estates, main-

in the UN peace mission the

Bangladesh armed forces have

earned for themselves a good

amount of money, and de-

posited a part of it to the na-

tional exchequer. The amount

they have already deposited to

national exchequer is US\$ 29.3

million, in other words Tk

123.06 crore. From the same

account it is still to get US

\$15.2 million, i.e., Tk. 63.84

crore. Apart from this, the

armed forces will further get an

amount of US \$ 24.9 million,

i.e., Tk. 104.58 crore as service

charge for the arms used.

(Source: Armed forces Divi-

sion, Govt. of Bangladesh). Now

we can say that the Bangladesh

Armed Forces is already earning

a part of their budget them-

Bangladesh is a disciplined

body and they are efficient in

many fields. Our armed forces

may take up, in open competi-

tion with others, construction

jobs under different ministries.

Moreover they can be employed

to construct the buildings of

The armed forces of

Meanwhile, by participating

taining civil aviation, etc.

The Concept of Security: Impact on Distribution of Wealth

by Matiur Rahman

judicious way in different sectors is very urgent.

N recent years the concept of security has undergone some I fundamental changes. The meaning of security is no more limited only to the security of the state. The concept now encompasses the security of the people and the individual, security at dwelling houses and workplaces, security in movement, security through development, security of the neighbourhood and the environment. et al. However, in this South Asian region, particularly in Bangladesh, there exists a delicate balance, rather incompatibility, between the requirements of state security and human security. The requirements of both the sides are

ally exclusive in many instances. It would take a huge investment if we want to provide even the bare minimum to ensure the security of the mass as a whole. A modern armed forces for the security of the state also demands a huge expenditure. This is where the decision makers are in great dilemma. For, in the poor countries like ours, if we go for the one, we cannot afford to attend the other. Thus the pace of human development in our countries depends on where we strike the balance. how do we get an appropriate solution as regards the expenditures for state security and for human security.

enormous, and they are mutu-

Bangladesh is one of the most impoverished countries of the world, where innumerable patients suffering from curable diseases die without treatment. doctors are fewer than soldiers. Here we have one soldier per one thousand population. whereas we have only one doctor for twelve thousand per-

We also know that in our country 67 per cent of the children are suffering from malnutrition. Two-thirds of the adult population are illiterate; 52 per cent of the whole population live below the extreme poverty line; 55 per cent of the population have no access to health service. We spend 1.4 per cent of our national income in health sector, whereas 1.5 per cent in defense sector. The defense sector is also benefited from the expenditures in education and health sectors. And if we add to it the expenditures for other national security agencies like the BDR, Police and Ansar the total will be a still bigger amount. Eighteen per cent of the total amount of our national budget is allocated to the

defense sector. During the

decade from 1985-'86 to 1996-'97 the annual defense budget has been increasing by more than 2 billion taka on average every year. At the end of each year the amount increased further and was provided by the supplementary budget. During the period from 1985 to 1994. the manpower of Bangladesh Armed Forces increased by 26 per cent. During the same period Bangladesh was first among the countries of South Asia in terms of growth in military installations — 222 per

The steady increase in military expenditure, as a matter of reality, points to an uneven tendency of the economy. Experts, including the military experts of the country agree that it is already time that we monitor the lopsided military expenditure to attain an appropriate balance between the expenditures in state security and human security. If we fail to keep military expenditure within the means of the state, it may go beyond our control dangerously threatening the human development sectors. As a result the internal political stability may be zeoperdised.

We do not know exactly

whether our government and

political leaders have any concern for this critical situation. What is evident is that every government who came to power since liberation harped on the same tune — 'we have to strengthen the armed forces', we have to modernise our armed lorces', etc and kept on increasing the defense budget. During the reigns of President Ziaur Rahman and Hussain Mohammad Ershad, as both the governments were mainly dependent on the armed forces. they had increased the defense budget and taken recourse to many other tactics to woo and keep the military satisfied. The armed forces were the mainstay of their power. Now the question is, why the democratic governments that came to power after 1990, shall have to follow the same course, the same principle of increasing the defense budget without giving due consideration to the most important aspects of human security. The budget allocations of the present and the last governments for education, health. nutrition, elimination of poverty and other sectors do not give any encouraging message that these sectors are being given proper attention. Today, when the world trend is to cut down military expenditure (though India and Pakistan, the

In principle there cannot be any contradictions between human security and state security. Because, the real security can be ensured only by defending the interest of the people. Here the question of resource allocation in a

two countries of the South Asian region are still following the path of increasing defense budget), what could be the rationale behind our growing defense budget? Though, some may argue that the growth is not real, it seems so because of

monetary inflation.

Let us now look back. In brief, the military/defense strategy of President Ziaur Rahman was to strengthen the armed forces to the extent that it can withstand the Indian aggression for some days only, so that meanwhile the international pressure builds up and enforces a cease-fire. He had expressed this view to the eminent political scientist Dr Talukdar Maniruzzaman ('Politics and Security of Bangladesh' by Talukdar Maniruzzaman, UPL, 1994 page 168). However, Dr Maniruzzaman gave some information as to show that Zia's defense strategy did not corroborate with the historical perspective. On the other hand, the defense strategy of President Ershad was to expand the military to a minimum of 7 divisions. Now, Bangladesh has 7 divisions of army. It was 6 divisions at that time. He maintained that with that strength it was possible to withstand the onslaught for 21 days. In an interview with Mushahid Hossain, which was published in the January 14, 1990 issue of the Pakistani daily 'The Nation', Ershad hinted about this strategy. Mushahid Hossain is now the information minister in the present Pakistani gov-

The fact is that the previous two military governments and the immediate past BNP and the present Awami League government — all had and have been directing the defense strategy of Bangladesh to the same old path. The only difference is that, at present, no tension is

ernment lead by Nawaz Sharif.

visible in the open. Almost all the frontiers of Bangladesh is flanked by India, one of the major military powers of the world. The defense strategy and plans of the country have been formulated and advanced based on the fear of an external aggression mainly from India. As a matter of fact, this threat perception (psychosis) is the reason behind the continued increase in our defense budget. It would not be

rational to say that there could not be any military threat to Bangladesh either from India, or from the other bordering country Myanmar (Burma). Bangladesh has been building up its military capability being cautious about this probable external aggression. Not only that, there are new concerns as well: a potentially huge reserve of oil and gas in Bangladesh brings to the fore the necessity of a qualitatively stronger defense mechanism for the country. There are strong arguments in favour of this approach. It

has also to be kept in mind that not only from the neighbouring countries, but threats of aggression from far away countries to get control over mineral resources may also become real For example, the constant US military interest in the Middle East. Hence is the US pressure on Iraq, so much effort to keep Iran at bay, and overt military threat to Libya. The internal and foreign policies of these countries may have their share to the Middle East conflicts, but they are due mainly to the clash of interest in control over the oil resources.

What is evident from the above is that Bangladesh too needs a well organised and modern armed forces. However, the questions are: what should be the size of the armed forces? What kind of arms they should be equipped with? And how they should be trained up? The other relevant question is, what should be the objective of our security policy and defense strategy?

In Bangladesh, there is hardly any document or resolution available on defense affairs. However, there are some expert level deliberations. But even then, these deliberations do not deal with Bangladesh directly. Among the experts, the eminent political scientist Dr Talukdar Maniruzzaman maintains that instead of a regular army Bangladesh should have a 'Citizen Army'. It means that every adult citizen of the country should have military training. Not that everybody should be equipped with arms. They should be given arms as the moment demands., like the 'Citizen Army' in Sweden, Switzerland and Costa Rica. He firmly believes that, as long as

there is regular army in the

poor and underdeveloped countries, there will always loom the threat of military coup and martial law. (Talukdar Maniruzzaman's interview with the writer, published in Weekly Muldhara of 31.12.89).

However, Dr Talukdar Maniruzzaman also maintains that to build up a 'Citizen Army' in place of the regular army in Bangladesh, a general consensus of the major political parties is a must. Only then, and if provided with pension for lifetime, the army will perhaps accept the proposition. It is only by gradually developing the whole nation into a 'Citizen Army', the Indian military aggression could be resisted. Dr Talukdar Maniruzzaman has elaborated this idea in his article 'Alternative Strategy of Defense for Bangladesh' (Politics and Security of Bangladesh by Talukdar Maniruzzaman, UPL, page-164.) We find almost a similar

view in the book 'वाश्नारमन प्रनर्गठेन उ জাতীয় ঐকমতা' (Reconstruction of Bangladesh and National Consensus, page 141-148) by Abul Maal Abdul Muhit, an eminent writer on politics and economics. In chapter entitled 'Security Strategy and Defense Mechanism' of the book he maintains that the security mechanism of Bangladesh needs to be reorganised upside down. He has advocated for disbanding the regular army. He emphasised on organising a 'National Militia' mobilising those people having military training.

If the policy-makers of the country accept the proposition of either Maniruzzaman or Muhit, a major portion of the military budget could be re-allocated to the important sectors like health, education, nutrition, poverty elimination, etc. However, there are also some military experts who maintain that the whole process of building up of a 'Citizen Army' or "National Militia', arrange-THEN! Or training of actities afor ammunitions and their maintenance at the ready-to-fire level is no less complex and expensive.

It cannot be denied that if our state security is threatened at all, the threat will come from our neighbouring India. And india is the fourth largest military power of the world. An economically weak country like Bangladesh cannot afford to set the objective of winning a war against this military power. Neither president Zia, nor President Ershad had this objective in mind. Their objective was to withstand the onslaught 3 to 21 days. That the objective of our défense policy remains in essence the same today. The present government too is following somehow the same pol-

Simultaneously, multifaceted diplomatic initiatives shall have to be taken at the same time to develop our bilateral relations with India. The objectives of these initiatives shall be to avert confrontation between the two countries. Side by side, the process of economic progress within the framework of the 'Development Quadrangle may be accelerated. And to top them all, there should be specific diplomatic initiatives within the SAARC to create an atmosphere of regional cooperation. However, this can only happen if the present tension between India and Pakistan

subsides and their arms competition stopped. In that scenario, it would be possible to cut down the military budget and give proper attention to human security of the countries of South Asia as a whole.

In her own interest Bangladesh should, without delay, give proper attention to people's (human) security. It is an acknowledged truth that the size of army in itself cannot guarantee victory in a war. For an efficient army you need most modern arms and ammunitions, which are very expensive. And that is why the government, major political parties, military leaders and the civil society, giving due priority to human security, should reach a consensus as to the size of the army and the requirements of arms and ammunitions for the defense needs of the state in relation to present economic condition.

In our annual budget only two sentences are used to record the allocation in military sector. And on this allocation no discussion takes place in the parliament, no member raises any question. As if there is some inviolable understanding between the government and opposition parties not to raise any question. Whom does the government or the opposition fear, and why? How is it that the budget allocation for defense is financed by the hardearned money of the people. and the representatives of the people would not or dare not discuss it, or if necessary raise questions? As a matter of fact. it is the politicians of the country who have made the subject so sensitive, a taboo.

The Parliamentary Committee on Defense might sit regularly, but their discussions are found to be limited to insignificant agenda like the functioning of Muktijoddha Kalyan Trust or the Survey of Bangladesh. The reports of even these meetings are not made available. The present government, like the

immediate past one, has consti

tuted a 'National Security

Council', of no consequence at

all. The Council has never been

found to meet in session. How-

ever, in private discussions we

have found many retired and

serving senior army officers who

are in favour of discussions in

the parliament and the parlia-

mentary committee not only on

defense budget, but also on de-

fense policy as well (except the

tactical policy). They maintain

that it will help to ward off the

prevailing misunderstanding

among the people, and make

them aware of the defense and

security needs of the country.

There are many who are inter-

ested in exchange of opinions

between the army and the civil

society. And, presumably, to

this end in view that a two-day

seminar was held at the Mili-

tary Staff College in last Jan-

any contradictions between

human security and state se-

curity. Because, the real secu-

rity can be ensured only by de-

fending the interest of the peo-

ple. Here the question of re-

source allocation in a judicious

way in different sectors is very

In principle there cannot be

mined. For illiteracy, absence of proper health care system, mainutrition, food shortage, unemployment etc., if pro-longed, may prove highly disastrous for the country. This danger may result from the absence of a proper balance between defense budget and social budget. The Soviet Union, even being a supper power in military terms. split into pieces in 1990 due to its failure in maintaining this balance. That is, the existence of a country does not depend only on its military strength. In the same way, countries strong in military power like Iraq. Somalia or Nicaragua have miserably failed to ensure their sovereignty, national integrity and welfare of the people. All these are testimony to the fact that military power alone cannot ensure the security of a country. As a result, the concept of security today is not limited to the defense of the frontiers only. Rather, it is be-

urgent. Which sector demands

how much has to be deter-

the people. The two major military powers of South Asian region, India and Pakistan, have failed to take stock from this most essential and important experience. We too in Bangladesh, trying not to reach a balance between state security and human security, are investing a major share of our limited resources in an unplanned way in militarisation. Doing so we are denying the possibilities of creating employment opportunities and expanding the most

ing measured specially by the

vardstick of standard of living of

urgent service sector. In this context we may now discuss how to strike a balance. Arms reduction is the trend of the world today. Between 1989 and 1994, about 5 million army personnel have been demobilised. In some poor countries like El Salvador, Namibia, Nicaragua and Mozambique a part of their armies have been withdrawn and given other peaceful jobs. However, during the same period some countries have raised their armies.

In the present situation, it is impossible to go for partial demobilization or reduction in army without creating alterna-

tion. Moreover, in the present

political condition any proposi-

tion like this will not be accept-

able. However, any proposition

like the reduction in army may

be considered only when it is

guaranteed that there would be

no military aggression against

Bangladesh either from India or

any other power. The people

should be made conscious and

public opinion should be mobi-

lized as to the security needs of

the country. However, in the

light of experience gained else-

where, some measures may be

taken to reduce military expen-

are deployed in urgent relief

and rehabilitation work after

severe national disasters. In

some occasions, army was em-

ployed to transport fertilizer

and foodgrains. In these duties

the army had proved itself very

efficient. In the construction of

roads, highways and bridges in

the Chittagong Hill Tracts the

army had successfully per-

formed the job. Keeping this ex-

perience in mind, or rather us-

In Bangladesh armed forces

The existence of a country does not depend only on its

military strength . . . countries strong in military power

like Iraq, Somalia or Nicaragua have miserably failed

to ensure their sovereignty, national integrity and

welfare of the people.

primary schools under the Facilities Department. They may even participate in tenders for constructions. This will also stop extortion and violence. The construction work will be completed within the stipulated time. The armed forces may also take part in long term projects like forest development in collaboration with the Forest Department. In the process the army can earn a lot. The army can be employed in transporting foodgrains and fertilizer throughout the country. The leftout land under the ownership of the army may also be used to earn money for themselves. By this way by using army, many plans can be taken up and materialized. As a result, pressure on budget will

cation, nutrition to ensure security of the people. All these to materialise, what is needed at first is the government decision. So far we understand, there are supporters of this approach tive job opportunities. The private sector in Bangladesh is not within the army too. Besides all these financially that strong to absorb them gainfully in case of army reduc-

profitable activities, the army can also be engaged in mass literacy programmes in health and family planning services in the countryside. They lidbe the record of performing these responsibilities in times of need. The government can reduce the budgetary pressure in this way by employing the armed forces in productive and service sec-

reduce. And the money that will

be released may be allocated to

other sectors like health, edu-

As a matter of fact, it has become very much imperative for us to strike a proper balance between state security and human security and give increasing attention to human security sectors. The media, NGOs and the civil society should work relentlessly to attract the attention of the government and the political decision markers to this urgent issue.

The author is Editor, the

Bhorer Kagoj, Dhaka. This is a slightly edited English version of the paper read at the seminar on the report Human Development in South Asia, 1997 by Mahbub ul Huq' on August 30, organised by

CHILD RIGHTS WEEK

Let Them be Ensured of Their Rights

OLLOWING the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) formulated by the UN General Assembly on 20th November, 1989, the week from 29th September is being observed every year as the Child Rights Week. In the World Summit for Children held in New York in 1990, 22 nations including Bangladesh made a Declaration of Goals for Children's Survival, Protection and Development, and called all nations to prepare their own Plan for Action to formulate programmes. Bangladesh has ratified the Convention on 2nd September, 1990 and since then is observing this Week.

According to the (CRC) all individuals below 18 are to be considered as children. The Convention has 54 Articles, 41 of which are about their basic rights of -

 birth registration having name, identity and nationality. * survival, protection and all round development, * non-discrimination of reli-

gion, sex and nationality. * not to be sold, trafficked or sexually abused having family assistance

for proper upbringing and intellectual development, having legal protection against all criminal activities.

In view of the above, the over-all condition of children in Bangladesh is alarmingly critical. According to the census of 1990, the total number of children aged up to 15 years is 45.15 per cent of the total

by Prof. Roushan Ara Hoque

living in sub-human standard. Out of 1000 children 125 die every year due mainly for want of care. About 8 lac 70 thousand under-5 children die due to preventible diseases. About half of the children are deprived of their basic rights to health, nutrition and education. Fortytwo per cent of children do not take admission to any school and 65 per cent of those taking admission drop out before completing their primary education.

the condition of 5-14 age-group child-labour is precarious. The census report of Research Reference Cell published on 9th June 1997 shows that childlabour constitute about 12 per cent of the total labour force in Bangladesh. In total about 62 lac 98 thousand child labourers work in different sectors, such as, in agriculture, fishery, domestic homes, family business poultry, leather processing, bidi-making, welding and lathe workshop, construction sites and in tea gardens. Girls work as domestic help and now also five lac girls work in garments industries in city areas where also many male children work as hawkers, porters, sales boys and tea boys etc. In all sectors they tall easy prey to all types of abuses, such as : they are

 deprived of standard wage, compelled to work for longer ours, without any over-

population. Half of them are

 to work and live in unhealthy condition. constantly threatened to be dismissed. Girl labourers are sometimes sexually abused by their employers. Young girls are sometimes employed as sex workers and boys are trafficked to Middle-East to be employed as

camel-jockeys. This is the general picture of children coming from poor families. Their condition must be improved. By granting them their basic rights In the employment sector as formulated by the CRC they must be given opportunity to grow up as useful human resources.

To implement the CRC a National Policy on Children was formulated in 1995 with aims: . to reduce the death rate of below 5 children to one third,

* to reduce death-rate due to

malnutrition to one-half * to bring 84 per cent of total children under immunization programme. to increase their rate of

school admission to 68.7 per cent, and · to reduce drop-out rate to 20 per cent.

For all-round development of children one Shishu Academy has been established at Dhaka. One Shishu Adhikar Forum has been formed consisting of 60 children's organisations. Both the Academy and the Forum organise literary, art and cultural

competitions and functions throughout the whole year. But the large number of street-children are not at all benefited by these programmes. They are to work for their own subsistence and also for their family. The CRC and the ILO conditions are impossible to be granted to them due to extreme poverty of their parents. The government of the developing countries also cannot afford to fulfil all of them due to shortage of funds The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) reached between the US importers and the BGMEA is a good step in eliminating child-labour below 14 and the placement of the discharged children under special schools with a stipend of Tk 300/- p.m. as a compensation for loss of their former jobs. Some NGOs are providing them with both monetary help and special education. This system of giving subsidy should gradually be stopped and awareness should be created among the parents that they should bear the responsibility of their own children till they attain ma-

Since children are the future architects of the nation it is the responsibility of the state as well to guarantee them their basic rights of survival, growth and all round development. In this Child Rights Week 1997 let all of our deprived young ones by assured of their basic rights. as formulated by the CRC in 1989, to be ensured by the next Child Rights Week 1998.

By Hanna-Barbera

Bhutan is giving aid to farmers in Holland.

No, it is not a misprint — in an unusual role reversal, reports Gemini News Service, the two countries have overturned conventional expectations, and both hope to gain. Hugh

Williamson writes from Cologne, Germany TT was like any other launch of a new development project.

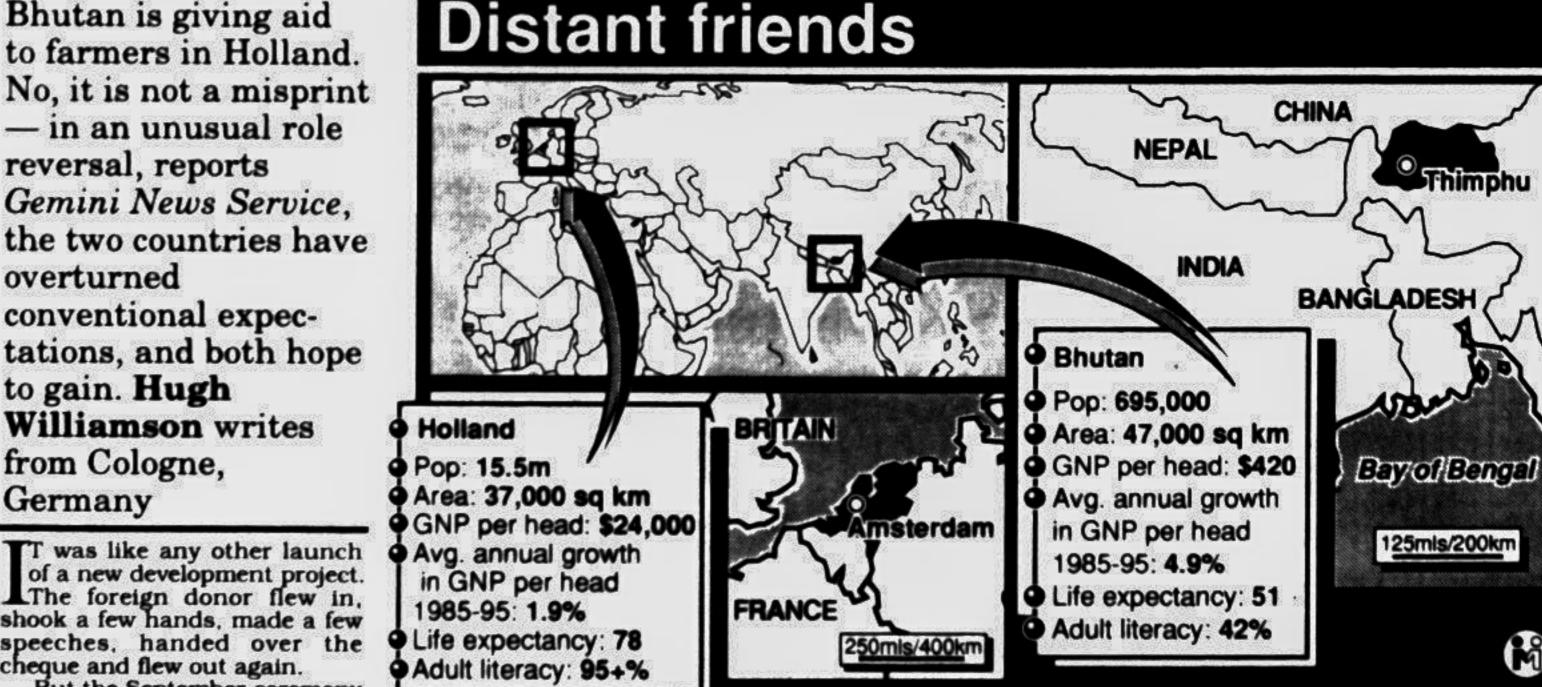
cheque and flew out again. But the September ceremony had one big difference. The donor was not a western country, but the small south Asian kingdom of Bhutan (annual gross national product per inhabitant: \$420). The recipient was not a developing nation. but Holland (per capita GNP:

\$24.000) It was Bhutan's Agriculture Minister, Dasho Khandu Wangchuck who had the satisfaction of handing over the \$100,000 cheque to a farming project in Zeeland, south-west

Netherlands. "Our aim is to change development assistance from a oneway to a two-way street," says Peter Lammers of Ecooperation. a Dutch government-funded foundation which runs this re-

verse-aid programme. "I'm very happy to help the Netherlands," said Dasho Khandu, with no trace of irony. That may be understandable: Bhutan's financial gift is actually part of the \$5 million Dutch

Role Reversal Turns the Aid Tables Distant friends



Source: World Bank/ UNDP aid it receives every year. Bhutan chose to give the money back — to a project of its choice - to promote development in

Holland. The ceremony was held as part of a "Sustainable Development Treaty" which The Hague signed with Thimphu in 1994. Similar treaties exist with Costa Rica and Benin. The treaties the first of their type worldwide - are a rare, practical outcome of the series of United Nations

summits held during the 1990s. At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, governments from the North and South committed themselves to sustainable development. To play its part, Holland adopted the three treaties in an attempt to "change the rules of North-

South cooperation". In practice, this means that Holland not only gives aid to Benin. Bhutan and Costa Rica, but is also committed to imple-

menting sustainable development goals back home — with the help of its three partners.

The four countries are aiming at "not only more aid to the South, but also less consumption of resources in the North", says Ecooperation.

In the Zeeland farming project, a private company run by local farmers aims to bring older wheat seed strains back into common use. Such strains, which date back centuries, have been pushed out by more modern seed types, the farmers say. The older seeds give lower yields, but are more naturally sustainable as they need lower inputs of chemicals and fertilisers, being more suited to local conditions.

"We chose this project because of the need to maintain biodiversity," says Dasho Khandu. "The Dutch farmers could learn from us - our agriculture is more sustainable than in the Netherlands. Just like traditional donors.

Bhutan will be keeping an eye on project management. The farmers are to send regular report to Thimphu. But Bhutan — like most

donors - also wants to benefit from the aid it gives. "Our farming sector is changing, becoming more commercial," says Dasho Khandu. "We want see how we can avoid some of the problems Western farmers are facing."

Among the other treaty partners. Benin has yet to decide how to use its \$100,000 but Costa Rica has spent the money on inviting young Dutch people to see how tropical rainforests can be managed.

In addition to the funding flows, businesses, non-government organisations and public bodies in Holland and its three partner countries have made twinning agreements.

