

EDITORIAL

A double issue of *African Research and Documentation* has been produced in an attempt to catch up with publication schedule. The next issue, no. 61 for 1993 will be the last under my editorship. From no. 62 onwards an editorial collective, comprising four SCOLMA members, will take over responsibility for compilation of the journal. Hopefully publication delays will then become a thing of the past.

Maureen Mahoney

NATIONAL HERBARIUM [ETHIOPIA]: FROM WHERE TO WHERE?

by Damtew Teferra

Background

Ethiopia is located in Eastern Africa and lies between 3° and 18° N and 33° and 48° E in what is usually called *The Horn of Africa*. It borders Sudan to the North, North West and West; Kenya to the South; Somalia to the South East and East and the Djibouti Republic and the Red Sea to the East and North East.

The Country enjoys great geographical diversity ranging from high and rugged mountains, flat topped plateaus, deep gorges to river valleys and lowland plains. The vegetation is also as varied: ranging from desert, tropical forest, alpine shrub to grassland. Ethiopia has a greater diversity of climate, topography and soils than almost any other African Country. The topography of the country ranges from 100 mt below sea level in the Dallol Depression to high ground and mountains as high as 4620 mt above sea level at Ras Dejen. About 55% of the tropical highlands of Africa occur in Ethiopia. These may be considered as regions above 1500 mt where temperatures are low enough to enable the cultivation of temperate crops and thus cover an area of about 99.5 million ha in Ethiopia. The great Rift Valley which runs from Mozambique in the South to Syria in the North separates the Western from the Southeastern highlands.

It becomes apparent then that the presence of many different plant and animal species in this diverse geographical area makes this country unique. It has been estimated that 10-12% of the 6-7000 plant species occurring in the country are endemic. The country with its wide range of agro-climatic conditions is one of the centres of the domestication and diversification of such important crops as coffee, barley and durum wheat. The fauna of Ethiopia is also a very interesting one: there are about 14 larger wild animals and 24 bird