

In order to carry out cultivation, the Neolithic man might have cleared the forest vegetation as shown by all the three studies, (i) pollen analysis, (ii) mineral magnetism and (iii) rate of sedimentation which show acceleration in erosional processes of the forest soil with decreasing forest cover. Since soil is a relatively incoherent material it is subjected to much disturbance and displacement. Some protection from disturbance is provided by the vegetation and stability against displacement is provided by plant roots and by the structure of the soil itself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author thanks Prof. D. P. Agrawal and his colleagues for their help. ^{14}C dates were provided by Dr S. Kusumgar.

8 June 1987; Revised 11 September 1987

1. Bender Barbara, *Farming in prehistory from hunter-gather to food production*, John Baker, London, 1975.
2. Erdtman, G., *An introduction to pollen analysis*, Waltham, Mass, USA, 1943.
3. Agrawal, D. P., Dodia, Rekha, Kotlia, B. S., Kusumgar, Sheela and Sharma, P., Quantification of erosion rates: some new perspectives, *Proc. Int. Symp., Erosion and Sedimentation in Arab countries*, 1986 (to be published).
4. Sauer, C. O., *Agricultural origins and dispersals*, (ed.) Bender Barbara, 1975.
5. Hutchinson, J. B., *Conclusion: the biology of domestication*, (ed.) E. S. Higg, 1972, p. 195.

NEWS

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF AIDS PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAMMES

The World Health Organization (WHO) Special Programme on AIDS issued a statement giving its first global summary of the common social aspects of AIDS prevention and control programmes, based on the experience of countries around the world.

In "Social Aspects of AIDS Prevention and Control Programmes", a statement developed over the past 10 months of intense work with over 100 countries, the WHO special programme on AIDS concludes that AIDS can be prevented and controlled without violating human rights and that discrimination against people infected with the AIDS virus HIV can threaten public health.

The statement was fashioned from an analysis of individual nations' responses to such complex AIDS issues as screening housing, health care, education and employment.

In an attempt to identify the primary social issues in the AIDS pandemic, as they emerge from nations throughout the world, the statement stresses the following social aspects of AIDS prevention and control: 1. AIDS prevention and control programmes can be implemented without endangering human rights; 2. Information, education and counselling on HIV-infected persons are required to prevent

HIV infection; 3. Any routinely applied exclusionary measures such as quarantine or other discrimination against HIV-infected persons are not justified on public health grounds; 4. Public health is best protected by keeping HIV-infected people integrated within society and helping them assume their responsibility to protect others from infection; 5. Testing for HIV-infection should be done on the basis of informed consent, counselling and assurance of confidentiality.

"During 1987, virtually every country in the world has considered implementing routine exclusionary or other discriminatory measures — and has then decided against them", said Dr Jonathan Mann, Director of the WHO Special Programme on AIDS. "This is because such discrimination will not protect public health, but will jeopardise educational programmes and risk, driving infected persons and those concerned about infection 'underground'".

"Therefore discrimination itself is a threat to public health and a threat to our ability to stop AIDS", Dr Mann said. (Press Release, WHO/32 dated 1st December 1987; WHO, Media Service, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland).