



**Tunisian students learning the use of the computer terminal — avoiding scientific disenfranchisement.**

plication in developing countries, and advised caution. But the group was unanimous in endorsing this new communications medium as a "viable tool" for use in the Third World. The system's relative simplicity, flexibility and low cost were all seen as major factors in its favour. These qualities were perhaps best illustrated by Liane Tarouco, of Brazil's Universidade Federale do Rio Grande do Sul, who told how the university had designed and implemented its own experimental CBCS.

They could simply have bought one of the existing systems available from the developed countries, she explained, but chose to take the "do-it-yourself" approach in order to gain the experience and the confidence that come from knowing a system "from the inside out". The system's small group of designers included several students, but for all concerned it was very much a question of learning-by-doing — and the system works. "So far as we are concerned this is the best way for a developing country to learn a new technology," said Ms. Tarouco.

For many developing countries, however, the exper-

tise to carry out such a project is simply not available. This lack of expertise was reflected in the fact that only two of the 14 participants at the workshop were directly representing developing countries, and it prompted the group to recommend that one of the most useful things IDRC could do would be to support the production of informational and educational materials about CBCS for developing countries.

Other recommendations for action included support for a series of workshops in developing regions of the world, several feasibility studies on technical, administrative and regulatory aspects of CBCS, and the establishment of an advisory group, consisting of people from both the developed and the developing countries, to provide a continuing focus for the recommendation of the workshop.

Action must come quickly, the group urged, lest the developing countries suffer "a scientific and technical disenfranchisement" as a result of their inability to participate in the "electronic community of science and technology".