

In Sudan, I had the chance to participate in a lively meeting organized by the Governor of Darfur with local officials to discuss real, practical measures to rebuild the region. In Niger, the government arranged a nationwide debate to convince the people of the need to change certain elements in their way of life in order to preserve the environment. Deforestation and control of livestock were among the main topics discussed. In Senegal, President Abdou Diouf has modified the agricultural policies of his country by cutting down the quota of land for cash crops in favour of cereal production for the local market. These and other projects are not without their weaknesses. The resettlement and villagization programs in Ethiopia must continue to be examined with great care. The point remains, however, that Africa is mobilizing itself in response to the disaster of the past two years.



Tree nursery project in Senegal

The birth and revitalization of African regional institutions is one of the most hopeful signs for the future. In Abidjan, 350 women from 17 francophone African countries have just founded CIFAD to promote women's economic growth. Organizations known by their acronyms — like CILSS in west Africa, SADCC in southern Africa and IGADD in the Horn of Africa — are engaged in the slow process of promoting mutual economic aid and building closer links between African countries.* The Organization of African Unity (OAU) took a giant step during its July 1985 meeting in Addis Ababa by confronting the critical food production problems of the continent (See Appendix). Under the direction of its new Chairman, Abdou Diouf of Senegal, and its Secretary General, Ide Oumarou, the OAU may emerge as the strategic centre and political heart of African recovery and development.