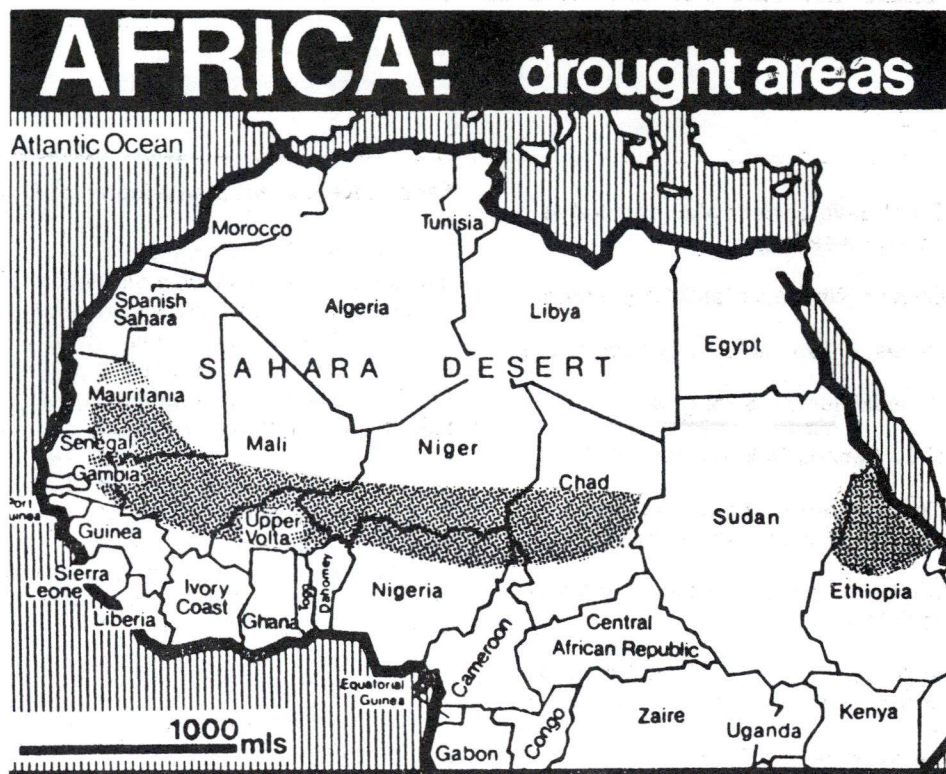


of last year.

Details of the economic plan were given at a press conference in Ottawa on June 2 by Boulama Manga, Rural Development Minister of Niger and Co-ordinator of the CILSS*, and Jean-Pierre Goyer, Canadian Minister of Supply and Services, who jointly chaired the Club's working sessions.

The strategy notably provides for a first-generation development program (1978-1982), estimated to cost at least \$3 billion. A statement adopted by the Club says: "...this program constitutes a decisive step in implementing the strategy and will serve as a guide for donors in the selection of projects to be financed over the next few years." Many donors and institutions informed the conference of planned increases in their financial contributions. Official aid commitments to the region in 1976 reached about \$850 million, almost double the level of financial assistance committed in 1973.

The primary object of the long-term strategy is to achieve food self-sufficiency, despite difficult climatic conditions, leading to self-sustaining economic and social development for the CILSS nations. The first-generation program seeks specifically to: develop water resources, protect crops, combat



desertification through reforestation, improve fisheries, livestock and agricultural productivity, and strengthen regional training and research programs.

Set up with the support of donor countries to the Organization for Economic

Co-operation and Development, the Club of the Friends of the Sahel seeks to reinforce the efforts of the CILSS and other international bodies and to help mobilize resources for the development of the Sahel.

CIDA Sahel program

CIDA's Sahel program was launched in 1974-1975. With a total budget of \$230 million for the 1975-1980 period, it is the biggest and most complex Canadian international co-operation program, making Canada one of the main sources of aid in the region.

In order to administer a program of this size, the Agency has set up a special branch with offices at its Ottawa headquarters, and in Upper Volta, Mali and Niger.

Canada's Sahel program has four components which contribute to international aid to the Sahel: the Sahel rehabilitation program (\$80 million); food aid to the Sahel (\$60 million); the Niger and Senegal program (\$60 million); and the Pan-African Telecommunications network, PANAFTEL (\$30 million).

* CILSS (permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought-Control in the Sahel). Members are: Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Upper Volta and Cape Verde Islands.

Quebec/Newfoundland ferry service

A contract has been awarded to Northern Cruiser Ltd., of St. John's, Newfoundland, to provide improved ferry service between St. Barbe, Nfld. and Blanc Sablon, Quebec, for five years. The firm will receive an annual operating subsidy of \$525,000 from the Federal Government to provide and operate an end-loading ferry, the MV *Northern Cruiser*.

The vessel, built in 1962, began service at the end of May. To support the improved ferry service, Transport Canada will build end-loading shore facilities at both ports at a total cost of \$835,000. This will enable the *Northern Cruiser* to operate safely and efficiently and reduce loading delays.

The *Northern Cruiser*, which was formerly used on the Matane-Godbout service in Quebec, carries about 100 people and the equivalent of 30 automobiles and will be able to handle increasing traffic and larger vehicles.

Wages - Canada/U.S. comparison

Statistics Canada's preliminary figures for November 1976 showed average hourly earnings in manufacturing in Canada to be 10.7 percent higher than the average reported in the U.S. - \$5.98 against \$5.34. However, caution is needed in interpreting the figures because they are not strictly comparable.

The Canadian survey excluded firms employing fewer than 20 employees, while the U.S. survey covers establishments of all sizes.

The figures for both countries are gross earnings before taxation and unemployment insurance deductions, but exclude fringe benefits which are considered to be higher in the U.S.

The Canadian average first surpassed the U.S. average in 1974. From November 1975 to November 1976 the Canadian average rose by 13.3 per cent compared with a 9.3 percent increase in the U.S. average.