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STORY HEADLINE: International Olympic Committee and 'Tree Aid' to plant an 'Olympic Forest' in Mali and Senegal.

LOCATION: Mali, Africa & Lausanne, Switzerland
DATE: 17 June 2021
LANGUAGE: English

Broadcast quality footage available at the IOC Newsroom: http://iocnewsroom.com

STORY SCRIPT:

The International Olympic Committee has announced details of a project to plant an 'Olympic Forest' in Mali and Senegal as part of a major environmental project.

The project is part of the ‘Great Green Wall’ initiative, which restores landscapes across Africa’s Sahel region. The IOC will work with 'Tree Aid' to plant around 355,000 native trees across over 2,000 hectares in around 90 villages in Mali and Senegal, hosts of the Youth Olympics Games Dakar 2026.

More than planting trees, the Olympic Forest will contribute to increasing the local communities’ food and economic security. The IOC will work hand in hand with local communities to ensure the Olympic Forest creates diverse social, economic and environmental benefits in an area which has experienced increased droughts and floods, leading to a steady degradation of land and sources of food.

"The Olympic Forest will support communities in Mali and Senegal by increasing their climate resilience, food security and income opportunities.” said IOC President Thomas Bach. “Addressing climate change is one of the IOC’s top priorities.”

This is the latest project in the IOC’s ‘climate-positive strategy’, which is committed to reducing carbon emissions by 30 per cent by the Olympic Games Paris 2024, in line with the Paris agreement. The ‘Olympic Forest’ will compensate for more than 100 per cent of the IOC’s residual emissions.

"With Dakar 2026, our goal is to go beyond sport and use the Games as an opportunity to raise young people’s awareness,” said IOC Member Mamadou Diagna Ndiaye, President of the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympics Games Organising Committee.

'Tree Aid' is a non-profit organisation with over 30 years experience working with people in the drylands of Africa to tackle poverty and the effects of the climate crisis, by growing trees and restoring and protecting land.

While the initial project will last four years, the IOC plans to open it up to other organisations in the Olympic Movement in the future, so they can contribute and grow the Olympic Forest.
SHOT LOG:
00:01 Wide shot of Mali village, Africa.
00:05 Villagers sitting in conversation
00:08 Wide shot of villagers walking alongside river
00:11 Mid-shot pan of planted saplings
00:19 Establishing shot of a tree

00:22 SOUNDBITES: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English Language)
"The Olympic Forest is a new IOC project which will help us to become climate positive already, by 2024. So, we will plant more than 350,000 trees in Senegal and Mali. But, the project is going far beyond this, it’s not just about planting trees, it’s about increasing the food and income security of the local population, with whom we will closely cooperate over the coming years."

00:54 Wide shot of planted saplings
00:58 Ground-level shot of a Mango tree
01:02 Mid-shot of mangos hanging
01:05 Close-up shot of mangos hanging from tree

01:08 SOUNDBITES: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English Language)
"Our mission is to build a better world through sport and we have learned from the recent pandemic that we can address all the upcoming challenges in this world of humanity, only in solidarity. In this solidarity, the Olympic Movement also wants to make its contribution to the fight against climate change. So we are working to reduce our carbon emissions in line with the Paris Agreement and in this we can count on the support and the great collaboration of UNIP, UNCCD, Tree Aid and individual communities, to create this Olympic Forest."

01:55 Aerial shot of Olympic House, Lausanne, Switzerland
01:59 Wide shot of Olympic House, Lausanne, Switzerland
02:03 Mid-shot of solar power tiles painted with Olympic rings
02:07 Tracking drone shot across the solar power roof tiles of Olympic House, Lausanne, Switzerland

02:12 SOUNDBITES: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English Language)
"Climate change is one of those challenges we can only address together in solidarity, and this is why we have our role to play, we have our responsibility to contribute to this. But climate change is also directly affecting sport, because sport is taking place in open air. We can be affected by extreme heat, by mild winters and major storms and they prove increasingly disruptive, and therefore to address all these changes, we do this for our own interests, but also in the interests of solidarity, with the entire society at large."

02:54 Establishing shot of small tree
03:00 Ground-level wide shot of large tree
03:07 Ground-level wide shot of large tree
-- ENDS --

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