



# Forestry Information & Fact Sheet

Vol: 07 No:04 (June 2021)

A Production of the FD/Education Unit

**Director's Note:** As Focal Point for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) it is important that we recognize that although we are not a country with deserts, we are a small island developing state (SID) with degraded lands and land threatened with degradation. We need to set Land Degradation Neutrality targets and work to protect the land that feeds us.

**World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought:** World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is observed on June 17th every year to promote awareness of international efforts to combat desertification. The day is a unique moment that focuses on turning degraded lands into healthy lands through problem solving, strong community involvement and co-operation at all levels., the theme for this year's celebration is "**Restoration. Land. Recovery**".

Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. It is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations. Desertification does not refer to the expansion of existing deserts. It occurs because dryland ecosystems, which cover over one third of the world's land area, are extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and inappropriate land use. Poverty, Political instability, Deforestation, Overgrazing and bad irrigation practices can all undermine the productivity of the land. In 2021, the goal of Desertification and Drought Day is to demonstrate that investing in healthy land as part of a green recovery is a smart economic decision not just in terms of creating jobs and rebuilding livelihoods, but in terms of insulating economies against future crises caused by climate change and nature loss, and in accelerating progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals as we recover from COVID-19.

Restoring degraded land brings economic resilience, create jobs, raises incomes and increases food security. It helps biodiversity to recover, locks away the atmospheric carbon warming the earth, slowing climate change. It can also lessen the impacts of climate change and underpin green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly three quarters of the Earth's ice-free land has been altered by humans to meet an ever-growing demand for food, raw materials, highways and homes. Avoiding, slowing and reversing the loss of productive land and natural ecosystems now is both urgent and important for a swift recovery from the pandemic and for guaranteeing the long term survival of people and the planet..

## HOW ARE LANDS DEGRADED:

Land degradation is where the amount of lands and their ability to sustain ecosystem functions or its productivity is decreased. The activities that cause this include;

- Poor Agricultural Practices
- Poor Soil Conservation
- Poor infrastructural development
- Deforestation
- Mining and overexploitation

The world Celebrates the Desertification and Drought Day with various activities. Here are some of the suggested activities and some that will be implemented.

## 2021 Desertification and Drought Day

### OVERVIEW

The celebration of this year's Desertification and Drought Day will be featured by Live events and an online program streamed via UNCCD social media, everyone is invited to join in on the program.

### Virtual events:

- ◆ High-Level forum convened by President Carlos Alvarado Quesada of Costa Rica



- ◆ Launch of the GAR Special Report on Drought

The special report on drought will be launched at a virtual event. Global experts on the subject will present and discuss its findings. The event is co-hosted with the UN Disaster Risk Reduction. The report explores the systematic nature of drought and its impacts on achievement of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the SDGs and human and ecosystems health and well being.



### Online Programme:

- ◆ A talk show
- ◆ Music, film and dance shows
- ◆ Children's program with a music presentation and a one-day challenge for children



*"Land can be our greatest ally in fighting climate change, but first we need to restore it to full health."*

- ◆ Thematic panels
- ◆ Announcement of the winner of the Land for Life Award



- ◆ Video messages from special guests

Mainstream and Social Media materials are provided for use

- ◆ Social media assets and Press kit with free film footage (b-roll) and high resolution photographs. The event will be stream via the UNCCD Facebook, YouTube and Twitter accounts. @unccd.



### Outreach Materials:

Without land restoration, we will continue to face global crises. Ensuring food and water security, reducing emissions and conserving biodiversity will not be possible without concerted efforts to regenerate our natural capital and transform our food systems. Different types of ready-to-use materials to share to social messages and publicize Thursday's event are provided: videos, pictures, short films, social cards, virtual reality animations of ELYX and a Tik Tok dance challenge.

**Drought** A drought is an event of prolonged shortages in the water supply, whether atmospheric, surface water or ground water. A drought can last for months or years, or may be declared after as few as 15 days.

**Drought**, a complex and slowly encroaching natural hazard with significant and pervasive socio-economic and environmental impacts, is known to cause more deaths and displace more people than any other natural disaster. 1,800,000,000.

