

Press release



#UNited4Land  
**OUR LEGACY.  
OUR FUTURE.**  
DESERTIFICATION AND  
DROUGHT DAY · 17 JUNE 2024

*Announcement on February 21, 2024*

***Desertification and Drought Day 2024  
“United for Land: Our Legacy. Our Future”***

**Bonn, Germany, 21 February 2024** – This year’s Desertification and Drought Day, observed on 17 June, will focus on the future of land stewardship. Every second, an equivalent of four football fields of healthy land becomes degraded – adding up to a total of 100 million hectares every year.

Engaging present and future generations is more important than ever to halt and reverse these alarming trends and meet global commitments to restore 1 billion hectares of degraded land by 2030. The theme chosen for this year’s Desertification and Drought Day— “United for Land: Our Legacy. Our Future.” — seeks to mobilize all parts of society in support of sustainable land stewardship.

17 June 2024 will also mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bonn-based United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)— the sole legally binding international treaty on land management and drought; one of the three Rio Conventions alongside climate change and biodiversity.

Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD Executive Secretary, said: “Up to 40 per cent of the world’s land is already degraded, affecting close to half of humanity. Yet the solutions are on the table. Land restoration lifts people out of poverty and builds resilience to climate change. It is time to unite for land and show a red card to land loss and degradation worldwide.”

Hosted by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, the global observance event will take place at the *Bundeskunsthalle* (Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany) in Bonn on Monday, 17 June 2024.

“Around a quarter of the world’s population is affected by drought. The condition of our soils in Europe is also deteriorating rapidly. Protecting soil and land is a global challenge. We need to take action together today so that the generations to come can have access to vital natural resources. We will only be able to feed humankind and deal with the climate and biodiversity crisis if we have healthy soils,” Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Bringing together leaders from all over the world, youth and prominent personalities from academia, civil society, sports and entertainment, the global observance event will showcase a strong ambition to be united for land, ahead of the largest-ever UN conference on land and drought in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in December 2024 (UNCCD COP16).

Throughout May and June, UNCCD together with the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the City of Bonn as their partner, will kick-start a #UNited4Land public awareness campaign and will be engaged in various events in and around Bonn on the future of land stewardship.

Katja Dörner, Lady Mayor of Bonn said: “As the home of the UNCCD and a city on the path towards climate neutrality in 2035, Bonn can only think and protect climate, nature and land together. Land is everything— and so much more than the area our city is built on. Land is the soil on which our crops grow, a habitat for plants and animals, a sponge for water, open space and cooling corridor— and a legacy that we pass on to future generations.”

Countries around the world are mobilizing to mark Desertification and Drought Day with an array of educational, cultural and sporting activities—from film screenings to football tournaments and from tree planting to gardening competitions. A full programme of events will be available online at: <https://www.unccd.int/events/desertification-drought-day>.

### **About Desertification and Drought Day**

Officially declared by the United Nations General Assembly in 1994 (A/RES/49/115), Desertification and Drought Day, marked annually on 17 June, has the following objectives:

- To promote public awareness of the issues linked to desertification, land degradation and drought.
- To showcase human-led solutions to prevent desertification and reverse intensifying droughts.
- To strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

**Take part in this year’s celebration:**



To find out more about this year's Desertification and Drought Day, click here:  
<https://www.unccd.int/DDD2024>

To access #UNited4Land campaign materials, click here:  
<https://trello.com/b/VdJGolcp/desertification-and-drought-day-2024>

To learn more about Desertification and Drought Day activities around the world, click here:  
<https://www.unccd.int/events/desertification-drought-day/2024/events-around-world>

For online participation in the global observance event in Bonn, please contact:  
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For more information, please contact:

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