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WDCD-2018 Observed in Pakistan

Sustainable Land Management Programme (SLMP)

Need stressed to raise awareness on combating desertification

(Rawalpindi, 18 July) Sustainable Land Management Programme (SLMP) in collaboration with Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University (PMAS AAUR) Rawalpindi organised a seminar to observe World Day to Combat Desertification in Pakistan. The participants of the seminar stressed on the need to create more public awareness in order to fight desertification in the country. World Day to Combat Desertification is observed every year globally under the aegis of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Addressing the audience at the seminar, Doctor Raja Omer, Deputy Inspector General of Forest, Ministry of Climate Change, (Government of Pakistan) informed the audience that Ministry was leading the efforts to combat desertification in the country by executing Sustainable Land Management Programme in 14 dry land districts of all four provinces. He thanked provincial governments and their all aligned departments for taking lead in their respective provinces to fight land degradation and desertification. He told the audience that National Programme Director of SLMP and Inspector General of Forests, Syed Mahmood Nasir has stepped up coordination efforts with provinces for more effective implementation of the programme.

Chair of the session, Prof. Dr. Sarwat N. Mirza, Vice Chancellor PMAS AAUR, highlighted acknowledged efforts by the Ministry of Climate Change, Global Environment Facility (GEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for supporting Sustainable Land Management Programme (SLMP) for on-the-ground efforts to combat desertification in the country. Dr Sarwat Mirza highlighted the role university is playing for climate change adaptation in the country. He emphasized that such collaborative activities must be strengthened and taken forward to combat desertification in Pakistan.

Earlier, Mr. Nadeem Shaukat, Expert Policy Reforms and Capacity Building (SLMP) briefed the audience about World Desertification Day and about SLMP approaches and interventions for better land management in Pakistan. He said, "The implementation of the programme will bring considerable financial benefits for the poor in dryland communities through sustainable management of their land resources."

Nadeem Shaukat also read out message of Mr. Hamid Marwat, National Program Coordinator (SLMP) who conveyed that SLMP was working on developing Integrated Sustainable Land Management Policies, Land Use Plans at district and village levels, and on ground interventions that aim for effective environmental management for combating desertification, land degradation and drought in Pakistan.

Mr. Fawad Mir, Expert Land Use Planning and Implementation thanked the audience and other participants of the seminar for according importance to the critical issue of desertification and hoped that collaboration between academic and research institutions with specialized institutions like AAUR, UNDP, Ministry of Climate Change and SLMP will go a long way in combating desertification in the country. The event culminated with tree plantation by the DIG Forest and by the Vice-Chancellor of the university.

Led by the Ministry of Climate Change with support from Global Environment Facility (GEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan, SLMP is striving to achieve the long-term goal of combating land degradation and desertification in Pakistan to promote sustainable management of natural resources, restore degraded ecosystems, reduce poverty, and increase resilience to climate change in the country.

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