

WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION 2015

Events around the world

AFRICAN UNION

On the occasion of the WDCD 2015 the African Union issued an opinion piece on desertification. Learn more about the organization at <http://www.ua-safgrad.org/54-en>

ARGENTINA

Workshops "Ambiente de Chic@s" about Gran Chaco in Paso Grande .On June 17, as part of commemoration of the World Day to Combat Desertification, Fundación Agreste and "Ambiente de Chic@s" Magazine will hold three workshops in schools of Paso Grande (San Luis). These workshops, aimed to students, teachers, promoters, volunteers and trainers, are part of the "Sustainable Forest Management in the Transboundary Ecosystem of the Gran Chaco Americano". The objective of the project is to reverse the trend of land and forest degradation by supporting sustainable land management in the productive environment.

BRAZIL

Brazil will celebrate this year's WDCD with an entertaining and colorful program, including the presentation of the Dryland Champions certificates, showcase of various projects and early warning systems to combat desertification.

BANGLADESH

The Department of Environment of the Ministry of Environment and Forest observed the WDCD 2015 via a day-long workshop on the draft National Action Programme for Bangladesh.

BELGIUM

To commemorate the World Day to Combat Desertification the NGO, ondernemers zonder grenzen (ONG), or Entrepreneurs without Frontiers Foundation, based in Belgium will plant a tree for every "like" it receives on Facebook throughout the day on June 17th WDCD 2015. ONG also shared the UNCCD's press release of the day's events on their website.

[Watch OZG's WDCD 2015 video](#)

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BHUTAN



Bhutan plans to celebrate World Day to Combat Desertification in Trashigang District, Thongrong village. The village has 60 households. The activity comprises of grass hedgerows establishment along contour line and stone bunding in sloppy dry land covering approx. 60 acres. The construction of stone check-dams in gullies, bio engineering and plantation in degraded land are other activity. The program starts from 20 May and ends on the Day 17 June 2015. The Programme will be organized by National Soil Service Center under Department Of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture & Forest, and Bhutan in collaboration with Trashigang Dzongkhag with financial support from UNDP and GEF- Small Grant Programme.

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CAMBODIA



The Minister and high-ranking officers on the stage

With financial support from the Government of Cambodia, the UNCCD's Global Mechanism and some contributions from the Economic-Land-Concession Company Grandis, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries organized a WDCD celebration event. The ceremony took place in the Teak Tree plantation of the Company in Raksmeay Samaky Commune, Oral District, Kampong Speu Province which is about 120 km west of Phnom Penh. The event was attended by around 700 people, including leaders and officers of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, line Ministries, relevant departments of the Province, ambassadors, development partners, local communities, journalists as well as lecturers and students of two agricultural universities.

CAMEROON

The NGO ICENECDEV celebrated the world day to combat desertification 2015 from the 15th June to 17th June 2015 in collaboration with the Regional delegation of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development South west Region. The activities that marked the celebration were:

- Tree planting in schools and local communities (Saint Theresa International Bilingual College), Government primary school Likoko Membea(Bokwaongo) and Government Secondary School Bomaka.
- Sensitisation Campaign through Radio programme and round table discussion on theme of the world day to combat desertification 2015 at media Afrique.
- Education and sensitization campaign on tree planting in village schools.
- A presentation by Environmental club Coordinators and staff of Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development and ICENECDEV to illustrate the Problems affecting environment, possible solutions and importance of environmental protection.

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CHILE

The RCU and its partners organized the following activities in observance of the World day to combat desertification:

- III International Seminar on Desertification and Drought. “Drought, the catastrophe”. House of the Senate of Chile. Valparaiso, June 16. Organized by the Chilean Technical Committee on Desertification (UNDP, UNCCD-RCU, CONAF and the President of the Senate)
- III International Seminar on Desertification and Drought “Drought, the catastrophe” in Santiago de Chile June 18. Former House of the Congress of Chile. Organized by the Chilean Technical Committee on Desertification (UNDP, UNCCD-RCU, CONAF and the President of the Senate)

ERITREA

To commemorate the World Day to Combat Desertification Eritrea organized several events and awareness raising campaigns. The office of the National Focal Point for Eritrea (NFP) for example arranged a one-day field trip to a neighbouring plantation site. Some years ago the site was devoid of vegetation and soil erosion was very excessive. However, in nowadays due to the construction of physical soil and water conservation structures coupled with tree planting the site is now turning into green with less or no erosion. Indigenous and exotic trees are well established, grass for livestock is plenty. There is a real change in the ecosystem of the site. The site manager of the plantation explained the type of interventions and the positive impacts on biodiversity, climate change and the overall livelihoods of the neighboring communities have been explained by the site managers and also by the beneficiary communities adjacent to the site. Male and female staff members from the ministries of Agriculture, Information, Land, Water and Environment, National Union of Eritrean Women, National Union of Youth and Students and farming communities of adjacent villages participated in the event. To commemorate the event the participants planted trees and maintained physical soil and water conservation structures. The participants promised to celebrate the event every year. An article based on the slogan and theme of WDCD of the year 2015 was also prepared and spread out to the national media. The article was printed out in local newspapers in local languages namely Tigriña, Arabic and Tigre and in English. Some of these are already printed out and are being circulated among the general public while some are yet to be printed out.

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FRANCE

Desertif'actions 2015 - 10 - 13 June 2015 - Montpellier France Climate change and the preservation of drylands: time to act! Desertif'actions 2015 is the civil society International Forum dedicated to land degradation and combating desertification. The forum will bring together over 300 stakeholders from over 100 countries from June 10th to June 13th in Montpellier, France. Civil society organizations, scientists, local government, farmer organizations, private and public institutions... will meet in Montpellier in order to share their concerns and built common positions on desertification and land degradation under a changing climate and its consequences in northern and southern countries!

The Desertif'actions 2015 Program includes:

- Preparatory meetings in southern countries
- One preparatory e-forum
- 3 days collaborative work with panel and group work in Montpellier among international stakeholders
- One special day downtown devoted to the general public awareness and cultural and scientific events open to the public.

Three lines of work:

- Desertification and Land Degradation: Integrating climatic evolutions into decision making and action taking
- Development Sustainability in Drylands: Creating greater synergy between the three Rio Conventions
- A Pluralistic and Organized Civil Society: Having a true impact and doing what needs to be done

Desertif'actions 2015 is a project certified Paris 2015, COP 21.

Visit the Desertif'actions website at www.desertif-actions.fr/en

GERMANY

Under the motto "Essen ist keine Selbstverstaendlichkeit. Investiere in gesunde Boeden" Germany organizes an art exhibition and evening event at Bonn's botanical garden. The exhibition entitled "Boden. Grund zum Leben." highlights the important role of the world's soils for food security.

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GUATEMALA

The Congress on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) was held on 17-18 June 2015 in Guatemala City. The meeting pretends to analyze the current situation and discuss alternatives for combating land degradation and desertification processes in the country, and therefore, reducing food insecurity and undernourishment rates. The meeting combined a set of presentations given by national experts and discussion panels. The technical segment addressed the current water crisis in Guatemala, the role of spatial planning for soil conservation and the state of the art of desertification in the dry corridor of Guatemala among others issues. The discussion panels focused on the future scenarios of drought and the progress on the preparation of a plan of action to mitigate the effects of drought. The Congress has been organized by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala with support of the GIZ.

GUINEA

Guinea has celebrated the World Day against Desertification in Kindia, 150 km from the capital city Conakry. The ceremony was chaired by Ms. Hadja Kadiatou N'Diaye, Minister of the Environment, Water and Forests. Ms. Hadja Cisse, Ms. Hadja Sarangbe Camara and the Governor of Kindia Mr. Mohamed Deen Camara also attended the ceremony. Were present in the room are participants from university, NGO, regional experts, representatives from the timber sector, the charcoal Union etc. Welcome remarks are made by the Governor of the regional with a focus on the sustainable land management.

Minister of Environment, Water and Forests provided figures from the global land degradation and mentioned its impact on the living conditions of the population and hunger, linking to the concept of land degradation neutrality and food security. He also introduced the government's action plans for the fight against desertification. The launch of the crop year 2015 was followed by the delivery of agricultural inputs in the remotest corners of the country has competitive prices. She thanked the development partners for their continued support to the implementation of the National Support Programme for Food Security. These opening remarks were followed by the presentations on the national action program against desertification in Guinea, climate change and food security and NAP alignment. Then officials were invited to visit the Koukou forest for cashew planting to commemorate the day. The launching of the agricultural campaign was followed by the dispatching of fertilizers in all the districts.

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INDIA

On the occasion of WDCD 2015, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) organized a series of events involving schools children, practitioners, multi-lateral & bi-lateral agencies and private sector at the Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi.

ITALY

The Desertification Research Center, University of Sassari Nucleo Ricerc (NRD-UNISS) celebrates the 2015 World Day to Combat Desertification. This year, the Desertification Research Centre (NRD-UNISS) will celebrate 2015 World Day to Combat Desertification with two events:

The first event with the title "(Musical) variations on desertification" will be held on 12 June 2015 at The Conservatory of Music "Luigi Canepa" of the city of Sassari, Italy where the Youth Orchestra of Sardinia will play a variety of songs with water as central focus.

The second event, with the title "Experiences of integrated water management to combat desertification" will be held on 18th June 2015 and it will be a full day Conference at the Department of Agricultural Science of the University of Sassari. The Conference will see the participation of various researchers and scientists from the University of Sassari, the University of Cagliari, the University of Barcelona and the University of Medicine in Tunisia.

[NRD-UNISS Facebook](#)

IUCN

The IUCN Director General, Inger Andersen, on World Day to Combat Desertification provided a message.

UNIDO, IFAD and HEFLCD

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Moroccan High Commissariat for Woods, Water and Fight against Desertification (HEFLCD) jointly organized a two-day event to present the results and lessons learnt from a project implemented in Morocco.

View the full story at <https://www.unido.org/news/press/experience-in-combat.html>

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KAZAKHSTAN



The International Scientific Forum “Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded forests” was organized jointly with Kazakh Agro Technical University and Kastamonu University (Turkey) on the 9-10th of June 2015 in Astana (Kazakhstan). The aim of this event was to increase political and public awareness of forest degradation and desertification as well as exchange views on measures for stabilization of these processes in different regions of the world. Experts and scientists of the leading universities and organizations in the field of forestry and desertification issues from the USA, Slovakia, Italy, Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, Turkey, Nigeria, Morocco, Iran, Russian Federation, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan attended the forum. Moreover an exhibition of achievements in the field of forestry, landscaping and floriculture was organized in the lobby of the main building. The Forum was held with the support of the UNDP SLM projects.

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MALAYSIA

The research Centre Crops for the Future (CFF) the world's first Centre dedicated to research on underutilized crops for food and non-food uses focusing on the uses of agricultural biodiversity to diversity crop and agricultural systems is organizing the following at their Field Research Centre on 17 June 2015:

- Launch of T-100 days to the Official Opening Ceremony of CFF new headquarters – Our HQ is scheduled to be officially opened in September 2015. It will house world class plant biotechnology laboratories, controlled-environment rooms, processing and sensory suites
- A talk entitled “Combating Desertification with Underutilised Crops” by Dr Ibraheem AlShareef, CFF Field Research Centre Coordinator.
- Tree planting: *Azadirachta indica*, *Moringa oleifera* and *Anacardium occidentale* – known best for combating desertification.

[Watch video about CFF Field Research Centre](#)

MALI

The UNCCD National Focal Point of Mali (Ingénieur des Eaux et Forêts et Chef de Section Etudes et Recherche, Agence de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable) organizes the national observance of the Day which starts from the World Environment Day on 5 June until the World Day to Combat Desertification on 17 June. The observance involves all sector partners: agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and transport, and planning, local authorities, technical and financial partners. The observance ceremonial opening is chaired by the President or the Prime Minister, along with the Minister of the Environment. During the observance period, various activities are organized on global challenges such as desertification, climate change, loss of biodiversity, food security, poverty communities, etc. Radio and TV stations organize debates on food security, land degradation, promoting best practices, climate change and biodiversity.

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MEXICO

As part of the World Day to Combat Desertification, on 17 June, the National Forestry Commission of Mexico with the National Commission of Arid Zones will conduct a conference in Museo del Desierto in Saltillo (Coahuilla). This conference will analyze the importance of the Global Soil Partnership. In addition, 32 federal entities will organize other activities to celebrate this important day. Students, government representatives and all citizens will take part in the National Day of Soil Conservation.



On the World Day, also the State Offices of CONAFOR took actions to recall this important day for the Government of Mexico. In Baja California Sur, Nuevo Leon and Zacatecas, field trips were organized with students, “ejidos” and authorities of the environmental sector. These field trips were conducted in the areas where CONAFOR works in forest conservation and restoration. In Campeche, Sinaloa and Tabasco conferences were held in educational institutions on main causes of soil degradation. In Chiapas successful experiences of soil restoration and forest management were presented. Also, as in the case of Sonora, media interviews were offered to disseminate the work being done by CONAFOR to address desertification. The NGO Grupo ecologista amigos de la ciudad y la naturaleza from Baja California also celebrated the Word Day to Combat Desertification 2015. They toured around the colonies to communicate ecological message and to raise awareness about the importance of this day

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MOLDOVA

The NGO BIOS performed various activities related to International Year of Soils, including training 11 Water User Associations in the updating, implementation and monitoring of Environment and Social Management Plans for Irrigation. NGO BIOS also held seminars and workshops with farmers and trainers concerning sustainable land management practices and hosted round tables related to environmental problems and solutions. Additionally, NGO BIOS participated in the preparation of reports at the national and international conferences: the last report and presentation related to the role of NGOs in the implementation of the UNCCD and practical implementation of environmentally friendly practices can be accessed at <http://bios.org.md/conferinta-internationala-mediul-si-schimbarea-climei-de-la-viziune-la-actiune>. On WDCD 2015, the NGO participated in a press conference and attended the radio programme, Ecoterra, which is dedicated to the World Soil Day. Moreover, NGO BIOS organized an ecological hour dedicated to the WDCD 2015 in Peresecina village Orhei district. During the press conference the NGO BIOS used arts and written media to disseminate knowledge related to desertification. Learn more at <http://bios.org.md/conferinta-internationala-mediul-si-schimbarea-climei-de-la-viziune-la-actiune/>

NAMIBIA

On Wednesday, 17 June 2015, a Conservation Agriculture Information Sharing event was hosted at Okashana Rural Development Centre in the Oshikoto Region of Namibia. The event is hosted by a consortium comprising of the Department of Environmental Affairs of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET/DEA), Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF), Namibia National Farmers Union (NNFU), and the National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA).

The primary objective of the event was to demonstrate the importance of conservation farming as a mechanism to combat desertification, drought and land degradation in Namibia. About 40 communal farmers from the Zambesi, Kavango East & West, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Omusati, Oshana and Kunene Region were invited to share their practical experiences that demonstrate the contribution of conservation agriculture to sustainable land management. The event took place under global theme "attainment of food security for all through sustainable food systems", and with the slogan "No such thing as a free lunch. Invest in healthy soils". Okashana Rural Development Centre is the first-rate venue for this event due to its high practising of conservation agriculture as a model for community adaptation that benefits the theme of the day. The keynote speaker at the event was the Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism, Honourable Tommy Nambahu. The event was also attended by the regional leadership led by the Governor of the Oshikoto Region, NGOs/CBOs, school groups, media and other invited guests.

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NIGERIA

The Africa Desertification Control Initiative (ADCI) Nigeria carried out an awareness campaign via a tree planting activity at Kadandani Village in Makoda Local Government Area in Kano State, Nigeria on June 17, 2015. The event featured lectures, tree planting and distribution of economic trees to peasants. Local radio and television programmes also covered the WDCD 2015 aiming at awareness raising and highlighting the importance of sustainable environmental and agricultural development. Furthermore a symposium on "The aligned National Action Program to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) 2015-2020)" at Valencia Hotel in Abuja on 17 Jun 2015 and another tree planting on the 18th of June was organized.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan is one of several tropical countries facing climate change and trying to mitigate the worst impacts of resulting weather changes. The Department of Remote Sensing and Geo-Information science, Institute of Space Technology- Karachi- Pakistan organized a one day seminar on World Day to Combat Desertification 2015 at the National Center of Remote Sensing and Geo-Information. Well known scholars and experts from Pakistan delivered lectures on impacts of drought and desertification. More than 130 peoples including students, professors and professionals from relevant departments participated in this event. A certificate of participation was also awarded to participants.

SERBIA

On the occasion of the WDCD 2015, the renowned Serbian newspaper Politika published an article written by Gordana Grujic (Oasis) on the issue of land degradation and how sustainable landmanagement could increase the resilience of land and soil in the view of climate change.

SWITZERLAND

This year, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) in cooperation with Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG), Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) and Agroscope will hold a public event, ""Flavours from our soils" – Dialogue and exhibition to mark World Day to Combat Desertification" at University of Bern on 17 June. The event will focus on farmers, their knowledge about soils and its use in agriculture.

Learn more at

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/aktuell/agenda.html/deza/en/meta/agenda/2015/6/ausstellung-welttag-desertifikationsbekaempfung>

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SRI LANKA

The Saviya Development Foundation in Galle, Sri Lanka held a World Day to Combat Drought and Desertification commemoration event on June 17th 2015 at the local Galle Town Hall. Main activities of the day included an art and poster exhibition under the theme “No such thing as a free lunch - Invest in healthy soil”, an awareness programme on environmental conservation, a presentation of the prize & certificates awarded to winners of the national level art and poster competition, as well as a distribution of plants to school children. The chief guest of the day was Dr. Hemakumara Nanayakkara who is the Governor of Southern Province and an expert in organic farming. He discussed issues of drought and desertification in the world, including how some countries, such as India and Israel combat these issues. He emphasized the importance of environmental conservation. Several other special participants attended the event as well. Mr. Mohan Heenatigala, the District Forest Officer of Galle discussed the deforestation rate in Sri Lanka and how it has specifically contributed to changing weather patterns and climate conditions in Sri Lanka. He also explained how communities can contribute to forest conservation efforts. Mr. Thilak Kariyawasam, who is President of Lanka Organic Agriculture Movement and Managing Director to Sri Cert- Organic Certification Body, delivered a lecture on “No such thing as a free lunch - Invest in healthy soil”. His lecture concerned causes of soil fertility loss, the negative impact of chemical usage and ways to invest in healthy soils.

SYRIA

On the occasion of World Day to Combat Desertification the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs held a workshop in Damascus - National Museum / Hall shamia on 15 June 2015. The workshop focused on the theme of World Day to Combat Desertification 2015 “No such thing as a free lunch. Invest in healthy soils” and was attended by about 70 participants the discussions and presentations centered on the issues of land and soil degradation in Syria before and during the crisis, the importance of investments in land and soil, remote sensing and ecological agriculture.

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TANZANIA

To commemorate the World Day to Combat Desertification this coming June 17th, the Journalist Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET) will conduct a forum to bring together government officials, community representatives of degraded and quickly desertifying lands, women's groups and journalists. The aim of the event is to highlight the situation of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and to commemorate this year's slogan, "No such thing as a free lunch. Invest in healthy soils." JET will launch the guidelines for mainstreaming the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification into sectorial policies, plans and programmes. Additionally, the Compendium of Best practices for sustainable land management in Tanzania and the National Action Program to Combat Desertification will be introduced. Key speakers will be "land witnesses," men and women from various villages who will give their testimonies of how they have personally been deprived of their lands. Many will discuss the ways water scarcity and drought affected themselves and their families. JET will also publish articles, be featured in radio programs and print its own Kasuku Kiswahili newspaper containing the WDCD messages and slogan.

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TURKEY



The World Day to Combat Desertification took place at the Congressium Ankara ATO Congressium International Convention & Exhibition Centre and ARMADA mall, on 17 June 2015 in Ankara, Turkey. General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion hosted the stately observance.

With the slogan: “No such thing as a free lunch. Invest in healthy soils”, the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs undersecretary Prof. Dr. Lutfi Akca, Deputy General Director of Forestry Ismail Uzmez, General Director of State Water Affairs Omer Ozdemir and Deputy General Director of Combating Desertification and Erosion Ismail Belen shared valuable ideas, goals and projects to save land, mitigate degradation and improve food security. The day-long event began with a Seymen traditional dance show, sand art and high-level speeches with around 2000 attendees. The following activities took place at ARMADA, one of the biggest malls in Ankara; a kids drum show, photograph exhibition, and handing out cacti with the COP12 logo to increase the public's understanding of the importance and implications of combating desertification

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UKRAINE

Respective governmental bodies and scientific organizations have been preparing relevant activities and WDCD observance events. For instance, the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences of the Ukraine (NAASU) has organized 13 events for WDCD including:

May 22: A validation workshop for the developed draft NAP to combat land degradation and desertification in Ukraine, as well as a training session concerning NAP indicators were held. Government agencies, scientific institutions and CSOs participated in the events.

June 11: International Conference: "Agriculture in XXI Century. "Problems and Solutions" organized by the National Scientific Centre "Institute of Agriculture of NAASU"

June 12: Scientific and Practical Conference: "Measures on Combating Desertification and Droughts" organized by the Institute of Agriculture in the Black Sea Region of NAASU.

June 16: A Round Table discussing outcomes of the 3-rd UNCCD Scientific Conference organized by the Institute of Irrigation Farming of NAASU.

June 17: With the support of the GEF/UNEP project "Development and Alignment of National Action Programme to the UNCCD 10 Years Strategy and Preparation of the Fifth Reporting and Review process," the Institute of Agro ecology and Natural Resource Use of NAASU and MENR prepared and published a special edition of the scientific journal "Agro ecological Journal" devoted to DLDD. A competition of schoolchildren's drawings on the theme: "Protection of Land and Soil" was also organized. Pictures of the winners were used for preparing a poster devoted to 17 June - WDCD.

June 19: International Conference: "Diversity of Soils: Stretch and Time" organized by the National Scientific Center "O.N. Sokolovsky Institute for Soil Science and Agro chemistry Research of NAASU".

VIETNAM

For this year's WDCD the leaders of the Vietnam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) and Binh Thuan province organized a meeting and planted 2000 trees to celebrate the WDCD. The event took place on 11 June at Bau Trang - BAC Binh district, Binh Thuan province.