

Bhutan Observes Desertification and Drought Day 2025

Every year, 17th June is observed as the Desertification and Drought Day to mark the founding day of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) that was adopted on 17th June 1994. Bhutan ratified and became party to the UNCCD on 23rd August 2003. Since then, Bhutan joins the global community each year in observing the day to promote public awareness of the international and national efforts to combat land degradation and drought. The day is a unique moment to remind everyone that land degradation, along with climate change and the biodiversity loss are the greatest challenges to sustainable development and reversing these triple planetary issues is achievable through problem solving, strong community involvement and cooperation, coordination and collaboration at all levels.

To mark the day, the National Soil Services Centre of the Department of Agriculture under the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, in collaboration with the Dzongkhag Administration of Zhemgang, organized land management campaign at Lingmapong under Goshing gewog to create awareness on the importance of sustainable land management (SLM) and its best practices. The day was attended by Dasho Dzongrab as the Chief Guest, along with Dasho Drungpa of Panbang Drungkhag, Lam and monks from Goshing Lhakhang, M&E Specialist of GCF Project, Gewog Thrizin, Mangmi, Tshogpas, Principal and teachers of Goshing Primary School, agriculture extension supervisors of Goshing and Phangkhar gewogs, and the farmers of Goshing gewog. There were 80 participants in total.

During the campaign, the participants were briefed on the importance of the day and engaged in the field demonstration and actual establishment of three acres of napier grass hedgerows. Further, as part of the Desertification and Drought Day 2025, various land restoration and sustainable land management (SLM) activities were carried out in 19 Dzongkhags across the country. About **7,472 acres** of vulnerable and degraded agricultural land was brought under SLM interventions (mainly terracing, contour hedgerows and stone bunds, check dam construction, orchard establishment and landslide stabilization).

The day was observed with the global theme "**Restore the land. Unlock the opportunities,**" that emphasizes on how restoring nature's foundation—land—can create jobs, boost food and water security, support climate action and build economic resilience.

Finally, the NSSC acknowledges: Zhemgang Dzongkhag and Goshing gewog administrations for co-organizing this global event, other Dzongkhags and gewogs for carrying out land restoration and SLM activities as part of the observation, and GCF and other projects for supporting the event and the implementation of land restoration and SLM activities.

"Land degradation and drought are major disruptors of our economy, stability, food production, water and quality of life. Land restoration is our chance to reverse these threats and create new possibilities."

UNCCD Executive Secretary Ibrahim Thiaw