

World Drought and Desertification Day Commemorated in Asmara, Eritrea

The Ministry of Agriculture commemorated World Drought and Desertification Day at the Embasoira Hotel in Asmara, Eritrea, on June 17, 2025, under the theme “*Restore the Land. Unlock the Opportunity.*” The day serves as a poignant reminder of the devastating effects of climate change and the urgent need for collective action to combat desertification and promote sustainable land use.

The event brought together key stakeholders, experts, and representatives from the Eritrean government, relevant ministries, organizations, associations, and institutions. It featured presentations on various topics, including land use planning, conservation measures for restoring degraded land, and the role of date palm plantations in addressing land degradation.

A keynote speech was delivered by Mr. Semere Amlesom, Director General of the Agricultural Extension Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and the country's UNCCD National Focal Point. In his address, he highlighted the Eritrean government's commitment to combating drought and desertification and emphasized the need for collective action to restore degraded land. He noted that drought and desertification are among the main causes of biodiversity loss, poverty, forced migration, and conflict. Therefore, restoring the land is essential to solving these issues and reversing their consequences.

Topics covered during the presentations included:

- Eritrea's Commitments and Experience in Combating Drought, Land Degradation, and Desertification
- Land Use Change and Its Impact on Poverty and Livelihoods
- Conservation and Sustainable Land-Use Management Practices
- Agroforestry Systems for Restoring Land
- Environmental Impact Assessments of Agricultural Farms
- Modeling Land Degradation Using Geospatial Techniques
- The Role of Date Palms in Restoring Degraded Lands
- The Effect of Biodegradable Porous Alpha on Agricultural Soils

The presentations were followed by a discussion that featured all the presenters and representatives from various organizations.

A panel discussion, addressing the Government's Commitment in Restoring Land and Unlocking Opportunities, attracted prominent experts and highlighted the need for a holistic approach to addressing drought and desertification.

Key takeaways included the recognition that climate change is a major driver of land degradation and desertification. Restoring degraded lands offers opportunities for sustainable land management, improved biodiversity, and enhanced livelihoods. Moreover, integrated land-use management approaches are critical for unlocking significant opportunities for sustainable development, restoration, and revitalization of degraded areas. These are essential steps toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

In conclusion, the event emphasized the importance of continued efforts to address drought and desertification and called on all stakeholders to work together to achieve these goals. As the world continues to grapple with the challenges of climate change, it is essential to accelerate the implementation of sustainable land use practices and conservation measures.

This event represents a significant step forward in global efforts to combat drought and desertification and contributes meaningfully to Eritrea's efforts to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

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