

Message from the Vice - Chairman on World Environment Day 2024



World Environment Day is the biggest international day for our planet earth. Led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and held annually since 1973, it has grown to be the largest global platform for environmental outreach. It is celebrated by millions of people every year across the world on 5th June.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will host World Environment Day 2024. Every year, a specific theme is chosen to shed light on a particular environmental concern, ranging from air pollution, plastic waste to energy conservation.

The theme for World Environment Day 2024 is '**Land restoration, desertification and drought resilience**'. Land restoration is a critical pillar of the World Environment Day 2024 theme, and the organisers wish to rally people for the revival of ecosystems around the world.

Land degradation, desertification, and drought are critical challenges affecting millions globally, leading to loss of biodiversity, decreased agricultural productivity, and exacerbating climate change. Addressing these issues through land restoration and enhancing drought resilience is essential for sustainable development, food security, and the well-being of affected communities.

Land restoration involves a range of activities aimed at recovering the health, productivity, and biodiversity of degraded ecosystems. Effective restoration can reverse land degradation, enhance ecosystem services, and support local livelihoods. Key strategies may include reforestation and afforestation, agroforestry, soil conservation practices and wetland restoration. We can combat desertification through sustainable land management, drought-resilient crops, water management & by empowering local communities to manage their resources sustainably ensures long-term success and resilience.

Enhancing drought resilience is very important. Developing and implementing early warning systems for drought can help communities take pre-emptive actions to mitigate impacts, encouraging economic diversification reduces dependence on climate-sensitive activities, enhancing community resilience and infrastructure development. Hence, implementing policies that promote sustainable land use, water conservation, and support for affected populations is crucial.

Globally Red Cross has been supplementing governmental and efforts of all actors working to save our planet earth. Red Cross has been promoting digital transformation to save paper, plant trees to maintain ecological balance and activities to reduce use of plastic to save bovine wealth and many other environmental benefits.

This World Environment Day, you can plant a tree or try some vegetable farming to get your hands dirty and get connected with nature. Spending time outdoors is also an excellent way to connect with the natural world.

World Environment Day serves as a powerful reminder of our collective responsibility to protect and preserve the planet for future generations. So, on this day, let's contribute to building a more sustainable and resilient world together.

With warm regards,

Dr. Anant Pandhare,
Vice Chairman,
Indian Red Cross Society, NHQ