



Message

"Desertification Day" is being observed today throughout the world including Bangladesh. I am happy to know that elaborate programmes have been chalked out to observe the day with due importance. I congratulate all who are associated with this efforts.

Desertification as a consequence of climate change and other related phenomena has gradually been visible in various parts of the world. In our country, especially in the northern region, gradual loss in land fertility, continued downward trend of underground water level and alarming disappearance of forest and tree-cover are gradually becoming apparent as the primary signs of desertification. This process, if continued over a long period, could transform the entire northern region into a desert. This degeneration of the land resources which is very much scarce compared to population needs will cause serious adverse consequential impacts on our socio-economic standing.

Observance of 'World Desertification Day' in Bangladesh, in this perspective, bears a special significance. Desertification as a consequence of climate change and other related phenomena has gradually been visible in various parts of the world. In our country, especially in the northern region, gradual loss in land fertility, continued downward trend of underground water level and alarming disappearance of forest and tree-cover are gradually becoming apparent as the primary signs of desertification. This process, if continued over a long period, could transform the entire northern region into a desert. This degeneration of the land resources which is very much scarce compared to population needs will cause serious adverse consequential impacts on our socio-economic standing.

The observance of the day will create world opinion in checking such a catastrophic phenomenon. Scientists engaged in relevant fields of research, social and economic experts and public representatives and planners engaged in implementation of socio-economic development programmes at the state levels can, through their intellect and expertise, strengthen their approach towards preventing desertification and alleviating its catastrophic consequences.

I wish the 'World Desertification Day' a success.

Abdur Rahman Biswas
President
People's Republic of Bangladesh

BANGLADESH is a signatory to the 'International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification,' which was adopted in October, 1994.

Use of major terms

"Desertification" means land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors including climatic variations and human activities;

"Combatting Desertification" includes activities which are part of the integrated development of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas for sustainable development which are aimed at:

(i) prevention and/or reduction of land degradation;

(ii) rehabilitation of partly degraded land; and

(iii) reclamation of desertified land;

"Drought" means the naturally occurring phenomenon that exists when precipitation has been significantly below normal recorded levels, caus-

ing serious hydrological imbalances that adversely affect land resource production systems;

"Land degradation" means reduction or loss, in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, of the biological or economic productivity and complexity of rained cropland, irrigated cropland, or range, pasture, forest and woodlands resulting from land uses or from a process or combination of processes, including processes arising from human activities and habitation patterns, such as:

(i) soil erosion caused by wind and/or water;

(ii) deterioration of the physical, chemical and biological or economic properties of soil; and

(iii) long-term loss of natural vegetation;

"Arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas" means areas,

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