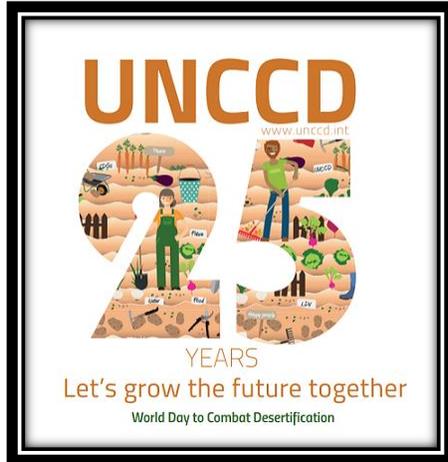




## World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2019



The purpose of this Day is to promote public awareness of land degradation and to draw attention to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). To maximize its impact, the UNCCD Secretariat invites all States, civil society organizations, international and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to draw attention to land issues and educate the public about effective methods for addressing land degradation. Acknowledging that desertification and drought are global problems, in that, they affect all regions of the world; joint action by the international

community is needed to combat this issue, particularly in Africa. It was against this backdrop that the UN General Assembly declared 17 June as "**World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. This year's celebration is being held under the theme "Let's Grow the Future Together."**

### What is desertification and how is it caused?

Desertification is defined by the *U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification* as the reduction or loss of the biological or economic productivity of dry lands resulting from persistent degradation of dry land ecosystems by human activities — including unsustainable farming, mining, overgrazing and clear-cutting of land — and by climate change.

Just in case you may be wondering, Guyana does have issues of land degradation which needs to be addressed.



## **Impact of Desertification**

Desertification is a global issue, with serious implications worldwide for biodiversity, eco-safety, poverty eradication, socio-economic stability and sustainable development.

Drylands are already fragile. As they become degraded, the impact on people, livestock and environment can be devastating. Some 50 million people may be displaced within the next 10 years as a result of desertification.

### Key Facts

"By 2025, 1.8 billion people will experience absolute water scarcity, and 2/3 of the world will be living under water-stressed conditions."

By 2045 some 135 million people may be displaced as a result of desertification."-UN 2019

## **What is being done and how can you play a part.**

In order to prevent and reverse desertification, major policy interventions and changes in management approaches are needed. Such interventions should be implemented at local to global scales, with the active engagement of stakeholders and local communities.

The seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 17) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), was held here in Guyana from 28 to 30, January 2019. CRIC17 reviewed the first global assessment of land degradation based on Earth observation data reported by governments. The assessment, which was conducted by reporting countries using a harmonized approach, shows the trends in land degradation, between the periods 2000 to 2015, based on data provided by 145 of the 197 countries that are party to the Convention. The assessment provided the baseline for assessing progress in the reduction or reversal of land degradation globally, going forward. It will also contribute to country efforts to achieve land degradation neutrality (LDN), which is Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3.

The Guyana Lands and Survey Commission is the focal point in Guyana for UNCCD. However, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) work closely with environmental users to ensure they are Authorised to carry out operations that impacts among others, air, water and soil quality. The EPA through in monitoring and enforcement arm seeks to ensure environmental users adhere to environmental protection and conservation laws. It also encourages and support a number of best practices and initiatives such as;

- Sustainable harvesting of forest resources.
- Increase education and awareness.
- Climate Smart Agriculture.
- Water resources management — saving, reuse of treated water, rainwater harvesting.
- Use of best available technologies to reduce impact on land, air and water.

Feel free to share with us via our Facebook page, one way you plan to join the rest of the world to observe this day.

***You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: “Our Earth, Our Environment”, C/O ECEA Programme, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: [eit.epaguyana@gmail.com](mailto:eit.epaguyana@gmail.com) or follow us on Facebook and Instagram.***