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## NEWSLETTER

Centre of Excellence  
on Sustainable  
Land Management  
Indian Council of  
Forestry Research and  
Education, Dehradun

# SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

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### From the Desk of Director

Land degradation remains one of the most pressing global challenges, driven by unsustainable land use, deforestation, and increasing pressure on natural resources. Addressing this issue is critical to achieving environmental sustainability and ensuring food security for billions of people.

The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM) at the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun, is dedicated to combating land degradation through innovative approaches, capacity building, and fostering South-South Cooperation. With its global mandate to contribute to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) by 2030, the Centre continues to advance its mission through impactful initiatives.

Over the past months, CoE-SLM has undertaken significant activities, including the celebration of World Environment Day and World Desertification and Drought Day, a plantation drive under #EkPedMaaKeNaam, and the Review Meeting of CoE-SLM. The Centre also hosted an Inception Workshop for the CIL-funded mega research project on the restoration of mined-out areas across India, marking a major step toward restoring

degraded ecosystems. The signing of an MoU between SAC-ISRO and ICFRE further strengthens our research capabilities in land resource management. The Centre's commitment to knowledge dissemination is evident through its post-training webinars and updates on global and national efforts towards LDN.

In Volume II, Issue I of the Newsletter on Sustainable Land Management, we showcase these achievements and feature a compelling article on the difficulties encountered by hill farmers, encouraging discussion and action among relevant stakeholders. The issue also introduces our readers to the Green Credit Programme.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all contributors and the editorial team for their unwavering support in bringing out this edition. Your feedback and suggestions are invaluable as we strive for continuous improvement.

Warm regards,  
Vinay Kumar, IFS  
Director, CoE-SLM  
ICFRE, Dehradun

# EDITORIAL

We are delighted to introduce the Volume II, Issue I of the Newsletter on Sustainable Land Management, a platform dedicated to sharing insights and advancements in sustainable land management. This issue emphasizes the steadfast commitment of the Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM), ICFRE, in combating land degradation and striving toward Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) by 2030.

The past few months have witnessed a series of impactful initiatives, including World Environment Day and World Desertification and Drought Day celebrations, the #EkPedMaaKeNaam plantation drive, and the Review Meeting of CoE-SLM. A prominent highlight was the CIL-funded mega research project focused on restoring mined-out areas across India- a significant step toward rehabilitating degraded lands and advancing ecological restoration.

This edition also showcases the signing of an MoU between SAC-ISRO and ICFRE, updates on global and national efforts toward LDN, and the Centre's commitment to capacity-building via post-training webinars. Additionally, a special Opinion article delves into the hurdles hill farmers encounter, highlighting the significance of targeted interventions in vulnerable ecosystems. This issue also marks the introduction of the Green Credit Programme to our audience.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all contributors and stakeholders for their valuable inputs and efforts in bringing this edition to fruition. We hope the newsletter inspires collaborative action and serves as a vital resource for all readers.

Your insights and recommendations play a key role in enhancing the impact of this publication, and we eagerly anticipate your continued involvement.

Warm regards,  
The Editorial Team  
CoE-SLM Newsletter  
ICFRE, Dehradun



*Smt. Kanchan Devi, DG, ICFRE inaugurating the workshop along with the other dignitaries*

The Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM), Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun

## TECHNICAL SESSIONS AND KEY DISCUSSIONS

The technical sessions featured expert talks from notable speakers, including Ms. Basu Kannogia, Conservator of Forests and Mr. Konda Reddy Chavva, Assistant FAO Representative, who presented successful restoration efforts and strategies for enhancing drought resilience. Ms. Kannogia discussed the

importance of reclaiming encroached forest lands as a way to combat desertification, advocating for collaborative restoration efforts across communities and government agencies. Mr. Chavva highlighted global landscape restoration efforts, underscoring the urgent need for policy support, technical expertise and financial resources. A virtual session by Mr. Mozaharul Alam, Country Head of the UN Environment Programme, emphasized the global challenge of land degradation.





## WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2024: WORKSHOP ON LAND RESTORATION, DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT RESILIENCE

celebrated World Environment Day on June 5, 2024 by hosting a workshop centered on the theme "Land Restoration, Desertification and Drought

Resilience." The theme aligned with the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and underscored the

importance of sustainable land management practices to protect our planet's future under the slogan, "Our Land. Our Future. We are #GenerationRestoration." The event was inaugurated by Smt. Kanchan Devi, IFS, Director General of ICFRE, along with a lineup of distinguished speakers and guests who shared valuable insights into combating land degradation. The workshop attracted participants from a

range of forestry, environmental and research institutions across India and beyond, including representatives from the Forest Survey of India (FSI), Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Wildlife Institute of India (WII), IGNFA and other prominent organizations, as well as international participants attending virtually.



*Ms. Basu Kannogia, Mr. Konda Reddy Chavva and Mr. Mozaharul Alam during their addresses at the workshop*

# PUBLICATION RELEASES AND AWARD CEREMONY

To commemorate the occasion, CoE-SLM launched a series of publications that include the biannual Newsletter (Vol. I, Issues I & II) covering activities from April 2023 to March 2024 and brochures on Land Restoration, Drought Resilience and Combating Desertification. These resources aim to disseminate knowledge and promote sustainable practices in land management.

Additionally, the winners of Essay Writing and Photography Competitions organized by CoE-SLM were announced. These competitions drew entries from participants nationwide, with essays exploring themes like "Innovations in Technology for Land Restoration" and "The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Drought Resilience." The photography competition recognized impactful visuals



depicting the resilience of nature, with winning entries from both above and below 18 age categories.

*Distribution of awards to the winners of Competitions*

# CALL TO ACTION

The workshop concluded with a call to action from speakers and participants alike, stressing the need for ongoing commitment to sustainable land management practices. The DG, ICFRE, Smt. Kanchan Devi encouraged the audience to embrace and implement sustainable land management practices to ensure thriving ecosystems for future generations, underscoring the traditional Indian spirit of coexisting with nature.

*Participants at the workshop on Land Restoration, Desertification and Drought Resilience*







Smt. Kanchan Devi, DG, ICFRE addressing the Symposium

## SYMPOSIUM ON WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

On June 18, 2024, the Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM), ICFRE, Dehradun, in collaboration with the UNCCD, organized a virtual symposium to commemorate the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (WDCDD). Held under the theme "United for Land: Our Legacy, Our Future", the event emphasized global collaboration and local action to address land degradation and drought.

Smt. Kanchan Devi, IFS, Director General of ICFRE, inaugurated the symposium, underlining the urgency of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) by 2030. The keynote by Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of UNCCD, highlighted the escalating global impact of land degradation and drought, urging collective action that integrates traditional knowledge and innovative science.

Dr. Deep Narayan Pandey discussed desertification challenges in India, particularly the Thar Desert, advocating natural climate solutions. Prof. Tony Simons from UNCCD connected land restoration to achieving SDGs and



Dr. Rajendra Dobhal highlighting the concerns of fragile Himalayan ecosystem during his lecture

emphasized intergenerational knowledge-sharing. Dr. Rajendra Dobhal focused on the fragile Himalayan ecosystem, stressing sustainable practices to protect mountain regions.

The symposium concluded with Dr. Rajesh Sharma, Head of CoE-SLM, summarizing key insights and reiterating the importance of dialogue and collaboration to combat desertification.



Dr. Deep Narayan Pandey delivering his lecture virtually during the symposium



Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of UNCCD during his virtual address

On May 2, 2024, the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM) under the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) hosted a post-training webinar in collaboration with the G-20 Global Land Initiative (GLI) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The webinar focused on utilizing remote sensing (RS) and geographic information systems (GIS) for assessing land degradation dynamics and supporting restoration efforts. The event featured key speakers, including Dr. Manoj Kumar from CoE-SLM and Dr. Manish Parmar from the Space Applications Centre (SAC), ISRO. They presented insights into the training workshop conducted from January 15 to 19, 2024, highlighting innovative applications of RS and GIS tools for monitoring and addressing land degradation challenges. The session was chaired by Mr. Vinay Kumar, Director of CoE-SLM, and Dr. Abd Salam from the



## POST-TRAINING WEBINAR ON "ASSESSING LAND DEGRADATION DYNAMICS AND RESTORATION EFFORTS WITH REMOTE SENSING DATA AND GIS TOOLS"

G20 GLI, UNCCD, who emphasized the significance of advanced technologies in combating land degradation on a global scale. The webinar saw an impressive turnout of 242 attendees, representing 41 countries and 177 cities worldwide. The top five participating countries were India, Nepal, Nigeria, Germany, and Uganda, with Dehradun, Abuja, Bonn, Kampala, and Kochi leading as the most represented cities. This event underscored the importance of collaborative efforts and capacity-building initiatives in addressing global land degradation and restoration goals through the application of cutting-edge technologies.



*Post-training webinar on Assessing Land Degradation Dynamics and Restoration Efforts with Remote Sensing Data and GIS Tools*



# POST-TRAINING WEBINAR ON "SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT: PRINCIPLES, PRACTICES, AND APPLICATIONS"



*Post-training  
webinar on  
Sustainable Land  
Management:  
Principles,  
Practices, and  
Applications*

The Post-Training Webinar on Sustainable Land Management (SLM), held on 15th May 2024, brought together participants from 50 countries to discuss the principles, practices, and applications of SLM. This webinar aimed to elucidate SLM's pivotal role in achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and to raise awareness about the ongoing initiatives by the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM), the G20 Global Land Initiative, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The event served as a platform to enhance the capacity of stakeholders in promoting sustainable land management globally. The webinar featured a distinguished panel of experts, including Mr. Vinay Kumar, Director of International Cooperation and CoE-SLM, ICFRE; Dr. Sanjay Singh, Scientist at CoE-SLM, ICFRE, and the Course Coordinator of the training workshop; Dr. Tony Simons, Senior Fellow with

the UNCCD; and Dr. P.C. Abhilash, Senior Assistant Professor at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. Their contributions provided valuable insights into the critical role of SLM in addressing land degradation challenges. Dr. P.C. Abhilash delivered a compelling presentation titled "Sustainable Land Management as a Tool for Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality", emphasizing SLM's potential to balance ecological restoration with socioeconomic needs. Prof. Tony Simons, a tropical land-use specialist with extensive expertise in agriculture, forestry, and strategic implementation, presented a lecture entitled "Towards Effective Implementation of Sustainable Land Management". His lecture highlighted innovative approaches to ensure SLM practices are impactful and scalable.

# REVIEW MEETING: PROGRESS, COLLABORATIONS AND THE PATH FORWARD



On September 1, 2024, a review meeting was held at the ICFRE headquarters in Dehradun to assess the progress and future direction of the Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM). The meeting, chaired by ICFRE Director General Smt. Kanchan Devi, featured key representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC), including ADGF & Mission Director Sh. A.K. Mohanty, IGF Smt. V.L. Roui Kullai, and DIGF Sh. Prashant Rajagopal. The session focused on updates for several key projects, including the Aravalli Restoration and Green Wall Initiative and laid out action points for CoE-SLM's future contributions toward India's environmental goals.

## COE-SLM'S PROGRESS AND STRATEGIC GOALS

Sh. Vinay Kumar, Director, IC & CoE-SLM, highlighted the center's alignment with India's UNCCD commitments. Dr. Sanjay Singh detailed ongoing projects, publications, capacity-building efforts, and the ten-year strategic plan, noting contributions to national and international initiatives like the G-20 and COP-15. A pending budget allocation of ₹3.94 crore was acknowledged as critical for sustaining these efforts.

## ARAVALLI RESTORATION AND GREEN WALL DEVELOPMENT

DIGF Sh. Prashant Rajagopal presented the Aravalli Restoration Project, involving GIS-based action plans across Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi. States shared best practices, such as Haryana's counter-overgrazing measures, Rajasthan's afforestation goals, and Delhi's strategies to maximize green cover. Challenges like overgrazing and funding gaps were addressed, with recommendations for improving monitoring, funding, and community engagement.

*DIGF Sh. Prashant Rajagopal  
presenting the Aravalli  
Restoration Project*





# CONTRIBUTIONS OF ICFRE INSTITUTES

Directors of ICFRE institutes showcasing innovations in land restoration

ICFRE institutes showcased innovations in land restoration:

AFRI, Jodhpur: Sand dune stabilization and technologies like Hydrogel SMC.

FRI, Dehradun: Mining area rehabilitation.

IFB, Hyderabad: Mangrove restoration.

HFRI, Shimla: Mycorrhizal fertilizers for soil productivity.

IFP, Ranchi & RFRI, Jorhat: Coal mine restoration with native species plantations.

Recommendations included integrating ICFRE technologies into state projects for eco-restoration.



Forest Officials of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi presenting the updates during Review Meeting

## NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AND FUTURE FOCUS

Dr. Sanjay Singh reaffirmed India's commitments under the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification. Discussions included updating schemes, integrating biodiversity assessments, and preparations for COP-16 in Riyadh, focusing on youth, gender inclusivity, and sandstorm mitigation.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

DG ICFRE, Smt. Kanchan Devi, emphasized collaboration among ICFRE institutes, state forest departments, and MoEF&CC to scale eco-restoration efforts. Immediate priorities include releasing funds and disseminating research-backed models to field projects. This meeting underscored CoE-SLM's leadership in sustainable land management and its science-driven approach to restoring India's ecosystems.

DG ICFRE presenting Concluding Remarks







# TREE PLANTATION PROGRAM AT COE-SLM: SUPPORTING THE #EKPEDMAAKENAAM CAMPAIGN

On July 16, 2024, the Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM), under ICFRE, Dehradun, organized a tree plantation program supporting the #EkPedMaaKeNaam campaign. This initiative promotes tree planting to combat climate change, conserve biodiversity, and honor mothers.

DG ICFRE, Smt. Kanchan Devi, emphasized the act of planting trees as a tribute to nurturing life and safeguarding future generations. Joining her were Sh. Vinay Kumar, Director IC & CoE-SLM, and Dr. Rajesh Sharma, Head, CoE-SLM, along with scientists and staff, planting native species across the CoE-SLM campus.

The campaign, fostering reforestation and community engagement, aligns with CoE-SLM's mission of ecological restoration and achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), inspiring nationwide efforts for a greener, sustainable future.



ampaign



## WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY DISCUSSIONS

The workshop's panel discussion, chaired by Dr. Amit Pandey (Director, ICFRE-IFP, Ranchi) and co-chaired by Sh. C. Jayadev, addressed logistical challenges and operational needs such as KML-based site mapping, land leveling, site preparation, and resource provisioning by



# INCEPTION WORKSHOP: ECO-REHABILITATION OF DEGRADED COAL MINES ACROSS INDIA



Vinay Kumar

On September 18-19, 2024, the Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM), under the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun, hosted an Inception Workshop for its newly launched project, "Standardization of Package and Practices for Eco-Rehabilitation of Degraded Coal Mines Across Various Agro-Climatic Zones of India through Forestry Interventions." Funded by Coal India Limited (CIL), this ambitious initiative addresses land degradation in coal mining regions, aiming to restore 195 hectares of land through customized forestry interventions across India's diverse agro-climatic zones. The workshop, held in Dehradun, brought together stakeholders from CIL, MoEF&CC, ICFRE institutes and research centers, setting the stage for a multi-institutional collaboration to establish eco-rehabilitation standards for coal mines.

Discussion on Methodology of the Project



Panel Discussion in progress

CoE-SLM outlined the detailed methodology to be adopted, covering objectives such as topsoil management, seedling establishment and biodiversity monitoring. Adjustments to the project methodology were discussed to optimize implementation and CoE-SLM committed to developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for eco-rehabilitation of mined sites. These SOPs aim to guide the scientific community and industry



stakeholders in replicating eco-rehabilitation practices across different sites.

CIL, with Sh. Jayadev assuring timely support. CIL participants recommended staggered trenching for soil moisture retention and practical conservation measures in mining areas. Dr. Pandey stressed the importance of sustained momentum, continuous monitoring, skill development, advanced technologies, and collective ownership to achieve the project's goals effectively.

This workshop marked a promising start for the project, underscoring CoE-SLM's dedication to sustainable land management and ecological restoration. As this landmark project progresses, CoE-SLM and its partners look forward to contributing to national and global restoration efforts, setting a benchmark in eco-rehabilitation practices for coal mine regions.

Group Photograph of participants at Inception Workshop



# COE-SLM UPDATES



Sh. Vinay Kumar, IFS, Director IC & CoE-SLM attended 'Post Mining Landscape Restoration Workshop' organized by United Nations University at Dresden, Germany during 14-19 April, 2024.

# 1

CoE-SLM attended an online meeting regarding 'DPR for Development of Aravalli Green Wall and Aravalli Landscape Restoration organized by MoEF&CC on 15 April, 2024.

# 2

Dr. Sanjay Singh, Scientist-E, CoE-SLM attended Review Meeting of Restoration of Degraded Forest Lands organized by MoEF&CC on 4th April, 2024 at Kaveri Hall, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi.

# 3



# EXPRESSIONS AND OPINIONS ON SLM

## DENUDED HILLS, SOIL EROSION, POOR VEGETATION AND SOIL HEALTH: CHALLENGES FOR HILL FARMERS



**Krishna Giri**  
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Vegetation cover is imperative for soil stabilization and erosion control, particularly on the hill slopes. The denuded hills are often devoid of vegetation and do not hold soil. Rocky boulders and poor soil depth in the steep hill slopes are the major causes of denudation and lack of vegetation. The upper soil layer of denuded hills is easily washed out due to heavy rains which further creates unfavourable environmental conditions for vegetation survival (Photo Plate 1). The poorly structured soil in the hilly regions has low nutrients and water holding capacity and limited organic carbon. These soil conditions are further exacerbated in the denuded hills due to rapid runoff and poor infiltration. The nutrient and water retention ability of eroded soil is diminished and the land degradation process is accelerated in the mountains. These factors further lead to poor survival of vegetation, crop failure, low land productivity, biodiversity loss, habitat destruction and disruption of overall ecosystem services.





Hostile environmental conditions, poor soil quality and low agricultural productivity hamper the people's livelihood in hilly areas. Despite such circumstances, farmers have developed several traditional knowledge-based adaptive measures for subsistence in difficult geographical terrains. The creation of terraces in the hill slopes, and planting of trees and shrubs on the denuded hills or contours help soil stabilization, water retention and erosion control. The traditional knowledge-based local interventions in the denuded hills improve soil health and productivity over time.

*Glimpse of a Denuded hill slope with sparse vegetation in Uttarakhand*



The farming system in photo plate 2 exemplifies farmers' efforts to survive in difficult environmental conditions. The terraces in the hill slopes and mixed vegetation cover around the farmland are the source of subsistence for the villagers. These efforts of the farming communities prevent soil erosion, improve soil organic matter and make the system suitable for the cultivation of a variety of crops. Besides, the cultivation of a variety of trees around the farmland provides them fodder, fuelwood, fibre, fruits and other intangible benefits. The farmland depicted in photo plate 2 is a fine example of an agroforestry system developed by the farmers on a hill slope for their subsistence. This system not only provides subsistence to the inhabitants of this hill region but also helps in environmental conservation. These traditional knowledge-based local actions of the smallholder farmers pave the way for the genesis of sustainable land management and livelihood support in rigorous geographical locations. Such practices need scientific interventions for further improvements in soil health, land productivity and socioeconomic conditions, besides incentivizing the farmers.

*A diverse farming system in the hill slope in Uttarakhand*



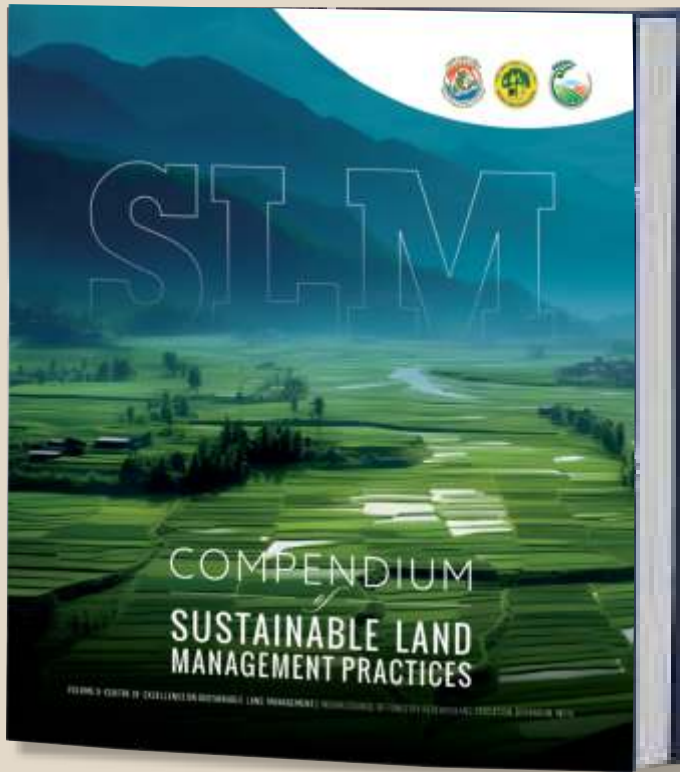


## AWARDS AND HONOURS

Sh. Vinay Kumar, IFS, Director International Cooperation & CoE-SLM was awarded the prestigious civil services Ashoka Award 2024 on September, 29, 2024 for outstanding and innovative work in policy formulation and administration at a glittering ceremony organised at India Habitat Centre in New Delhi. The award was conferred by General Deepak Kapoor, former chief of army staff in the esteemed presence of former Defence Secretary and Governor of Chhattisgarh Shekhar Dutta, special guest Dr RK Ranjan Singh, Minister of State, Government of India and Justice BP Singh, former Chief Justice High Court of Mumbai.

*Sh. Vinay Kumar, IFS, Director International Cooperation & CoE-SLM receiving Civil Services Ashoka Award 2024*





# RELEASE OF COMPENDIUM ON SLM PRACTICES VOL. II

Shri Kirtivardhan Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India, released "Compendium of Sustainable Land Management Practices Vol. II in the 30th AGM of ICFRE. During the release DGF&SS; DG, ICFRE; Director, IGNTA, Directors of ICFRE Institutes, PCCFS, VC's, dignitaries of MoEF&CC, Progressive farmers & other members of ICFRE society were present.

*Releasing of Compendium of Sustainable Land Management Practices Vol. II*





# MOU SIGNED BETWEEN SAC-ISRO AND COE-SLM, ICFRE

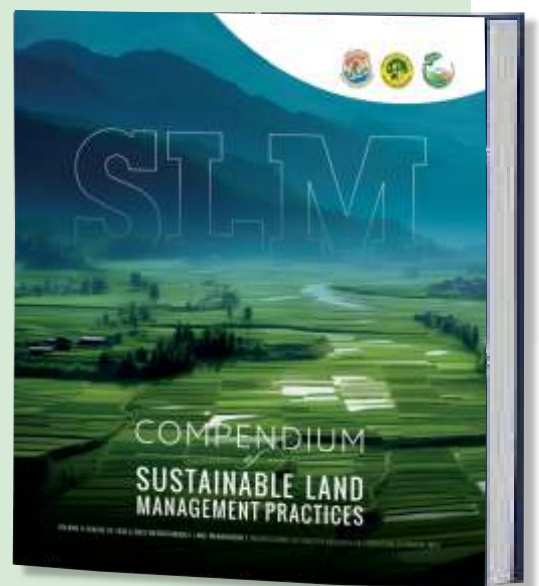
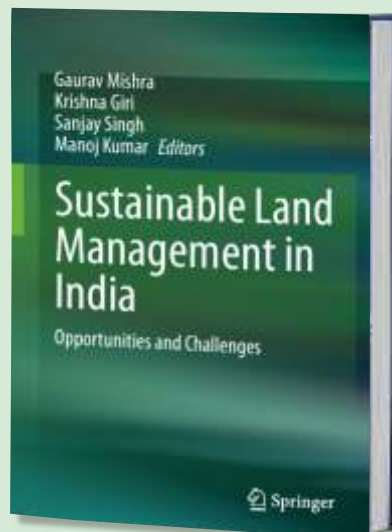
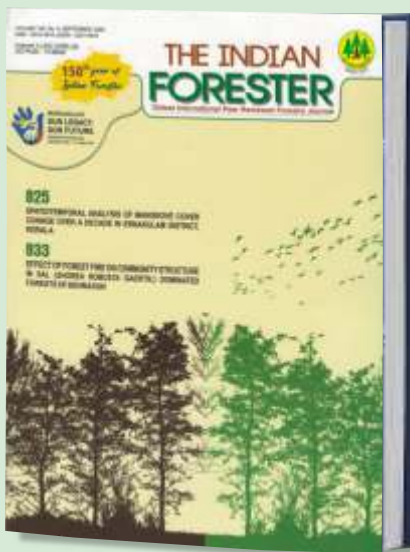


MoU Signing between ICFRE and SAC-ISRO

An MoU was signed on 5th July 2024 between the Space Applications Centre (SAC), a unit of ISRO under the Department of Space, GoI and the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GoI to achieve the shared goal of disseminating scientific knowledge and technologies for achieving land degradation neutrality, ecological security, improved land productivity, livelihood enhancement and sustainable use of natural resources. Shri Nilesh M. Desai, Director SAC and Shri Vinay Kumar, Director, International Cooperation and Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Land Management, ICFRE represented respective institutes for signing this MoU in the presence of Scientists of both the institutes.



## NEW PUBLICATIONS OF COE-SLM



# NEWS AND UPDATES FROM ROUND THE GLOBE ON LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY



## GLOBAL STATE OF THE CLIMATE REPORT BY WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION RELEASED

The "State of the Global Climate 2023" report released on March 22, 2024 highlights record-breaking climate indicators, including global temperatures, greenhouse gas levels, ocean heat, acidification, sea level rise, and glacier retreat. It reviews extreme events like heatwaves, floods, droughts, wildfires, and tropical cyclones, alongside their impacts on food security, displacement, and economic losses. The report confirms 2023 as the warmest year on record, with global temperatures 1.45°C above pre-industrial levels, marking the hottest decade in history.

The Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4), held in Antigua and Barbuda from May 27-30, brought representatives from 39 nations to address climate and disaster-related challenges. The conference resulted in the adoption of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), urging immediate action to avert irreversible changes within a decade. Priorities included protecting critical infrastructure, particularly freshwater resources, with insights from SEI researchers contributing to climate resilience and sustainability efforts.

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS4) ORGANIZED





## SIXTH MEETING OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON DROUGHT CONDUCTED

The 6th and final meeting of the UNCCD Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on Drought, held in Riyadh from June 3-6, 2024, reviewed seven policy options for enhancing global drought resilience, including UNCCD amendments and a global framework. Delegates reached consensus on improved drought risk management and integrated governance. The draft report will be finalized by July 15, guiding regional consultations and preparations for COP 16 in December 2024. The meeting concluded with commitments to advancing sustainable drought solutions and appreciation for collaborative efforts.



World Environment Day 2024, celebrated on June 5 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, under the theme "Our Land. Our Future. We are #GenerationRestoration," highlighted the urgency of land restoration to combat desertification, enhance drought resilience, and address environmental crises. Featuring a keynote by UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen, the event engaged millions globally in advocacy and action. Efforts showcased emphasized improving livelihoods, food security, resilience to extreme weather, and carbon storage, reinforcing sustainable land management as vital for a sustainable future.

## WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2024 CELEBRATED IN RIYADH

## THIRD DUSHANBE WATER ACTION DECADE CONFERENCE ORGANIZED IN DUSHANBE



The 3rd High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" was held from June 10-13, 2024, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Organized by Tajikistan and the UN, the conference advanced the outcomes of the 2023 UN Water Conference and the Water Action Agenda. It focused on fostering partnerships, new commitments, and actions to achieve water-related goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, bringing together diverse stakeholders to strengthen global cooperation on water challenges.

## DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT DAY 2024 COMMEMORATION IN BONN, GERMANY

The 30th anniversary of the UNCCD, celebrated on Desertification and Drought Day 2024, united leaders, youth, and figures from various sectors under the theme "United for Land. Our Legacy. Our Future." The event, leading up to UNCCD COP 16 in Riyadh in December 2024, emphasized the transformative power of sustainable land management for global challenges. Hosted by Germany at the Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn, it featured a photo exhibition, educational programs, performances, and a social media campaign, calling for renewed global action on land restoration and drought resilience.

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (ECOSOC) organized The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2024, held from July 8-17 under ECOSOC, focused on "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises." It supported the SDG Summit outcomes and featured reviews of SDGs on poverty, hunger, climate action, peace, and partnerships. Over 90 governments and 125 speakers participated, with 36 countries presenting Voluntary National Reviews. The forum included 236 side events, 13 VNR labs, 13 special events, and 14 exhibitions, fostering collaboration on sustainable development solutions.



## SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV CALLS FOR BRICS SUPPORT ON SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES RESOLUTION

At the 10th Meeting of BRICS Environment Ministers, held virtually on June 28, 2024, Union Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, urged BRICS nations to implement the Resolution on Sustainable Lifestyles, adopted at the sixth United Nations Environment Assembly. He highlighted the expanding BRICS group, now including Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, as a powerful force to tackle global environmental challenges. Emphasizing the need for a level playing field for developing nations, he



# NATIONAL NEWS AND UPDATES ON LAND DEGRADATION NEUTRALITY



## INDIA SHOWCASES FOREST CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES AT UN FORUM ON FORESTS

India showcased its forest conservation and sustainable management initiatives at the 19th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) in New York (May 6-10, 2024). India emphasized its significant progress, ranking third globally in net annual forest area gains from 2010-2020. The country highlighted its commitment to biodiversity through over a thousand protected areas, celebrating 50 years of Project Tiger and 30 years of Project Elephant. India also introduced the 'Green Credit Program' to incentivize tree planting and forest restoration. Additionally, India shared recommendations from its October 2023 Country Led Initiative on forest fire management and hosted a side event on integrated fire management. The session concluded with a declaration calling for urgent action to halt deforestation and degradation, aligned with the UN's Global Forest Goals. The Indian delegation was led by Shri Jitendra Kumar, Director General of Forests.

stressed the importance of climate finance commitments by developed countries. Shri Yadav also called for BRICS support for India's initiatives such as Mission LIFE and the Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam campaign. The meeting concluded with the adoption of the statement reflecting these priorities.

## INDIA AND BHUTAN HOLD BILATERAL MEETING ON AIR QUALITY, CLIMATE CHANGE, FORESTS, AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

On 12 July 2024, a Bhutanese delegation, led by Mr. Gem Tshering, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, met with Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change. The meeting focused on air quality, climate change, forests, wildlife, natural resources, and renewable energy. Shri Singh praised Bhutan's participation in the International Big Cat Alliance, emphasizing shared environmental concerns. Mr. Tshering highlighted Bhutan's carbon-negative status and reliance on hydropower. Both sides agreed to collaborate on climate change, air quality, and forest management, and proposed a Joint Working Group meeting for further cooperation.





## SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH INAUGURATES ASSOCHAM ENVIRONMENT AND CARBON CONFERENCE IN NEW DELHI

On 29 August 2024, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh, inaugurated the ASSOCHAM Environment and Carbon Conference in New Delhi. The conference, themed "Fostering a Collaborative Ecosystem for Achieving Net Zero by 2070," emphasized the need for a global effort to tackle climate change. Shri Singh highlighted India's commitment to climate resilience and NDC targets, stressing the importance of Mission Life (Lifestyle for Environment) in sustainable development. He called for focused R&D to develop green technologies and low-carbon industries. The event saw participation from key stakeholders, including experts and industry leaders.

## WORLD OZONE DAY 2024 CELEBRATED IN NEW DELHI WITH THE THEME: "MONTREAL PROTOCOL - ADVANCING CLIMATE ACTIONS"



On 13 September 2024, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change celebrated the 30th World Ozone Day in New Delhi. The theme, "Montreal Protocol: Advancing Climate Actions," emphasized the Protocol's pivotal role in protecting the ozone layer and driving climate action. Union Secretary, Ms. Leena Nandan, highlighted India's leadership in meeting reduction targets ahead of schedule and its contribution to global climate efforts. The event included the announcement of winners for the National Level Poster and Slogan Competitions and the release of key publications on sustainable cooling technologies. Over 500 students attended the event, underscoring the importance of ongoing climate action for future generations.



## UNION ENVIRONMENT MINISTER SH. BHUPENDER YADAV ADDRESSES PLENARY SESSION ON INDIA'S PATHWAY TO NET-ZERO EMISSIONS AT RE-INVEST SUMMIT 2024

On 18 September 2024, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Sh. Bhupender Yadav, addressed the Plenary Session on India's Pathway to Net-Zero Emissions at the Re-Invest Summit 2024 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Minister Yadav emphasized the importance of choosing sustainability for ecosystem conservation, biodiversity, and societal development. He highlighted the need for policy, technological interventions, and capacity building to ensure equitable and inclusive economic growth while preserving natural resources for future generations. The summit was inaugurated by Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi on 16 September 2024.



## UNION SECRETARY MS. LEENA NANDAN DELIVERS OPENING REMARKS AT SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE SIDE EVENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS ON 21 SEPTEMBER, 2024

On 21 September 2024, Ms. Leena Nandan, Union Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, addressed the Summit of the Future Side Event at the UN Headquarters. She highlighted India's commitment to sustainable living through Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), launched globally by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2022. Ms. Nandan emphasized the importance of empowering youth for a just transition to a green economy, noting that the Green Skill Development Programme and initiatives like the International Solar Alliance offer new green job opportunities. She also announced that over 750 million trees were planted in India under the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" initiative.



## EK PED MAA KE NAAM: 80 CRORE SEEDLINGS PLANTED AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

India's Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change achieved its goal of planting 80 crore seedlings under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign by 25th September 2024, five days ahead of the deadline. Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on World Environment Day 2024, this initiative encourages people to plant trees in honor of their mothers. The campaign symbolizes the nurturing role of mothers and emphasizes environmental responsibility. Through collective efforts, India continues its commitment to sustainable development and increasing forest cover.

## WORLD RECORD: OVER 5 LAKH SAPLINGS PLANTED IN JUST ONE HOUR!

On 22nd September 2024, the 128 Infantry Battalion and Ecological Task Force of the Territorial Army set a new world record by planting over 5 lakh saplings in just one hour during a "Special Plantation Drive" in Jaisalmer. This achievement, part of the Prime Minister's "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign, was recognized by the World Book of Records, London, with multiple provisional records, including most saplings planted by a team, most by a team of women, and the largest number of people planting saplings simultaneously.



# BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF GREEN CREDIT PROGRAMME

The Central Government notified the Green Credit Rules, 2023 on 12th October 2023 under the Environment Protection Act, 1986. These rules put in place a mechanism to encourage voluntary environmental positive actions resulting in issuance of Green Credits. The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) has been designated as Administrator of the Green Credit Programme, and is responsible for implementation of the GCP including development of activity specific methodologies and IT infrastructure (Portal/Registry) for GCP, registration of activities, issuance of green credits, monitoring and audit. Green Credit will arise from taking measures by various stakeholders for environmental activities such as tree plantation, water management, sustainable agriculture, waste management, air pollution reduction, mangrove conservation, Eco-mark label development and sustainable building.

To begin with, only voluntary eco-restoration cum tree plantation is envisaged on degraded land under the control and management of Forest Departments. The Ministry published the notification for 'Methodology for calculation of green credit in respect of tree plantation' and OM for modalities to take up tree plantation on degraded forest lands on 22nd February 2024. Further the guidelines for preparation of cost estimates for eco-restoration of degraded forest lands under GCP is also issued by MoEFCC vide its OM dated, 12.04.2024. GCP Portal (<https://moefcc-gcp.in/>) has been developed to enable registration of Forest Department (implementing agency), plantation land blocks, entity, selection of land parcels by entity, demand note generation, payment of fund by entity, issuance of green credits and monitoring.

## UPDATED DETAILS OF THE GREEN CREDIT PROGRAMME

1. **Increased Participation:** Significant rise in engagement across India, indicating strong commitment to environmental sustainability from both entities and State Forest Departments.
2. **Registered Entities:** 17 states and 40 public sector undertakings (PSUs) are actively registered on the Green Credit Portal.
3. **Approved Land Parcels:** 942 parcels approved by administrator (ICFRE), covering a total of 24,759 hectares for eco-restoration and plantation.
4. **PSU/CPSU Involvement:** 789 land parcels selected by PSUs/CPSUs, encompassing 22,390 hectares for generating green credits.
5. **Cost Estimates:** 512 estimates received from State Forest Departments, covering 13,526 hectares for eco-restoration projects.
6. **Demand Notes Issued:** 377 demand notes issued, covering 8,810 hectares across 17 states for eco-restoration and plantation.
7. **Payments Processed:** Payments received from entities for 162 land parcels, covering a total of 3,596 hectares.
8. **First-Year Payments Released:** 152 land parcels have released first-year payments to State forest departments, covering 3,410 hectares for eco-restoration and plantation initiatives.



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