



The State of Eritrea

# Ministry of Agriculture Newsletter



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## Eritrea Marks World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

The commemorative ceremony witnessed presentation of local research papers on diverse relevant topics, and panel discussion on the national context of the Theme of the Day

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is observed globally on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June. This year, the Day was internationally observed in Bonn, Germany, for the 30th time under the theme, “United for Land: Our Legacy. Our Future”.

In Eritrea, the commemoration of the event, which was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June in Asmara, National Confederation of Eritrean Workers’ Hall and was attended by around one hundred participants, including senior MoA officials, representatives of relevant line ministries, regional administrations, national associations, higher educational



Mr. Semere Amlesom

institutions, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) office in Eritrea, FAO, stakeholders from several development programs, agriculture experts and farmers, among others.

Delivering a key note speech of the event, representing the MoA, Mr. Semere Amlesom, the Director General of the Agricultural Extension Department of the ministry, stated that the annual event calls for everyone to enhance participation in the endeavors being exerted towards restoring degraded land and combating desertification so as to leave safe land to next generations. Pointing out that the livelihood of more than 3.2 billion people of the global population is at stake due to desertification, land degradation and drought, he explained that the most vulnerable people constitute rural agrarian communities and small-scale farmers, and that the



dire consequences thereof are poverty, hunger, unemployment and migration. Mr. Semere further indicated that soil and water conservation as well as afforestation programs are being pursued as the cornerstone of national strategic policies, and called for stepped-up and integrated efforts on the part of pertinent bodies, including members of the national defense forces, local communities and experts for a more impacting outcome in this area.



Ms. Nashida Sattar

Speaking on the occasion representing the UNDP office in Eritrea, Ms. Nashida Sattar, the Officer in Charge of the office, said, “We are aware of the considerable resources and strong community participation invested by Eritrea pursuing soil and water conservation, construction of water reservoirs, enhancement of agricultural productivity, and sustainable land management”. Ms. Nashida went on indicating that the occasion serves as an opportunity to discuss and recognize Eritrea’s human-led solutions that were put in place to adapt its capacities since independence, and that the Government of Eritrea, through its legislative as well

as policy frameworks, has been playing an active role to solidify its engagements to this effect. She also reiterated the UNDP’s readiness to enhance partnership and support in the efforts Eritrea is putting up towards ensuring long-term resilience, as well as environmental and social justice.

Moreover, five thematically relevant research papers were presented on the occasion, preceded by a question-and-answer session.

**List of Research Papers Presented in Connection with the Event**

- “UNCCD: Eritrea’s Commitments and Experience in Combating Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought,” Presented by Mr. Michael Berhane, from the Agricultural Extension Division (AED), MoA



Mr. Michael Berhane

- “Drought Monitoring, Forecasting and Impact Assessment,” Presented by Mr. Tekeste Weldegebriel, from the Agricultural Strategic Information Systems Division (ASISD), MoA

- “Regulating Salinization and Land Degradation,” Presented by Mr. Dawit Tesfai, from the Regulatory Services Department (RSD), MoA



Mr. Tekeste Weldegebriel



Mr. Dawit Tesfai



Mr. Zerai Sultan



Mr. Mussie Fekadu



- "Role of Agroforestry Systems in Combating Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought," Presented by Mr. Zerai Sultan, from the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), MoA

- "The Date Palm and its Role in Combating Desertification and Climate Change," Presented by Mr. Mussie Fekadu, from the NARI, MoA

On the other hand, a panel discussion, moderated by Mr. Amanuel Ghebrai, a Journalist working for Dimtsi Hafash Radio Program, was an integral and crucial part of the event. The panelists were Dr. Seife Berhe, a Geologist who conducted a number of researches on environment; Dr. Weldeslassie Okubazghi, from Hamelmalo

Agricultural College, and Mr. Estifanos Beyin, Senior Forestry and Biodiversity Conservation Expert in the Ministry of Land, Water and Environment.

Subsequently, the participants of the event held extensive discussion and exchanged views on a number of important issues. Finally, a number of comments and recommendations were forwarded, and deliberations from the participants of the event were as follows: The need for emphasizing on policies that encourage sustainable land use rather than those that are prohibitive; focusing on the merits of adherence to the 1994 - land proclamation that encourages communal land protection through higher sense of ownership; integrating action



plans and information systems of pertinent bodies; sharing research results; reinforcing backyard agroforestry activities and traditional agroforestry practices; integrating National Date Palm Development Program with other national programs; solidifying action plan for management of prosopis trees (AKA: Temri Musa), as well as enhancing monitoring

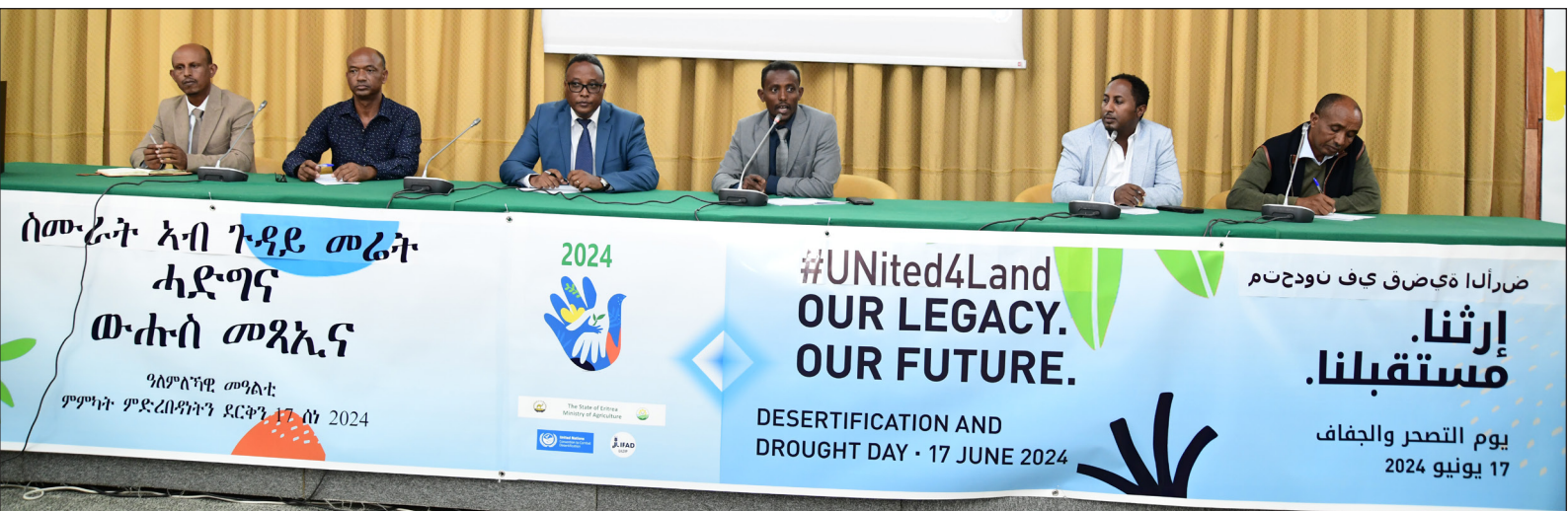


and evaluation capacities along the entire cycle of afforestation programs, especially following the plantation of seedlings.

During the event, a flyer which addressed national and international challenges and opportunities with regards to Desertification and Drought was distributed to participants. Meanwhile, a short video on Eritrea's ongoing accomplishments in soil and water

conservation, as well as construction of water reservoirs, along with the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres' official video message on the Day, were displayed at the occasion.

Participants agreed that, the annual commemoration of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is vital in promoting public awareness on a number of related issues.



Paper Presenters in Discussion



Panelists in Discussion

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