



**Statement by  
David Cooper  
Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity  
World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought  
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This year’s World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought spotlights land stewardship.

The theme – “United for land. Our Legacy. Our Future.” – is a recognition that sustainable land management is critical to providing a healthy and sustainable future for all.

This is a responsibility that transcends generations.

Our ancestors cared for the land because they recognized its value.

Today, it is our duty to safeguard land for the next generations.

Young people must be at the centre of our thinking, and they must be at the centre of action.

We must also recognize the pivotal role of indigenous peoples and local communities in land stewardship. Their land rights and meaningful participation in decision-making must be front and centre.

All parts of society must be able to contribute to sustainable land stewardship.

These are powerful notions that can be found at the core of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, also known as The Biodiversity Plan.

The Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted The Biodiversity Plan in December 2022 to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

This is a plan for nature stewardship with a vision of living in harmony with nature.

The Plan includes specific targets to manage, protect and restore land.

This year, World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought marks the 30th anniversary of the adoption of our sister convention, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

Happy anniversary UNCCD!

Let us unite for land. Let us unite for nature. This is our legacy. This is our future.

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