

# World Environment Day

## Why In News

- **World Environment Day** was conceptualised at the United Nations Conference on Human Environment, which took place in Stockholm, Sweden, from June 5 to June 16, 1972.
- During this conference, delegates discussed various environmental issues and challenges facing the world.



- The **UN General Assembly** designated June 5 as World Environment Day to mark the beginning of global environmental awareness and action. Since then, **World Environment Day** has been celebrated annually, with a different theme each year. The **first World Environment Day** was celebrated in 1973 under the theme 'Only One Earth'.

## History

- In **1972**, the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** passed a resolution, designating June 5th as World Environment Day during the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment.
- The first World Environment Day was celebrated in 1973 with the theme **“Only One Earth”**.
- Since then, World Environment Day has been celebrated annually on June 5th, with a different host country and theme each year.

- At present, the day has **become a global movement**, with participation from millions of people around the world, making it one of the largest annual celebrations of the United Nations.



## Theme

- All over the world, ecosystems are threatened. From forests and drylands to farmlands and lakes, natural spaces on which humanity's existence depends are reaching a tipping point.
- According to the **UN Convention to Combat Desertification**, up to 40 per cent of the planet's land is degraded, directly affecting half of the world's population. The number and duration of droughts has increased by 29 per cent since 2000 – without urgent action, droughts may affect over three-quarters of the world's population by 2050.



- Land restoration is a key pillar of the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration** (2021-2030), a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all

around the world, which is critical to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

- This is **why World Environment Day 2024** focuses on land restoration, halting desertification and building drought resilience under the slogan “Our land. Our future. We are #GenerationRestoration.” We cannot turn back time, but we can grow forests, revive water sources, and bring back soils. We are the generation that can make peace with land.



- **2024 will mark the 30th anniversary** of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. The sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) will be held in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, from 2 to 13 December 2024.

## World Environment Day 2024

- Though **World Environment Day** is organized by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, each year, a different country is chosen to host the main activities of World Environment Day.
- The host country plays a crucial role in setting the theme and agenda for the year and organizes national and international events. **Ahead of World Environment Day 2024**, the UNEP has shared various ways to restore vital landscapes and combat desertification and drought:



- **Make agriculture sustainable:** Promote organic farming. Embrace regional, seasonal and plant-rich diets, and include more soil-friendly food in meals, such as beans, lentils, chickpeas and peas.
- **Save the soil:** Make compost from leftover scraps of fruit and vegetables for use in gardens and balcony plant pots.
- **Protect the pollinators:** Create pollinator-friendly habitats by planting native wildflower and reducing pesticide use.
- **Restore freshwater ecosystems:** Protect and restore wetlands, rivers, and lakes that play a crucial role in water purification and maintaining healthy ecosystems. Implement sustainable water management practices.



- **Renew coastal and marine areas:** Protect mangroves and seagrass meadows that buffer coastlines from erosion and provide vital habitat for marine life. Implement sustainable fishing practices.
- **Bring nature back to cities:** Install more roofs and vertical gardens in buildings to provide habitats for birds, insects and plants.
- **Generate financing for restoration:** Move bank accounts to financial institutions that invest in sustainable enterprises, donate to restoration or crowd-fund innovations that can help save the planet.

## How To Get Involved

There are numerous ways to participate in World Environment Day 2024:

- **Join Local Events:** Look for events in your community, such as clean-up drives, tree-planting ceremonies, and educational workshops.
- **Raise Awareness:** Use social media platforms to spread the word about the importance of environmental protection and share information about the theme and activities.



- **Make Sustainable Choices:** Commit to lifestyle changes that reduce your environmental footprint, such as reducing waste, conserving water, and using public transport.
- **Advocate for Policy Change:** Support or initiate campaigns for stronger environmental policies at the local, national, and international levels.

