Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

India calls for Diversified, Adequate, Predictable and Sustained International Finance for Land Restoration and Drought Resilience at UNCCD CoP17, at Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Union Environment Minister highlights India’s successful Blended Green-Finance Framework for Land Restoration

Land Restoration is Not a Cost, but an Investment in Food, Water, Biodiversity, Livelihoods and Long-term Resilience: Shri Bhupender Yadav

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Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, today highlighted India’s innovative and diversified financing architecture for land restoration and drought resilience at the Ministerial Dialogue on *‘Innovative Financial Mechanisms for Healthy Land and Drought Resilience’*, during the 17th Conference of Parties (CoP17) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), at Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia).

Emphasising the need for sustained investment in land restoration, Shri Yadav said, “Land restoration is not a cost, but an investment in food, water, biodiversity, livelihoods and long-term resilience”. He stressed that addressing desertification, land degradation and drought at scale requires diversified, predictable and sustained sources of finance beyond public budgets, along with stronger public-private partnerships.

The Minister highlighted India's blended green-finance framework, which enables financing for climate-change adaptation, sustainable land use, forestry and agriculture, afforestation and biodiversity conservation. He also highlighted Sovereign Green Bonds as an avenue to mobilise capital for land restoration, drought resilience, sustainable forestry and other environmental and climate priorities.

Shri Yadav highlighted India's Green Credit Programme, which enables public and private entities to finance restoration of degraded forest land. Credits are issued after five years of restoration and upon achieving at least 40 per cent canopy density, and may be used once for compensatory afforestation, statutory plantation or CSR obligations. He also highlighted India's compensatory conservation regime, which channels payments received for forest diversion towards compensatory afforestation and ecosystem restoration, while corporate funding is integrated by the environmental regulatory processes.

Underscoring the importance of convergence, the Minister said that bringing public and private finance together through mechanisms such as the Green Credit Programme and compensatory afforestation funds, on the same landscape and alongside citizen participation, represents a Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society approach. Shri Yadav emphasised that “Finance must be continuous, verifiable and connected to local communities.” He noted that India’s experience demonstrates what committed domestic resources can achieve, but stressed that this cannot substitute for additional, adequate and predictable international finance for restoration and drought resilience.

Concluding his address, the Minister reaffirmed India’s commitment to sharing its experience, safeguards, institutional arrangements, lessons learned and areas requiring course correction. He said, “Ultimately, innovative finance should be judged not by its design or resources mobilised, but by whether it reaches the land, ecosystems and communities that need it most and delivers lasting restoration and resilience.”

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