

India calls for a shift from Drought Response to Drought Resilience at UNCCD CoP17 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Treat Drought as a Predictable and Preventable Risk, Not a Recurring Disaster: Shri Bhupender Yadav

Preparedness over Response, Prevention over Crisis Management, Resilience over Recovery should be the Goal: Union Environment Minister

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Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, today called for a fundamental shift in the global approach to drought - from reactive relief to proactive, technology-enabled resilience. Addressing the *Ministerial Dialogue on 'Accelerating Drought Resilience'*, at the 17th Conference of Parties (CoP17) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), the Minister said drought is “no longer an occasional event, but a defining development challenge”, affecting water security, food systems, biodiversity and economic stability.



Shri Yadav highlighted India's coordinated, multi-institutional approach integrating early warning, mitigation, relief and community resilience. Rainfall monitoring and satellite-based drought assessments trigger preparedness at the inter-ministerial and State levels, ensuring that a dry spell does not escalate into a crisis. Emphasising the critical link between land and water, he stated, “restore the forest, before the

flow”, underscoring India’s focus on catchment and riverscape forestry to reduce erosion, improve water retention and recharge groundwater. River rejuvenation and revival of traditional water bodies further strengthen water security and rural drought resilience.

The Minister highlighted that community-led restoration of springs and recharge zones in India's hills, while in the plains, a pan-India watershed programme addresses degraded rainfed lands through a ridge-to-valley approach, supported by community institutions and convergence with rural employment programmes. At the household level, drinking water programmes seek to ensure reliable supplies during periods of stress, with assured service levels, local quality testing and prioritisation of vulnerable areas. He also highlighted crop insurance that protects farmers against drought and other non-preventable losses across the crop cycle, combining subsidised premiums with technology-driven assessment for faster and transparent claim settlement. The Minister stressed that community ownership, capacity building and livelihood diversification are central to the transition from reactive relief to proactive, technology-enabled resilience.

Shri Yadav said India’s core belief is that “drought must be managed as a predictable, preventable risk, and not a recurring disaster demanding emergency response”. He highlighted prevention measures including watershed development, water harvesting, afforestation, groundwater recharge and climate-resilient crops, complemented by disaster-related funds, employment guarantees, fodder support and emergency water supplies when required. Calling for stronger global action, Shri Yadav advocated greater investment in ecosystem restoration, stronger early warning systems and coordinated action. “Preparedness over response, prevention over crisis management, resilience over recovery should be the goal”, he said. He concluded by emphasizing that building drought resilience is not optional for the world’s most vulnerable, but a matter of survival, and affirmed India’s readiness to share its knowledge and capacities, including on early warning, for a drought-resilient future for all.

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