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Email: mediarelations@ishafoundation.org

Sadhguru urges the world to unite to combat desertification

17 June 2019, Coimbatore: “If other nations do nothing about ecology, they may still survive and do well. In this country, if we don’t act now, we will leave a disastrous nation because our pressure on the land is unbelievable. Most people don’t understand to what extent we have exploited it and how it actually translates to human life and to the life of the soil,” said Sadhguru, Founder, Isha Foundation speaking at a webinar to commemorate World Day to Combat Desertification.

“Nature Based Solutions to Combat Desertification” was organized by Isha Foundation in association with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India. Dr. Vivek Saxena, Country Representative of IUCN India while introducing the topic spoke about the urgent need to address desertification across the globe which threatens food security, habitats and livelihoods.

The conversation between Sadhguru and Dr. Pradeep Monga, Deputy Executive Secretary –United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) focused on the importance of adopting nature-based solutions such as Rally for Rivers and its project Cauvery Calling which were launched by Sadhguru in 2017 and 2019 respectively. The projects have garnered worldwide attention for their potential to offer a global blueprint for river revitalization in tropical regions.

Stating that 52% of the agricultural land in India was classified as degraded, Sadhguru asserted that in a tropical country, the only way to keep soil healthy and rich is by

putting “40% of soil under shade.” Cauvery Calling aims to put a third of the river basin area under shade by planting 2.42 billion trees on private farmlands in the river basin area. The high value trees will substantially increase farmer income by 300 to 800% while promoting soil and aqua biodiversity, recharging groundwater tables and increasing soil nutrients – all of which are necessary for rivers to flow perennially. Sadhguru said in order for farmers to adopt tree-based agriculture, “25 to 30% of our diet should come from the trees.”

He said that despite the lockdown, Cauvery Calling was on track and millions of saplings will be planted on private farmlands in this first year which will multiply over the years. “We will ensure this is a success,” Sadhguru said referring to the large-scale adoption of tree-based agriculture by farmers.

Sadhguru strongly urged all elected governments and citizens globally to speak in one voice to ensure that leaders make ecology a mainstream issue on their election manifestos. “This is not about you or me. In this generation, if we don’t act, we’re not a worthy generation, that’s all it means,” Sadhguru said.

17 June is annually observed as World Day to Combat Desertification. This year, the Day was marked by several online events where heads of state and civil society organizations came together to explore how policy formulation can reverse desertification globally.

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