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UNEP accredits Isha Foundation to the United Nations Environment Assembly

25 July 2020, Coimbatore: Isha Foundation announced that it has been accredited by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with Observer status to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and its subsidiary bodies. Accreditation offers several advantages for NGOs including participation in meetings of global groups, interaction with representatives of governments and a platform to influence policy formulation. Isha previously partnered with UNEP for World Environment Day hosted by India in 2018.

Last September, Isha Foundation was accredited by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to its Convention of Parties (COP). Sadhguru, Founder, Isha Foundation, was invited to speak at the UNCCD COP14 Summit in New Delhi in September.

Sadhguru has been invited by several UN bodies including UN Water, UNCCD and UNESCO apart from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) since the launch of his Rally for Rivers (RfR) campaign in India. The campaign first garnered international attention for its record-breaking public mandate in India where it was endorsed by 162 million people. Subsequently, RfR's policy recommendations became the cornerstone of the Government of India's river revitalization guidelines. Rally for Rivers was presented at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit as part of the Nature-Based Solutions coalition led by UN Environment. RfR has been included in the UN Secretary-General's Compendium of Nature-Based Solutions.

Rally for Rivers launched two mega projects last year. A project to revive river Waghadi in Yavatmal district in Maharashtra has received state support. The Maharashtra

government recently set up a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to oversee project implementation. Rally for Rivers' volunteers – Nadi Veeras – are offering ground support to the state government's implementation efforts.

In September last year, Sadhguru launched Cauvery Calling, a movement to revitalize river Cauvery, a major lifeline of southern India which has depleted alarmingly in the last few decades. Cauvery Calling teams are working in two states - Karnataka and Tamil Nadu – in project implementation. The 12-year project has an ambitious goal to help farmers plant 2.42 billion trees in the river basin region, all on private farmlands. Cauvery Calling has generated international attention as a potential global blueprint for river revitalization in the tropics.

Both projects are designed as economic models with a beneficial ecological impact. They aim to significantly enhance farmer income through tree-based agriculture which will also positively impact the ecosystem. The projects will enable more than 5 million farmers to plant high-value tree species on their farmlands for economic gain and will positively impact food and water security for more than 84 million people.

Isha Foundation has held Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2007.

If you would like to know more about this, please write to mediarelations@ishafoundation.org.