

## Commemorating World Environment Day 2024

# Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience

### *Clarifying Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience*

**Vidya Jothi Emeritus Professor Sarath W. Kotagama**

*Professor Emeritus and Former head of the Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo*



The environment day theme for 2024 needs deep analysis, as for many years we have been attempting to cover up our destruction of nature and its impact by a series of fancy technical terms and approaches. When the efforts of tree planting were questioned by the very person who provided the basis for the “Trillion trees” program just prior to COP28, attempts made to undermine the science was clearly evident. All of these exercises, even though they are based on good science, cannot bring back the “nature’s evolution” product that we as humans have destroyed. If so, how should we proceed into the future against the continuing destruction? Dependence on Sustainable Development to overcome the “overconsumption destruction” of the planet is yet to be realized. This is because we ride on the “jargon” with little understanding of the delicate and intricate objectives and processes. We have always forgotten the masses in the process of our efforts. The technicalities are not properly transferred across disciplines and populations leading to not achieving our objectives, but continuing to ride the destruction. It is here that we who promote the cause should recognize to “sleep with” all the subjects –sociology, economy, and ecology while ensuring that citizens through “citizen science” are “lassoed in”.

### *Building Drought Resilience: Monitoring, Mapping, and Management*

**Dr. Niranga Alahacoon**

*Researcher in Remote Sensing and Disaster Risks, International Water Management Institute (IWMI)  
Council Member, National Research Council (NRC)*



The talk will shed light on various advanced techniques for managing drought risks while emphasizing a collaborative, integrated approach to enhance community resilience. It will define drought types—meteorological, agricultural, hydrological, and socioeconomic—and stresses the importance of data from ground observations, meteorological sources, and satellite imagery for monitoring. Strategies for drought resilience include improved water management, sustainable agriculture, and community awareness. The focus will be on GIS-based drought hazard mapping to identify at-risk areas. Tools such as the South Asia Drought Monitoring System (SADMS), Earth Observation for Agricultural Risk Management (EO4ARM), and satellite data from GPM, MODIS, Landsat, and Sentinel are showcased. The AWARE platform integrates forecast data and financial planning for early warning and action.

**7<sup>th</sup> June 2024 | 4.30 PM**

Hybrid mode At SLAAS headquarters and via Zoom

#### **Zoom meeting information**

Meeting ID: **984 1058 0459** | Passcode: **iDTDS@04**  
or scan the QR code



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