



United Nations  
Convention to Combat  
Desertification



وزارة البيئة والمياه والزراعة  
Ministry of Environment Water & Agriculture

## Forests for Sustainable Land Restoration-Way to COP 16 of UNCCD in Saudi Arabia

8<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Time: 13:15 to 14:30 hours

Venue: Meeting Room 4, UN Main Building

### Objectives

Forests cover about 31% of the total land area of the planet, covering about 4 billion ha. About 50% of the world's forests are influenced by human interventions, and a significant part of it is degraded. Since 1990, FAO estimates that 420 million hectares of forest have been lost through conversion to other land uses. The extent of land restored by forests is variable depending on the climatic and edaphic conditions. The restoration efforts are particularly challenging in drylands, which cover about 47% of the planet's lands (World Atlas of Desertification, UNEP 1992).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is making utmost efforts to support vegetation cover improvement for sustainable land restoration at national and regional levels. The Saudi Green Initiative, the Middle East Green Initiative (SGI & MGI) and the G20 Global Land Initiative are few examples of these efforts and high-level commitments.

The panel discussion will bring together representatives of government and UN agencies to discuss the central role of restoring degraded lands, exploring opportunities for investing in forestry initiatives and contributing to mitigating and adapting to climate change. The event will also provide a base for suggesting action agendas on sustainably restoring degraded land through forestry initiatives for consideration during COP 16 of UNCCD to be hosted by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in December, 2024 in Riyadh.

### Opening Remarks

#### **H. E. Dr. Abdulaziz bin Mohamed Al-Wasel**

Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to United Nations

### Panelists

#### **H.E. Ambassador Zephyrin Maniratanga**

Chair of the UNFF 18/19 Bureau  
Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations

#### **Dr. Khaled Alabdulkader**

Chief Executive Officer, NCVC  
Saudi Arabia

#### **Dr. Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs**

Senior Forestry Officer  
Food and Agriculture Organization

#### **Mr. Minoru Takada**

Deputy Director  
United Nations Forum on Forest Secretariat

**Moderator: Dr. Nandhini Krishna**, Deputy Chief of Office, UNCCD/CBD Liaison Office, UN Headquarters

Further information on the event can be obtained from Mr. Abdullah Abdullrahman Alrwajh (aalrwajh@ncvc.gov.sa)  
WhatsApp: +966555200075