



## WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

**SASSARI, 17 JUNE 2022**

The **World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (DD-day 2022)**, established by the **United Nations** in 1994, promotes public awareness of international efforts to fight desertification, which is the loss of soil fertility and the resulting degradation of natural resources caused by human activities (pollution, excessive soil exploitation, overgrazing, deforestation, fire, irrigation with saline water). The Day is a unique moment to remind us that involvement and cooperation among communities at every level are essential to combat soil degradation.

This year's theme is focused on drought: **"Rising up from drought together"**. From 1970 on, 50% of all disasters and 45% of the associated 650,000 deaths, have been caused by extreme climate events and water crises. Tragically, 9 out of 10 of these deaths happened in developing countries, where drought is the main cause of the loss of human lives (WMO, 2021). However, also developed countries witnessed a 29% increase in drought-related events from 2000 to today, compared with previous decades. More than 2.3 billion people suffer from water-related issues on a global scale. The impact is particularly serious for the weakest categories: women and children are the most exposed. Nevertheless, the consequences of drought on society, ecosystems and the economy are underestimated.

Italy is not exempted from drought damages. Over the last five years, at least three extreme drought events happened, even in the Pianura Padana, where the capacity of the Po is altered by long periods of drought, as well as by the reduction of high-altitude glaciers due to the increase in temperatures, which exceeded climate averages of some decades ago by 2-3°C. The consequences are serious: among all, salinisation of aquifers for tens of kilometres close to rivers' mouths, with terrible risks in particular for agriculture.

In **Sassari**, the **Department of Agronomic Sciences** and the **Desertification Research Centre** at the University (Viale Italia 39A) will celebrate DD-day 2022 with an international event which will involve Anna Luise, member of the Science Policy Interface of the UN Convention on Desertification and Drought (UNCCD); Marco Orlando, Programme Manager of the PRIMA Programme; the three coordinators of the Projects on Desertification in the Mediterranean recently financed by [PRIMA Foundation \(MARA-MEDITERRA, REACT4MED e SALAM-MED\)](#) and a young representation of the [EWA BELT](#) European Project and of the Italian PhD on [Sustainable Development and Climate Change](#).

The event has been organized in the context of **"Sanai sa Terra"** (**"Heal the Earth"** in Sardinian language), a Summer School on the interactions between soil, plants and microorganisms in areas contaminated by potentially toxic elements. The first part of the event will be in Italian. It will be dedicated to students, PhD students, researchers, and agronomists, and it will cover topics related to the PRIN RIZOBIOREM National Project on the recovery of degraded and polluted soils. RIZOBIOREM developed low-cost, nature-based soil reconditioning techniques and solutions (*Sanai sa Terra*) with the combined use of organic soil conditioners, plants and microorganisms.

It is possible to register for the event on the School website: <https://bit.ly/sanaisaterra>. **The event will take place in a hybrid format with the possibility to take part remotely via Microsoft Teams at <https://bit.ly/DD-day2022>.**



## PROGRAMME 17 June 2022

**Location:** “Aula Barbieri”, Department of Agricultural Sciences, University of Sassari – Viale Italia 39A, 07100 Sassari

### Session 1 (in Italian) – The RIZOBIOREM Project

9:15 Institutional greetings

9:30 Massimo Fagnano and the *RIZOBIOREM* team: “**Phytostabilization of Polluted Soils**”

10:45 *Coffee break*

### Session 2 (in English) - International Webinar: “Rising Up from Drought Together”

11:15 A. Luise, ISPRA, UNCCD Scientific-technical Correspondant, Science & Policy to combat desertification

11:30 M. L. Tefera – EWA-BELT and the international PhD “Desertification and Land Degradation”

11:40 C. Ceseracciu – SUSTAIN COAST and the national PhD “Sustainable Development and Climate Change”

11:50 M. Orlando, PRIMA Foundation: “**PRIMA Projects on Land Degradation and Desertification**”

12:00 V. Takavakoglou, MARA MEDITERRA

12:15 M. Thrassyvoulos, REACT4MED

12:30 P.P. Roggero, University of Sassari, SALAM MED

### Session 3 (in English) – In memory of Prof. Giorgio Ghiglieri

12:45 M. Iannetta (ENEA), A. Carletti (UNISS), M. Ouessar (IRA): “**Rising Up from Drought Together: the Contribution of Prof. Giorgio Ghiglieri**”

13:15 *Conclusions*

#### **Organizing Committee**

Stefania Diquattro, UNISS  
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Paola Castaldi, UNISS  
Giovanni Garau, UNISS  
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