

Social Desk

EXCLUSIVE

The sun has set on yet another World Environment Day. Such a pressing issue, however, needs more than a day. We should be reminded of the inimitable beauty and fragility of our celestial oasis every single day. Suspended in the vast, unfathomable expanse of the cosmos, Earth is our singular home, a haven for life in a universe that, to our current knowledge, remains devoid of other sentient beings. It is incumbent upon us to cherish and protect this extraordinary sphere, for it is the only living space we have been bequeathed.

The importance of protecting our irreplaceable planet cannot be overstated. We must not forget, even for a second, that the health of our planet is inextricably linked to our own well-being. Pollution and mismanagement of the earth's resources can have devastating consequences for the environment and for future generations. We must take action to protect our planet, not just on World Environment Day, but every day. It should be a ceaseless endeavor for every one on Earth if we want to have a chance at reaching humanity's climate goals.

We must also remember that protecting our planet is not just the responsibility of governments and organizations. We, citizens of the Earth, all of us, has a role to play in protecting our planet. We can plant trees, reduce our carbon footprint, and recycle. We can also use our voices to advocate for policies that protect our planet and hold those who harm it accountable. All of these simple actions, combined, can have the power and efficiency to perhaps change the course of our history.

The World Environment Day is a chance for us to remember the beauty and fragility of our planet. Let us take action to protect it and to ensure that it remains a haven for life for generations

Deforestation leads to soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and habitat destruction.
● SIMON BERGER/
UNSPLASH

Earth is our one and only home



to come.

The exigency of environmental stewardship has never been more palpable. Our planet's delicate ecosystems are under siege, assailed by the relentless march of anthropogenic forces. Climate change, deforestation, and pollution are but a few of the myriad challenges that threaten to irrevocably alter the intricate tapestry of life on Earth.

The human impact on the environment is a primary driver behind many ecological and societal threats. The degradation of the environment through depletion of resources such as air, water, and soil, the destruction of ecosystems, habitat de-

struction, the extinction of wildlife, and pollution are all caused by human activity. The Rights of Nature movement is gaining momentum, advocating for ecosystems such as rivers, lakes, and mountains to bear legal rights in the same manner as human beings. The movement is fundamentally rethinking humanity's relationship with nature, and it is being embraced by many worldwide.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services has identified the five key drivers of biodiversity loss: changes in land and sea use, direct exploita-

tion of natural resources, climate change, pollution, and invasive alien species. The Royal Society has warned that ecosystems are changing so rapidly in response to global change drivers that our research and modeling frameworks are overtaken by empirical, system-altering changes. Connected, diverse, and extensive ecosystems can help stabilize the climate.

The earth's ecosystem is so degraded that "the very fabric of human life is now being threatened." Deforestation, biodiversity loss, toxic spills, and plastic pollution only make things worse. Everything we have so far

We must cherish and protect this extraordinary sphere, for it is the only living space we have been given.
● ELENA MOZHILO/
UNSPLASH

gained as human civilization, and the future of our children are at stake. The United Nations has identified climate change, man-made changes to nature, and crimes that disrupt biodiversity, such as deforestation, land-use change, intensified agriculture, and pollution, as the biggest threats to our natural world.

The challenges we face are daunting, but we must take action to protect our planet. We must rethink our rela-

tionship with nature and advocate for policies that will protect our planet. We can reduce our carbon footprints as individuals. This, in the long run, will surely help. Now, let us take a closer look at the environmental degradation and its severe consequences on the environment and human health. Here are some of the consequences of not addressing environmental degradation:

Spread of diseases: Environmental degradation can lead to severe flooding, which can increase the spread of waterborne diseases, such as malaria and diarrhea.

Economic losses: Water shortages, adverse effects of water pollution, and shortages on other environmental resources can lead to declining fisheries, aquifer depletion, and irreversible compaction, which can cause economic losses.

Malnutrition: Depleted soils increase the risks of malnutrition for farmers. Productivity losses on tropical soils are estimated to be in the range of 0.5-1.5 per cent of GDP, while secondary productivity losses are due to siltation of reservoirs, transportation channels, and other hydrologic.

Poverty: Environmental degradation can lead to a rise in poverty, overcrowding, and famine. It can also cause weather extremes, species loss, acute and chronic medical illnesses, war, and human rights abuses.

Decline in quality of natural resources: Environmental degradation can lead to water scarcity, decline in quality of air, and reduction in air quality, which is responsible for more than 300,000 deaths annually.

Destruction of ecosystems: Continued environmental degradation can completely destroy the various aspects of the environment such as biodiversity, ecosystems, natural resources, and habitats.

Climate change: Environmental degradation is one of the largest threats that are being looked at in the world today. It can lead to global warming, which can cause extreme weather events, such as severe flooding, droughts, and wildfires.

It is of the utmost importance to address environmental degradation to prevent these consequences. Human activities have long caused significant environmental degradation, leading to the deterioration of the environment and the depletion of natural resources. Here are some examples of environmental degradation caused by human activities:

Burning of fossil fuels: The burning of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and gas, releases carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change.

Deforestation: Deforestation is the clearing of forests for agricultural or commercial purposes. It leads to soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and habitat destruction.

Pollution: Pollution is the introduction of harmful substances into the environment. It can lead to air pollution, water pollution, and soil pollution, which can cause health problems for humans and wildlife.

Overconsumption: Overconsumption of natural resources, such as water and energy, can lead to depletion and scarcity of these resources.

Extensive agriculture: Extensive agriculture involves clearing large areas of land for farming, which can lead to soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, and habitat destruction.

Overexploitation: Overexploitation of natural resources, such as fishing and hunting, can lead to depletion and extinction of wildlife species.

Urbanization: Urbanization involves the expansion of cities and towns, which can lead to habitat destruction, loss of biodiversity, and increased pollution. It would be wise for us all to have at least a blueprint of what we can do to stop such degradation and move towards a cleaner future. We certainly should not wait for the World Environment Day to do so.

Environmental degradation can lead to a rise in poverty, overcrowding, and famine.
● DULANA KODITHUWAKKU/
UNSPLASH

