



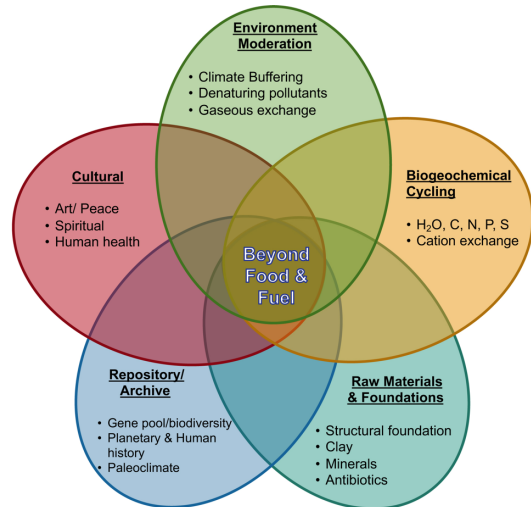
FROM THE DESK OF RATTAN LAL
Special Viewpoint 8.2018

12th August 2018

Subject: Beyond Food and Fuel: The Power of Soil to Address Global Issues

Fellow Soil Scientists,

I congratulate you all for celebrating the 21st WCSS being held in Rio, Brazil from 12-17th August 2018. The theme “Beyond Food and Fuel” is highly pertinent. Multifarious demands of humanity provisioned by soil include: (i) moderating the environment, (ii) strengthening biogeochemical and biogeophysical cycles, (iii) sourcing of raw materials, (iv) creating an archive of human and planetary history, and (v) generating cultural and aesthetical values. Above all, the world peace and security depend on healthy soil capable of provisioning numerous ecosystem services. Indeed, a healthy soil is an essential prerequisite to attaining peace at: (i) local, regional and global scale on the one hand, and (ii) at personal, family, community, national and international level on the other. The goal is to lead a life in perfect harmony with mother nature – the soil. Personal or individual transformation to create a healthy soil is the pathway to peace, by being at peace with ourselves. Soil degradation and desertification, anthropogenic climate change and the related extreme events, pedological/agronomic droughts and the attendant extreme events, low agronomic yields and perpetual hunger, and marginal living and desperateness are also serious threats to global peace and stability, and require policy interventions at local, regional and global scale. **If soils are not restored, crops will fail even if rains do not; hunger will perpetuate even with emphasis on biotechnology and genetically modified crops; civil strife and political instability will plague the developing world even with sermons on human rights and democratic ideals; and humanity will suffer even with great scientific strides. Political stability and global peace are threatened because of soil degradation, food insecurity, and desperateness.** Therefore, restoring degraded soils and desertified lands are essential to global peace and security. Soil is the gift of nature for achieving eternal peace and prosperity.



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I wish you all a personally pleasant and professionally rewarding experience at the 21st WCSS in Rio.

Sincerely,

Rattan Lal,
 President, International Union of Soil Sciences

