

Quarterly Viewpoint

FROM THE DESK OF PROFESSOR RATTAN LAL

The two week-long conference in Dubai (1-12 December 2023) was attended by 154 Heads of States and Government, as well as 85,000 participants from around the world, representing scientists, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, NGOs, and Indigenous people. Although not specifically stated, COP28 laid the foundation stone of the “beginning of the end” for the fossil era. The final Declaration of COP28 specifically focused on agriculture as an important part of the solution. In Bullet 5 of the Declaration, the mention of “soil health” indicates a statement of historical significance with long-term consequences toward identification and implementation of strategies to harness the potential of land-based carbon sinks. Specific focus on agriculture included the following objectives:

- 1) Scaling up adaptation and resilience activities and responses in order to reduce vulnerability of all farmers,
- 2) Promoting food security and nutrition by increasing efforts to support vulnerable people,
- 3) Supporting workers in agriculture and food systems,
- 4) Strengthening the integrated management of water in agriculture and food systems, and
- 5) Maximizing the climate and environmental benefits by conserving, protecting, and restoring land and natural ecosystems, enhancing soil health, and biodiversity.

However, translating these 5 objectives into action would need an annual allocation of \$100 billion for several decades to empower all land managers and especially small farmers (< 2 ha), most of which are women.

The next two COPs will be held in Azerbaijan (COP29 from 11-22 November 2024) and Brazil (COP30 from 10-21 November 2025).

Sincerely,



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