



FROM THE DESK OF RATTAN LAL
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Sub: Building Soil Bridges Across Nations: Soil Science Without Borders

Dear Soil Scientists,

Soil is on the frontline of global issues (e.g., COP21, COP22, COP23). It is precisely during this era that the soil science community must seize the moment. In addition to being the essence of all terrestrial life, engine of economic development, moderator of climate, and provider of key ecosystem services, soil health is also critical to pursuing national/regional and global peace. O’Henry appropriated stated, “Love and business and family and religion and art and patriotism are nothing but shadows of words when man’s starving.” Because a soil-scape is a continuum across political boundaries, its understanding must be pursued by building soil-bridges across nations.

For building soil-bridges, members of IUSS and the soil science community must also reach out to policymakers and translate knowledge into action. Through multi-disciplinary cooperation in sustainable intensification of agroecosystems, soil resources already appropriated are adequate to feed the present and future population, but through adoption of judicious land use and best management practices.

The emerging nexus concept of exploring linkages and synergisms through cooperation among nations is also pertinent to IUSS. However, goals and aspirations of cooperating institutions must be respected.

Thus, the mission of building soil-bridges across nations must be based on the following ten tenets cooperation:

Through:

- Transparency,
- Trust,
- Accountability, and
- Mutual respect

- Non-hierarchical,
- Cooperative and horizontal,
- Without conditions or interference,
- Hands-off approach in the set-up of cooperation
- Hands-on approach in the operational phase of cooperation,
- Peer-to-peer institutional capacity development,
- Complimentary to all partners,
- Carries no hidden agenda,
- Meets basic needs of all partners, and
- Builds upon existing norms of cooperation and synergism.

Sincerely,

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