



FROM THE DESK OF RATTAN LAL
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Sub: Soil and Peace

Fellow Soil Scientists,

The term “peace” is depicted in diverse cultures by words including, *Shanti, Shalom, Salaam, Eirene* and others. Norman Borlaug, father of the Green Revolution, stated matter of factly, “If you desire peace, cultivate justice; but at the same time cultivate fields to produce more bread; otherwise there will be no peace.” Needless to say that there is a strong relationship between a healthy soil and more bread. Because peace must be universal, healthy soils must also be universal. We cannot achieve peace in one region at the expense of another. Thus, we cannot enhance soil health in parts of the world and ignore it or take it for granted in others.

The strong link between soil health and global peace must not be ignored. 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.

Depleting soil organic C pool, degrading soils, recurring drought, marginal use efficiency of fertilizers and other inputs, low crop yields, perpetual poverty and hunger, high infant mortality due to hunger and malnutrition are as real threats to global peace and security as are ICBMs and nuclear weapon proliferation because the health of soil, plants, animals, people and ecosystems is one and indivisible.

In close cooperation with other disciplines (e.g., crop science, climatology, hydrology, medical sciences), the IUSS can make the dreams of realizing global peace through restoration of soil health come true.

With best wishes for peace, calmness, tranquility and harmony with nature and soil.

Sincerely,

Rattan Lal,
President, International Union of Soil Sciences

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