



LIVING SOILS, A GLOBAL PUBLIC GOOD

"Preserving and restoring terrestrial ecosystems, including soils and forests, by ensuring their sustainable management, combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity": This is one of the 17 sustainable development goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

For us scientists, observers and cultivators of land and soil, the focus on soil is a vital imperative. Soil, the thin layer that is the interface between the surface of our planet's rocky crust and the air around it, is the very essence of all life on Earth. It retains water, recycles the elements, feeds fauna and flora, produces our food, stores carbon, helps ecosystems to be resilient to climate shocks and is home of countless living organisms, which account for a quarter of the world's biodiversity.

Soil health is essential to all living species and ecosystems. Its degradation puts the environmental cycles that underpin life at risk: food security, water quality, air quality, the ability to buffer climate change, peaceful coexistence between people. But soils are fragile, they are a limited resource, and they are irreplaceable.

We no longer have time to wait for nature to restore soil balance. Today, one third of the Earth's soils are degraded. Deforestation, sealing, agriculture intensification, chemical pollution, salinization: human activities are accelerating and further aggravating degradation, which impoverish land to the point of killing it. Reversing this process is essential and possible.

For our planet to remain living, it is urgent to protect soils through institutional support and incentive schemes. It is urgent to go beyond the simple, non-deterrent rules of polluter pays. It is urgent to take concrete and strong measures to encourage ecological transition of agriculture, which is the only way to sustainably feed the planet and fight climate change.

Soil protection and regeneration is humanity's ethical and moral responsibility towards the planet. The sustainable use of soils is critical for our children and of generations to come.

We, farmers, researchers, professors, entrepreneurs, political decision-makers, representatives of civil society, all signatories of this call, solemnly call on European and global authorities to acknowledge of living soils as a global public good.

Europe, in particular, must include on its agenda, as part of a policy in favor of agriculture and the environment, a concrete and ambitious project to protect its soils, lands and territories. Rich in all its parts, the European Union must pass this ambition on to major United Nations environmental conventions and to all international institutions working on the SDG's

Call approved and signed between June, 28 and July, 3rd-2019, by

Rattan Lal, Professor of Soil Science, Director of the Carbon Management and Sequestration Center, former President of the International Union of Soil Science, 2019 Laureate of the Japan Prize Foundation, co-recipient of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize under IPCC

Initiative « 4 p 1000 » : **Ibrahim Mayaki**, President, **Stéphane Le Foll**, Vice-president et **Paul Luu**, Executive Secretary

Claire Chenu, Professor of Soil Sciences, Co-chair of the 4 p 1000 Initiative, Special ambassador for the international soil year 2015

Jean-Luc Chotte, Research Director at IRD, Scientific Expert within the Science-Policy Interface of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Scientific referent for Initiative « 4 p1000 »

Michel Eddi, Chairman of CIRAD (Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement), President of Iddri

Dr. Fabrice DeClerck Science director, EAT/Stockholm Resilience Centre

Christian Huyghe, Science director Agriculture, INRA

Mike Parish, Director Health Soils Australia

Jean-Pierre Renaud, Chairman of the Scientific Board of Planet A®, Managing director Livelihoods Venture, Chairman of the Board of Supagro Montpellier,

François Mandin, Farmer, President of the APAD network

Jean-Philippe Quérard, Chairman, for Mouvement « Pour une Agriculture du Vivant »

Benoist Apparu, Mayor of Châlons-en Champagne, Former Minister

Henri Nallet, Former Minister, President, Fondation Jean-Jaurès

Gilles Finchelstein, Director, Fondation Jean-Jaurès

Dominique Potier, MP for Meurthe et Moselle

Anne Laurence Petel, MP for Bouches-du-Rhône

Xavier Iacovelli, Senator, Hauts-de-Seine

Pierre-Marie Aubert, Researcher, coordinator of the European Agriculture Initiative, Institut du développement durable et des relations internationales (IDDRI)

Benoît Grimonprez, University Professor, Institute of Rural Law of Poitiers

Thomas Ribémont, President of Action Against Hunger

Sébastien Couasnet, CEO, Éléphant Vert

Carmen Munoz-Dormoy, President of Planet A®, CEO of Citelum