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**Dear Colleagues,
Dear Presidents of the national Soil Science Societies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the end of a very interesting and successful 20th World Congress of Soil Sciences in Jeju/Korea under the professional organization of the team of President Jae Yang and Vice President John Kim, the new team has taken over the IUSS. It (comprising of Rainer Horn as President, Rattan Lal as President Elect and Jae Yang as Past President) will serve IUSS for a total of 30 months until 31st December 2016. Rattan Lal will take over as the President of IUSS in January 2017 and will then serve until end of December 2018. The new system of presidency is decoupled from the congress vice president, who is Flavio Camargo, as he will serve for a total of 4 years but will focus on the 21st WCSS 2018 in Brazil.

Together with the new secretariat in Vienna headed by Secretary Mr. Sigbert Huber and our new IUSS treasurer, Dr. Andreas Baumgarten, IUSS has a new and certainly very active group ready to undertake the challenges of the new decade towards the IUSS's centennial celebrations in Rome in 2024. Of immediate interest, however, are preparations for the International Year of Soils during 2015, together with the 4 new Division Chairs and the 22 active Commission Chairs as well as 17 Working Group Chairs. We certainly are aware, that soils are a practically non-renewable natural resource, soils perform crucial functions for human activities and ecosystems survival, and are increasingly degrading and sometimes irreversibly lost across the world. However, the mere manifested Community 'concern' is not sufficient to address severe challenges. Indeed we need to enhance awareness among policy makers and general public about the impacts and costs of soil degradation and of inaction, which are supposed to be very high and are mainly borne by society and not by the land users.

Therefore, not only we need closer links between us as scientists, but must also urgently establish links with the politicians, academicians and the general public and increase their awareness about soils. The link and



the cooperation with international organizations (e.g., UNCCD, FAO, UNEP, World Bank) are essential to achieving these goals. With the decision of the UN in December 2013 to declare the year 2015 as the International Year of Soils, a long dream came true. However, apart from this principal success of the better awareness of soils worldwide, it is also a challenge for us all to make the year 2015 a real soils year with as many activities and public documentations as possible. We have the unique opportunity of leaving the corner of only complaining for not being recognized by the politicians and public but showing to them what are soil properties, and functions but also limitations concerning their resilience. These preparations need time which is only very limited because 2015 is just around the corner. Therefore, we must quickly plan and prepare for key activities worldwide. We will also cooperate with the FAO in Rome or further international organizations (e.g., Global Soil Week) in celebrating the importance of soils with the global communities.

Dear colleagues, we rely on you and strongly encourage you to support these activities worldwide. Therefore, we seek your support and cooperation and hope that you will respond as soon as possible about already planned or still under discussion projects or activities in your country for celebrating the International Year of Soils 2015 as well as on the occasion of the World Soils Day on the 5th. December. It will help us a lot, if we get to know your national activities on these occasions: **what do you plan for the International Year of Soils 2015 and for the World Soil Day in your country?**

We want to collate a list of these activities for as many of our national societies as possible in order to prepare not only a specific link on our homepage but to also prepare a “calendar” which will be sent to organizations, societies in order to improve their attention to these events.

We plan that every quarter in 2015 one division is presenting its key topics, so at least every month one commission; additionally every month one working group should present one topic. Furthermore, we suggest that a national Soil Science Society presents its key message weekly apart from the fact that in parallel soil types will be documented.

I hope that you will send us these data as soon as possible in order to finalize a calendar during autumn (September-November) this year. More detailed information which is also based on your replies concerning your expected contributions as national society to our weekly changing homepage will be given.

In this context, we have also decided to organize an international conference on: Soil functions and climate change- do we underestimate the consequences of new disequilibria in soil



properties? - SUSTAIN-, which will be held in Kiel in the Christian Albrechts University at the 23-26.Sept. 2015.

The topics we want to concentrate on are related to soil functions and climate change, because we think that it needs our utmost attention because thermal and hydraulic impacts on coupled hydraulic, chemical and biological processes under various land-use systems will alter soil properties enormously in the future due to climate change.

The key role of soil structure, its functions and its expected changes under various climatic conditions must be analyzed in more detail in order to define the real boundary conditions for reliable predictions in a changing environment and/or for a more precise definition of prediction model input parameters which must be available for a reliable analysis of soil and environmental properties and functions. This first congress _SUSTAIN_ will therefore deal with such interactions and necessary topics in soil physics, chemistry, biology and coupled processes which will become essential for a more reliable prediction of future soil processes and functions. (For more detailed info: www.soils.uni-kiel.de and www.iuss.org)

Looking forward to hearing from you soon. We remain with our best regards to you.

Yours sincerely,

Rainer Horn

Rattan Lal

Jae Yang