

SOIL HEALTH RESOLUTION AT UNFCCC COP28

A commitment to enable and scale healthy soil practices to both adapt to and mitigate climate change

To achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), restoration targets, and food and nutrition security goals, we need comprehensive action. In the past, energy-based solutions were the sole focus of climate policies. However, nature-based solutions can make an essential contribution to combating climate change. Specifically, carbon solutions that use and increase the absorption capacity of natural carbon sinks, most notably soil, offer advantages and co-benefits.

The projected mitigation potential in agriculture via improved crop and livestock management is **1.8-5.5 Gigaton CO₂(eq) per year in 2030**. This is comparable to the mitigation potential of wind energy. Yet, carbon sequestration in agriculture is still limited. If we manage soil well, it can be an important ally in our fight against climate change.

We lose **24 billion tons** of topsoil every year. This is due to unsustainable land and soil management practices that accelerate degradation through erosion, salinization, compaction, acidification, loss of organic carbon and biodiversity, and ~~chemical pollution~~ accumulation. By scaling sustainable and regenerative farming and grazing practices, and supporting farmers, pastoralists and land managers on the ground who implement them, global agriculture can shift from being the world's largest driver of soil degradation to its greatest restorer.

Now is the time for multi-stakeholder action to build an enabling environment at multiple levels for supporting, financing, scaling and monitoring healthy soil ecosystems. The Soil Health Resolution is a step toward achieving this.

Therefore, the undersigned government leaders:

1. *recognize* that soils are the basis of life and soil health¹ is the foundation of sustainable and regenerative food systems for food and nutrition security, and for improving livelihoods and supporting economic development;
2. *affirm* that agricultural systems are part of the climate solution, through large-scale adoption of sustainable soil and land management practices that benefit nature and people, while also ensuring long-term productivity and enhanced resilience;
3. *stress* the importance of aligning UN conventions and providing legal instruments for climate change, biodiversity, and combating land degradation to synergize organizational efforts and accelerate the action on the ground;
4. *consider* the critical role played by increased soil health to achieve the objectives of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, among other declarations;
5. *reaffirm* the need for further international action and cooperation to revert current soil degradation processes.

About the Coalition of Action 4 Soil Health (CA4SH):

The Coalition of Action 4 Soil Health (CA4SH) was inspired by the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021. The overarching goal of CA4SH is to improve soil health globally by addressing critical implementation, monitoring, policy, and public and private investment barriers that constrain farmers from adopting and scaling healthy soil practices. For more information contact the coordination team at: coordination@coalitionforsoilhealth.org

About the international “4 per 1000” Initiative :

Launched at UNFCCC CoP 21 in December 2015, the international "4 per 1000 Initiative: Soils for Food Security and Climate" aims to show that agriculture, and in particular agricultural soils, can provide concrete solutions to the challenge of climate change while at the same time meeting the challenge of food security by implementing agricultural agroecological practices adapted to local conditions. More information on www.4p1000.org and by mail at: secretariat@4p1000.org.

¹ Soil health is “the ability of the soil to sustain the productivity, diversity, and environmental services of terrestrial ecosystems” (ITPS, FAO 2020).