



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN and President of the UN Economic and Social Council at the World Soil Day

New York, December 7, 2020

I thank the FAO as well the UN CC for organizing this event to commemorate the International Soil Day.

The September biodiversity summit highlighted the need for urgent action to agree on a post-2020 global biodiversity framework that contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Covid 19 pandemic has further compounded the interrelated global challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change.

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the relationship between people and nature and it reminds us of the profound consequences of the loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems on our own well-being and survival.

If current trends biodiversity loss and degradation continue, it could jeopardize global food security. The loss of biological diversity would increase the risk of zoonotic diseases as well.

We must take transformative action for biodiversity, climate and people. Actions against biodiversity loss must be an integral part of the COVID-19 response.

There is need to mobilize public and private financing to support a socio economic recovery that embraces nature based solutions and disaster risk reduction.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Today's theme, "Keep soil alive protect soil diversity" is timely as soil diverse biodiversity is part of the solution to our challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Healthy soils, enable life on Earth by providing key ecosystem services, such as the production of food, fiber, storing and filtering water, regulating nutrient site recycling, enhancing biodiversity sequestering carbon.

The great strength of our soil comes from the life that exists within it from the millions of microbes and several 1000 species of bacteria that exist within our soil. Humanity depends on the existence of healthy soils, both for the production of food, and for ensuring a healthy biodiverse environment.

Yet, soil biodiversity is under consistent threat, largely from human activities, contributing to the downward spiral of biodiversity loss and climate change. Soil degradation, due to unsustainable soil management practices is putting our Agri food system, and ecosystems in danger.

Our efforts to tackle poverty and hunger will be undermined.

Excellencies Dear colleagues,

To combat hunger and reduce poverty action is required at both the national and international level to immediately redress and improve soil biodiversity. This is feasible, reliable and cheaper option to the other solutions. we can achieve multiple benefits including climate change, mitigation, food security land degradation neutrality and biodiverse environment.

It is also important that breakthroughs in new agricultural technologies and financial models to enhance food production, improves soil and seed quality and effective water utilization should be our focus.

There is a need to make nature-based solutions part of our strategies to combat climate change and protect biodiversity on our planet.

I work at the UN systems efforts to support member states in making biodiversity an integral part of development strategies, innovative approaches and disaster risk management. The UN system support is also critical for policies to ensure food security, livelihoods and sustainability, including in relation to implementing international agreements.

I hope that implementation of the IG targets will become an integral part of the national SDG strategies of all countries.

Distinguished colleagues,

Soil biodiversity must be treated at the same level of the above-mentioned biodiversity targets. Awareness raising and advocacy towards healthy soil is imperative. The ECOSOC and the high-level political forum next July will underscore the vital importance of promoting biodiversity and healthy soils, as an integral part of a transformative response to COVID-19. This will also be addressed in the STI forum, the FFD forum and other meetings.

Let us join together to keep our soil alive by protecting soil biodiversity, I thank you.