

Seeds and Soil vs. the Tyranny of Corporate Power: A 2015 Message of Hope

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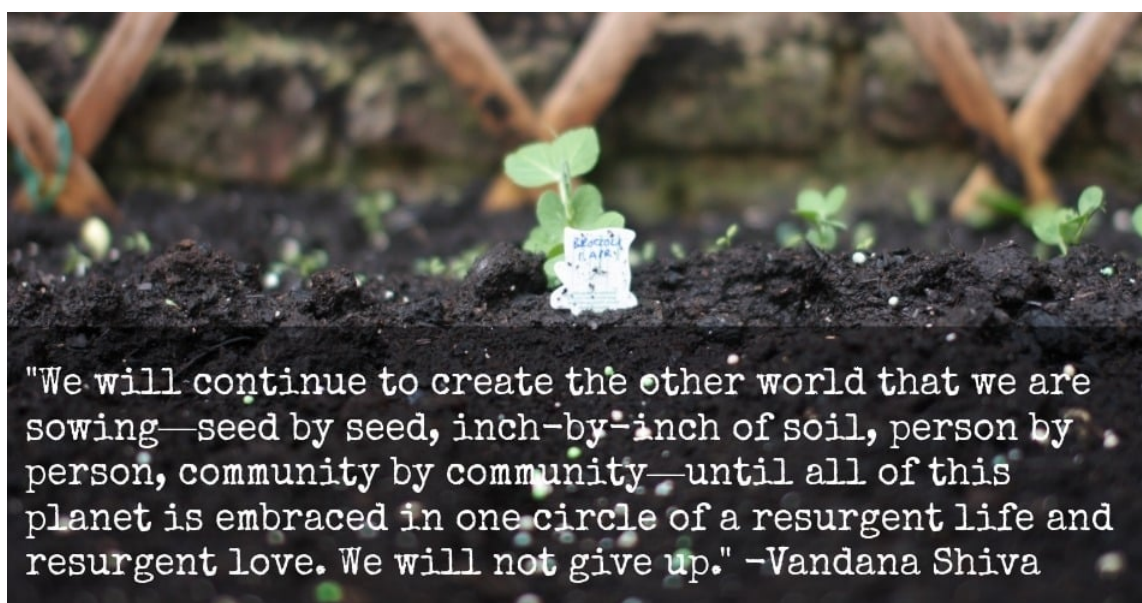
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It has been declared 'the International Year of the Soil,' but the year ahead, according to Dr. Vandana Shiva, will also see key developments in the global fight to overthrow corporate power with true democracy.

Last year, the United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organization officially declared that 2015 would be celebrated as the [International Year of the Soil](#) citing the threat to one of the key ingredients to the planet's food and farming systems posed by "expanding cities, deforestation, unsustainable land use, pollution, overgrazing and climate change."

"In the seed and the soil we find the answers to every one of the crises we face. The crisis of violence and war; the crisis of hunger and disease; the crisis of the destruction of democracy." —Dr. Vandana Shiva

Though many recognize the FAO declaration as a largely symbolic gesture, many advocates of organic food and sustainable agricultural are planning to seize the designation as a way to push forth their message that the health of the planet's soil should not be relegated as a metaphorical issue, but rather one that should be at the very heart of serious conversations and policy changes humanity must begin in order to transform its economic systems, its democracies, the way it generates power, and the way it feeds itself.



Dr. Shiva says that within 'the soil lies the answer to the problems oil has created' and

that 'organic gardens of hope everywhere' and 'farms that grow real food' can be a powerful enough force to help upend the march of globalized neoliberalism that is taking the planet towards the brink of destruction. (Image: Magnus Franklin/flickr/cc)

Summarizing the issues at stake and the fight ahead, one of the world's most prominent advocates for democracy and organic agriculture, Dr. Vandana Shiva, an Indian activist and founder of the seed-saving organization [Navdanya](#), has posted an impassioned New Years message to [those battling](#) on behalf of food sovereignty, economic egalitarianism, agroecology, climate action, and social justice.

In the video posted to the website of [Seed Freedom](#), Shiva applauded all those who have stood up for the rights of people and Mother Earth against the greed and disregard perpetrated by corporate power and the neoliberal economic model which is ravaging economies, human rights, and the planet's ability to sustain life.

Looking back on 2014, Shiva celebrated that it was a year in which the phrase '*We Are All Seeds*' rang out in resonance across the world and described how "for a while we might lie underground, but at the right moment we germinate and burst forth with our full potential."

At the dawn of 2015, however, she welcomed global activists to look forward to this coming 'Year of the Soil' and called it a year that will commemorate "earthiness... groundedness... [and] rootedness" of individuals and organizations that make up the global movement for climate, economic, and social justice.

The year ahead, she said, will be a year in which the seeds—"of hope and love" and "of abundance and creativity"—that activists and well-meaning citizens from around the world have sown and will sow, shall be political and cultural seeds that "will multiply and show the way forward."

"In the Year of the Soil," Shiva continues, "let us celebrate the connections between Mother Earth and ourselves. We are, afterall, made of the earth. We are made of soil."

She said, "In the seed and the soil we find the answers to every one of the crises we face. The crisis of violence and war; the crisis of hunger and disease; the crisis of the destruction of democracy. We will not allow corporations to allow everyone to believe that they are persons. Corporations are legal constructions—that's where their place is. People, through democratic processes, give permission to what sort of business activity is sustainable, what business activity is equitable, what business activity respects, with dignity, the life of this planet, the life of all beings, and the lives of all human beings."

Shiva cited recent lawsuits filed by corporations against places like Vermont and Maui, Hawaii for citizen-led efforts to ban GMO crops or label GMO ingredients as examples of an illusionary charade in which business interests masquerade as people. The movement she is speaking to, she said, will instead "create a reality in which reality rules—the reality of the living ecological processes of the planet." She offered that such a reality would be shaped by the ordinary lives of citizens by democratic rule, not fabricated by corporate pr campaigns and disinformation.

The challenge of fighting for true democracy, according to Shiva, "is going to be the single biggest challenge throughout 2015."

Within that challenge and amid the context of the 'Year of Soil' ahead, Shiva finally reminded her listeners that it is organic farming and ecological agriculture (frequently called agroecology) which offers the "answer to the havoc that's being created by fossil fuels." Quoting from her book, *Soil Not Oil*, Shiva argued that "in the soil lies the answer to the problems oil has created" across the planet.

"The joint crises of climate change and biodiversity erosion can both be addressed by planting gardens everywhere—full of biodiversity; full of the celebration of life, well-being, and abundance. Gardens of hope everywhere. Farms that give real food. We will continue to create the other world that we are sowing—seed by seed, inch-by-inch of soil, person by person, community by community—until all of this planet is embraced in one circle of a resurgent life and resurgent love. We will not give up."

Watch:

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