

## **WELCOME ADDRESS**

**Your Excellencies,**

**Dear Minister of Agriculture,**

**Dear President of Agricultural Academy,**

**Dear Guests and colleagues,**

**I really appreciate you all for attending this Conference today!**

**It is a great honour for me to share with you this important moment of our academic community — i.e. The N.Pushkarov Institute of Soil Science, Agrotechnology and Plant Protection, The Agricultural Academy of BULGARIA, The Scientific and Technical union of specialists in Agriculture, The Union of Quality Specialists in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Soil Science Society, and our professional and personal efforts to achieve the goals of the Green Deal and other EU initiatives for the sustainability and fertility of SOILS which are precious, irreplaceable and non-renewable natural resource.**

**With increasing public concern and the focus of interest on climate change and the role that soils play in ensuring our sustainable future, taking into account the important decisions taken by the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP 27) held in Egypt in November this year, there is no better time than today — 5th Dec - World Soil Day for the academic community to share and disseminate knowledge and information in the fields of soil science, ecology, agrotechnologies and plant protection.**

**The quality of life, and ultimately the sustainability of the environment depend on the scientific research, data, information and knowledge about soil that we as scientists generate, in order to ensure the provision of the valuable ecosystem services that soils fulfil for the benefit of humanity.**

**Our conference includes scientists and specialists from various professional fields and institutions, representing the entire spectrum of experts who work in the field of soil science, ecology, agrotechnology and plant protection.**

**We hope that the participants in this conference will demonstrate how we address the challenges presented above, and use this forum as a stimulus to develop innovative solutions for the successful management of agriculture and environment.**

**Significant threats continue to affect agriculture and the environment, many of them are soil-related: erosion, carbon and biodiversity loss, soil compaction and sealing, pollution, salinization and negative impacts on the environment, food security, food quality and ecosystem services.**

**I believe that the colleagues who participate in this conference will present the innovative ideas of Poushkarov Institute for taking the right decisions in this aspect, for the benefit of society.**

**I would like to open the conference "Ecology and agrotechnologies - fundamental science and practical implementation", at which today we also celebrate our professional holiday - World Soil Day, December 5th.**

**Happy professional Holiday dear colleagues and guests!**

**I wish you good health and new creative professional achievements.**

**Prof. DSc Irena Dimitrova Atanassova**

**Director of Nikola Poushkarov Institute of Soil Science, Agrotechnologies and Plant Protection**

**SOFIA, BULGARIA**