

ITPS-VIII/18/Report



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**



Report of the Eighth Working Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils

Rome, Italy, 30 April - 4 May 2018

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Rome, 2018

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1. Opening of the session

The eighth working session of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) was held at the FAO Headquarter in Rome from 30 April to 4 May 2018. Mr. Eduardo Mansur (Director of the Land and Water Division, FAO) acknowledged the work done by the ITPS during the 2015-2017 period and thanked all ITPS members for their support to the GSP Secretariat and FAO. He stated all the important contributions made by the ITPS members and anticipated the important items of this session. During the Sixth GSP Plenary Assembly (11-12 June, 2018), the soil experts for the ITPS 2018-2021 will be officially appointed.

2. Adoption of the Agenda, Timetable and election of the Rapporteur

Mr. Luca Montanarella (ITPS Chair) called upon the panel for any additional agenda items or request for modification to the proposed draft agenda. The agenda was endorsed with the following changes:

- Report of Mr. Taboada on the collaboration with the IPCC under Item 10;
- Discussion on the second edition of the Status of the World's Soil Resources report under Item 11;
- Discussion on the 21st World Congress of Soil Science and the G20 under "Any other business".

Mr. Bhanooduth Lalljee agreed to be the rapporteur for the session with the support of the GSP Secretariat.

3. Report of the work performed since the 7th working session of the ITPS

Mr. Montanarella recalled the work performed by the ITPS in the 2017-2018 period as agreed upon at the 7th working session of the ITPS:

- The five ITPS working groups identified per each pillar will keep on working on the implementation plans;
- Four working groups will prepare reports on the progresses made in addressing the four priorities identified within the SWSR report:
 - Mr. Gunay Erpul, Chair of the working group on "sustainable soil management and assessment of soil degradation and restoration", reported that the Land Degradation Neutrality concept is not working at the regional scale and that soils are overlooked because soil ecosystem services are not understood. In this regard, a specific reference was made to his communications with IPBES. He highlighted the importance to finalize the study on the economic benefits of SSM for farmers and other land users.
 - Mr. Miguel Taboada, Chair of the working group on "the global management of soil organic matter", reported the progresses made in writing the IPCC Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems (IPCC SR CC LAND). The second lead author meeting took place in New Zealand from 26 to 30 March 2018. The review of the first order draft by experts will take place from 4 June to 22 July 2018.
 - Mr. Gary M. Pierzynsky, Chair of the working group on "sustainable nutrient management aiming to stabilize or reduce global nitrogen (N) and phosphorous (P) fertilizer use while simultaneously increasing fertilizer use in regions of nutrient deficiency", led the writing of the Code of Conduct for the Use and Management of Fertilizers, which will be discussed in section 5.
 - Nothing was reported on "Improve soil data and information systems" because of the absence of the working group's Chair, Mr. Neil McKenzie.

- The preparation of a Code of Conduct for the Use and Management of Fertilizers, which can be compared to the “Global assessment of the impact of plant protection products on soil functions and soil ecosystems” because of the large amount of debates it triggered
- Regional revisions of the Global Soil Organic Carbon Map (GSOCmap);
- Engagement of ITPS in INSII and GLOSOLAN;
- Work on preparing the second edition of the Status of the World’s Soil Resources report;
- Preparation of the study on the economic benefits of SSM; and
- The organization of the Global Symposium on Soil Pollution (GSOP18).

Thereafter, he summarized the main achievements of the ITPS for the period 2015-2018: the writing of the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management, the organization of the Global Symposium on Soil Organic Carbon (GSOC17), the production of the Global Soil Organic Carbon Map (GSOCmap), the writing of the Global Assessment of the impact of Plant Protection Products on Soil Functions and Soil Ecosystems, the organization of the upcoming Global Symposium on Soil Pollution, and the drafting of the Code of Conduct for the Use and Management of Fertilizers. Complying with a request of the ITPS members, the GSP Secretariat was kindly asked to report that these milestones were produced by (in alphabetic order) Prof. Dr Ahmad S. Muhaimed (Iraq), Dr. Amanullah (Pakistan), Dr. Bhanooduth Lalljee (Mauritius), Dr. Botle Mapeshoane (Lesotho), Dr. Brajendra (India), Prof. Dr. Daniel John Pennock (Canada), Dr. Fernando Garcia Préchac (Uruguay), Prof. Dr. Gan Lin Zhang (China), Dr. Gary Pierzynski (USA), Dr. Gunay Erpul (Turkey), Dr. Isaurinda Dos Santos Baptista Costa (Cape Verde), Dr. Juan Antonio Comerma (Venezuela), Dr. Kazuyuki Yagi (Japan), Dr. Luca Montanarella (Italy), Dr. Maria de Lourdes Mendonça Santos (Brazil), Dr. Martin Yemefack (Cameroon), Dr. Miguel Taboada (Argentina), Dr. Neil McKenzie (Australia), Dr. Nsalambi V. Nkongolo (Democratic Republic of Congo), , Dr. Pavel Krasilnikov (Russia), Dr. Peter de Ruyter (The Netherlands), Dr. Rainer Horn (Germany), Dr. Saéb AbdelHaleem Khresat (Jordan), Dr. Siosua Halavatau (Tonga), and Dr. Talal Darwish (Lebanon).

To conclude, Mr. Montanarella recalled that the ITPS has always been collaborating with other groups like IPBES, UNCCD and the IPCC. However, other groups were not as open as the ITPS to collaborate, perhaps due to the large amount of products annually delivered by the ITPS and the GSP Secretariat. Adding to this statement, Mr. Vargas confirmed that Mr. Mansur is representing the GSP in other groups because they do not officially recognize the ITPS and prefer to have a FAO representative instead.

4. Follow up on the GSP Plans of Action/Implementation Plans

Mr. Montanarella invited the ITPS Chairs of the GSP Pillars to brief the panel on the progresses on their work.

- Mr. Dan Pennock, ITPS Chair for Pillar 1, asked for feedback on the implementation plan for Pillar 1, which was lately finalized with the support of Ms. Liesl Weise, Chair for Pillar 1 at the GSP Secretariat. The suggestion to look at trends instead of thresholds, set a baseline level of ecosystem services and establish a recovery time for ecosystem services was moved. The ITPS stressed that attention should be paid to indicators and metrics, and that it is pivotal to finalize the study on the economic benefits of SSM as well as to bring soil into international discussion to cooperate with other groups that are also working on soil. The plan includes a protocol for assessing soil practices against the ITPS definition of Sustainable Soil Management. Ultimately, the implementation plan for Pillar 1 was approved to be presented to the Sixth GSP Plenary Assembly.

- Ms. Maria de Lourdes Mendonça Santos Brefin, ITPS Chair for Pillar 2, presented the progresses made on Pillar 2 and more specifically on the development of the Global Soil Doctors programme. The programme was recognized to be challenging mostly due to the issue of language barrier, the availability of financial resources to purchase reliable soil testing kits, and the possible competition with local stakeholders getting financial benefits from the overuse of agricultural inputs. When discussing the “Manual for the implementation of the Soil Doctors Global programme at the country level” and the “Soil testing methods manual”, the ITPS suggested to:
 - Take calibration and harmonization into consideration when identifying the methods for assessing soil quality. In this regard, the programme should collaborate with GLOSOLAN;
 - Do not assess soil nutrients through plant responses because this is a late signal of nutrient imbalance that does not prevent yield losses;
 - Identify those soil parameters that can be assessed through cheap but reliable methods on the field to include in the programme. Therefore, demand to the working group for Pillar 3 the development of methods for the assessment of the remaining soil parameters;
 - Review the implementation manual in order to organize the programme in two levels, one for farmers and one for technicians; and
 - Promote the involvement of students as trainers in the programme.

In conclusion, the ITPS members offered their help to review the soil parameters that should be included in the “Soil testing methods manual”.

- Mr. Brajendra, ITPS Chair for Pillar 3, asked for feedback on the implementation plan for Pillar 3, which was lately finalized with the support of Ms. Liesl Weise, Chair for Pillar 3 at the GSP Secretariat. The discussion built around on the possibility to compile an inventory of research papers and projects on soil at the global level. Ultimately, feedback on what should or should not be considered in the implementation plan have to be sent to Mr. Brajendra, Ms. Wiese and Mr. Horn for consideration. A note on the ultimate interest of the GSP to have access to research results was made, and the implementation plan was approved to be presented to the Sixth GSP Plenary Assembly.
- Mr. Yusuf Yigini presented the progresses made on Pillar 4 on behalf of Mr. Neil McKenzie, ITPS Chair for Pillar 4, who was excused. The GSP Secretariat is finalizing the SoilSTAT Concept Note which is to be shared with the Pillar 4 Working group in May 2018. The concept note pays particular attention to current monitoring activities undertaken by the UN (e.g. SDGs) and the OECD. The P4WG is to ensure that input is obtained from relevant GSP partners and specific input is to be sought from the IUSS Working Group on Soil Monitoring. At a minimum, the SoilSTAT proposal will provide soil-related indices for the FAO statistical system (FAOSTAT). Designing and executing a global soil monitoring system is a complex task institutionally, technically and logistically, with large budgetary implications. In this regard, an expert team is required to prepare the final concept note and their expertise needs to include scientific aspects of soil monitoring, logistics, institutional capacity and decision making in natural resource management. A careful analysis of the potential costs and benefits of SoilSTAT is essential. About the development of soil profile databases, a proposed three-year schedule for developing the Tier-1 and Tier-2 databases was included in the presentation to INSII 3 by the SDF. The schedule was endorsed by INSII and the primary focus for 2018 is on the preparation of Specifications for the Tier 1 and Tier 2 databases, which will be

available prior to the 6th GSP Plenary Assembly in June 2018. Two levels of functionality have been proposed: basic functionality and fully-functional (Web 2.0). To note that the GSP SDF has allocated resources to develop the technical specifications. In addition, efforts are being made to prepare the global polygon coverage map and the Harmonized World Soil Database Version 2 (HWSD2). Mr. Yigini highlighted the need for the P4WP to have a clear understanding of demand for the HWSD2 and the existing users of the earlier version. A remark was made on the fact that funds to develop the HWSD2 are yet to be acquired or allocated, and that the GSP should not only mobilize resources but also ask countries to work for the implementation of the plan. To conclude, Mr. Yigini informed the ITPS about the developments in the production of a global fine-resolution grid. Initial discussions on the preparation of a project plan were already held. It is now time to (1) organize a broader meeting between the P4WG and the soil mapping community, and to (2) prepare an agenda paper for the P4WG that provides a plan that outlines how the specification and the GLOSIS fit together. Other activities under implementation in pillar 4 are countrySIS and the SOC MRV working group.

A remark was made on the GSP Capacity Development Programme, which focused on on-the-job trainings for the preparation of the GSOCmap in 2017. Resources were mobilized to implement trainings on digital soil organic carbon mapping. Ultimately, more than 250 soil experts from more than 110 countries were trained, and the GSP will continue improving and building capacities on soil data management. The ITPS highlighted the importance of the GSOCmap as a concrete, simple outcome to implement P4 activities at the national level and to convince donors to invest in GSP activities. Thereafter, the idea of producing maps similar to the GSOCmap on other soil parameters/threats like soil erosion was launched. However, Mr. Yigini stressed the need to have soil samples to use as a baseline before moving into mapping and monitoring activities. ITPS members provided feedback and called the GSP Secretariat to start populating GLOSIS by developing specific products such as the global soil erosion map, the global soil salinity map, a map depicting the potential of SOC sequestration as well as global maps of soil functional properties such as pH.

- Mr. Bhanooduth Lalljee, ITPS Chair for Pillar 5, asked for an opinion on the possibility to merge Pillar 4 and Pillar 5 in the future. However, this possibility was rejected because of the different aims of these pillars. Ultimately, great efforts were made in implementing activities within the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN), which will be discussed in section 7.

5. Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management

The discussion on the implementation of the VGSSM focused on four core outputs:

- Preparation of the Code of Conduct for the Use and Management of Fertilizers:* the process for the endorsement of the Code of Conduct will be the same as for the VGSSM. This implies that the draft document prepared by the ITPS will be sent to an open ending working group (OEWG) before being presented to the 6th GSP Plenary Assembly. The format used to draft the Code of Conduct was the same as that of the Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management. The ITPS acknowledged the scientific value of the document and endorsed the code for its consideration by the OEWG.
- Towards a Global Assessment of Soil Biodiversity:* the proposal is that the assessment has to be developed by the ITPS together with other relevant international organizations. In this regard, Mr. Vargas informed

the ITPS that the GSP Secretariat is already working with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Global Soil Biodiversity Initiative in many ways, and that a Global Symposium on Soil Biodiversity is proposed to be organized in 2020 following the example of the Global Symposium on Soil Organic Carbon (GSOC17) and the Global Symposium on Soil Pollution (GSOP18).

- c) Global Symposiums: Global Symposium on Nutrition Sensitive Soil Management in 2019 and Global Symposium on Soil Biodiversity in 2020: the ITPS members discussed if the selection of the topic for the global symposiums should follow the priority list in the Status of the World's Soil Resources report. Thereafter, the idea to organize a Global Symposium on Soil Erosion in 2021 and to link soil erosion to the topic of all upcoming symposiums was launched. The GSP Secretariat welcomed this idea but stressed that symposiums should not be purely technical but should look at practical outcomes for the GSP to implement.
- d) Follow up on the GSOC17: the ITPS is following up on the implementation of the outcomes document of the GSOC17. In this context, the working group lead by Mr. Taboada established online collaborations to develop a technical manual on SOC management at the regional and sub-regional level. The manual will ultimately be reviewed by the ITPS and launched at the World Soil Congress in August 2018 as a FAO publication. In order to allow the ITPS to comply with this task, the GSP Secretariat will ask the Plenary Assembly for a transition period between the end of the mandate of the current ITPS members and the start of the mandate of the newly appointed ones.

Mr. Yigini, leader of the working group for the development of guidelines for measuring, mapping, monitoring and reporting on SOC, informed the ITPS that the working group is now selecting leading authors for the different chapters of the guidelines.

To conclude, it was agreed that the mandate of the working groups herewith mentioned goes beyond the mandate of the ITPS. They will therefore continue working until the new ITPS is in place and properly working.

6. Review of the progress on a) assessment at global level of the potential of soil protection for increased resilience in a context of climate change, and b) study on the economic benefits of SSM for farmers and other land users, as well as identify best practices that prevent soil degradation

The members of the ITPS were able to discuss the progress on two different items:

- a) the assessment at a global level of the potential of soil protection for increased resilience in a context of climate change,

For the first time, no action was taken by the ITPS to meet a request of GSP Plenary Assembly because of the heavy workload of the ITPS and the lack of funds.

- b) the study on the economic benefits of sustainable soil management (SSM) for farmers and other land users, as well as to identify best practices that prevent soil degradation.

Mr. Krasilnikov, one of the leaders for this activity, together with Mr. Amanullah, suggested the GSP Secretariat to hire an expert in economics to complete this assignment because there are no experts in the topic within the

ITPS. He stated that in addition to the request of the Plenary Assembly for the ITPS to write a terms of reference document, a concept note was written. The concept note was ultimately reviewed during the meeting, where it was emphasized that there is a need to assess the price for each management technique (from the list of SSM practices), as well as the cost of not adopting these practices. It was also mentioned that ecosystem services should be taken into consideration for this project, with an emphasis on below ground ecosystem services. Further minor changes were submitted to Mr. Krasilnikov, who was asked to submit the final document to Mr. Ronald Vargas by 4 May 2018. It was agreed that the future consultant works in close collaboration with ITPS members.

7. Review of the progress of the technical networks: INSII, GLOSOLAN, INBS

- International Network of Soil Information Institutes (INSII)

Mr. Vargas reported on INSII on behalf of the Chair for Pillar 4, Mr. Neil McKenzie, who was not present at the meeting. Overall, no significant activities were carried out by INSII within this period. The next meeting of the group (October 2018) was already announced in the hope to attract more national soil information institutions to join the network.

- Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN)

Ms. Lucrezia Caon from the GSP Secretariat reported on the progress made by the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN). The network was launched in November 2017 as part of the endorsed Pillar 5 implementation plan and in response to the need to make soil information across laboratories, countries and regions comparable and interpretable. In this regard, GLOSOLAN is tasked to build a set of agreed harmonization principles, to improve quality control and assurance of soil analyses, and to promote information and experience exchange to develop capacities where it is needed. The Network is currently chaired by Ms. Nopmanee Suvannang from Thailand and counts on Dr. Bhanooduth Lalljee from Mauritius (also the chair of pillar 5 within the ITPS) as vice-chair. The execution of activities in the network is supported by a working group composed of laboratory managers from Costa Rica, France, Mexico, Russia and Ukraine, which was formed during the meeting in November. This working group is open to further members.

Since its establishment, GLOSOLAN was successful in (1) finalizing the list of reference labs in almost all countries of the world, (2) launching an online survey to collect information on soil laboratories' needs to keep the work of the network centered on a bottom-up approach. The report for this activity is almost ready to be presented to the 6th GSP Plenary Assembly. (3) Launching the Regional Soil Laboratory Network (RESOLAN) for Asia (SEALNET) and Latin America (LATSOLAN), (4) keeping the communication between RESOLAN Chairs and GLOSOLAN Chair and Co-Chair, and (5) preparing a concept note for a best practice manual to be presented to the 6th GSP Plenary Assembly. Additionally, (1) communications to establish RESOLAN-EUROPE, which include the European and the Eurasian Soil Partnerships, were initiated, (2) documents to report on GLOSOLAN activities to the 6th GSP Plenary Assembly were prepared, (3) points for discussion at the second GLOSOLAN meeting were compiled, and (4) a draft protocol for the execution of ring tests under GLOSOLAN was prepared with the support of WEPAL. However, the decision to postpone the discussion on the ring test and the writing of a resolution on the free exchange of soil samples for research purposes under GLOSOLAN, to the next GLOSOLAN meeting was made.

Despite the challenges related to the execution of the GLOSOLAN concept, the ITPS fully supported the activities of the network.

- International Network on Black Soils (INBS)

Mr. Yuxin Tong from the GSP Secretariat reported on the INBS starting by defining “black soils”. According to INBS, black soils are all those soils containing a thick layer of humus (minimum thickness of 25 cm), a soil organic carbon content greater than 2% and a high base saturation (greater than 50%). A map showing the distribution of the so defined black soils, which ultimately included Chernozems, Kastanozems and Phaeozems, was showed. The objectives of INBS was listed as following:

- To provide a platform for countries with black soils to discuss common issues related to the conservation and sustainable management of black soils, which is directly related to Pillar 1;
- To develop a report on the global status, current production and challenges with black soils (link to Pillar 4 and 5);
- To foster collaboration among these countries towards promoting the sustainable use and management of black soils and identify relevant research gaps (link to Pillars 1 and 3);
- To serve as a platform incorporating real local challenges for knowledge sharing and technical cooperation on black soil management (link to Pillar 2); and
- To develop governance guidelines aiming at improving black soils protection and sustainable productivity (link to Pillar 2).

The INBS is composed of countries with black soils that expressed an interest in joining the network. Activities will be implemented under the framework of the GSP, who will also provide technical and scientific advice to the network together with the ITPS. Up to date, 28 countries joined the network: Armenia, Austria, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Congo, Djibouti, Hungary, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Malawi, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Romania, The Russian Federation, Slovakia, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and the United States of America. The INBS kick-off meeting will take place in Harbin, China on 10-12 September 2018 in the form of an International Symposium on Black Soils (ISBS18). The symposium will discuss and confirm the information available within the concept note and the framework of the INBS. It will also consolidate future cooperation between the members of INBS, and action plans for the sustainable development of black soils with a focus on soil organic carbon, soil nutrient, soil erosion and soil health. This will be done through the establishment of a global status report on black soil and the establishment of a management practices database, as well as the implementation of these practices.

The ITPS raised some concerns on the definition of black soil in relation to soil management and offered to help Mr. Tong better defining them. The question standing is: are black soils only those naturally high in organic carbon or also those high in organic carbon because of management practices? In order to further support Mr. Tong and the INBS, ITPS members will review the draft concept note of the network, which will be thereafter improved. The ITPS members interested in contributing more to the INBS were invited to meet.

8. Preparation for the Global Symposium on Soil Pollution (GSOP18)

The ITPS members acknowledged the GSP Secretariat for organizing the GSOP18. Ms. Natalia Rodriguez Eugenio, lead organizer from the GSP Secretariat, provided the ITPS with background and practical information on the symposium. The symposium will be attended by 525 registered participants from 100 countries, with 106 oral presentations and 52 posters. Unfortunately, a note was made on the lack of experts working on soil remediation, which was likely due to miscommunication problems. Besides being part of the Organizing and Scientific Committees, the ITPS members will contribute to the symposium by chairing and/or co-chairing some sessions as

well as by being theme leaders. In this context, Ms. Eugenio Rodriguez thanked the ITPS members for their contribution.

The contribution of ITPS members as either authors and/or reviewers of the GSOP 18 publication “*Soil Pollution: A Hidden Reality*” was acknowledged and a call for help to draft the outcome document of the conference was launched. In this context, Ms. Rodriguez reminded the ITPS that the outcome document has to be discussed at the 6th GSP Plenary Assembly, which has to agree with the GSP work plan on soil pollution. Ultimately, there is hope to submit it to the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) and to have it discussed by the other UN bodies that were involved in organizing the symposium.

Discussions followed on the next steps to take in relation to soil pollution and to the UNEA 3 resolution. Actions included the development of a global assessment on soil pollution and the writing of specific guidelines on soil pollution, which would be linked to the Voluntary Guidelines on Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM), the International Code of Conduct on Pesticides, and the International Code of Conduct on Use and Management of Fertilizers - which will be presented for endorsement to the 6th GSP Plenary Assembly. Despite the difficulty in retrieving data on soil pollution at the global level, the ITPS suggested to proceed by using an approach similar to that used to implement GSOC17 decisions. Thereafter, build the global assessment on soil pollution on the number of contaminated sites, the main sources of soil pollution worldwide, and the existence of policies on soil pollution. Working groups to address specific tasks should be created and national capacities to achieve global objectives should be built. To conclude, the need to work at the science-policy interface to develop informed legal instruments at national and regional levels was mentioned.

9. Report on the collaboration between ITPS and the SPI of UNCCD, IPBES and IPCC

Mr. Montanarella reported on the collaboration between the ITPS and other international panels:

- **IPCC:** the ITPS is currently serving as a formal observer at the IPCC and worked with the IPCC to jointly organize the Global Soil Organic Carbon Symposium (GSOC17) in 2017.
- **IPBES:** the ITPS co-chaired and contributed to the Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment, which was finally released in 2018.
- **UNCCD-SPI:** the collaboration between the ITPS and the UNCCD-SPI led to the launch of the Global Soil Organic Carbon Map (GSOCmap) on 5 December 2017, a contribution to the SDG 15.3 sub-indicator, and to the publishing of the UNCCD-SPI Global Soil Erosion Assessment. Additionally, the ITPS and the UNCCD-SPI agreed to closely collaborate at COP 13.
- **4pour1000:** the ITPS is a formal observer in the 4pour1000 Committee for Science and Technology.

In addition, the ITPS participated in the 2nd Global Soil Biodiversity (GSB) conference and further supported the development of a Global Soil Biodiversity Assessment (GSBA). Upcoming collaboration commitments for Mr. Montanarella, ITPS Chair, are: (1) to present the LDRA to the EU Council and Brussels based EU institutions in Brussels on the 28 May 2018, (2) participate in the 4pour1000 Science and Technology Committee in Madrid on 4 -7 June 2018, and (3) report to the 6th GSP Plenary Assembly, in Rome, on the 11 – 13 June 2018.

To conclude, Mr. Montanarella stressed the big effort made by the ITPS to collaborate with other panels and highlighted how requests for collaboration mostly came from the ITPS/GSP side.

10. Report to the Sixth GSP Plenary Assembly and transmission report to the next ITPS

Mr. Montanarella invited the ITPS to review the ITPS report he wrote for the 6th GSP Plenary Assembly and stressed the need to agree on the contribution of current ITPS members to the second edition of the Status of the World's Soil Resources (SWSR) report. In this regard, he insisted on the need for continuity in service of editorial board members, whose names are listed in his report. Mr. Vargas, commented that the final decision on whether current ITPS members could keep on serving in the editorial board of the second SWSR or not is on the next ITPS.

Ultimately, the suggestion to have Mr. Montanarella writing some recommendations on how the ITPS work for the next ITPS was supported.

11. Date and Venue of the next meeting

The Ninth ITPS working session will take place at FAO headquarters in Rome in September 2018. The decision was made to facilitate the establishment of the new ITPS experts group.

12. Any other business

Ultimately, Mr. Rainer Horn reported on the organization of the 21st World Congress of Soil Science (WCSS, Rio de Janeiro, 12-17 August 2018) and an overview of the ITPS members registered to the event was provided. Mr. Vargas explained that the GSP Secretariat will contribute to the WCSS by organizing an afternoon session focused on the work performed by the partnership since 2012 and its main achievements. In order to support the organization of the session, five GSP staff members will travel to Rio de Janeiro to attend the Congress.

Mr. Krasilnikov closed this item by recalling the importance that soil is acquiring in the G20 agenda and by mentioning that Mr. GanLin Zhang (ITPS member from China), Mr. Taboada (ITPS member from Argentina) and himself are invited to participate in a G20 meeting on soil in Argentina. In this regard, he explained that soil is one of the seven priorities to be discussed at the G20 and that there is a possibility to get to some positive conclusions for promoting the practice of SSM at global level during the meeting.

13. Closing of the meeting

The meeting was closed by Mr. Montanarella, who thanked the GSP Secretariat for the support provided to the ITPS during their mandate, and by Mr. Vargas, who acknowledged the work done by the ITPS and invited them to collect their certificates of appreciation.