



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



2015
International
Year of Soils



**GLOBAL SOIL
PARTNERSHIP**

**Report of the NENA Soil Partnership: towards a regional
implementation plan on sustainable management of Soil
Resources**

1-3 June 2015

Amman, Jordan

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1. Background

Following the approval of the Global Soil Partnership by FAO Conference in 2012, the Regional Soil Partnerships (RSPs) were established to activate an interactive consultative process with national soils entities working on soil functions and processes, including cross-cutting dimensions related to desertification, climate change and biodiversity particularly linked to policies and strategies of major UN conventions (UNCCD, UNFCCC, CBD). RSPs also build on existing regional networks or collaborative processes, linking national and local networks, partners, projects and activities to ensure that the partnership process is country-driven. The RSPs should provide guidance on regional goals/priorities and the required implementation mechanisms and regularly review progress in achieving common objectives and targets. In particular, RSPs should facilitate coordination between national and local soil management programs and activities to boost delivery and develop synergies.

The Near East and North Africa (NENA) Soil Partnership was established during the Inception Workshop on Regional Soil Partnership and NENA Soil Information, April 2012, Amman – Jordan (<http://www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/en/>). Participants from soil institutions and governments of ten countries presented their status of soil information and soil work programmes, highlighting the needs and priorities that the regional partnership would focus on. The *Amman Communiqué* fully supported the Global Soil Partnership and highlighted the need for strengthening the soil institutions through capacity development. Investing in sustainable soil management practices was clearly stressed.

The NENA Regional Soil Partnership also organized the NENA Conference in June 2014, Amman, Jordan, during which the NENA (Amman) Recommendation was formulated by the participants. With the support of FAO, the NENA Soil Partnership started with a first regional activity to develop the NENA Soil Information System including capacity development on soil information. After the endorsement of the global Plans of Action on Soils, the next step is the development of the implementation plan for the NENA region.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this NENA Soil Partnership Conference are:

- to increase awareness of policy makers, land users, research and development community and civil society organizations about the fundamental role of soils for human life and their prominent contributions to food security, climate change adaptation and mitigation, essential ecosystem services, poverty alleviation and sustainable development
- to celebrate the International Year of Soils
- to consolidate the NENA Soil Partnership by establishing a steering committee and thematic working groups as per the Regional Soil Partnerships guidelines
- to review and prioritize soil related challenges in the region by developing the NENA Soil Partnership Implementation Plan and discuss its execution
- to discuss a NENA Regional GEF draft proposal on soil and climate change

For more information, please refer to the conference concept note and agenda.

3. Summary of the conference activities and main outputs

Thirty-six participants from 20 countries, regional and international institutes discussed the various challenges and gaps toward sustainable soil management. A summary of the main activities to achieve better management of soil resources was prepared during the conference. A communique' was prepared to identify working groups for the five pillars of the Global Soil Partnership. The next step is to finalize the Regional Implementation Plan and to mobilize resources to commence the implementation.

4. Opening session

The speakers at the opening session welcomed the participants from different countries and institutions and indicated that this conference supports FAO and the international and regional soil communities in making the case for the vital role of soils as an indispensable resource and is a significant contribution to 2015 which was declared by the UN General Assembly as the International Year of Soils. It was emphasized that the role of soil as the foundation of agricultural and food production and in enhancing the potential to mitigate and adapt to climate change through their ability to store organic carbon is not always recognized by most decision makers because we consider "soil is everywhere" and we rarely ask "is it healthy and productive soil?"

The importance of nominating 2015 as the International Year of Soils with the slogan "Healthy Soils for a healthy life" as well as the designation of December 5 as the World Soil Day in raising awareness on the importance of soils and making healthy soils a key agenda item in public policy was mentioned.

It was also highlighted that there are difficulties in finding information about soil and therefore, it is important to consider the limited availability of soil information in the NENA region as a main constraint that needs lots of attention. Also, the importance of awareness of the public about soil problems and degradation. Soil is not among the issues within the League of Arab States, it is usually impeded within other subjects like climate change, and productivity. However, soil is under threats of soil erosion, desertification, loss of biodiversity, decline of organic matter, urbanization and others. This calls for the need to conserve the soil, develop effective preventive measures based on regional priorities, formulate policy messages about the impact of soil degradation, provide economic analysis (cost-benefit) of soil management and finally implementation of conservation interventions. It is important to link soils to ecosystem services and to remember that healthy soil is essential to achieve food security. Desertification and land degradation is considered as high priorities and soil is part of both. It was emphasized that the League of the Arab States is ready to collaborate with FAO and others for better management of soil resources.

The importance of the soil conference which is held in Amman for the third time to review the challenges and priorities of soil management and to formulate a plan for soil management was mentioned as an important step in institutionalizing the soil management

issue. Soil is an integral part of the development and there is an urgent need to raise awareness of decision makers and the public about the role of soil in food security, productivity and environmental challenges.

5. Global Soil Partnership and Celebration of IYS

The speakers in this session indicated the importance of the International Year of soil to raise the awareness about soil and to put soil in the political agenda. The need for formulating NAPs for CC and soil, partnership, soil mapping, formulation of indicators regarding soils, land use change, land productivity and trend of soil carbon were mentioned.

The organization of the Global Soil Week (GSW) was mentioned as a signal that soil is at the center of sustainable development. The importance of soils and impact on sustainability, economic stability and loss of productivity and yield due to soil degradation was emphasized. The GSW touches three issues:

- The role of soil in the Sustainable Development Goals was emphasized and the fact that we do not have enough soil to achieve our goals. We need to send a signal from regional soil partnership to manage soils differently. Soil could be considered as cross cutting issue in the SDG
- Planning for achieving SDG: there is a need to focus at regional level and regional priorities. Implementation strategy for the SDG at regional level. Role of soil in the implementation of SDG.
- Land rehabilitation focus: status of land degradation, how to put soil rehabilitation in the agenda. Land rehabilitation is an important issue in the sustainable development and play major role in Carbon storage. Initiative by French to increase carbon in the soil as contribution to SDG and fighting CC. Regional partnership is important in this. However, not much activities in the region regarding these issues. We need to be the first in linking these issues at the NENA region.

A short animation about the International Year of Soil was shown as awareness raising mean.

The GSP was introduced with major achievements and the need to develop the regional implementation plan. This should build on the five pillars of the GSP and on the regional priorities to achieve sustainable soil management. The progress and achievements of the NENA soil partnership was presented and discussed: the importance of NENA in terms area and population and land degradation issues, drought and population growth are dominant and therefore the need for sustainable soil management is urgently needed in the area.

The main challenges facing the NENA region are: soil erosion by water and wind, soil sealing, salinization and alkalization, loss of soil organic matter and fertility decline, desertification, urbanization, improper soil management practices and soil contamination. The main achievements of the NENA soil partnership are: establishing the NENA soil Information system, which is funded by EU for Jordan Syria, Tunisia, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen;

organizing a training on WRB by ISRIC and the conversion of hardcopy data into electronic format. The main constraints to develop NENA Soil Information System are the lack of geographic coordinates for soil sites, large and medium scale soil maps, lack of homogeneity between soil data. The short-term plan is to prepare implementation plan, organize training session on digital soil mapping, nominate a chair for each pillar and establish the steering committee.

6. Summary of discussion

Soil is not sufficiently considered in sustainable development. However, the impact of awareness campaign, such as the IYS 2015, is tangible and we should make more events for raising awareness about soil in the NENA region. There is a very important push for the soil in the international agenda through awareness. The short IYS 2015 animation was valued as a mean to raise awareness and it was recommended to disseminate such material for local TV and public media. The current political conditions in the region are important. The nomination of focal point for each country will support the NENA SP and there should be a commitment that the same participants will follow up all the time.

An important aspect is that soil is absent from the education programs and there is no interest in fundamental soil science. Therefore, we need to introduce soil science as part of the curriculum even at primary years.

The need for a regional body to work on soil was highlighted. It was emphasized that to take the soil issue forward in the NENA region, it is necessary to consider putting this topic at high level. More specifically, the MOA in Jordan could work with other ministries to launch a soil-related initiative by the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD). This could be taken to the approval by the Council of Arab Ministers (in Agriculture) and eventually to get support from The League of Arab States (LAS). Another option would be to approach the working groups for Biodiversity and Desertification within LAS to raise the soil in the political dialogues and in the NENA countries. A very good example is the water scarcity initiative (WSI), which was approved by the LAS. We should also link this to an outreach strategy and work through UNICEF and UNISCO to send clear these messages to the public and the policy makers. Currently, there are different messages sent to different audience. The NENA secretariat supports this and will take this as an outcome from the conference to the Minister of Agriculture and to share it with Ministers in the LAS. It was also suggested that Ministers responsible for environment and other related topics should be approached to gain more support to soil as an integral part of the environment.

The effort to compile soil maps from few countries was valued, especially under the current situation in the region. However, it is very important that all participating countries deliver the data they have to proceed with establishing the NENASIS.

The progress in implementing GSP is relatively faster in other regions compared to NENA. Therefore, we need to understand the challenges/constraints that prevent better implementation and suggest solutions to move forward in the right direction. Making

parallel working groups (maybe for each pillar) to foster work in different aspects was recommended. Also, support is needed to the secretariat to foster the implementation; this needs a good communication and support by all working groups so we can distribute responsibilities.

Important questions was raised: how to explain soil status and it is link to land degradation, biodiversity, ecosystem services, food security and human health and how to create a business case with economic values so we can publicize and get attention from different areas? i. e. how to build a marketable case?

7. Panel session on partnership and sustainable soil management

The panelists suggested tools and means to increase the visibility of soil by: ensuring that soil is included in the UNCCD reports, highlighting the role of soil and land management in reducing risks and promoting resilience, and defining mechanisms how to link soil management with national implementation plans. Issues related to the NENA region:

- Promote sustainable soil management;
- Provide information about soil potential and harmonization of soil data and information;
- Work with multi-disciplinary national communities, made of all stakeholders engaged in soil issues, to generate tangible impact;
- Encourage investment (investment return in soil is not tangible and/or not seen);
- Strengthen technical cooperation through the governments, partnerships, legal or policy making bodies and organization working in relevant issues;
- Raise the awareness and extension in soil: choose ambassadors of the soil to send the message to the public;
- Developing soil research, looking at gaps, interlinkages, and establish center of excellence to gather soil information;
- Take opportunity of important activities in 2015 and 2016, such as SDGs, COP CC, Finance for development (Addis Ababa), and Green climate fund, to highlight soils as one important aspect and present clear messages to these events in order to leverage resources. These events look for implementation plans, but there are many priorities and soils need to be promoted as a cross cutting issue to enhance support.
- The role of soil in SDGs indicators is important and should be used to gain more support to achieve sustainable development goals.

8. Country presentations on the priorities for sustainable soil management

Delegates from the participating countries presented the status of soil resources and priorities towards sustainable soil management, which highlighted the challenges, opportunities, national policies and institutional mechanisms. These presentations included the following main topics:

- An introduction about agricultural sector as part of the national economy and soil/land resources and the agricultural sector;
- A characterization of soil resources, highlighting the major soil types and their characteristics, area and distribution;
- The major biophysical challenges of soil resources, including type of challenges and area affected;
- Major policy and Institutional challenges of soil resources, including an analysis of major issues and suggested solutions;
- Opportunities towards sustainable soil management considering the available resources and current or future actions;
- Summary of main challenges and suggestions to achieve sustainable soil management (at country level but within regional context).

All presentations are uploaded at the GSP website.

9. Proposed GEF concept note to support land / soils degradation in RNE

The main purpose of the suggested program is to support sustainable soil management and land degradation under climate change environment. This was considered as a good and timely opportunity to support the implementation of the NENA soil partnership. Therefore the liaison between the GEF program and the RIP would generate mutual benefits for both. The GEF proposal composed of four components:

- Component 1: SLM focusing on soil health improvement, soil health standards setting and climate resilient systems.
- Component 2: integration of resilience into policy, legal and institutional frameworks for sustainable soil and land management.
- Component 3: upscaling of climate smart agricultural practices in drought prone and/or salt affected production landscapes.
- Component 4: monitoring and evaluation

Allocating 20% of GEF total allocation from each country resulted in 16.5 M USD plus co-financing. We need to get interest from countries who would like to participate through the GEF focal point to indicate their interest in participation. The participants from the following countries indicated their interest and willingness to follow up: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Palestine (in the regional activities), Sudan, and Tunisia. However, we need to follow up with the GSP focal points from these countries to liaise with GEF focal points to express their interest in this program. Important to form working groups between RNE, NRL, NENA secretariat and focal points from these countries.

10. Developing the NENA Implementation Plan

The regional implementation plans showed build on and be in harmony with the Plans of Action (POA) for the five GSP pillars. The five pillars are:

1. Promote sustainable management of soil resources and improved global governance for soil protection and sustainable productivity;
2. Encourage investment, technical cooperation, policy, education, awareness and extension in soils;
3. Promote targeted soil research and development focusing on identified gaps, priorities and synergies among economic/productive, environmental and social dimensions;
4. Enhance the quality and availability of soil data and information: collection, analysis, validation, reporting, monitoring, integration with other disciplines;
5. Harmonization of methods, measurements and indicators for the sustainable management and protection of soil resources.

The participants were divided into five groups to discuss and develop priorities and implementation plan for each pillar. This was followed by two plenary discussions to ensure the participation of all attendants, enhance synergies among pillars, and identify cross cutting issues across the five pillars. The RIP will be developed following the guidelines suggested by GSP secretariat and considering the specific challenges, gaps and opportunities in the NENA region. A summary of the main outcomes/activities for the five pillars as suggested by the working groups is listed below.

Pillar one: Promote sustainable management of soil resources and improved global governance for soil protection and sustainable productivity.

- Assessment of soil quality and hot spots for immediate actions
- Implementation of relevant SLM, including documentation of best practices and scaling out to similar areas
- Monitoring and assessment of the impact of implementation on achieving sustainable soil management

Pillar two: Encourage investment, technical cooperation, policy, education, awareness and extension in soils.

- Promote investment in soil rehabilitation and management.
- Enhance the role of policy, civil societies, and soil Institutions to support soil management
- Key messages to create awareness campaign to target the civil society and non-soil specialists through TV and other media
- Capacity building in soil related topics, promotion of soil science and education

Pillar three: Promote targeted soil research and development focusing on identified gaps, priorities and synergies among economic/productive, environmental and social dimensions.

- Changing from classical research to integrated research (system approach), which target specific soil challenges within landscapes (agro-ecosystems)
- Focused research on the economics of soil management
- Establish center of excellence for soil research in the NENA region

Pillar four: Enhance the quality and availability of soil data and information: collection, analysis, validation, reporting, monitoring, integration with other disciplines.

- Establish soil information system for the NENA region (GEOSS for NENA), define data need and specifications by different stakeholders and at different scales
- Establish indicators, monitoring and forecasting systems
- Create tool(s) to help users to create soil information for various demands and at different levels

Pillar five: Harmonization of methods, measurements and indicators for the sustainable management and protection of soil resources.

- Harmonization of sampling and analysis to facilitate data exchange (indicators exchange rather than data exchange)
- Harmonization of assessment criteria for soil health (salinity, erosion, degradation). Modified land degradation assessment (LADA/WOCAT) to give more emphasis in soils
- Harmonization of land evaluation criteria across the region (capability and suitability)

11. Establishment of Steering Committee and the way forward

It is important to keep the communication after this meeting, one way is by email and copying all concerned, especially the focal point. Focal points for all countries should be nominated. It is important to identify the role of the focal points. The following were identified:

- Make efforts within the countries to raise awareness about the GSP and the implementation of five pillars and contribute actively in the formulation of the RIP.
- Work with groups to arrange the activities and organizing meeting with national team and donors.
- Present and promote the RIP and seek funding at national level.
- Contribute to the resources mobilization at national, regional and global level.

The participants worked together to agree on a communique' to express their commitment to the NENA soil partnership and the GSP (appendix C). The participants agreed to consolidate the NENA Soil Partnership by establishing the Secretariat hosted by Jordan until

the next meeting and a Steering Committee that will be formed in consultation with the focal points. The functional statement (TOR) of the NENA soil partnership will be prepared in consultation with the focal points. Also, they agreed to establish working groups for the five GSP Pillars of Action with the composition of individual members representing countries/institutions:

Pillar 1: Chair: Mr. Hedi Hamrouni

Members: Emad Ghanma, Abdelhakim Ouzzane, Ali Abdulla, Talal Darwish, Mohamed Yacoub, Iman Sahib Salman

Pillar 2: Chair: Dr. Ali Hamid AlShabani

Members: Ahmed Madlool Mohammed, Rahma AlHabsi, Hedi Hamrouni, Atef Amriche, Ahmed Dowek

Pillar 3: Chair: Dr Rafaat Kamal Yacoub

Members: Hamdan AlWahaibi, Ali Abdulah, Talal Darwish, AbdelMagid Ali ElMobarak, Claudio Zucca, Mahamed Yacoub, Karim Ouamerali, Rachid Moussadek

Pillar 4: Chair: Rachid Moussadek

Members: Imad Ghanma, AbdelMagid Ali ElMobarak, Rafaat Kamal Yacoub, Claudio Zucca, Ali Abdulah, Mahmoud AlFrieht, Talal Darwish, Abdelhakim Ouzzane

Pillar 5: Chair: Imad Ghanma

Members: Abdelhakim Ouzzane, Mahamed Yacoub, Claudio Zucca, Hedi Hamrouni, Talal Darwish, Ali Abdulah, AbdelMagid Ali ElMobarak, Rachid Moussadek, Rafaat Kamal Yacoub

The participants agreed to develop the NENA Soil Partnership Implementation Plan for a horizon of five years. The development of this plan will be facilitated by the Secretariat, the focal points and the Steering Committee ensuring a very inclusive process where all partners in the region plan an active role. The execution of this implementation plan will be coordinated by the secretariat and the focal points. They also expressed their commitments to make the International Year of Soils 2015 a successful foundation for advocating sustainable soil management in the region and especially to bring this momentum beyond 2015.

Appendix A: Conference Concept Note



NENA Soil Partnership Conference: towards a regional implementation plan on sustainable management of Soil Resources

1-3 June 2015, Amman, Jordan

Background

Healthy soils are the basis for enhanced food and nutrition security and provide various ecosystem services, including maintenance of biodiversity and resilience to climate variability and climate change.

Soil is the essential component of land and production systems and performs important provisioning and regulatory ecosystem functions by maintaining the exchange of energy and matter between the biosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere. Soil is a complex, multifaceted environment enabling the evolution and adaptation of a highly diverse biotic community, which use the soil as its permanent or temporary habitat or refuge.

Soil and land degradation are widespread in many cropping systems in NENA countries and the loss of soil quality and its protective cover affect the ecosystem services leading to nutrient mining, hydrological disturbance, loss of above- and below-ground biological diversity and reduced soil carbon stocks and associated increases in carbon emissions.

Climate change is expected to exacerbate effects of soil degradation through increases in drought and heat stress, extreme weather events, and an increase in pests and diseases particularly in the NENA region. Unless properly managed, continued soil and land degradation by unsustainable agricultural practices in small and large, subsistence and commercial, farming systems (including pastoral and livestock systems), will cause further decline in soil productivity and loss of a large array of social, economic and environmental services.

One major role of soils in this respect is as provider of "green water" stored in the soil and "blue water" delivered to downstream users. Upstream land users in watersheds can better manage their soil resources and thereby generate green water credits to supplement their income from the sale of food and other products. Various schemes are now operating in most regions, led by Latin America, where land users upstream are remunerated for their contribution to the provision of reliable water quantity and quality downstream.

The attainment of hunger eradication and global food security and nutrition cannot be achieved unless soils are placed high in the national and international development agenda. The importance of 'soil health' needs to be recognized and valued not only for their productive capacities, but also for their contributions to the maintenance of key ecosystem services. Recognizing these alarming facts, the 68th

session of the United Nations General Assembly declared 2015 as the International Year of Soils (IYS) with the overall goal of being a major platform for raising awareness of the importance of soils for food security and nutrition and essential ecosystem services.

Following the approval of the Global Soil Partnership by FAO Conference in 2012, the Regional Soil Partnerships (RSPs) were established among interested and active stakeholders to activate an interactive consultative process with national soils entities (soil survey and soil management institutions, scientific soil societies, universities and soils scientists) working on soil functions and processes, including cross-cutting dimensions related to desertification, climate change and biodiversity particularly linked to policies and strategies of major UN conventions (UNCCD, UNFCCC, CBD). RSPs also build on existing regional networks or collaborative processes, linking national and local networks, partners, projects and activities to ensure that the partnership process is country-driven. The RSPs should provide guidance on regional goals/priorities and the required implementation mechanisms and regularly review progress in achieving common objectives and targets. In particular, RSPs should facilitate coordination between national and local soil management programs and activities to boost delivery and develop synergies.

The Near East and North Africa (NENA) Soil Partnership was established during the Inception Workshop on Regional Soil Partnership and NENA Soil Information, April 2012, Amman – Jordan (<http://www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/en/>). Participants from soil institutions and governments of ten countries presented their status of soil information and soil work programmes, highlighting the needs and priorities that the regional partnership would focus on. The *Amman Communiqué* fully supported the Global Soil Partnership and highlighted the need for strengthening the soil institutions through capacity development. Investing in sustainable soil management practices was clearly stressed.

The NENA Regional Soil Partnership also organized the NENA Conference in June 2014, Amman, Jordan, during which the NENA (Amman) Recommendation was formulated by the participants. With the support of FAO, the NENA Soil Partnership started with a first regional activity to develop the NENA Soil Information System including capacity development on soil information. After the endorsement of the global Plans of Action on Soils, the next step is the development of the implementation plan for the NENA region.

Objectives

The objectives of this NENA Soil Partnership Conference are:

- to increase awareness of policy makers, land users, research and development community and civil society organizations about the fundamental roles of soils for human life and their prominent contributions to food security, climate change adaptation and mitigation, essential ecosystem services, poverty alleviation and sustainable development
- to celebrate the International Year of Soils
- to consolidate the NENA Soil Partnership by establishing a steering committee and thematic working groups as per the Regional Soil Partnerships guidelines
- to review and prioritize soil related challenges in the region by developing the NENA Soil Partnership Implementation Plan and discuss its execution
- to discuss a NENA Regional GEF draft proposal on soil and climate change

Expected outputs

- 1) NENA Soil Partnership institutional mechanism (including steering committee and working groups) and the functional statement (TOR) discussed and agreed
- 2) NENA Soil Partnership Implementation Plan endorsed
- 3) An initial NENA Regional GEF proposal on soil and climate change elaborated through a participatory process
- 4) Workshop report prepared

Expected participants (about 40-50 participants)

Two participants from each country; one being the national Focal Point to the GSP or the president of the National Soil Science Society; the other being a professional from development and extension-service institutions. GEF focal points. The NENA members of the GSP Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS). International and regional institutions and agencies, development banks and donors, research and development organizations dealing with agriculture, land, soils and climate change. Other major regional organizations.

Structure of the Conference and Provisional Agenda

The three-day regional Conference will be organized as follows:

Day 1 will have a high-level segment to deliver messages by policy makers, International and Regional Institutions and Keynote Speakers devoted to the International Year of Soils. A high-level panel discussion will address emerging issues related to soil and climate change in the region and will provide a perspective for future work orientations.

After the high-level segment, the conference will continue in the form of an operational Workshop with the core members of the NENA Soil Partnership and interested participants. A Technical session will be devoted to knowledge sharing providing the opportunity to learn more about the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) implementation plan and progress achieved and lessons learned about the NENA Soil Partnership. Each participating country will make a short presentation about the national policies, institutional mechanisms and priorities towards sustainable soil management in their respective countries. A NENA draft Regional GEF proposal on soils, land and climate change will also be presented.

Day 2 will have the participants divided in two working groups, as per GSP pillars, to identify the regional priorities and related actions, as part of the Regional Implementation Plan and to draft a GEF proposal on soils, land and climate change in NENA region.

Day 3 will establish the steering committee of the NENA Soil Partnership and will present the NENA Soil Partnership Implementation Plan and recommendations for the Regional GEF proposal. A final *communiqué* on the IYS will be also agreed.

Appendix B: Conference Agenda



Near East and North Africa Soil Partnership Conference

1 – 3 June, Amman, Jordan

Conference Agenda

Time	Topic	Chair/Moderator
First Day: 1st June		
08:30 – 09:00	Registration	
Session 1		
Welcome, Opening remarks, Keynote address – Celebrating the International Year of Soils		
09:00 – 09:30	Welcome and Opening Remarks Mr. Nasredin Hag Elamin, FAO Representative, Jordan Mr. Pasquale Steduto, Deputy Representative, RNE, FAO H.E. Shahira Wahbi, Chief of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation, League of Arab States H.E Dr Akef AL Zoubi Minister of Agriculture	Talal Alfayez
9:30 – 10:30	International Year of Soils <i>Dr. Parviz Koochafkan, FAO Senior Consultant, Former Director of Land and Water Division, FAO</i> Issues and priorities on Soil and land degradation in NENA region: A UNCCD perspective <i>Mr. Sergio Zelaya, Head of Policy and advocacy, UNCCD</i> Soils: The Substance of Transformation. Report from the Global Soil Week 2015 <i>Mr. Alexander Muller, Secretary General ad Interim IASS Potsdam institute, Former ADG Natural Resources, FAO</i>	Talal Alfayez
10:30 – 11:00	Group photo and Coffee/Tea break	
Session 2		
This session will provide the opportunity to learn more about the GSP and NENA Soil Partnership		
11:00 – 11:15	Introduction to the Global Soil Partnership <i>Mr Feras Ziadat, GSP Secretariat, FAO</i>	Pasquale Steduto
11:15 – 11:30	NENA Soil Partnership – current status <i>Mr. Mahmoud Alferihat, RSP Secretariat, Ministry of Agriculture of Jordan</i>	Pasquale Steduto
11:30 – 12:00	Panel discussion on partnership, support to country, role	Pasquale Steduto

	of different sectors in sustainable soil management Representatives of invited guests and donors	
Session 3		
Country presentations on the priorities for sustainable soil management		
12:00 – 13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algeria • Bahrain • Egypt • Iran 	Mahmoud/Feras
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 – 16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iraq • Jordan • Kuwait • Lebanon • Libya • Morocco • Oman • Qatar 	Mahmoud/Feras
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee/Tea break	
16:30 – 18:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saudi Arabia • Sudan • Syria • Tunisia • United Arab Emirates • Yemen Guidelines to develop regional	Mahmoud/Feras Khresat
Second Day: 2nd June		
Session 4		
Working groups - NENA Implementation Plan and GEF Concept Note discussions		
08:30 – 09:00	Land /soils degradation and the proposed GEF concept note to support activities in RNE – Parviz Koohafkan	Amal Aldababseh - FAORNE
09:00 – 10:30	Working groups per pillar, developing priorities for the NENA Implementation Plan - Chair and Rapporteur per WG	Mahmoud/Feras
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee/Tea break	
11:00 – 13:00	Continuation of working groups discussion	Chair and Rapporteur per WG
13:00 – 14:15	Lunch Break	
14:15 – 15:30	Continuation of working groups discussion	Chair and Rapporteur per WG
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee/Tea break	
16:00 – 17:30	Presentation by working groups and discussion of GEF program as part of the implementation plan	Pasquale Steduto

Third Day: 3rd June		
08:30 – 10:00	Review of the draft NENA Implementation Plan and institutional setting	Mahmoud/Feras
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee/Tea break	
10:30 – 13:00	Adoption of the NENA Implementation Plan	Mahmoud/Feras
13:00 – 14:15	Lunch break	
Session 5: Establishment of Steering Committee and the way forward		
14:15 – 15:00	Establishment of NENA Soil Partnership steering committee	Mahmoud/Feras
15:00 – 15:30	Prepare a communiqué	Mahmoud/Feras
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee/Tea break	
16:00 – 17:00	Prepare a communiqué	Mahmoud/Feras
17:00 – 17:30	Final conclusions and adoption of the communiqué: The Way forward of the NENA Regional Soil Partnership	Parviz Koohafkan

Appendix C: NENA Communiqués'

NENA Communiqué'

Amman, 3rd June 2015

We, the representatives of 12 countries from Near East and North Africa Region participating at the NENA Soil Partnership Conference held in Amman, Jordan from 1 to 3 June 2015, funded by FAO and jointly organized with the Ministry of Agriculture of Jordan and in accordance to the Terms of Reference of the Global Soil partnership, would like to:

- Appreciate the great diversity of soils in the region and their fundamental value for food security and overall sustainable development.
- Draw the attention that soil degradation is a serious process that is affecting the soils in the region through their various forms such as soil erosion by water and wind, soil pollution, nutrient imbalance soil organic matter depletion, soil alkalization soil sealing (urban encroachment), soil salinity, deterioration of soil physical properties, status of land tenure and absence of proper land governance.
- Report that the degradation process is threatening the soil resources in the NENA region and thus is affecting food production and associated food security, provision of ecosystem services, adaptation to climate change and increasing poverty. The situation is being aggravated by climate change and unsustainable soil management practices.
- Inform that the establishment of the NENA Soil Partnership is a unique opportunity for addressing the current challenges and serve as platform for promoting sustainable soil management in the region.
- Advocating for the following priorities in the region: promotion of sustainable soil management at all levels and in all land use types; restoration/rehabilitation of degraded soils. Similarly, the enhancement of soil information by using state of the art methods of digital soil mapping and advocating for having national soil information systems.
- Draw the attention that investment on the promotion of sustainable soil management is a pre-condition for achieving sustainable development. Therefore, it is fundamental to increase the investment to support the execution of actions under the priorities highlighted before.

To achieve these goals, the participants agreed to consolidate the NENA Soil Partnership by establishing the Secretariat hosted by Jordan until the next meeting and a Steering Committee that will be formed in consultation with the focal points.

The functional statement (TOR) of the NENA soil partnership will be prepared in consultation with the focal points.

Also, we agreed to establish working groups for the five GSP Pillars of Action with the composition of individual members representing countries/institutions:

Pillar 1: Chair: Mr. Hedi Hamrouni

Members: Emad Ghanma, Abdelhakim Ouzzane, Ali Abdulla, Talal Darwish, Mohamed Yacoub, Iman Sahib Salman

Pillar 2: Chair: Dr. Ali Hamid AlShabani

Members: Ahmed Madlool Mohammed, Rahma AlHabsi, Hedi Hamrouni, Atef Amriche, Ahmed Dowek

Pillar 3: Chair: Dr Rafaat Kamal Yacoub

Members: Hamdan AlWahaibi, Ali Abdulah, Talal Darwish, AbdelMagid Ali ElMobarak, Claudio Zucca, Mahamed Yacoub, Karim Ouamerali, Rachid Moussadek

Pillar 4: Chair: Rachid Moussadek

Members: Imad Ghanma, AbdelMagid Ali ElMobarak, Rafaat Kamal Yacoub, Claudio Zucca, Ali Abdulah, Mahmoud AlFriehat, Talal Darwish, Abdelhakim Ouzzane

Pillar 5: Chair: Imad Ghanma

Members: Abdelhakim Ouzzane, Mahamed Yacoub, Claudio Zucca, Hedi Hamrouni, Talal Darwish, Ali Abdulah, AbdelMagid Ali ElMobarak, Rachid Moussadek, Rafaat Kamal Yacoub

Similarly, we agreed to develop the NENA Soil Partnership Implementation Plan for a horizon of five years. The development of this plan will be facilitated by the Secretariat, the focal points and the Steering Committee ensuring a very inclusive process where all partners in the region plan an active role.

The execution of this implementation plan will be coordinated by the secretariat and the focal points.

We commit to make the International Year of Soils 2015 a successful foundation for advocating sustainable soil management in the region and especially to bring this momentum beyond 2015.

Abi Abdullah

AS

Imad Ghannma

[Signature]

Abdelhakim OUZZANE

[Signature]

Ghassan Hamdallah

[Signature]

MOUSSADEK Radid

[Signature]

Mohamed alferih

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Dr. Hamdan Alwahabi

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Talal Darwich

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Amr Zee

Heidi HANROUM

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Dr. Hameed Alshab

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Rahma AlHabsi

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NEVA GSP

Appendix D: List of Participants

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