

May 2016

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## Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly



<b>Fourth session</b>
<b>Rome, 23-25 May 2016</b>
<b>Implementation of the World Soil Day and its celebration in 2016</b>

### Executive Summary

- The GSP Plenary Assembly agreed to be the venue for the selection of themes of successive World Soil Day (WSD) celebrations, and more generally for keeping abreast of WSD-related developments. Accordingly, the Assembly endorsed WSD themes for 2015 and 2016: i.e. respectively “*Soils, a solid ground for life*” and “*Soils and pulses: symbiosis for life*”. It also endorsed the visual identity of WSD.
- The World Soil Day celebration occurred on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2015, with activities carried out in more than 100 countries. It was also the opportunity to close the [International Year of Soils](#) with events organized by the Secretariat in Rome, New York, Bangkok, Santiago and Accra. The material campaign built on the material developed for the IYS with main focus on the launch of the Status of the World’s Soil Resources report and an animation on Soils and the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN Secretary General issued a message to commemorate this day. Various stakeholders and a good communication coverage ensured an interesting dissemination of the WSD messages.
- The Secretariat aims to keep the momentum gained with the IYS legacy, by pursuing a committed awareness raising campaign activity supported by a dedicated team as a crosscutting, seminal feature of the GSP. To this end, World Soil Day, through a dedicated website and use of social media, together with the proposed World Soil Prize (cf. document for item 8) will constitute the main awareness building platforms.
- In order to truly deliver knowledge and promote education across multiple audiences while continuing to foster the interest and attention built in the past years, it may be observed that one cannot rely on a single occurrence such as WSD. Indeed, there is the need to establish year-long contacts with the public. Only through a dedicated team one can maintain this kind of public attention, delivering appealing, educational material that can be used across a variety of audiences in several languages.
- The theme for WSD 2016 “*Soils and pulses: symbiosis for life*” will facilitate regular exchanges with the public, mostly through the use of social media, producing messages and awareness raising material (topics to be identified). . Indeed, a recent seminar organized in

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FAO HQ was the starting point for this kind of approach. As a tradition, the WSD per se will have an event organized in the main regional FAO offices, while the GSP Secretariat will provide support for national celebrations by offering its website and social media platform as a global sounding board for local activities. A more detailed presentation on the plan for WSD2016 will be provided by the Secretariat during the PA.

- Finally, the following theme is proposed for the WSD occurrence in 2017: *“Soils, ground for development”*.

**Suggested action by the GSP Plenary Assembly**

- The Plenary Assembly may wish to:
  - take note of the successful first WSD celebration on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and the programme foreseen for WSD 2016.
  - endorse the theme proposed for WSD 2017.
  - invite resource partners to financially contribute to the implementation of the sustained communication plan proposed by the Secretariat.