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	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
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Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly

First session

Rome, 11-12 June 2013

Adoption of the Global Soil Partnership Rules of Procedure

Executive Summary

- This document covers proposed rules of procedure for the Global Soils Partnership (GSP) to facilitate its operations.
- The 145th session of the FAO Council which was held from 3rd to 7th December 2012 approved the Terms of Reference of the Global Soil Partnership (CL 145/REP/F1-4) and recommended implementation of the initiative.
- With the assistance of FAO's Legal Office, the Secretariat has prepared a draft version of the GSP Rules of Procedure. This draft was circulated to GSP partners for comments and suggestions. The review process was conducted in an inclusive manner, and after two rounds of consultations, the majority of proposed changes were reflected into a revised version, as set out in this document.
- This version is hereby submitted to the GSP Plenary Assembly for adoption.

Suggested action by the GSP Plenary Assembly

- The Plenary Assembly may wish to:
 - adopt the Rules of Procedure as presented;
 - request the Secretariat to ensure full application of the Rules of Procedure during the implementation of the Global Soil Partnership.

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I. Rules of Procedure of the Global Soil Partnership

The Plenary Assembly of the Global Soil Partnership adopted Rules of Procedure for the GSP, at its first session of June 2013.

Rule I - Scope

These Rules of Procedure shall apply to all activities related to the implementation of the Global Soil Partnership.

Rule II - Partners

- 1) As a voluntary and inclusive initiative, the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) will be composed by various types of partners, including: governments, international and regional organizations, technical institutions, civil society organizations, private sector bodies and other stakeholders, but not individuals.
- 2) The Partners shall accept the following conditions:
 - to abide by the World Soil Charter Principles;
 - to pledge full willingness to participate in GSP activities;
 - to act in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the GSP;
 - to implement the decisions reached at the sessions of the Plenary Assembly.

Rule III – Plenary Assembly

- 1) The Plenary Assembly shall normally hold one regular session every year. It may also decide to convene extraordinary sessions, subject to the approval of Partners. Regular sessions shall not exceed three days and shall be preceded by regional consultations (based, to the extent possible, on electronic communications methods such as teleconferences). The sessions of the Plenary Assembly shall normally be held at the FAO Headquarters in Rome.
- 2) The notice for a regular session of the Plenary Assembly shall be communicated to Partners not less than 60 days before the opening day, while notices for extraordinary sessions could be sent not less than 30 days in advance.
- 3) Sessions of the Plenary Assembly shall be convened by the GSP Secretariat (hereafter referred to as Secretariat) in consultation with the Secretary of the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG).
- 4) Each Partner shall communicate in writing to the Secretariat the name of its representative (s), before the opening day of each session of the Plenary Assembly.
- 5) Partners should, as far as possible, be represented by highly qualified senior officers so as to contribute actively to multidisciplinary discussions of the subjects on the agenda of the Plenary Assembly.
- 6) At the end of each session, the Plenary Assembly shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson, or in his absence the Vice-Chairperson, shall preside at the subsequent sessions of the Plenary Assembly.

- 7) The Plenary Assembly will keep under continuous review, prioritize and monitor GSP activities through Plans of Action related to each of the GSP pillars. Decisions taken at the Plenary Assembly will be implemented by Partners with the support of the Secretariat.
- 8) Expenses of Partners to attend the sessions of the Plenary Assembly shall be borne by them.

Rule IV - Agenda and documents

- 1) The Secretariat, in consultation with Partners and, if needed, the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils, shall prepare a provisional agenda for the Plenary Assembly which shall be communicated with due notice, in accordance with Rule III.2.
- 2) Any Partner may request the Secretariat, not less than 30 days before the date fixed for the opening day of the Plenary Assembly, to add an item to the provisional agenda. The Secretariat shall thereupon advise all Partners about the proposed item, together with any necessary documents.
- 3) The Assembly may, by consensus, amend the agenda through the deletion, addition or modification of any item.
- 4) Documents to be submitted to any session of the Plenary Assembly shall be posted on the GSP website at the time the agenda is published, or as soon as possible thereafter, but at least three weeks prior to the opening day. Upon request by Partners, the documents may be provided in hard copy.
- 5) Documents exceeding 5000 words shall include an executive summary.

Rule V - Decision-making

- 1) All GSP decisions shall be taken by consensus during the Plenary Assembly unless another method of arriving at a decision on certain measures is adopted (also by consensus).
- 2) Decisions about strategic areas requiring follow-up by national governments in terms of adoption and implementation will be solely decided upon by FAO Members. Other partners may contribute to this specific decision-taking process by providing expert guidance and technical support.

Rule VI - Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS)

- 1) Procedure for establishing the ITPS:

The ITPS shall be established as follows:

- a) The Secretariat will request Partners to propose, within a specific deadline, names of experts from their respective regions, who shall have:
 - a recognized academic profile (postgraduate level);
 - demonstrated experience at international level in different soil-related activities, ranging from research to development;
 - a record of sound publications subjected to peer reviews;
 - a position that would not preclude the provision of advice independently from their employment status and nationality;

- b) The Secretariat will consolidate a list of experts on the basis of the above criteria.
- c) This list of experts will be submitted to FAO Member countries requesting their endorsement, while respecting the regional distribution mentioned in section 5.2 of the Terms of Reference of the GSP.
- d) The members of the ITPS will be appointed at the Plenary Assembly and will not hold any employment contract with FAO. The Secretariat will meet the costs related to the time devoted to their assigned tasks and their participation in the sessions, as requested by the Plenary Assembly.

2) Duties of members of ITPS

The members of the ITPS shall:

- a) sign a “non-conflict of interest” declaration;
- b) participate at the Plenary Assembly, when requested either by the Plenary Assembly or by the Secretariat;
- c) elect a Chairperson whose tasks will be:
 - i) to coordinate activities with panel members;
 - ii) to act as communication channel with the Secretariat;
 - iii) to report to the Plenary Assembly and to other events, if so requested by the Plenary Assembly or the Secretariat.

3) Functions

The ITPS will have the following functions:

- a) provide scientific and technical advice and guidance on global soil issues primarily to the GSP and in relation to specific requests submitted by global or regional institutions.
- b) advocate for the inclusion of sustainable soil management into different development agendas.
- c) review and monitor the situation and issues related to soils in the contexts of food security, use and management of natural resources, ecosystem services provision, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and other relevant areas.
- d) review and endorse from a technical viewpoint the GSP Plans of Action.
- e) monitor the implementation of these Plans of Action with due attention to their impact and contributions to different global policies and initiatives related to sustainable development, MDGs, food security, climate change adaptation and other subject matters.
- f) in exceptional cases, when complex technical matters arise, request the Plenary Assembly and the Secretariat to form technical committees aiming to gather specific advice.

Rule VII – Regional Soil Partnerships

- 1) Regional soil partnerships (RSPs) shall be established in each of the following geographical areas:
 - Africa
 - Asia
 - Europe
 - Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Near East
 - North America
 - Southwest Pacific
- 2) Partners may decide to establish soil partnerships of regional nature not coinciding with those mentioned in the preceding paragraph, based on common language, culture, physical location or other considerations.
- 3) Members of the RSPs shall be members of the GSP willing to promote the World Soil Charter principles in their respective region.
- 4) The RSP Partners will identify the priorities for their region and present them at the Plenary Assembly. The ITPS will provide guidance on these priorities and support their implementation through the concerned Plans of Action.
- 5) Each RSP shall liaise with the Secretariat for coordinating the implementation of activities in their region.
- 6) The Secretariat will facilitate the functioning of the RSPs, particularly through the implementation at regional level of global actions. The RSPs will seek to catalyze in a proactive manner the necessary financial support at regional level for implementing their activities.

Rule VIII - Reporting

The Plenary Assembly shall report, through the Secretariat, to the FAO's Committee on Agriculture which may bring to the attention of the FAO Council any recommendation adopted by the GSP that may have policy implications, or could affect strategic programmes of FAO. As soon as the report of the Plenary Assembly becomes available, it will be circulated to all Partners and will also be sent for information to international organizations concerned with soil resources.

Rule IX - Secretariat and expenses

- 1) The Secretariat shall be composed by FAO technical and administrative staff. It should facilitate and coordinate implementation of GSP activities at all levels in close interaction with the Plenary Assembly, the ITPS and the RSPs.
- 2) The Secretariat will organize meetings related to the implementation of GSP activities and provide the necessary administrative and technical support.
- 3) The Secretariat will facilitate the work of the ITPS, including interaction between the ITPS and the Plenary Assembly.
- 4) The Secretariat will also facilitate the work of the RSPs in implementing the Plans of Action at regional level.

- 5) The Secretariat will be responsible for organizing activities related to the celebration of the World Soil Day, and other awareness raising events such as the International Year of Soils.

Rule X - Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

- 1) The Plenary Assembly may amend these Rules of Procedure, provided that such amendments are consistent with the Terms of Reference of the GSP.
- 2) No proposal for the amendment of these Rules of Procedure shall be included in the agenda of any session of the Plenary Assembly unless notice thereof has been given to Partners by the Secretariat at least 30 days before the opening of the session.