



NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

newsletter

LAND RESOURCES

Developing the Global Soil Partnership



AT FAO HEADQUARTERS in March 2012, eighty-five experts attended a technical consultation on soil mapping and to discuss how these activities should be undertaken by the Global Soil Partnership. Participants came from all geographical regions, representing member governments, international organizations, research institutes, the donor community and academia.

Alexander Mueller, Assistant Director-General of FAO's Natural Resources Management and Environment Department spoke about the need to establish a Global Soil Partnership. "What we can see, especially in the last years, is that there is an increased pressure on land: biofuels, more food, more fiber. We can see additional threats by climate change and, therefore, it's very clear: if we don't protect the basis of food production, the basis of our ecosystems – land – we'll have a big problem in our future. And so it's high time to act now and to gather all relevant players to create this global soil partnership."

Speaking from the donor perspective, Dr. Christian Witt, Senior Programme Officer at the Gates Foundation, supported the need for building a true partnership. "We think the Global Soil Partnership adds tremendous value to our existing investments because it brings together a wide range of stakeholders that we could never bring together. There's an enormous opportunity here to work together and to integrate data from various sources into a global soil partnership, so that data are really operable from field level up to

global level."

Dr. Thomas Strassburger the Director-General of Environment at the European Commission stressed that good soil information underpins all sound environmental policy-making: "I cannot convince anybody if I can't explain why it matters at all. [Soil information] is on soil fertility, it's food security, it's a need for irrigation to have soil that accumulates water - to keep water, instead of allowing for surface run-off. You see all the flooding in Europe and, on the other side, there is more and more pressure in the future. In Europe alone we are losing about 1000 sq km alone, just to development. Soils that we are missing in the future, with more and more people and less land. So, there is a need for action."

Work in establishing the Global Soil Partnership continues as a wide range of stakeholders share their views on how such a partnership can best serve the international community and provide access to long-neglected soil information.



To learn more:

[Global Soil Partnership video interviews](#)

[Global Soil Partnership web site](#)



**GLOBAL SOIL
PARTNERSHIP**

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Natural Resources and Environment Newsletter



WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE of the Natural Resources and Environment Newsletter.

In the June issue of the Natural Resources and Environment newsletter, we examine the importance of the newly established Global Soil Partnership. Soil specialists, international organization staff, the donor community and academics discuss what such collaboration can achieve. We note the events of World Water Day, highlighting water and food security.

Moreover, a new web site, Sustainability Pathways, focuses on greening the economy with agriculture and related ecosystem services.

To learn more:

Natural Resources Management and Environment Department
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

www.fao.org/nr

WATER RESOURCES

World Water Day celebrations

EACH SPRING, WORLD WATER DAY is celebrated worldwide. This year's theme was 'Water and Food Security' and it was celebrated at FAO Headquarters in Rome on 22 March with a roundtable discussion about challenges to achieving water and food security.

All of the experts present at the event agreed that securing water resources in a time of population growth is a key concern around the world. The world population is currently seven billion people, and we expect that figure to grow by another two billion by the year 2050. We know that each person consumes between two to four litres of drinking water each day. However, water is also embedded in the food we eat. Producing one kilogramme of beef requires 15,000 litres of water and each one kilogramme of wheat utilizes 1,500 litres for its production.

In light of growing population and challenges such as climate change and rapid urbanization we must become more aware of our water use. By 2050, it is estimated that almost two-thirds of the world population could live in water-stressed areas. The message of this year's World

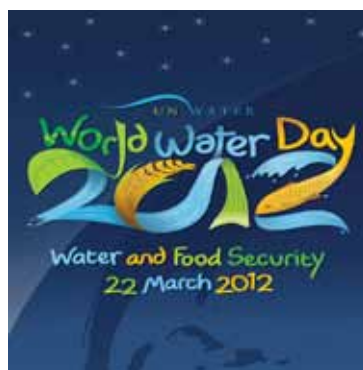


Water Day is the need to seek sustainable solutions to ensure that we conserve our valuable water resources and ensure that more food is produced for our growing populations, while utilizing less water, ensuring more sustainable diets and reducing the high level of food wastage.

Changing habits and finding sustainable solutions to achieving food security will require heightened awareness of the challenges we face and a strong political will. This important theme will also be the focus of discussions at the upcoming World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden, 26-31 August.

To learn more:

- [World Water Day web site](#)
- [World Water Day 2012 video](#)
- [FAO Water web site](#)



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Sustainability Pathways

THE NEW SUSTAINABILITY PATHWAYS site is on-line, offering information and publications on new projects spanning issues of greening the economy with agriculture, ecosystem services, sustainability and livestock, and food loss and waste. The site will also offer e-for a on timely issues and allow you to share your views and experiences.

The site is available in English, French and Spanish and will be regularly updated with news, events and information.

To learn more:
[Sustainability Pathways site](#)