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COUNCIL

Hundred and Forty-eighth session

Rome, 2-6 December 2013

Report of the First Meeting of the Plenary Assembly of the Global Soil Partnership (Rome, 11-12 June 2013)

Executive Summary

The Council approved the Terms of Reference of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) at its 145th Session of December 2012, and “recommended the implementation of the initiative”.

In this regard, the first meeting of the Plenary Assembly of the GSP was held on 11-12 June 2013 in Rome.

As appears from the Report of this meeting, two significant milestones at the early stage in the development of the initiative were achieved: the adoption of complementary GSP Rules of Procedure, and the establishment of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS), which held its first meeting on 22-26 July 2013 in Rome.

The Plenary Assembly also addressed other important dimensions of the GSP, including the foreseen preparation of Plans of Action under the five Pillars¹ and the progressive establishment of Regional Soil Partnerships. On the financial side, it requested in particular the establishment of a dedicated facility under FAO's rules to facilitate collection of (extra-budgetary) contributions and financial allocations to approved activities and projects in a transparent manner.

Suggested action by the Council

The Council is invited to:

- note the good progress made at the first meeting of the Plenary Assembly of the GSP.
- note that the current and future reports of the Plenary Assembly shall be reported to the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), which would advise the Council on any recommendations adopted by the GSP that may have policy implications, or could affect strategic programmes of FAO, as specified in the GSP Rules of Procedures (Rule IX).

¹ The pillars (in abbreviated form) are: 1) promotion of sustainable soil management; 2) encourage investment, technical cooperation, policy, education awareness and extension in soil; 3) promoted targeted soil research and development; 4) enhance the quantity and quality of soil data and information,; and 5) harmonization of methods, measurements and indicators.

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;
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Other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org*



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GSPPA-I/13/Report

First Meeting of the Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly

Rome, Italy, 11- 12 June 2013



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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OPENING OF THE SESSION

- The first meeting of the Plenary Assembly of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) was held in Rome at FAO headquarters on 11-12 June 2013 (List of participants is attached as Annex I).
- The Assembly appointed the following officers for this session: as Chairperson, Ambassador Mario Arvelo, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic; as Vice-Chair, Minister Rapibhat Chandarasrivongs, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Thailand; and as Rapporteur, Dr. Pavel Krasilnikov from the Russian Federation.
- The Assembly welcomed the keynote address from Dr. Hafdis Hanna (Programme Director of the Land Restoration Programme, UNU, Iceland) covering examples of the severe soil degradation experienced in many regions, particularly in Iceland, and the successful efforts made to reverse it.
- The provisional agenda and timetable were adopted, as submitted in document GSPPA I/2013.

I. Item 1: Adoption of the GSP Rules of Procedure (document GSPPA I/2013/1)

1. The Assembly took note that the proposed Rules contained in the document had been the object of consultations with partners, and that they also duly reflected advice from the Legal Office of FAO. It recognized that their purpose was to complement the Terms of Reference (ToRs) agreed by the Council, in order to facilitate work under the GSP at a more practical level.
2. Many interventions were made, requesting amendments to the text in the first instance with a view to making the Rules more precise and reflective of the ToRs. Among key aspects addressed, there was a need to stress even more clearly the voluntary nature of the GSP and to clarify the roles of Partners, whether governments of Members or non-governmental partners. The discussion led to better specification of the criteria and procedures for the selection of experts to constitute the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils.
3. A new brief Rule was added (with accompanying guidelines placed in Annex to the Rules) with a view to specifying arrangements for sound development of the Plans of Action under the GSP pillars. This would have the merit of filling an identified gap in the governance structure of the GSP.
4. Special attention was given to the use of languages and it was decided that the GSP should follow the established practice in FAO, i.e. of six official languages (namely, English, Spanish, French, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic). However, for each meeting or activity it would be decided, which language (s) should be used depending on the demands and the availability of funds.
5. The Assembly endorsed the Rules of Procedures, as amended (cf. Annex II). The agreed text would henceforth constitute the current version, until amended by a subsequent Plenary Assembly.
6. The Assembly requested the Secretariat to ensure full application of the approved Rules of Procedure in the operations of the Global Soil Partnership.

II. Item 2: Nominations for and establishment of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel of Soils (ITPS) (document GSPPA I/2013/2)

7. The Assembly recognized that it had not been possible to post on the GSP website ahead of the meeting the planned document on this item, as agreement had not yet been reached on the selection of experts in two regions.
8. The Assembly was advised about the steps taken by the Secretariat to ensure due consultations with partners in order to present an agreed list, in line with the mandatory regional distribution and qualification criteria for the ITPS experts, as well as other requisites. In this regard, it was observed that local knowledge should be taken into account.

9. As the result of last minute consultations within the concerned regions, the list was completed, as reflected in the eventually released document.

10. Accordingly, the Assembly endorsed the list of 27 experts (cf. Annex III) and approved the establishment of the first Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils on that basis. It asked the Secretariat to support and facilitate the activities of the ITPS as may be requested by the Assembly, including the organization of its first meeting, and assisting with its internal organization.

III. Item 3: Development of Plans of Action for the GSP Pillars (document GSPPA: GSPPA I/2013/3)

11. The Assembly took note of the information provided in the document, as well as *via* an oral presentation by the Secretariat, on a number of activities, the outcome of which should contribute to the formulation of fully articulated Plans of Action under the established five Pillars.

12. The Assembly observed that this information was not inclusive, as it omitted for instance such particularly pertinent events as the Global Soil Week. During the discussion, several partners confirmed their interest in, and commitment to support various components of work under the Pillars. Comments were also made to recommend modified or broadened focus of specific activities.

13. The Assembly appreciated the good progress made under Pillar 4, as transpired also from an oral presentation made by one of the experts nominated to the ITPS who had been actively involved in the work carried out hitherto. It noted that the draft Plan of Action prepared so far highlighted the importance of a global system to map, monitor and assess soil resources and to provide soil related information that was not currently available to answer critical questions. The Assembly further noted that work on Pillars 4 and 5 could be considered as a logical whole, in view of the close dependencies among these pillars.

14. The Assembly also addressed the respective and complementary roles of the ITPS and the Regional Soil Partnerships (RSPs) in discussing priorities which should underpin the Plans of Action. The desirable involvement in this regard of the FAO Regional Conferences was underlined.

15. The Plenary Assembly:

- requested the Secretariat to continue to carry out supportive activities under the different pillars, laying the foundation for fully-fledged Plans of Action;
- invited partners to support in all appropriate ways the formulation and development of the Plans of Action;
- requested the Secretariat to take into account the recommendations emanating from the FAO Regional Conferences and the RSPs for the formulation and development of the Plans of Action;
- noted the advanced stage of development of the Plan of Action for Pillar 4;
- requested the ITPS to guide and support, from the technical point of view, the formulation of these Plans of Action with a view to, when finalized, submit them for endorsement by the Plenary Assembly;
- requested the Secretariat to facilitate and coordinate the swift implementation of activities for all GSP Pillars and their Plans of Action.

IV. Item 4: Regional Soil Partnerships (document GSPPA: I/2013/4)

16. Supplementing the information in the document, the Assembly received an oral presentation on the activities of the GSP Secretariat, in support of the establishment of Regional Soil Partnerships, especially in Asia, Near East, Latin America and Caribbean, and West Africa, including a contribution of US\$ 900,000 from the Organization.

17. The Assembly also fully appreciated the presentations made by four experts about the useful work carried out under the aegis of the GSP in respective regions, which should pave the way for the establishment of robust RSPs.

18. Several partner institutions expressed interest in contributing to the development and implementation of the Plans of Actions of the GSP Pillars.

19. It was noted that the establishment of Regional Soil Partnerships, although highly desirable, should be of a voluntary nature, depending on common interest to have them operate in each geographical area.

20. The Plenary Assembly:

- requested partners to establish active regional soil partnerships, either across entire regions, or based on common language, physical location or culture of the interested countries;
- emphasized existing and future regional soil partnerships as essential frameworks for implementing fruitful actions in the field;
- encouraged the use of regional soil partnerships in activities related to food production and sustainable development;
- requested the Secretariat to further support and facilitate the establishment of Regional Soil Partnerships.

V. Item 5. Financial status of the GSP (document GSPPA I/2013/5)

21. The Assembly was advised about the contributions made by FAO's regular budget to the functioning of the GPS, and the first steps made by the Secretariat to sensitize donors to funding specific project proposals. It received clarifications about the proposal to develop a "business model" for the GSP to assist with resource mobilization.

22. The Assembly fully appreciated the intent stated by some donors to provide extra-budgetary support to the GSP.

23. The Plenary Assembly :

- requested the Secretariat to develop a business model for the GSP;
- requested partners to support the GSP by contributing extra-budgetary funds and/or in-kind contributions to develop and implement specific activities at global, regional or national level;
- invited partners to consider enhancing the capacities in the Secretariat by seconding necessary supportive staff;
- requested the Secretariat to establish a dedicated financial facility under FAO's rules which may be called the "Healthy Soils Trust Fund", in order to facilitate collection of contributions and financial allocations to approved activities and projects in a transparent manner.

VI. Item 6. World Soil Day and International Year of Soils (document GSPPA I/2013/6)

24. The Assembly recalled that these two advocacy platforms had been discussed by the FAO Council at recent sessions, and that action was pending at the FAO Conference – in the following week – and subsequently in the UN General Assembly to formally endorse them.

25. A Letter of Recognition was consigned to Minister Rapibhat Chandarasrivongs, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Thailand, in view of his unrelenting efforts in presenting and promoting support to related requests at the FAO Council.

26. The Assembly took note with appreciation of various pledges made by Partners to participate actively in these events, once endorsed.

27. The Plenary Assembly:

- confirmed its full support to the proposals for the establishment of the World Soil Day on 5th December and the International Year of Soils in 2015, and invited the 38th session of the FAO Conference to support these proposals;
- endorsed the organization of a side event on 5th December 2013 to raise awareness on the importance of soils and invited Partners to suggest potential topics and strategies;
- requested the Secretariat, in the case of a positive outcome in the concerned Bodies, to facilitate the process so as to ensure maximum impact of these key awareness raising platforms.

VII. Item 7. Development of a GSP roadmap (document GSPPA I/2013/7)

28. The Assembly noted that the tentative roadmap of the GSP, as presented in the document, covered the following important dimensions and actions:

- a. Soils and the Sustainable Development Goals
- b. Links with the Rio Conventions
- c. The World Soil Charter
- d. Global soil information
- e. Soil restoration
- f. Sustainable soil management
- g. Global Soil Biodiversity Assessment.

29. Comments were made pointing to the need to put these rubrics in a more logical order in the future, in particular by giving prime emphasis to the sustainable management of soils, and then to restoration efforts, to be complemented by other key actions indicated in the roadmap.

30. The Plenary Assembly endorsed in principle the general scope and direction of the proposals in this roadmap and requested the Secretariat to pursue their further development through a transparent consultative process.

VIII. Any other matters

➤ *Date and Place of the 2nd GSP Plenary Assembly*

31. The Assembly took note that its 2nd meeting would be held in Rome at FAO headquarters, with the date still to be determined.

➤ *Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur for next session*

32. Reference was made to the agreement between the G-77 Chair and the OECD Chair to the effect that the Chairperson of the GSP Plenary Assembly would alternate between the G77 and OECD Groups. It was also stated that the appointment of Rapporteur and Vice-Chairperson of the GSP Plenary Assembly would not prejudice the election of the Chairperson.

33. In line with agreed arrangements, the Assembly appointed Minister Rapibhat Chandarasrivongs, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Thailand as Chairperson and Dr. Pavel Krasilnikov from the Russian Federation was subsequently nominated to be the Vice-Chair, both to serve from the end of the present Plenary Assembly until the next session. It was decided that the Rapporteur for the next session would be appointed directly before the start of the meeting.

➤ *ITPS meeting*

34. The date for the first meeting of the ITPS would require further consultations and would be communicated at a later stage. The Assembly took note of an offer made to host the first ITPS meeting in Germany at the occasion of the Global Soil Week, from 27-31 October 2013.

➤ *Dr. David Dhliwayo Award*

35. As a fitting tribute to Dr. David Dhliwayo, reputed soil scientist from Zimbabwe, who regrettably passed away during a GSP related meeting in Nairobi, the Assembly decided to endorse the establishment of an award bearing his name, the implications of which would be discussed at a further Assembly.

ANNEX I

List of Participants

FAO Members

Countries	Participants:
Algeria	Boubekeur Karima (alternate)
	Kheireddine Abdelnacer (delegate)
Argentina	Infante Gustavo (delegate)
	Taboada Miguel (delegate)
	Repetti Andrea (alternate)
	Uria Mariana (alternate)
Australia	Worrell Matthew (delegate)
	Summers Guy (alternate)
	Mc Kenzie Neil (alternate)
	Collins Emily (alternate)
Austria	Feistritzer Natalie (delegate)
Bangladesh	Rahman Md Mafizur (delegate)
Bolivia	Ayaviri Gomez Antolin (delegate)
	Oller Catoira Roxana (alternate)
	Gazau Maria Eugenia (alternate)
Brazil	Marques Porto Antonino (delegate)
	Pio Correa Luiz Maria (alternate)
	Vieira Olyntho (alternate)
Cameroon	Moungui Medi (delegate)
Canada	Robinson Eric (delegate)
Chile	Guerra Alejandra (Delegate)
China	Guo Handi
	Zong Huilai
	Shen Liping
Colombia	Pena Serrano Carolina
	Ramirez Manosalva Daniela
Costa Rica	Guzman Vasquez Orlando (alternate)
Cuba	Alvarez Rossell Silvia Maria (delegate)
	Marin Llanes Luis Alberto (alternate)

Countries	Participants:
Czech Republic	Muchka Jiri (delegate)
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Kim Chol Mikn (alternate)
	Kim Chun Guk (delegate)
	Pang Kwang Hyok (alternate)
Dominican Republic	Arvelo Caamaño Mario (delegate)
	Taveras Arbaje Rawell (alternate)
	Vicioso Julia (alternate)
	Laureano Maria Cristina (alternate)
Ecuador	Carranza Jose Antonio (alternate)
Egypt	Hassan Magdy Anwar (alternate)
El Salvador	Jimenez Eulalia
European Union	Bucella Pia (delegate)
	Garbelotto Franco (alternate)
	Marmo Luca (alternate)
	Montanarella Luca (alternate)
	Villa Alessandro (alternate)
France	Derevier Alain (delegate)
Germany	Heinz Flessa (alternate)
	Cramer Georg Friedel (alternate)
	Kutsch Werner (alternate)
	Seeberg-Elverfeldt Christina (alternate)
	Hausmann Thomas (alternate)
	Schnitzler Franziska (alternate)
Ghana	Stokes Hayford Evelyn (delegate)
	Quaye Kumah Nii (delegate)
Honduras	Reina de Titta Maria
Hungary	Balazs Hamar (delegate)
Iceland	Bragason Gudni (delegate)
	Aegisdottir Hafdis Hanna (alternate)
India	Vimlendra Sharan (delegate)
Indonesia	Saptono Agus (delegate)
	Hamim Hamim (alternate)
	Wilapa Hariwan (alternate)
	Feriany Vivi (alternate)
Iran	Taghavi Motlah Seyed Aminollah (delegate)

Countries	Participants:
	Zarei Seyed Morteza (alternate)
	Mohajer Alirera (alternate)
Iraq	Janabi Hassan (delegate)
	Mashta Ala (delegate)
Italy	Gentile Pier Luigi
	Luise Anna
Japan	Ohkura Toshiaki (delegate)
Jordan	Al Argan Fiesal (alternate)
	Alfraihat Mahmoud Hasan (delegate)
Kuwait	Al Bazzaz Salah
	Alsabah Manar
	Jhail Yousef
Lesotho	Rakootje Malikopo Patricia (alternate)
Madagascar	Monja Tamara
Mexico	Romero Alan (delegate)
Mozambique	Mucavi Carla Elisa
Nigeria	Ojuola Olatunji (delegate)
Paraguay	Patino Lorena (delegate)
Peru	Arosemena Ferreyros Alfredo (delegate)
	Reategui Gamarra Pedro Roberto (delegate)
	Chirinos Llerena Carla Stella (delegate)
	Arce Mendoza Maria Ernestina (delegate)
	Tonsmann Foppiani Alexandra (delegate)
Philippines	Lazaro Lupino (delegate)
	Pagaran Esteban (alternate)
Republic of Korea	Hong Suk Young (delegate)
	Park Chan Won (delegate)
Russian Federation	Krasilnikov Pavel
San Marino	Emiliani Marina (delegate)
	Rotondaro Daniela (alternate)
Slovakia	Marieta Okenkovà
South Africa	Rampedi Moshibudi (alternate)
Spain	Menendez de Luarca Santiago (delegate)
Sri Lanka	Indikadahena Gothami
Sudan	Elmustafa Elsheikh Elsiddig Ahmed (alternate)

Countries	Participants:
	Malik Osman Abla (delegate)
Switzerland	Obrecht Andreas (delegate)
	Grieder Christina
Thailand	Chandarasrivongs Rapihbat (delegate)
	Naigowit Piyawat (alternate)
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Panovska Elisaveta (alternate)
The Netherlands	Verburg Gerda (delegate)
United Republic of Tanzania	Msekela James (delegate)
Uruguay	Alvarez Gustavo (alternate)
	Piñeyro Oscar (delegate)
Venezuela	Alvarez Fermin Luis Alberto (alternate)
	Claros Oviedo Manuel Eduardo (alternate)
	Urbaneja Duran Gladys Francisca (delegate)
Vietnam	Nguyen Hoang Long (delegate)
	Quynh Nguyen (delegate)
Yemen	Al Akwa Khalid (alternate)
	Al Na'Ami Abdulla (delegate)
	Saba'A Omer (delegate)
	Shoja'Aadin Haytham (delegate)
Zambia	Masuhwa Kayoka
Zimbabwe	Bosha Irene (alternate)

Non-Governmental Organizations

Name	Institute/Organization	Country
Allton Kathryn	British Society of Soil Science	UK
Braganca Alves Fernandes Raphael	Brazilian Society of Soil Science	Brazil
Chude Victor Okechukwu	Soil Science Society of Nigeria	Nigeria
Dawson Lorna	The James Hutton Institute	UK
De Ruitter Peter	International Soil Reference and Information Centre	Netherlands
Khadka Yajna Gajadhar	Nepal Agriculture Research Council	Nepal
Kozak Josef	Czech University of Life Sciences	Czech Republic
Lobos Alva Ivonne	Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies	Germany
Weigelt Jes	Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies	Germany

Name	Institute/Organization	Country
Mc Kenzie Blair	International Soil Tillage Research Organization	UK
Mekouar Ali	International Centre of Comparative Environment Law	Italy
Rice Charles	Soil Science Society of America	USA
Baritz Rainer	Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources and EuroGeoSurvey	Germany
Sobočka Jaroslava	Soil Science and Conservation Research Institute	Slovakia
Yang Jae	International Union of Soil Sciences	Korea

International Governmental Organizations

Name	Institute/Organization	Country
Bossio Deborah	International Centre for Tropical Agriculture	Kenya
Castro Zuniga Aracely	International Centre for Tropical Agriculture	Colombia
Dashiell Kenton	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	Nigeria
Durand Jean Maurice	International Fund for Agricultural Development	Italy
Turner Debra	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas	Jordan
Zdruli Pandi	Institut Agronomique Méditerranéen de Bari	Italy

Rules of Procedure of the Global Soil Partnership

The Plenary Assembly of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) 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 GSP.

Rule II - Partners

- 1) The GSP is a voluntary partnership, open to governments, international and regional organizations, institutions, and other stakeholders.
- 2) All Partners, except FAO Members, will be reviewed and approved by the Secretariat following FAO procedures.

Rule III – Plenary Assembly

- 1) The Plenary Assembly shall 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 be held at the FAO Headquarters in Rome unless otherwise decided by the Plenary Assembly.
- 2) The notice for a regular session of the Plenary Assembly shall be communicated to Partners not less than 90 days before the opening day, while notices for extraordinary sessions shall be sent not less than 45 days in advance.
- 3) All sessions of the Plenary Assembly shall be convened by the GSP Secretariat (hereafter referred to as Secretariat) in consultation with Chairperson and the Secretary of the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG).
- 4) Each Partner shall be registered to attend Plenary sessions by communicating 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 and Rapporteur. 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, prioritise and discuss progress on GSP activities through Plans of Action related to each of the GSP pillars. Partners may implement the decisions taken by the Plenary Assembly with the support of the Secretariat as required.
- 8) Expenses of Partners to attend the sessions of the Plenary Assembly shall be borne by them.
- 9) Languages of the GSP will be FAO languages. FAO Members may decide to hold specific meetings or carry out specific activities in a selected number of agreed languages on an ad hoc basis.

Rule IV - Agenda and documents

- 1) The Secretariat, in consultation with all 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 30 days 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

All GSP decisions shall be taken by consensus during the Plenary Assembly. Decisions that may require follow up by national Governments will be solely decided upon by GSP partners which are FAO members

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.

The ITPS experts should act in their personal capacity and provide the best possible scientific knowledge available.

- b) Members of the ITPS shall be experts appointed by the GSP Plenary Assembly for a term of 2 years renewable for one additional term (with agreement of the Plenary Assembly).

Every 2 years the call for experts shall be re-conducted; the Secretariat will consolidate the new list of experts on the basis of the above criteria.

- c) This list of experts will be submitted to FAO Members requesting their endorsement, while respecting the criteria mentioned in section 5.2 of the Terms of Reference of the GSP, and taking into account the diverse fields of soil science, a balanced participation within regions, and an equitable rotation.
- d) Members of the ITPS will not hold any employment contract with FAO. The Secretariat will meet the costs related to travel and daily subsistence allowance in order to facilitate the participation of the members of the ITPS during its annual working session.

- 2) Duties of members of ITPS

The members of the ITPS shall:

- a) provide scientific and technical advice on global soil issues to the GSP;
- b) sign a “non-conflict of interest” declaration;
- c) participate at the Plenary Assembly, as provided for in the TOR of the GSP;
- d) appoint a Chairperson by consensus 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 of ITPS

The ITPS will have the following functions:

- a) provide scientific and technical advice 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 follow up on 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) Follow up on 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 - Plans of action

Plans of Action for GSP Pillars will be developed following an inclusive and participatory process according to the guidelines set out in Annex 1 of these Rules of procedure. The Plans of Action shall be approved by the Plenary Assembly.

Rule VIII – Regional Soil Partnerships

- 1) Regional Soil Partnerships (RSPs) may 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 a 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 facilitate 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 promoting 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 IX - 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 X - 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 promoting, organizing and facilitating activities related to the celebration of the World Soil Day, and other awareness raising events such as the International Year of Soils.

Rule XI - Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

- 1) The Plenary Assembly may amend the 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.

Annex 1 to the Rules of Procedure

Guidelines for the development of Plans of Action of the GSP Pillars

- a) An international technical workshop will be organised by the Secretariat for the development of each Plan of Action with representatives from each Region to discuss and outline the scope and content of the concerned Plan of Action.
- b) The workshop will nominate a working group, consisting of competent experts from active institutions and considering equitable representation, to further develop the draft Plan of Action through a transparent and open process in close consultation with the Secretariat.
- c) The draft Plan of Action should be circulated for feedback from GSP partners to the Secretariat. The working groups will incorporate inputs in a revised draft Plan of Action with the support of the Secretariat.
- d) Plans of Action shall be submitted to the ITPS for consideration, finalisation and endorsement.
- e) The endorsed Plan of Action will be submitted to the Plenary Assembly for approval.
- f) The Secretariat will invite Partners to suggest how they could contribute to implementation of the approved Plan of Action and will develop an implementation plan together with the working group.
- g) Implementation will be coordinated and facilitated by the Secretariat in close consultation with the interested Partners.

ANNEX III**Membership of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel of Soils****AFRICA**

- Dr. Isaurinda Dos Santos Baptista Costa -Cape Verde
- Dr. Martin Yemefack - Cameroon
- Prof. Dr. Victor Chude - Nigeria
- Dr. Mohamed Badraoui - Morocco
- Prof. Dr. Tekalign Mamo - Ethiopia

ASIA

- Prof. Dr. Gan Lin Zhang – China
- Prof. Dr. Milkha Singh Aulakh – India
- Dr. Kazuyuki Yagi – Japan
- Dr. Suk Young Hong – Republic of Korea
- Dr. Pisoot Vijarnsorn – Thailand

EUROPE

- Dr. Helaina Black - United Kingdom
- Dr. Sobocká Jaroslava - Slovak Republic
- Dr. Dominique Arrouays - France
- Dr. Luca Montanarella - Italy
- Dr. Pavel Krasilnikov - Russia

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- Dr. Maria de Lourdes Mendonca Santos -Brazil
- Dr. Miguel Taboada - Argentina
- Dr. Carlos Roberto Henríquez - Costa Rica
- Dr. David Espinosa Victoria - Mexico
- Dr. Julio Alegre - Peru

NEAR EAST

- Prof. Dr. Seyed Kazem Alavi Panah – Iran
- Prof. Dr. Elsiddig Ahmed ElMustafa ElSheikh – Sudan
- Dr. Abdullah AlShankiti – Saudi Arabia

NORTH AMERICA

- Dr. Cheryl Palm – United States
- Prof. Dr. John Daniel Pennock – Canada

SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

- Dr. Marta Camps Arbestain - New Zealand
- Dr. Neil McKenzie - Australia