

Nairobi Communiqué on Eastern and Southern Africa Soil Partnership

We, the participants from government ministries and national soil institutions representing 20 Eastern and Southern African countries, along with international organizations with an interest in sustainable soil management in Africa assembled in Nairobi, Kenya, from March 25th to 27th, 2013. We explored opportunities and applications of the emerging Global Soil Partnership (GSP) in light of soil degradation and its impacts on sustainable livelihoods and climate change in the region.

Based on our discussions of country reports and relevant regional initiatives, we agreed that there are similar environmental and developmental challenges, priorities and needs for improving soil health towards food security under a changing climate in the region. We reiterate **that if actions towards healthy/fertile soils are not rapidly implemented, the challenges of food security, sustainable intensification of food production, and poverty reduction will not be achieved.**

We acknowledge that major benefits will be gained from establishing national and regional soil information systems, widespread application of sustainable soil management practices and capacity development. It is paramount that the role of soils and soil science in ensuring food security and providing other key ecosystem services are given appropriate priority at national and regional levels. By working together, countries will improve soil security and benefit from this new synergy for regional cooperation. To further these objectives, the Eastern and Southern African Soil Partnership (ESASP) was launched.

Guided by the GSP pillars of action, the priorities of the ESASP are:



















1. **Developing, updating and disseminating** harmonized national and regional soil information addressing all user needs.
2. **Developing and implementing training and capacity development** programs taking into account the gender balance.
3. **Guiding and enabling** the implementation of sustainable soil management practices and the restoration of soil health at all levels towards food security.
4. **Addressing** soil degradation as a major factor in food insecurity and climate change.
5. **Establishing linkages and networks** with other national, regional and global initiatives that impact soil health.










To achieve these goals, we agreed to develop an ESASP plan of action within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP). The ESASP was operationalized by setting up a provisional working group that will facilitate activities in consultation with the GSP Secretariat.

We would like to honor Dr. David Dhliwayo, a meritorious soil scientist from Zimbabwe who was fully committed to promote sustainable soil management in Africa, who passed on during the launch of the GSP in the region. To honor his contribution, we would like to establish the Dr. David Dhliwayo Award as the main accolade to be presented by the GSP in recognition of outstanding persons who contribute to soil management in Africa.

We thank FAO and partners for establishing the GSP and facilitating the launch of the ESASP. We fully commit to its immediate implementation.

Nairobi, Kenya, 27/03/2013

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