



## **Invitation**

**The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), under the framework of the Global Soil Partnership is organising a World Soil Day side event:**

### **“A day dedicated to healthy and productive soils”**

**Thursday, 5 December 2013 from 13:00-14:30 hours in Sheikh Zayed Centre, FAO HQ, Rome**

Soil is a finite natural resource. On a human time-scale it is non-renewable. However, despite the essential role that soil plays for human livelihoods, there is increasing degradation of soil resources worldwide. The International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), in 2002, made a resolution proposing the 5<sup>th</sup> of December as World Soil Day to celebrate the importance of soil as a critical component of the natural system and as a vital contributor to human wellbeing.

Under the leadership of the Kingdom of Thailand and within the framework of the "**Global Soil Partnership**", FAO has supported the formal establishment of the World Soil Day as a global awareness raising platform. The FAO Conference, in June 2013, unanimously endorsed World Soil Day and requested official adoption at the 68<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly. In this context, FAO has organized this event this Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

## **Draft Agenda**

- Opening by Mr. Graziano Da Silva, FAO Director General (tbc).
- Keynote speech “Towards food security: on the need for healthy and productive soils” by H.E. Robert Sichinga, Minister for Agriculture and Livestock of Zambia.
- Keynote speech “World Soil Day: a recognition of the critical role of soils for life” by H.E. Rapibhat Chandarasrivongs, Permanent Representative of Thailand to FAO and Chair of GSP Plenary Assembly.
- Keynote address “Towards healthy soils: Is soil contamination a real issue?” by Dr. Luca Montanarella, Chair of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils.
- Launch of European Geochemical Atlas (GEMAS) by Dr. Mart van Bracht, EuroGeoSurveys President, and keynote address on "Geochemical mapping of agricultural and grazing land soil at the continental scale" by Dr. Clemens Reimann, Chair of the EuroGeoSurveys Geochemistry Expert Group.
- Presentation of "SoilGrids1km: a proposal for an automated system for global soil mapping to support the GSP" by H. E. Gerda Verburg, Permanent Representative of The Netherlands to FAO.
- Open discussion and closure.

Cocktail reception: 18:30 p.m. at Aventino room (8<sup>th</sup> floor)

Note: simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Spanish will be available.