



FAO Conference Side-Event: Appointment of the Special Ambassadors for the International Year of Soils and open discussion on healthy soils for food security

Biographies of the Eminent Panellists

Professor Claire Chenu – Vice-Chair of the Scientific Council of the French natural heritage and biodiversity



Claire is the Chair of Soil Science at AgroParis Tech in Paris, France. Deemed a soil expert on biodiversity and soil sciences, she has longstanding research experience in the interactions between soil organic matter, microorganisms and soil mineral matrix which is crucial for managing soil structure and enhancing carbon sequestration in soil for cropping systems.

She is also the Vice-Chair of the Scientific Council of the French natural heritage and biodiversity, which is an advisory committee to the Minister of Environment in Paris.

Previously, Claire was associate editor of several international journals, leader of the soil organic matter group in Grignon and of the Soil Science Department in INRA Versailles.

Professor Tekalign Mamo Assefa – University of Haramaya



Mr. Assefa is the soil management expert and senior adviser to the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture.

He is also a researcher and an internationally renowned scholar in the field of soil fertility and fertilizer. Over the past thirty years his work has played an important role in the shaping the agenda on improving the productivity of clay soils.

In 2005, Mr. Assefa established community watershed management systems to rehabilitate degraded land. This initiative has become part of the agenda of food security and has since been adopted by other countries.

Since 2011, Professor Assefa also established a national database on soil data, digital mapping of soil fertility and fertilizer plants that allowed Ethiopia to provide farmers with custom fertilizer.



H.E. Laurence Argimon Pistre – Ambassador, Delegation of the European Union to the Holy See, to the Order of Malta and to the UN Agencies in Rome



Ms. Argimon-Pistre has a degree in law from the University of Grenoble where she studied European and International Law from 1970 to 1975.

Ms. Argimon-Pistre joined the European civil service at the Commission in 1978. In this capacity, she was involved in the preparation for and the conducting of the Uruguay Round (1984 to 1991), representing the European Union first in the Working Party on Codes.

From 1991 to 1995, Ms. Argimon-Pistre was a visiting professor to the Independent University of Barcelona in international trade policy. In 1995, she was posted to the Directorate-General for External Relations where she worked on the ASEAN and ASEM Desk where she supervised, for the Commission, the preparation of the first ASEM meeting in 1996.

Before taking up her duties as Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Holy See, to the Order of Malta and to the UN Organisation in Rome, Ambassador Argimon-Pistre was Permanent Representative of the European Union to the OECD and the UNESCO in Paris.

H.E. Tabaré Aguerre – Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries for Uruguay



Mr. Aguerre is the current Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries in Uruguay, laying down the groundwork for greater agricultural links between Uruguay and other nations in order to feed the growing global population in an “agro-intelligent” way.

In 1981, he received his Agronomist title from the University of the Republic, where he went on to work as a technician for a former sugar mill of the cooperative CALNU. He then went on to develop as a farmer, livestock and rice producer.



H.E. Aroldo Cedraz, Minister of the Federal Court of Accounts, Brazil



Minister Cedraz graduated in veterinary medicine from the Universidad Federal de Bahía, Brazil, and also holds a Masters in veterinary medicine from the Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Brazil, and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the Tierärztliche Hochschule in Hannover, Germany.

Before assuming the post of Minister and President of the TCU, Cedraz was federal deputy and held various positions in the government of Bahia, also working as a university professor.

H.E. Ahmed Yakubu Alhassan, Deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture, Ghana



Dr. Ahmed Yakubu Alhassan, deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Crops) holds PhD (Agronomy) Imperial College, University of London, UK, which he obtained in 2000.

He is a Farmer/Agriculturist and worked at Savanna Agricultural Research Institute of the CSIR before he became Member of Parliament for Mion Constituency in 2005