

27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture
Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members (English version)
Item 3.3 Report of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP)

Member Name	Comments
Costa Rica (Wed 23/09/2020 23:07)	<p>By the means of this communication, the delegation of Costa Rica would like to express its support to the documents presented for analysis under Item 3.3 Report of the Global Soil Partnership during this 27th period of sessions of COAC. Since their approval represents, a step forward in the efforts of strengthening the framework that sustains a prompt and efficient implementation of the initiatives created under the consensus of the Global Soils Partnership.</p> <p>At the same time, we take this opportunity to extend our gratitude for all the support and appreciation expressed by the members of the GSP, during Costa Rica's tenure of the Chair of the 8th meeting of the GSP Plenary Assembly.</p>
Dominican Republic (Tue 22/09/2020 18:52)	<p>The Dominican Republic supports the submitted reports, including those that include the most recent outcomes from the Plenary Assembly of the GSP.</p> <p>We recognize the work undertaken by the GSP Secretariat to achieve sustainable soil management. In particular, we appreciate the instruments that have been developed to facilitate the exchange of information and experiences between stakeholders, such as SoILEX and EduSOILS.</p> <p>With regard to the proposal by the Evaluation of the GSP to institutionalize the GSP as a Statutory Body of FAO under the COAG, we agree with the understanding that this integration will provide greater stability and continuity for the Partnership. We approve “Resolution for the international exchange of soil samples for research purposes under GLOSOLAN” (Annex 1). We also approve the support given to the application of key instruments and initiatives.</p>
Australia Wed (23/09/2020 17:07)	<p>Australia is an active participant in the GSP, currently chair of the Pacific Soil Partnership, which brings together Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and over 20 Pacific Island nations to promote regional awareness of the need for improved and sustainable soil management through progressing activities in education and training, targeted soil research and development of soil data and information systems. The Pacific Soil Partnership reaffirms a regional commitment to advancing the proposed outcomes of the five GSP Pillars of Action through our regional collaborative efforts.</p> <p>Australia takes note of the reports of the 7th and 8th meetings of the GSP Plenary Assembly, and supports the request for the Secretariat to provide information on implications of the potential institutionalisation of the GSP as a Statutory Body, in order to better assess this proposal.</p> <p>Australia also provides in-principle support for the resolution for the international exchange of soil samples for research purposes under GLOSOLAN, and the ongoing implementation of the various tools and initiatives of the GSP.</p>
Argentina (Wed 23/09/2020 23:05)	<p>Argentina wishes to highlight the work done by the Secretariat of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) and the support it has given to our country and the region. It should be noted that Argentina has held the presidency of the Latin America and the Caribbean Soil Partnership since 2019 and has received constant and ongoing support from the secretariat of the GSP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Argentina notes the reports on the seventh and eighth meetings of the Plenary Assembly (PA) of the GSP and on the progress made to combat soil degradation and the promotion of sustainable soil management. 2. Argentina highlights in particular, among the main results of the biennium, the launch of RECSOIL (Recarbonization of Global Soils) and the production of its MRV protocol, global evaluation of pollution and global soil biodiversity. As part of the mapping activities, progress has been made in soil salinity and work has started on mapping the organic carbon storage potential of the soil from a country-driven approach. 3. One of the most significant activities carried out during the reporting period was the inventory evaluation and activities of the GSP. The main recommendation of this report refers to the new positioning of the GSP as a statutory body of FAO. In this respect, the PA recommended that, in advance of this, detailed information should be presented on the legal and financial consequences, including the impact on the participation of non-State actors, of the proposal contained in the evaluation of the

	<p>GSP for the purposes of institutionalizing the GSP as a statutory body of FAO. Argentina considers that this is a need to be met in the short term and strongly supports the initiative.</p> <p>4. For this purpose, and according to what was stated in section 7.3 (Recommendation 3) of document COAG/2020/18, Argentina emphasizes the importance of having more information on the possible repercussions of the institutionalization of the GSP on the budget of the Organization, as well as with respect to the development of the possible institutionalization process (steps to be taken, timeframe, etc.). It is important for Argentina that the possible institutionalization of the GSP as a statutory body of FAO does not involve increases in the Organization’s budget nor the allocation of resources intended for programmes already agreed by the Membership.</p> <p>5. Furthermore, the work that the GSP is doing to achieve the global harmonization of soil analysis is greatly emphasized, along with the inter-laboratory comparisons to evaluate its performance and to monitor the development of the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN) and in particular the regional networks, such as LATSOLAN, of which Argentina holds the vice-presidency. In this respect, it is particularly important to have a protocol to standardize the form in which soil samples are exchanged at international level. For this reason, Argentina supports the approval of the “Resolution for the international exchange of soil samples for research purposes under GLOSOLAN”. This protocol has been reviewed by scientists and experts in the field, and constitutes a document which will facilitate the work on a global and regional level.</p> <p>As regards the request to provide support for the application of essential instruments and initiatives such as, among others, the International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers, the GSOC-MRV protocol for measuring, reporting, verification and monitoring of soil organic carbon in agricultural landscapes, RECSOIL or the global “Soil Doctors” programme, Argentina considers it appropriate to support these activities, in particular, by virtue of the work done in this respect in the scientific and technical field by both Argentina and the region.</p>
<p>Canada (Thu 24/09/2020 14:43)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada supports the request for the Secretariat to provide further information on the legal and financial implications, including the impact on the participation of non-state actors for further consideration by the GSP Plenary before any further actions occur. • Canada would also like more information on how the proposal to formalise the GSP from a voluntary partnership into a formal body in the FAO’s structure might impact FAO Member State assessed contribution payments. • Canada shares the concerns identified in the GSP Stocktaking Review related to the increasing workload of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) and the limited time and financial resources to respond effectively to requests. The work of the ITPS would benefit if priority was given to topics and tasks that will support and inform the development of the next World Soil Report in 2025.
<p>Peru (Thu 24/09/2020 10:03)</p>	<p>The Global Soil Partnership (GSP) is an interactive and voluntary association that addresses the needs and requirements of soil management. It was established in December 2012 as a mechanism to develop a strong interactive partnership and enhanced collaboration and synergy of efforts between all stakeholders.</p> <p>The General Directorate of Environmental and Agricultural Affairs (DGEAA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MINAGRI), as Peru’s Focal Point to the GPS, and as a Peruvian state body, is responsible for ensuring, promoting and disseminating the rational use of soil resources at a national level within the conception and principles of sustainable development, with the aim of preventing soil degradation. It carries out various activities and focuses its actions on improving the governance and sustainable management of soils to achieve the objective of the GPS.</p> <p>The DGEAA works and coordinates with the GPS with the aim of strengthening and implementing actions related to the GPS pillars of action at a national level. The GPS strengthens capacities by providing technical assistance on the generation of soil information, soil degradation and harmonization of methods, measures and indicators to be used in laboratories for physical, chemical and biological soil analyses. The GPS has made great progress and achieved global positioning on the promotion of sustainable soil management.</p>

	<p>In this respect, and in accordance with the “Report of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP)” carried out by the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), it would be appropriate to position the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) as a statutory body of FAO, thereby converting it to an official body and ensuring greater stability and continuity in the progress made to date. This would strengthen and streamline administrative issues such as the strengthening of the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN) and the removal of international obstacles that have been encountered, allowing researchers and/or laboratories to improve and obtain more reliable data from laboratory analyses. It would also mobilize financial resources to help countries take full advantage of the benefits of sustainable soil management practices.</p>
<p>Switzerland (Thu 24/09/2020 17:33)</p>	<p>Switzerland takes note of document COAG/2020/18 exposing the work of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP). We would like to congratulate the GSP Secretariat and all Partners for the enormous amount and quality of work done during the last biennium. Switzerland is proud to be a longstanding donor of the GSP.</p> <p>We are pleased to note that the work of the Global Soil Partnership is having direct and indirect repercussions on sustainable land management at national and regional levels.</p> <p>The multi-stakeholder character of the GSP is one of its strengths. Turning the GSP into a FAO Statutory Body goes potentially against the spirit of SDG17 that calls for the strengthening of multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development. One of the value added of the GSP is its rich partnership with the many non-state organisations from different backgrounds that all contribute with their expertise to the work and success of the GSP. Formalizing the GSP should in no way have limited effects on the participation and contribution of these actors, be it in legal, financial or practical terms. Therefore, this aspect will need to be a major focus of the analysis that the Secretariat is re-requested to provide. Additionally, the financial implications of a formal status in terms of operational costs, human resources and the participation of actors need to be clearly established. Additionally, we would like to request the Secretariat to provide further information in particular on the potential changes such institutionalisation would lead on the decision processes, the future role of the regional soil partnerships, and the role of the national focal points.</p>
<p>Mexico (Thu 24/09/2020 14:31)</p>	<p>Soils are a resource with great potential for mitigating greenhouse gases due to their great capacity for sequestering carbon, at the same time as being fundamental for food productivity.</p> <p>Starting this year, Mexico will participate actively in the Global Soil Partnership (GSP). The institutions and experts have already been appointed who will contribute to the generation of soil salinity maps, for potential carbon sequestration in soils, to training for government officials and to the dissemination of the importance of this resource.</p> <p>It should be noted that, in recent years, major partnerships have been established between the production and environment sectors in Mexico so that decision-making bodies in both sectors now work together, in relation to the GSP, to provide inputs and incorporate actions in their policies to reverse soil degradation and contribute to its reclamation.</p> <p>Within this framework, Mexico notes the reports on the seventh and eighth meetings of the Plenary Assembly of the GSP, along with the progress made to combat soil degradation and the promotion of sustainable soil management.</p> <p>It similarly considers it important that the Secretariat presents detailed information on the legal and financial consequences, including the impact on the participation of non-State actors, of the proposal contained in the evaluation of the GSP for the purposes of institutionalizing the GSP as a statutory body of FAO, with a view to its subsequent examination.</p>
<p>Colombia (Thu 24/09/2020 22:41)</p>	<p>(comment from IGAC) “The list of activities planned for 2020-2021 (document nd413es, page 4, point 3) does not mention the global black soils map, as we need to submit the first version by November of this year.</p> <p>In addition, I do not see the work presented at the meeting of the INSII last year, on SoilSTAT, CountrySIS and GLOSIS, which are soil information organization, storage and statistics systems, which were being developed and which have not yet had approached countries to gather the necessary resources and inputs. However, the Resolution for the Interchange of Soil Samples (Annex 1, document nd413es) names GLOSIS as a key point for inter-laboratory activities”.</p>

<p>New Zealand (Thu 24/09/2020 18:16)</p>	<p>New Zealand welcomes this report on the activities of the GSP and would like to acknowledge both the significant efforts of the GSP Secretariat as outlined in the Plenary reports. We would also acknowledge those member countries and non-state actors who contribute significant voluntary/in-kind resources and time to progress the work of the GSP.</p> <p>New Zealand can support the implementation of the International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers, the GSOC-MRV Protocol for measuring, reporting, verification and monitoring of soil organic carbon in agricultural landscapes, the RECSOIL: recarbonization of global soils, and the Global Soil Doctors Programme.</p> <p>We acknowledge the useful Evaluation of the GSP, particularly concerning the proposal to institutionalize the GSP as an FAO Statutory Body. The evaluation clearly highlights potential governance issues (and potential resulting impacts on non-state actor participation) and also legal and financial considerations that should be further elaborated on before there is detailed consideration by COAG and FAO's other governance bodies. In this light we can support the recommendation in the paper to analyse these aspects further before formally considering the proposal to change the GSP into a Statutory Body.</p> <p>We also endorse the "Resolution for the International Exchange of Soil Samples for Research Purposes under GLOSOLAN" in Annex 1 of the paper.</p>
<p>Thailand (Thu 24/09/2020 23:20)</p>	<p>Thailand takes note of the reports of the 7th and 8th GSP Plenary Assembly and appreciates the progress made in combating soil degradation and promoting sustainable soil management over seven years since its establishment.</p> <p>We emphasize the need for formalizing the GSP from a voluntary partnership into a formal body in the FAO's structure to ensure the stability and continuity of its performance and duty. Therefore, Thailand requests the Secretariat to provide further information on the legal and financial implications, of institutionalizing GSP as a FAO Statutory Body.</p> <p>Thailand is in favor of institutionalizing the GSP as FAO Statutory Body because healthy soils are fundamental for food security and nutrition as well as for achievement of several SDGs. The institutionalization of GSP as FAO Statutory Body would ensure higher visibility of soils in the global agenda and promote increased global cooperation on soil related issues.</p> <p>Thailand endorses the 'Resolution for International Exchange of Soil Samples for Research Purposes under GLOSOLAN' and the establishment of a simplified procedure for international exchange of soil samples for research purposes.</p> <p>Thailand appreciates the achievements of global soil laboratory network (GLOSOLAN) which was established since November 2017, and well accepted by all regions. Thailand encourages GLOSOLAN to provide a simplified procedure for the international exchange of soil samples for research purposes which is also helpful for exchanging soil samples in proficiency testing.</p> <p>Thailand supports GSP initiatives, in particular the International Code of Conduct for Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers (CoCoFe), the GSOC-MRV Protocol, RECSOIL, and the Global Soil Doctors Programme.</p> <p>Thailand commends the GSP for the excellent work on the 10 soil threats identified in the Status of World's Soil Resources. We appreciate the commitment of FAO in supporting and implementing of the World Soil Day Award. We would like to encourage all members to celebrate this event to raise the awareness on the sustainable use of soil resources.</p>
<p>Russia (Thu 24/09/2020 19:18)</p>	<p>The Russian Federation considers the Global Soil Partnership to be one of FAO's most dynamically developing initiatives, which addresses the topical themes of soil preservation and the sustainable management of soil resources. We note the substantial contribution made by the GSP to raising public awareness about the sustainable management of soil resources and to the development of tools for the management of soil carbon sequestration for reducing greenhouse gases. The Russian Federation supports the growth of the activities of the GSP and greatly appreciates the pace of development of this mechanism, including the regional European Soil Partnership and subregional Eurasian Soil Partnership.</p> <p>The Russian Federation supports the implementation of the key tools and initiatives of the GSP, such as, in particular, the International Code of Conduct for the sustainable use and management of fertilizers, the Protocol for measuring, reporting, verification and monitoring of soil organic carbon in agricultural landscapes, and the Sustainable Soil Management Project which aims to create a global programme for soil development and establish a global network of soil laboratories (an initiative of the PhosAgro group).</p>

	<p>The Russian Federation wishes to note the high efficacy of its work, despite limited financial resources. The Russian Federation has made a significant financial contribution to the activities of the GSP. However, those resources are not enough to resolve the GSP's global agenda. The Russian Federation called on Member States to mobilize resources to support the activities of the GSP.</p> <p>The Russian Federation supports the proposal by the Secretariat to convert the GSP from a voluntary partnership into a statutory body of the FAO. In that context the Russian Federation notes the importance of providing information about the legal and financial implications, including the impact on the participation of non-state actors.</p> <p>The Russian Federation notes that the import and export of soil samples for research purposes is permitted in the Russian Federation, and consequently the country does not face significant barriers to the approval of a simplified procedure. The Russian Federation did not object to the adoption of the relevant draft resolution for the international exchange of soil samples for research purposes under GLOSOLAN.</p> <p>The Russian Federation hoped that the GPP would work just as effectively and dynamically in future.</p>
<p>EU (Thu 24/09/2020 19:00)</p>	<p>We welcome the intense activities and the progress of the Global Soil Partnership towards promoting sustainable soil management at global level. This resonates with the goals of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy as well as the statement published by the European Commission in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 on 20 May 2020 that "it is essential to step up efforts to protect soil fertility, reduce soil erosion and increase soil organic matter. This should be done by adopting sustainable soil management practices".</p> <p>3. We agree that healthy soils and their sustainable management are essential for a resilient agriculture in order to ensure food security as well as to meet the SDGs and the international commitments addressing biodiversity loss and climate change. Thus, we recognise that GSP actions, implemented in reinforced coordination with other international efforts, are a fundamental element to address today's global challenges, and need to be more and more strongly supported and developed.</p> <p>4. We appreciate the GSP initiatives aimed to promote the inclusion of soils in the global agenda, to recognize and combat soil pollution, to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation through protecting and enhancing soil fertility and biodiversity, and to harmonise methods to measure soil health and quality.</p> <p>5. We invite GSP and FAO to join the high environmental ambition set in the European Green Deal, scaling it up to global level.</p> <p>6. To conclude, we recognise the value of the stocktaking exercise that took place, and support the proposal to enter into a consultation process for a possible repositioning of the Global Soil Partnership, provided that any potential negative implication concerning the common, public interest would be adequately addressed.</p>
<p>Republic of Korea (Thu 29/09/2020 2.37)</p>	<p>III.8. As one of the member countries participating GLOSOLAN, the Republic of Korea, due to the complex custom clearance procedure, highly supports the necessity of developing a simplified procedure for the exchange of soil samples at the international level.</p> <p>III.10. Standard soil analytic methods of the Rural Development Administration, Republic of Korea is different from those suggested by GSP for carrying out inter-laboratory comparisons. One-time use of GSP methods does not produce continuous and reliable data. Hence, the development of data conversion tools is required for harmonizing soil analytical data.</p>