



Food and Agriculture
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Report of the Fifth (5th) Plenary Meeting of the African Soil Partnership

Virtual meeting, 6-7 July, 2021

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1. Introduction

A physical meeting could not be held due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the meeting was hosted virtually via Zoom Video Communications platform. The meeting duration exceeded three hours planned for each of the two days- 6-7 July 2021. The fifth meeting was attended by 66 participants from 42 countries (see list of participants in Annex 2). The meeting objectives aimed at (1) Follow up on countries on the status of projects, initiatives and activities undertaken in relation to soil and the environment including fertiliser use and availability of national documents (Policy, Acts, legislation, framework) on fertiliser. (Brief national reports); (2) Develop the Regional Implementation Plan (RIP) and redirect its focus on being active in promoting sustainable soil management within Africa and beyond including the GSP's work;(3) Identify governmental and non-governmental partners that can synergise to foster interaction and collaboration of future activities in the region; (4) Discuss further the need for the Working Groups and how their roles complement that of the Focal Points; (5) Discuss the way forward with the Afrisoil project.

1.1 Endorsement of the Agenda and Opening of the Meeting

The moderator for the opening session Mr Jean Jacques Muhinda called the meeting to order and proceeded to welcome all to the meeting. The agenda for the meeting was reviewed and adopted, and a brief background to the partnership according to the concept note was given (<http://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/events/detail/en/c/1410497/>).

Mr Yemi Akinbamijo the Executive Director for the Forum for Agriculture Revolution in Africa (FARA) in an opening remark called for “technical action” that will produce results in line with what the GSP is promoting through the African Soil Partnership in order to equip Africans with the requisite knowledge and tools to drive the development of sound and solution-oriented policies and programmes that will promote the soil agenda. Mr Akinbamijo also proposed the building of synergy between the *AFRISOIL* programme of the AfSP and the upcoming *Soil Initiative for Africa (SIA)* if possible to ensure that there is a comprehensive programme that will tackle the soil issue threatening the continent. He added that as Africa prepares for the World Food Systems Summit in September there will be the need for a unified voice from the continent at this forum and at other global forums and events, in order to articulate clearly what the issues are as well as project a united front.

Mr Abebe HaileGabriel (Assistant Director General and Regional Representative for the FAO Regional office for Africa) opened the meeting with some remarks stating that in spite of the high level of degradation, the region has the potential to position itself as a champion in terms of increasing food production and security, achieving land restoration, and increasing agricultural resilience to climate change within the framework of Sustainable soil management. Mr Abebe spelt out the need for coordination and partnership to harness resources, both technical and financial, to implement initiatives and programmes in Africa. He placed a call on partners to team up and share knowledge and information instead of working in silos which creates room for duplication of efforts and wastage of resources. He further stated that FAO is of the view that there is a need for a shift in widening the issue of soil fertility beyond fertilizer use through the adoption of sustainable soil management to calling for high level policy commitment as highlighted in the revised World Soil Charter. And that this political commitment should build on the Abuja Declaration to address soil

nutrient imbalances in a sustainable soil management framework for more resource-efficient, sustainable and economically-efficient production systems.

Mr. Victor Chude, Chair of the African Soil Partnership in a summary remark re-echoed the call for action and collaboration. Mr Chude further stated that there is the need for Africans to make their voice heard and their readiness to be at the forefront calling for information sharing and partnership in order to have a unified and coherent voice on issues that affect sustainable soil management and agriculture on the continent.

2. Technical Session

2.1 Status on the implementation of the GSP's work/ Resource Mobilisation

Mr Ronald Vargas, GSP said it is important for national soil science societies and soil scientists to gather information on the management of soils and ensure its inclusion in national policy and decision-making strategies, else it will remain at the level of research and limited circulation. Mr Vargas reiterated the work of the GSP since 2012 which has been to promote Sustainable Soil Management, to improve soil governance at all levels, to support/enhance the provision of essential ecosystem services. Mr Vargas challenged focal points to follow up the GSP activities on behalf of their countries and bring the GSP (soil) activities for implementation at national level, as part of their is to serve as a point of convergence bringing all national stakeholders together (national soil Partnership) to promote sustainable soil management and that an active engagement can yield fruitful benefits for the country and the focal point. He presented the RECSOIL programme as a tool that can be used for resource mobilisation encouraging focal points to study the concept and approach the GSP on opportunities identified for the development of projects to mobilise resources for implementation. Mr Vargas said the AfriSOIL programme under the GSP aims at increasing soil productivity in 47 African countries by 30% and reducing degradation by 25% over a 10-year period. He concluded that (i) there are many fragmented initiatives in Africa with little or no coordination at political/policy level under a bigger framework; (ii) there is urgent need to scale up sustainable soil management activities at field level using good results of pilot studies; (iii) there is need for political commitment by African countries towards soil health. Abuja II can be the one, but if its scope is widened to include SSM.

2.2 Brief Overview of the African Soil Partnership: *Accomplishments, Challenges and the Way Forward*

Mr Victor Chude, AfSP Chair outlined the successes of the AfSP as (i) Getting national experts to be trained in soil salinity mapping from 11-22 May 2020; (ii) Some AfSP members participating in the Eighth GSP Plenary Assembly meeting held from 3-5 June 2020; (iii) Some focal points supported their countries to celebrate the 2020 World Soil Day event. (iv) National experts received support in Module I & II training to produce the GSOCseq map. On the challenges he mentioned that: (i) A number of activities could not be implemented due to the non-availability of financial resources; (ii) There was low commitment from countries in the area of promoting soil-related issues; (iii) Inadequate skills on the part of focal points to engage the FAO country offices and other national institutions. On plans for the future Mr Chude said (i) plans to support implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Sustainable Soil Management and Fertiliser Use Management Code at regional/national level; (ii) plans to support implementation of the Soil Doctor programme at regional/national level. He concluded by stating that embedded in these two broad areas are

opportunities for collaboration, capacity building and resource mobilisation and called on focal points to be proactive.

2.3 Global Soil Doctors Programme

Speaking on the soil doctor programme Ms. Carolina OliveraSanchez, GSP said it is a farmer-to-farmer training programme that aims to identify Soil Doctors mainly champion farmers and provide them with training, educational material and soil testing kits to build capacity on the principles of soil science and promote the practice of sustainable soil management. Ms OliveraSanchez added that these farmers who will be easily accepted by their fellow farmers will in turn be expected to assist and train farmers in their community. On the mode of implementation, she stated that at national and local level a third party, called *promoter*, who can be part of a government institution or NGO but has a direct link with local farmers is required. The *promoter* will be responsible for the trainings and the dissemination of the Soil Testing Kits at the local level which could be implemented within the framework of another programme or project that is already working with farmers, but must be interested in soils fertility improvement. Ms OliveraSanchez concluded that trained soil doctors in the end would be issued with certificates, encouraging focal points to get on board.

2.4 Soil Information and Data

Mr Yusuf Yigini, GSP said that the aim of the Global Soil Information System (GLOSIS) is to develop a spatial data infrastructure that brings together soil information collected by national institutions. To do this capacity of national experts is built on up-to-date digital soil mapping techniques and tools as well as exposing them to technical manuals, product guidelines, tools and software developed or available. He further stated the short term goal of GLOSIS which is to help countries to organise and share their existing data and also to create a soil information system that increases findability and accessibility of data. Ms Isabel Luotto, GSP spoke on the products that have been developed and the capacity building being provided to countries to produce their own maps. She said some maps have been produced and indicated the stage of work with regards to some products such as the Global Soil Salinity map, the GSOCseq map with a call on countries to follow up with their experts for the submission of their maps in time. Ms Luotto finally said the GLOSIS team works hand-in-hand with the GLOSOLAN team to support countries to harmonise procedures and protocols for data collection and processing.

2.5 The Global and the African Soil Laboratory Networks: GLOSOLAN and AFRILAB

Mr. Filippo Benedetti, GSP speaking on the global soil laboratory network (GLOSOLAN) explained that it was established in November 2017 to (i) Strengthen the performance of laboratories through the use of standardized methods and protocols (ii) Harmonize soil analysis methods so that soil information would be comparable and interpretable across laboratories, countries and regions. Mr Benedetti outlined the Areas of work under GLOSOLAN which include (i) Execution of external quality control (proficiency testing), (ii) Training on the execution of internal quality control, (iii) Harmonization of Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs), (iv) Training on the implementation of GLOSOLAN SOPs, (v) Training on safety and health, (vi) Training on equipment use, maintenance and purchasing, (vii) Establishment of a donation/bartering system, (viii) Soil spectroscopy, and (ix) Harmonization of fertilizers quality assessment procedures. Mr. Joseph Uponi, Chair AFRILAB said since its establishment in the region in 2019 it has grown into a regional network of 137 soil laboratories from 39 countries which meet annually to revise its workplan according to laboratory needs, and the position of GLOSOLAN. Mr Uponi called on national focal points to identify

laboratories that undertake soil or chemical analysis and invite them to be part of the network where they can benefit and be equipped to do the right thing to produce quality data reliable to inform decision-making.

2.6 Fertilizer Code and International Network for Fertilizer Analysis (INFA)

Ms Vinisa Saynes, GSP speaking on the Fertilizer Code explained that it is an instrument meant to provide a locally adaptable framework and a voluntary set of practices to serve the different stakeholders directly or indirectly involved with fertilizers. She further stated that the Code is a vehicle for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM), particularly addressing the nutrient imbalances and pollution soil threats. In conclusion Ms Saynes articulated the reasons for the establishment of INFA as (i) To standardize methods and protocols for the analysis of fertilizers, (ii) To strengthen the performance of fertilizer laboratories, and (iii) To harmonize fertilizer quality standards. Mr Yuxin Tong, GSP in his delivery said within the framework of the Fertilizer Code 2 South-South corporation projects being funded by the People's Republic of China on capacity building for sustainable soil management are under implementation in Uganda and Rwanda. Some equipment have been provided to labs in these countries with planned activities aimed at building national capacities in fertiliser quality assessment and management. He ended with a call to countries to take up opportunities for more projects to help them.

3. National Presentations on Soil-Related Activities from 2020 to Date

3.1 Cameroun

Ms NGOMENI Arlende F. N., focal point for Cameroun reported that from 6-8 October 2020 they attended the 2nd AFRILAB meeting and participated in the 4th GLOSOLAN meeting held from November 11-13 2020 as well in the first INFA meeting on December 8 - 9, 2020. From December 14 - 18, 2020 they also took part in the Module I GSOCseq training. They also attended the plenary session on Spectroscopy which was followed by registration of LASPEE from IRAD in Cameroon to INFA (International Network on Fertilizer Analysis) for Inter-Laboratory Tests (EIL) in December 2020. Cameroun submitted its report on the state of saline soils with the soil map. Participated in global events such as contribution of the Cameroon soil map to the modernization of Williams's soil museum in Russia and in the first meeting of INSAS held on 14-15 April, 2021. She also mentioned their participation in the first meeting of the working group on the sustainable management of saline soils of INSAS (SAS & SSM WG of INSAS), May 25, 2021. In June 2021 LASPEE provided samples to GLOSOLAN on the bulk density of the soil for the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) matrix and ended by saying the country is working on the production of the GSOCseq map.

3.2 Kingdom of Eswatini

Mr Patrick Bhekisisa Dlamini, focal point for the Kingdom of Eswatini reported that no data collection was done last year due to lack of resources and that there are requests to collect soil samples to analyse for carbon stocks and other soil properties. He further stated his participation in the global symposium on soil biodiversity and the launch of the soil doctors programme. Mr Bhekisisa reported his participation in the Soil Information System for Food Security and Sustainable Intensification in Africa and the country's membership in International Networks such as INSII, GLOSOLAN, INFA and AfriLab. To produce the national soil salinity map data used was taken from the Lowveld of the country where salinity is a challenge due to mass production of irrigated crops and flat terrain. He added that the Highveld has a sloppy terrain and thus challenges are with soil

erosion and soil acidity due to high rainfall. In conclusion, he said work was ongoing to produce and submit its the national map as part of the Global Soil Organic Carbon Sequestration Map. Mr Bhekisisa outlined the following challenges (i) Lack of capacity (financial) to carry out sampling that is representative of the country; (ii) Lack of national coordination for soil issues; (iii) Lack of land legislation.

3.3 Kenya

Ms Anne Muriuki, focal point for Kenya reported that Kenya is a member of GLOSOLAN and AFRILAB with KALRO Kabete Labs (NARL) serving as the National Reference Soil Laboratory. She added that in 2019-2020 Kenya participated in: (i) Providing data to support global carbon map; (ii) Providing standard operating procedures for evaluation of soil chemical, physical and biological properties at NARL, to be used to prepare harmonized soil laboratory procedures/methods by GLOSOLAN; (iii) Participating in global soil analysis quality control exchange programme (WEPAL); (iv) Submitting it's need for equipment and capacity building for which GLOSOLAN is in the process of procuring a Flame photometer for the National Reference Soil Lab; (v) Reached out to other soil labs in the country; (vi) Participated in the 2nd INFA meeting on June 29-30, 2021.

3.4 Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho

Ms Maseeiso Hlongwane, focal point for the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho reported that the yearly Land management program funded by Lesotho government was undertaken with a number of donor funded projects that complemented it still ongoing. She outlined support received from some organisations such as Strengthening capacity towards climate change (GEF-UNDP); Reducing vulnerability towards climate change (FAO); Wool and mohair promotion project (IFAD); Improving adaptive capacity of vulnerable and food-insecure populations in Lesotho (WFP); Regeneration of landscapes and Livelihoods (IFAD, GEF, OFID, FAO, etc). Ms Hlongwane also mentioned that the Lesotho Soil Information Systems (LeSIS) protocols had been adopted and were currently being updated. She also mentioned the country's participation in the preparation of the National soil organic carbon sequestration potential map and INFA meetings in November 2020 and June 2021. She also reported the collection of data in Lesotho to update the land cover map from April- May 2021. She spoke on the FAO-TCP SADC Harmonized Regulatory Project being implemented to be completed in June 2021. They also observed the UN Day of Desertification and Drought on 17 June.

3.5 Nigeria

Mr Victor Chude, focal point for Nigeria reported that Nigeria participated in an online training organized by GSP, on National Digital Mapping of Salinity and Contribution to Global Mapping of Salt – affected Soils from 11 – 22 May, 2020. A tree planting campaign by the Sokoto State Government was held on 22nd July 2020 to sensitize the general public on the importance of planting trees in the soil and the environment with a similar exercise organized by the Jigawa State Government on 31st of August, 2020 followed with the distribution of 2.5 million seedlings across the state. He reported that the Nigeria Institute of Soil Science (NISS) rolled out a 5-Year Action Plan for the management and protection of soil resources and that preparations were underway for the Development of a National Soil Policy by NISS. He added that Nigeria participated in the GLOSOLAN meeting of on Spectroscopy from 23-25 September, 2020. Mr Chude said the 2020 World Soil Day Celebration was organized by NISS, in collaboration with the FAO office in Nigeria, the Soil Science Society of Nigeria, the National Agency for the Great Green Wall, OCP Africa and Indorama Eleme and Chemical Limited

under the theme “Keep Soil Alive, Protect Soil Biodiversity”. Further, the 45th Soil Science Society of Nigeria Annual conference came off from 17-20 May 2021 at Bowen University Iwo, Osun State under the theme “Understanding Soil Organic matter dynamics; Key to Sustainable Ecosystem Health and food security”. On 18 May 2021 NISS inducted some 114 soil scientists as Registered Soil Scientists to ensure standards in the profession at Bowen University Iwo, Osun State. The Inception workshop on disseminating innovation and technologies for managing of problematic soils in Nigeria, and signing of an MoU between NISS and OCP had been done. Mr Chude reported that research on management of problematic (acidic and saline) soils in Nigeria funded by OCP Africa fertilizer company was in progress.

3.6 Togo

Mr Koffi Afawoubo, focal point for Togo reported that Human resource capacity building for 3 PhDs in soil science had been done. He touched on the Resilience to Salinity through Development project which involves participatory research to improve agricultural productivity on the saline soils of Togo with agronomic trials on crops tolerant to saline soils. Training of trainers on good agricultural practices resilient to soil salinity organised from 24-27 May 2021. He also said the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (ARAA)-UEMOA Workshop was held on March 10 and 11, 2020 in Lomé, Togo on Sustainable land management. Togo is developing fertility map of agricultural soils under a project being supported by the OCP Foundation and FAO which involves (i) Collection of soil samples for analysis completed throughout the cultivable area, (ii) EC C, P, K, and pH maps available for 2 R Kara and Central Regions, (iii) pH, C, P and K available for 3 regions: R of the Kara and Central Savannas (54.2% of the country). The country is conducting agronomic trials to calibrate formulation of fertilizers in UF for 9 major crops. A digital decision-making platform for sustainable crop fertilization in Togo called "FertiTogo.tg" has been created which allows users to access all of the results free of charge and to have recommendations (fertilizer units) specific to each production plot. He reported that about 60% of soils have an OM content of less than 2%. There is strengthening of the technical platform of the Soils-Water-Plants-Fertilizers laboratory of the Togolese Agronomic Research Institute (ITRA). In addition, strengthening the technical capacities of the executives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development (MAEDR), in particular: 10 in soil fertility and crop fertilization; 3 in quality control of fertilizers; 13 in GIS applied to soil mapping; 8 in interpretation of soil analyses and development of fertilizer recommendations being done.

3.7 Congo

Mr Obambi Daniel Zéphirin focal point for Congo reported that soil management is an issue as ploughing is not done by professionals making the soils prone to acidification and erosion. He added that the lack of a national pedological centre and a laboratory for soil, plant and water analysis worthy of the name. He reported very few soil scientists present in the country and a lack of a substantial budget for soil studies and for physico-chemical analyses in the laboratory. Mr Obambi proposed to the GSP to continue to promote synergy between/among countries in matters of soil, and to continuously encourage countries to allocate resources in national budgets for soil studies.

3.8 Rwanda

Mr Pascal Rushemuka, focal point for Rwanda reported that support was received from the BMG Foundation for the establishment of the Rwanda Soil Information System (RWASIS) and to implement the project ‘Guiding Investments in Acidic soils of Africa (GIAA)’. He also reported on the

support received from the Chinese Government through FAO/GSP on Capacity Development on Sustainable Soil Management for Rwanda.

3.9 South Africa

Mr Ramakgwale Mampholo, focal point for South Africa reported that:

- **Pillar 1:** He and other soil practitioners participated in soil pollution symposium as well as in the soil biodiversity symposium 19-22 April 2021. He participated in the launch Soil Doctor programme which was followed by application by several national government and soil institutions to promoters. An NGO supported by FAO rolled out 10 Soil Doctor Programme packs to farmers.
- **Pillar 2:** He reported that the Conservation Agriculture policy had been approved by NEDLAC and ready for Cabinet; Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land Bill had been submitted to Parliament for avoidance of land sealing. He further reported that a collaborative meeting with soil science society and partners for possible formation of nation soil partnership had been held. A national soil video hosting Mrs South Africa to appeal to broader public, youth, women had been produced
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SI02OYuOQ55PQrVriJpDGbMA_wo9iaat/view?usp=sharing.
 - World Soil Day 2020 was celebrated virtually with ZZ2 private farm and Agricultural research council.
- **Pillar 3:** Research gap on mobile laboratory, spectrometer drafted and resource mobilisation ongoing. Capacity building for higher education on spectrometer and mobile laboratory initiated
- **Pillar 4:** Soil information system policy drafted and gazetted for public consultation. Participation in International Network of Soil Information Institutions (INSII) meeting of 7 October 2020. Compilation and submission of report on salt-affected soils in South Africa. Participation in network of salt affected soils (INSAS) and its working groups and compilation and submission of report on Soil Organic Carbon Sequestration Potential National Map for South Africa.
- **Pillar 5:** Member of GLOSOLAN and participated in the meetings. Joined the laboratory network and participation in the network sessions and activities. Participation in spectrometer working group. Rolling out capacity building at agricultural colleges on soil survey and fertility analysis using mobile dry analysis and wet analysis. Purchased and distributed 250 pH meters and 11 hand held spectrometer to facilitate dry field analysis and other soil survey tools. Member of INFA.
- **Challenges/Concerns** were (i) No coordination of pillars on the continental level; (ii) Lack of formal platform on national level to coordinate soil matters; (iii) Limited capacity at national level to address key issues of the GSP intentions and pillars; (iv) Limited funding on key initiatives

3.10 Mauritius

Mr Ronald L. Ng Cheong, focal point for Mauritius reported that 2 persons from the University of Mauritius, and 3 from the Forestry Services of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security participated in the international training workshop on the GSOCseq map production held in 2021. The country provided information to the SoilEX programme by filling the questionnaire. Mauritius has 2 soil laboratories which also participated in the soil laboratories survey. The country is currently implementing an FAO project on: Strengthening rural development planning in Rodrigues through land suitability maps and natural resource information systems out of which 12 persons have been trained in field survey methods, soil sampling and analysis. Under the project samples were taken from 250 locations for which the following parameters were analysed: Stone content, Texture, Soil organic carbon, N, P, K, pH and Electrical conductivity. The result from other FAO project are (i)

Updated and detailed land suitability and other maps for land management development plan; (ii) Natural Resource Information System accessible to relevant stakeholders produced; (iii) Training provided on production, use and updating of natural resource data, land suitability maps and on overall land resources planning process.

3.11 Gabon

Mr Raphaël NGADI LITADI, focal point for Gabon reported that Gabon contributed to the preparation of the world report on the state of biodiversity and also supported the work of the Steering Committee of the Central African Forests Initiative (CAFI) program as a member to improve land use and ensure better monitoring of land use, land and forest use changes in order to help reduce and minimize deforestation and degradation of forestry, while optimizing Co-benefits for development. Implementation of the Regional support program for the preservation of biodiversity and fragile ecosystems in Central Africa (ECOFAC 6) the celebration of World Soil Day during which a training workshop for the leaders of certain agricultural cooperatives, on the manufacture and use of compost as organic fertilizer was organized. Mr Litadi said Gabon participated in the GSOCseq training organized in 2021 and in the GLOSOLAN/AFRILab activities using laboratory expert in MASUKU University of Sciences. They also participated in the "Dialogue on forests, agriculture and commodity trade" in preparation for COP 26, in November 2021. He touched on the support received from the Minister of Agriculture for construction work on the soil laboratory and the geographic information system in June 2021. Faced with the disinterest of the country's reference laboratory to participate in the work of AFRILAB the focal point is working to resolve this problem by the end of the 2021.

3.12 Niger

Mr. Addam Saidou Kiari, focal point for Niger reported that (i) Niger contributed to and participated in GLOSOLAN activities down to NASOLAN; (ii) Participated in the GSOCseq training to produce soil organic carbon map; (iii) Soil phosphorus map for the country has been produced; (iv) Participated in training for the production of soil salinity map; (v) The soil fertility map in Dosso Region of the country has been produced; (v) Organization of world soil day 2020 supported by FAO in Niger; (vi) Construction of new soil, plant and water Laboratory by the World Bank; (vii) Supported the 'test of fertilizer doses' to help in proposing appropriate recommendations; (viii) Capacity building in Land Potential Knowledge System (LandPKS); (ix) Training of two PhD students: one in adding value to *Sida cordifolia* in compost and the other in small mechanization of micro dosing with fertilizer and rapid seed planting.

3.13 Guinea

Ms Aissatou Taran Diallo, focal point for Guinea reported the following activities (i) development/production of soil fertility map: Analyses of 2,324 soil samples (in addition to the 511 samples already analyzed) taken in 2019 from the Kankan sheet of pole F, an area of 1,100,000 ha; Results obtained in June 2020, followed by setting up of a commission compile, analyse and process these results; The final document was obtained in October 2020 and sent to all our partners involved (FOCP, UM6P, ENA of Morocco) in the development of the soil fertility map of the Kankan leaf; Maps of fertility parameters (pH, OM, P₂O₅, K₂O) have been produced at a scale of 1:200 000; Disseminate the formulas obtained (popularization) through field schools. She also reported that World Soil Day 2020 was celebrated within the premises of SENASOL with partners. She further outlined the following (i) The SENASOL laboratory participated in the various work of the GLOSOLAN and is

officially registered under the network; (ii) Successful engagement with the Islamic Development Bank to support SENASOL with 2M USD to produce soil fertility map. Project was supposed to start in July 2020 but has delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic; (iii) SENASOL management continuously engaging UNIDO to support with equipment and certification for soil, fertilizer, water and plant laboratory; (iv) SENASOL has had privileged relations with the OCP, being the bearer and co-bearer of the three areas of collaboration of the said protocol. These three axes were as follows: The development and implementation of a soil fertility map; The establishment of an agricultural caravan and schools in the fields in the Republic of Guinea; Capacity building for managers and workers in the agricultural sector. On projects she said SENASOL was in charge of agro-pedological studies under the AgriFARM Project (December 2020 to March 2021) which produced land use map, soil map, land cultivation and irrigation maps. SENASOL was also in charge of agro-pedological studies under the Bureau GMP - SARL project (March - July 2020) which produced soil map, land cultivation and irrigation suitability maps.

3.14 Burkina Faso

Mr. Mamadou Traore, focal point for Burkina Faso reported that Burkina Faso Sustainable Land Management Bill had been drafted. The validation of the preliminary draft was done in a national workshop and is currently in the cabinet council of the Ministry in charge of Agriculture. There has been establishment of the baseline situation and monitoring of the fertility of lowland soils in some provinces with 25 soil fertility maps of the various lowlands have been drawn up. Other activities undertaken include (i) Construction of a soil resource centre in progress; (ii) Training of BUNASOLS technicians to construct three soil monoliths for the centre done; (iii) Establishment of the soil fertility map of Burkina on a pilot zone of 140,000 ha - 48 fertility parameter maps of 4 regions were produced; (iv) Participation in training in production of soil salinity maps. Map prepared and submitted; (v) Participation in the GSOCseq map training. Map yet to be submitted; (vi) Participation the setting up of the Taskforce to on sustainable land management which has been validated by the minister; (vii) Organized World Soil Day 2020. Dignitaries included reps from FAO and UNDP; (viii) Participated in the preparation of the National Recovery Strategy, Land Conservation; (ix) Support Soils4Africa project and coordinate the implementation of activities in West Africa; (x) Organization of an international videoconference to present the results of the first phase of the fertility map of the soils of Burkina Faso; (xi) Implementation of the nutrition sensitive agriculture project through sustainable soil Management "Micronutrients project" in collaboration with FAO; (xii) Organization of the International Scientific Symposium on Sustainable Land Management, 3rd Edition: Presentation of a communication entitled: "development of the soil fertility map of Burkina Faso on a pilot zone of 100,000 ha and of the Soil Information System for Africa project." (xiii) Conducted pedological and ethno-pedological studies on a scale of 1 / 20,000 of the different communities of Burkina Faso; (xiv) Organization of an agricultural awareness-raising caravan on the reasoned fertilization of soils and crops with delivery of protection kits against COVID-19 to producers from 6 regions; (xv) Organization of 3rd Edition of awareness-raising on sustainable management of soils via national radio; (xvi) Supervision of trainee students in the field of pedology: Soil study in the six villages of the project to improve biodiversity, food and nutritional security in the South Centre region of the NATURAMA Foundation.

3.15 São Tomé and Príncipe

Ms Antonia Neto, focal point for São Tomé and Príncipe reported that São Tomé and Príncipe officially joined the GSP/AfSP in 2019 after her appointment. She added that there was a project to update the draft soil map of the country (1958) for which physico-chemical analyzes of samples taken from the profiles are being done. In addition, laboratory technicians will receive training in physico-chemical soil analysis and also benefit from a national internet hotline. Ms Neto said she participate in the global symposium on soil biodiversity and in the second AFRILAB meeting as well as in the INFA meeting. On projects she reported that (i) Feb / Mar / 21 -performed physico-chemical analyzes of soil and water samples for a study of the irrigation system in the northeast of the island of São Tomé financed by the BAD (African Development Bank) through the PRIASA II; (ii) Training of small farmers on the preparation and production of organic insecticides and bio-fertilizers carried out by the NGO ADAPA (Action for Agricultural Development and Environmental Protection) in partnerships with PRIASA II (Food Safety Infrastructure Project); (iii) Training for horticultural producers in enriching organic compost for soil fertility through the convention with PRIASA II in 2020; (iv) April 2020: Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development sensitized the São Toméan society to produce and consume local products, taking advantage of the lots, plots, vegetable gardens and backyards. 719 farmers benefited from this campaign; (v) Support to Project TRI: Landscape Restoration for Ecosystem Functionality and Climate Change Mitigation in the Republic of São Tomé e Príncipe with activities related to reforestation and storage of organic carbon. Unfortunately, they did not participate in the training on the preparation of the carbon map due to the poor internet connection.

4. Why a New Implementation Plan: *Quick Review of Previous Plan*

Mr Victor Chude, Chair of the AfSP explained to participants the rationale behind the development of the Regional Implementation Plan (RIP) for Africa saying it was to identify prevailing soil issues at local level and what could be done to address them. Mr Sebastian Brahene of the GSP further stated that the current RIP expired in December 2020 and as such there is the need for a new one which should reflect current issues and challenges in response to calls to review some of the activities which were described as being overambitious. He called for a new RIP which should cover a shorter duration e.g. 2 years instead of the 5 years and should consider activities that can be carried out with little or no internal funds instead of depending on external support. Mr. Victor Chude then asked all focal points to look at the RIP and on their own carry out an evaluation for subsequent discussion on the way forward. Finally, he tabled a motion for the review and drawing of a new plan to be deferred to a later date before close of 2021 which received unanimous approval.

5. Discussion on the Role of Working Groups per *Areas of Work and Nomination of Chairs*

Mr Sebastian Brahene of the GSP spoke on the role of Working Groups per *Areas of Work* and nomination of Chairs by calling on all focal points' attention to the paradigm shift from *Pillars* to *Areas of work* within the GSP and the need for the AfSP to align itself in this direction in order to be more effective. The Areas of Work basically respond to the identified 10 soil threats. Mr Brahene explained that Working Groups would be formed for which focal points would be requested to belong to at least 1, per one's area of competence and interest. In addition, Chairs will be needed as convenors of these Working Groups to facilitate discussions on issues and help in identifying

opportunities for resource mobilisation through development of project proposals. He further stated that Chairs of Working Groups must be experts or competent enough in the chosen area of work so they can direct discussions or activities. Mr Brahene encouraged focal points to accept to be Chairs of Working Groups which only imposes extra burden of time for meetings which are not often but gives them exposure to work with the ITPS and other technical networks of the GSP.

6. Opportunities for Collaboration and Support

Mr Eugene Rurangwa, Land and Water Officer, FAO RAF who moderated the session said that FAO has supported some countries in the development and implementation of certain projects in the region for which selected countries would be allowed to share their experience to motivate others to take hold of available opportunities. Mr Rurangwa also stated that some invited partners working in the region were chosen to share their interventions as a way of presenting existing opportunities for collaboration with countries. He went ahead and invited the various presenters to make their presentations.

6.1 Sustainable Soil Management for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture in Burkina

Faso

Mr Mamadou Traore speaking said BUNASOLS on behalf of the Government of Burkina Faso is implementing the project with FAO's support. He said an expert consultation session was held and followed by a literature review on micronutrient deficiencies and related subjects. In addition, he stated that good practises for nutrition-sensitive agriculture had been identified. He further stated that the baseline status of crops, nutrients and local population had been conducted. Mr Traore said establishment and conduct of field trials to verify and disseminate good sustainable soil management practices for nutrition sensitive agriculture had been done as well as the training of farmers and technicians in these practices. The results showed that (i) the yield limits observed on certain treatments are partly linked to the poor quality of the soils; (ii) the addition of micronutrients and organic matter in fertilization increases crop yields by 20% and promotes their assimilation in plants; (iii) micronutrients improve the efficiency of chemical fertilizers and make it possible to obtain a gain of 5.7 F CFA for 1 additional F CFA of sulphur and zinc. On the number of beneficiaries Mr Traore said 140 producers and 4 Agents were taking through training made up of 5 modules on the concept of the micronutrient project, the test protocol, sustainable soil management and the importance of micronutrients. In conclusion Mr Traore said the results of the projects are very appreciable despite the short implementation time. Looking ahead, he observed that there will be the need to advocate scaling up of the recommendations from the trials, the continuation of training/ sensitization of producers on sustainable soil management and rational fertilization of crops.

6.2 Capacity Development for Sustainable Soil Management in Uganda

Ms Lydia Mugala in her submission said Uganda was privileged to benefit from an FAO South-South Corporation project support received from the People's Republic of China in 2020 with a particular focus on balanced fertilization for improved food production and soil health within the framework of the Fertilizer Code implementation. Ms Mugala continued by saying Some laboratory equipment had been provided to the reference national soil laboratory following the conduct of a capacity assessment test. In addition, there have been series of stakeholder engagements out of which partners have been identified for the implementation of other planned activities such as building

national capacities in fertiliser quality assessment and management. In conclusion, Ms Mugala said the project is working on the development of an EduSOIL platform for knowledge sharing and learning.

6.3 Sustainable Soil Management for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture in Malawi

Mr Gilbert Kupunda speaking said the Ministry of Agriculture on behalf of the Government of Malawi with FAO's support was implementing the Soil4Nutrition project. He added that the main aim of the project is to promote and support the application of sustainable soil management (SSM) practices for nutrition-sensitive agriculture with the purpose to improve the nutritional quality of locally produced foods. Mr Kupunda enumerated some activities undertaken such as, data collected in several locations in the country under analysis, literature review for empirical evidence and data on soil nutrition, multi-stakeholder discussions held with technical experts, identification of possible interventions to support nutrition-sensitive agriculture and extension services to scale up knowledge dissemination and preliminary revision of training materials available to orient the dissemination of information. In conclusion he spoke on the integration of the Soil Doctor Programme into the project which was useful in building the capacity of the Extension Service and selected farmers within which the training material was translated into a local Malawian language 'chichiwa' which facilitated training.

6.4 Capacity Building in Module I&II: Production of Global Soil Organic Carbon Sequestration (GSOCseq) Map by Nigeria

Mr James Jayeoba spoke on the capacity building received in digital soil mapping techniques from FAO/GSP to produce the national map for Nigeria as a contribution to the Global Soil Organic Sequestration (GSOCseq) Map. He highlighted some challenges encountered during the process which includes the needs for a high specification computer to process the data. He added that the map production process is time-consuming and quite demanding, thus, accounting for why most countries have not been able to finish and submit to the GSP team for the next level of validation and final submission. Mr Jayeoba encouraged countries not to give up because the output in the end is a very useful tool for planning and decision-making.

6.5 Capacity Building to produce National Soil Salinity Map for Zimbabwe

Ms Marilyn Muzira in her presentation touched on the capacity building received from FAO/GSP to produce the Soil Salinity map of Zimbabwe and the benefits of having such a product as (i) serving as an entry point for monitoring the current severity of soil salinity in the country and (ii) providing a visual aid in communicating with stakeholders and policy makers. She added that updating the map will show the development of saline soils in the country which would be useful in determining the action needed to be taken to protect unaffected areas and halt the degradation in affected areas. Ms Muzira said there are opportunities for improvement which includes helping in the establishment of a national soil information system and providing evidence to partners and donors to support the country to deal with the current challenge.

6.6 Establishment of the National Soil Information System for Lesotho (LeSIS)

Mr Ramakhanna Selebalo spoke on the Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) support received from FAO to establish a national soil information system for the country. He stated that the establishment of LeSIS is to support decision-making in a number of sectors in the country. Mr Selebalo appreciated the capacity building received through the project from the GSP team which has further

enhanced the national team's efforts to produce a number of maps which have been useful to the country. In addition, the experts trained have benefitted from further capacity building to produce the national soil salinity and the GSOCseq maps.

6.7 International institute for tropical agriculture (IITA)

Mr Jeroen Huising in brief said the IITA is still involved in supporting countries to implement projects and to promote soil health. He also stated that the institution is collaborating with others within the soil fraternity, and is ready to continue to provide assistance to countries and partner institutions in Africa to promote sustainable soil management and soil health.

6.8 Soil Initiative for Africa: Forum for Agriculture Revolution in Africa (FARA)

Mr Wole Fatunbi speaking on the soil initiative for Africa said it is an upcoming initiative to be developed by FARA which aims at providing a holistic response to soil management issues in Africa. He added that the constraints to improving soil fertility in Africa are not mainly technical but (i) Scaling of technologies, (ii) Coordination of various actions, (iii) Policy issues, (iv) Institutional arrangements, and (v) Capacity. Mr Fatunbi touched on the essential elements of the initiative and outlined progress made so far in its development namely (i) External partnership development for the initiative ongoing, (ii) Elastic task team established, (iii) Currently developing the Comprehensive programme Concept Note, and (iv) Lesson learning from existing initiatives within and outside Africa. Mr Fatunbi in conclusion said there is opportunity to explore synergy between the initiative and the AfriSOIL programme developed by the GSP/AfSP.

6.9 West Africa Soil Doctors: Wisconsin university

Mr. Geoffrey Siemering said the West Africa Soil Doctor is a proposal that has been developed and submitted by Wisconsin University to USAID for a small-scale 16-month Farmer to Farmer programme where US-based technical experts will team up with the GSP to conduct trainings on agricultural topics of interest to individual countries using the Soil Doctor concept in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Gambia. Mr siemering added that Soil Doctor program support can be requested by countries from the current USAID program contractors situated in US Embassies or Agency offices who are required to be responsive to requests from individual countries. He concluded by saying those who would need technical assistance could contact the Wisconsin University team

6.10 Soils for Africa: International Soil Reference and Information Centre (ISRIC)

Ms Mary Steverink-Mosugu presenting on the Soil for Africa project said it is being implement by ISRIC with the support of the European Union which has identified the shortfall in the area of quality soil data and aims to develop a soil information system with plans to build capacity for it to be managed by Africans. Ms Steverink-Mosugu said the project plans to identify a host institution for the soil information system for Africa and provide opportunity for capacity building to maintain, use and expand the system. In conclusion she stated that there are plans to identify and establish linkages with the GLOSI and other programmes involved in soil information systems.

7. Future of the Partnership: Mechanism for a Self-Sustaining Partnership

Mr Victor Chude, AfSP Chair explained that sustainability is key for every system and that the previous submission on the RIP and role of Working Groups are all within the broad context of sustainability. He encouraged focal points to share their thoughts on what they think can be done to improve the partnership and make it more dynamic and a bit independent. Mr Chude challenged the

focal points to be bold to visit the FAO offices in their respective countries and introduce themselves and seek to collaborate with them on certain issues. *Mr Sebastian Brahene, GSP* in presenting the AfSP Workplan for the remaining months in 2021 said the planned activities would be followed as indicated in what was shared with focal points in the early parts of the second quarter of this year. Mr Brahene said the next planned activity involves preparations for the celebration of World Soil Day for 2021 for which all focal points are being encouraged to start preparing and to do well to share information with the GSP Secretariat.

8. Way forward for the African Soil Partnership

Mr Victor Chude, AfSP Chair on *the way forward* said the proposed High Level Ministerial Meeting on fertilisers was spoken about in the previous presentation by Mr Vargas. He encouraged focal points to align themselves with their Ministries of Agriculture to support when the time comes for an assessment. On the AfriSOIL programme, Mr Chude encouraged focal points to own the programme and try speaking with donors in their countries to support it, if not the entire programme, aspects relevant to solving some issues peculiar to their countries.

The Land and Water officer, FAO RAF- Mr Eugene Rurangwa said the FAO Regional Office for Africa as part of its plans for 2022 will be promoting Sustainable Land Management as a way to address issues of land/soil and agriculture, and that there are opportunities for countries to begin to align themselves in this direction by contacting the FAO Country offices through the Ministers of Agriculture with proposals for TCP support and other programmes.

Mr Ramakgwale Mampholo, focal point for South Africa said there was a need to look at the governance of the AfSP. Mr Chude encouraged him and all other persons with brilliant ideas on how to improve the partnership to do well to write to the secretary of the GSP- Mr Vargas and make them known to him for further action.

On housekeeping matters Mr Sebastian Brahene informed focal points of a national fertilizer survey to be carried out soon during a presentation he made and called on all focal points to respond well when the time comes as information would be extracted from it to identify opportunities for resource mobilisation to support countries. He also reminded participants of the 9 GSP Plenary Assembly meeting to come off from 8-10 September and the need for them to participate actively.

Mr Chude enumerated briefly some conclusions and outcomes of the meeting as follow:

1. There is the need for focal points to be more proactive in pushing the soil agenda on the continent far especially at national level.
2. Regular reporting is needed for knowledge and experience sharing.
3. Collaboration among partners is key to avoid duplication of efforts and wastage of resources if really we want to push farther the soil agenda in Africa.
4. AfriSOIL was developed by national focal points and experts based on challenges identified per country and could serve as a starting point for addressing the diverse soil issues while taking on board other dimensions to touch new areas.
5. Focal points can do better if they collaborate with institutions and organisations in-country to mobilise technical and financial resources to implement soil-related activities.

6. The Global Soil Partnership (GSP) Secretariat and the FAO Regional office in Africa are available to assist countries and partner institutions to raise awareness on soils and implement activities but must be country-driven.

9. Vote of Thanks and Closing

Mr Chude appreciated the focal points for their hard work, dedication and commitment but encouraged them to regularly report ongoing activities and programmes to the GSP so they can be shared with a wider audience. He delivered a vote of thanks to:

Mr. Abebe Haile-Gabriel, ADG/RR, FAO RAF -for his statement and opening of the meeting.

Mr. Yemi Akinbamiyo Executive Director FARA -for delivering an opening Remark.

The Moderator Mr Jean Jacques Muhinda, AGRA for his affability as moderator.

To all focal points for responding to the invitation and for their participation.

To all partners for responding to the invitation and making presentations.

To the GSP team for the hard work and commitment in getting the meeting organised especially the team that handled the simultaneous interpretation in French and Portuguese.

The 2-day meeting was finally brought to a close by Mr Victor Chude.

Annex

1 Agenda



| TIME | TOPIC | MODERATOR/SPEAKER |
|--------------|--|---|
| DAY 1 | | |
| 10:00 -10:40 | <p style="text-align: center;">Opening Ceremony</p> <p>Opening of the meeting by Mr. Abebe HaileGabriel <i>ADG/RR FAO RAF</i></p> <p>Statement by Dr. Yemi Akinbamijo <i>Executive Director, FARA</i></p> <p>Statement by H.E. Josefa L.C. Sacko <i>Commissioner for REA, AUC</i></p> <p>Closing remark and Vote of thanks by Prof Victor Chude, Chair AfSP</p> | Prof Jean Jacques Muhinda |
| | Break | Moderator |
| 10:45 -10:55 | Self-introduction by Focal Points and acknowledgement of Partners | Prof Jean Jacques Muhinda |
| 10:55 -11:10 | <p style="text-align: center;">Technical Sessions</p> <p>Status on the implementation of the GSP's work/ Resource Mobilisation</p> | Mr. Ronald Vargas, GSP |
| 11:10 -11:25 | Brief Overview of the African Soil Partnership: <i>Accomplishments, Challenges and the Way Forward</i> | Prof. Victor Chude, Chair, AfSP |
| 11:25-11:55 | <p>GSP Paradigm shift: <i>From Pillars to Areas of Work</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soil Doctor - GLOSIS and National Soil Info Systems - GLOSOLAN/AFRILAB - Fertilizer Code Implementation - INFA | <p>Ms. Carolina Olivera Sanchez, GSP</p> <p>Mr. Yusuf Yigini/ Mr Omuto, GSP</p> <p>Mr Filippo Benedetti, GSP & AFRILAB Chair</p> <p>Ms. Vinisa Saynes & Yuxin Tong, GSP</p> |
| 11:55-12:55 | National programmes/activities on soil: <i>Jan 2020 till date</i> (5 mins each) | Mr. Brahene Sebastian, GSP/AfSP |
| 12:55-13:00 | Wrap up for Day 1 (Launch of Survey) | |

| DAY 2 | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| 10:00-10:10 | Welcome and brief recap of Day 1 | Mr. Brahene Sebastian, GSP/AfSP |
| 10:10-10:30 | National programmes/activities on soil: <i>Jan 2020 till date</i> (5 mins each) | |
| 10:30-10:50 | Why a new Implementation Plan - <i>Quick review of previous plan</i> | Prof. Victor Chude, Chair, AfSP |
| 10:50-11:10 | Discussion on the role of Working Groups per <i>Areas of Work and nomination of Chairs</i> | Mr. Nzeyimana Valere, FAO Regional Office, Accra |
| 11:10-12:10 | Opportunities for collaboration and support: Examples from Burkina Faso, Uganda, Malawi, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Lesotho <i>GSP Partners Presentation</i> – IITA, FARA, Wisconsin University, Soil4Africa (5 mins each) | Mr. Eugene Rurangwa FAO Regional Office, Accra |
| 12:10-12:30 | Discussions: Future of the Partnership: <i>Mechanism for a Self-Sustaining Partnership</i> - <i>Workplan for 2021</i> - <i>AfSP brochure</i> | Prof. Victor Chude, Chair, AfSP Mr. Brahene Sebastian, GSP/AfSP |
| 12:30-13:00 | Way forward for the African Soil Partnership - <i>Relaunch of AFRISOIL</i> - <i>High Level Ministerial Meeting on Fertilizers (Abuja II)</i> - <i>Closing remarks</i> | Prof. Victor Chude, Chair, AfSP Mr. Ronald Vargas Prof. Victor Chude, Chair, AfSP |

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3 Information and contacts

Link to access the meeting audio recordings:

Day 1

https://fao.zoom.us/rec/share/oFIPsES_FuOHc4kgi89yYvwM8aRpWBho8Iln48dPv_tI5Gf4HtDSv6_Nl_bwLvfh.b5uCPHwJAqO96zg3

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Day 2

https://fao.zoom.us/rec/share/j3qhSST4k_2yzw74VZzgCoQxbJj8AuJ6nSMKMPQstOJSecXxboDWEpT3q-AaQzTi.CGmgWPw4AECluq-T

Passcode: gB9#dJy4

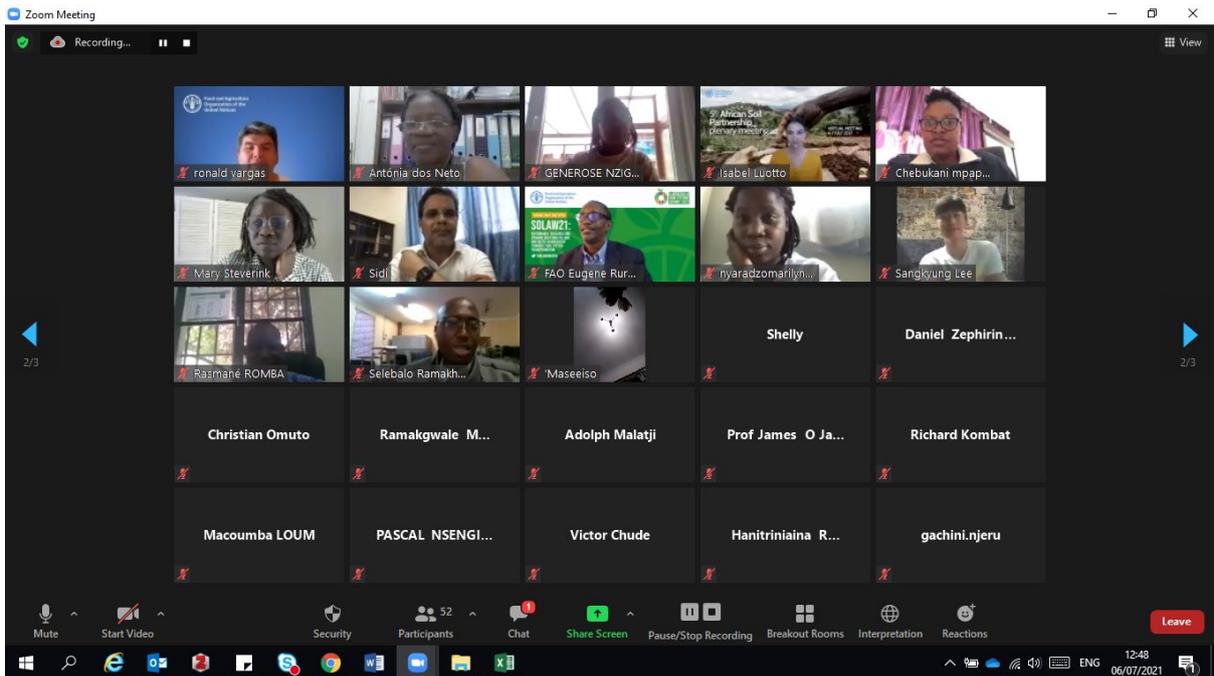
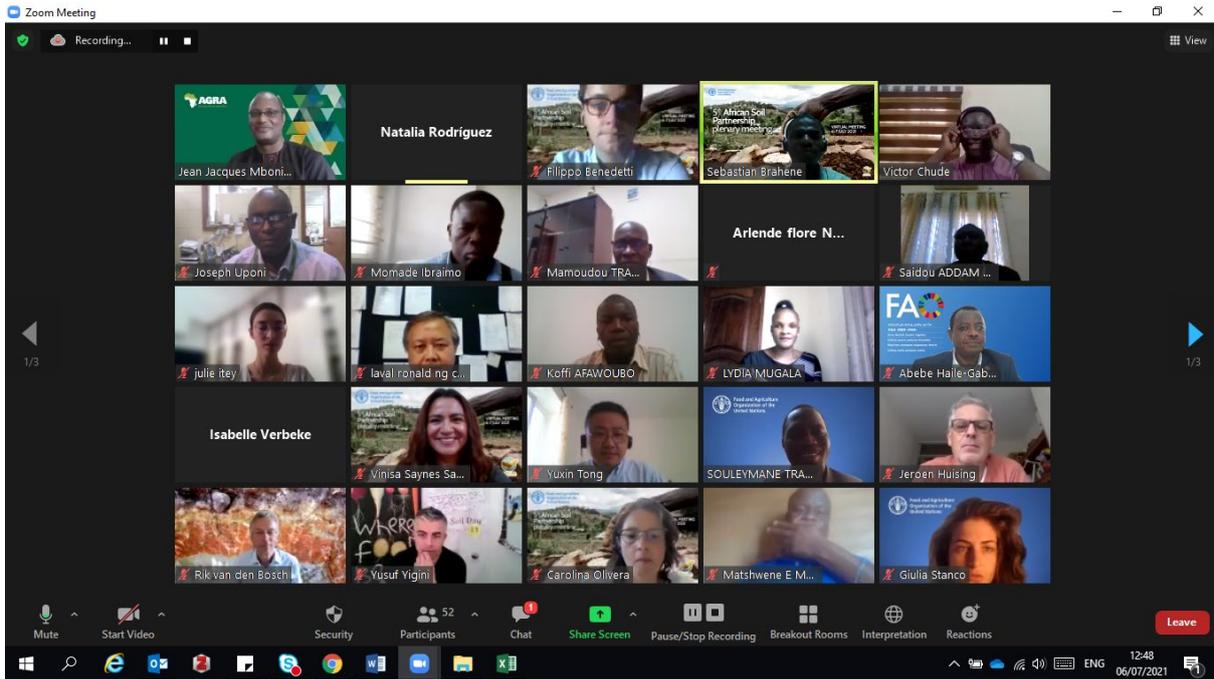
Information relating to the African Soil Partnership, the meeting, presentations, pictures, etc can be accessed via

- <http://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/regional-partnerships/africa/en/>
- <http://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/regional-partnerships/africa/presentations-africa-july-2021/en/>
- <http://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/events/detail/en/c/1410497/>

Contact: GSP Secretariat: GSP-Secretariat@fao.org

Regional facilitator: Sebastian.Brahene@fao.org

4 Group photos



Zoom Meeting

Recording...

View

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|  GENEROSE NZIG... |  Isabel Luotto |  Chebukani mpap... |  Mary Steverink |  Sidi |
|  FAO Eugene Rur... |  nyaradzomarijyn |  Sangkyung Lee |  Rasmán ROMBA |  Selebalo Ramakh... |
|  Maseeiso |  Ramakgwale Ma... |  Shelly | Daniel Zephirin... | Christian Omuto |
| Adolph Malatji | Prof James O Ja... | Richard Kombat | Macoumba LOUM | PASCAL NSENGI... |
| Victor Chude | Hanitriniaina R... | gachini.njeru | Patrick Bhekisis... | Julia Mousquer |

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12:48 06/07/2021 ENG