

Ninth Session of the Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly

Rome, Italy, 8-10, September 2021



**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**



**GLOBAL SOIL
PARTNERSHIP**

**REPORT OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE
GLOBAL SOIL PARTNERSHIP PLENARY ASSEMBLY**

Rome, 8-10, September 2021

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Opening of the Session

The ninth session of the Plenary Assembly (PA) of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP), conducted in the form of a virtual event due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, was held on 8-10 September 2021 (the list of participants is attached in Annex I).

The three-day event was chaired by Mr Thanawat Tiensin Permanent Representative of Thailand to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (Thailand), the vice-chair was Mr Luca Montanarella from the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (European Union), and the Rapporteur to the PA was Mr Mahmoud Hasan Alferihat from the Land and Irrigation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture (Jordan).

Mr QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General, welcomed participants to the PA and acknowledged the commitment of the GSP and its partners to advance the adoption of sustainable soil management (SSM) and to scale-up efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change, safeguard food systems and meet the objectives the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The FAO Director-General urged members to “become more action focused,” stressing that sustainable soil management is vital to nutritious diets. He underscored the need to look for innovative ways to transform agri-food systems to be more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable.

Mr QU welcomed the launch of two FAO products: the "Global Soil Organic Carbon Sequestration Potential map (GSOCseq)" and the "Recarbonizing global soils: a technical manual of recommended management practices". Each aims to nurture soil organic carbon (SOC) sequestration and preserve SOC stocks in soils. The two products are part of the RECSOIL initiative.

Finally, the FAO Director-General congratulated the GSP for progress made in several other areas: such as the global assessments on soil pollution and soil biodiversity, the upcoming global soil salinity map; and the progress done in the implementation of the International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers. He stipulated that the evaluation report of the GSP could hold practical solutions for change management.

Mr Víctor Manuel Villalobos Arámbula, Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development of Mexico praised the high turnout of participants and their commitment to the conservation and sustainable management of soils. Mr Villalobos voiced enthusiasm over the launch of the two new complimentary tools pioneered by the partnership as pivotal mechanisms in the contribution to the wellbeing of humankind and nature. He said that the GSOCseq map represents the first country-driven estimation of SOC sequestration potential around the world. The resulting data offered the scope to help users visualise crucial information such as initial SOC stocks and to predict stocks under various sustainable soil management and “business-as-usual” scenarios and can help countries to better plan their mitigation actions. Mr Villalobos unpacked the problematics of land degradation, caused by poor soil management, explaining that the issue posed a particular threat to those soils with a higher organic content. Ensuring carbon sequestration held the potential to equip countries with the components needed to tackle greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and to improve soil health. Decision-making and policy building could lean on such a tools to advance efforts to meet the SDGs by increasing organic carbon in arable land, according to Mr Villalobos. He said the latest report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) should serve as a further motivating force for countries to take decisive action in the fulfilment of SDG 13 on Climate Action and SDG 15 on Life on Land.

The opening session concluded with the keynote of Mr Tony Siantonas from the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) who presented the Soil Investment Hub for mobilizing global financial resources to improve soil health and farmers capacities. He pointed out how soil and land degradation posed a serious risk to business continuity. According to Mr Siantonas, the Soil

Investment Hub can leverage public investment in nature-based solutions and upscale business investment on soil health as part of their offsetting mechanisms of carbon emissions.

Mr Siantonas cautioned the PA that it was not moving quickly enough, calling for a global soil health revolution including multi-stakeholders with action-oriented investments to boost soil health, establish clear alignments and standards, and direction for market-based incentives as drivers of transformative change. The WBCSD addressed how to achieve a net-zero, nature positive and farmer-centred agricultural system, identifying actions on climate change, soil health, land restoration, finance mobilization and digital innovation.

Launch of the Global Soil Organic Carbon Sequestration Potential map

Mr Guillermo Peralta (FAO's GSP) presented the Global Soil Organic Carbon Sequestration Potential map (GSOCseq) and explained the country-driven process followed to prepare this important global product. He acknowledged national contributions to the methodology and map preparation, and highlighted the importance of such a product to guide decision-making processes at national level in relation to climate change. Mr Peralta noted that the GSP aims to achieve sustainable soil management through country-driven processes, combining data and methodologies based on local knowledge and new technologies for soil organic carbon management. This tool will contribute not only to reduce emissions to meet climate targets but also enhancing soil health.

The GSOCseq map offers various layers of information, helping users to visualise crucial data such as initial SOC stocks and predicted SOC stocks under various sustainable soil management and business-as-usual scenarios, as well as relative sequestration rates for each scenario. Mr Peralta highlighted that about 34 percent of agricultural emissions could be mitigated if SSM practices are adopted globally but other mitigation strategies are also needed to support soil contribution to climate change mitigation.

Mr Jorge Mario Díaz Luengas, Executive Director of AGROSAVIA, the Colombian Corporation for Agricultural Research presented the example of Colombian SOCseq map and its application in guiding land management practices to reduce GHG emissions and to set the targets of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Mr Celso Moretti President of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) introduced his country's contribution to the GSOCseq. Mr Moretti emphasised the role of agricultural soils in cutting global GHG emissions by adopting SSM practices. Mr Moretti also linked the GSOCseq to the technical manual of good practices that was to be launched later and highlighted some of Brazil's low-carbon agriculture initiatives.

Launch of the Recarbonizing global soils: a technical manual of recommended management practices.

Ms Rosa Poch, Chair of the ITPS, presented the Recarbonization of global soils: a technical manual of recommended practices to recarbonize soils. This manual is the result of three years of collective effort by more than 400 specialists from around the world. The six-volume technical manual is the first attempt to collect good soil management practices supported by sound scientific data on the impacts of these practices on SOC content in a wide array of environments and land uses.

Ms Poch encouraged all members and partners to use this manual and to submit contributions to the compendium of good practices for farmers to supplement its content, as this manual is a living product. Managing soils in a sustainable way and rehabilitating degraded agricultural land and grasslands can help mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis and improve food security and nutrition.

Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda (GSPPA: IX/2021/1)

Mr Lifeng Li, Director of the FAO Land and Water Division, opened the GSP PA and presented the main topics to be discussed during the ninth session of the GSP PA. Mr Li called on members and partners to actively participate in advancing the global soil agenda.

The agenda was adopted as outlined.

Item 2: Implementation of the Recommendations of the GSP Evaluation (GSPPA: IX/2021/2)

The PA welcomed the work done by the Secretariat in order to implement the recommendations of the GSP Evaluation including the assessment of the implications of an eventual institutionalization of the GSP into a statutory body. The PA also acknowledged the steps taken by the GSP Secretariat to strengthen resource mobilization and improve interaction with and outreach of GSP activities to FAO country and regional offices and UN Conventions in response to this evaluation.

The PA noted that there are many emerging soil initiatives (i.e. the resolution of the European Parliament inviting EU Member States to establish a UN Soil Convention) that may have an impact on the future of the GSP and encouraged GSP members and partners to position themselves on how to integrate these initiatives into the Partnership framework or vice versa.

As per recommendation 1, the PA acknowledged the effort made by the ITPS and the GSP Secretariat in formulating a revamped GSP Action Framework, which draft was presented in the Annex of document GSPPA: IX/2021/2.

The PA noted that the GSP Action Framework 2021-2030: healthy soils for a healthy life; from promotion to consolidation of sustainable soil management is based on lessons learned during the 9 years of GSP's existence and on an internal analysis of accomplishments and areas for improvement. The PA welcomed the fact that the Action Framework includes targets to monitor progress made and to better align with the different UN Conventions and SDGs targets and indicators.

The PA agreed that soil threats and crosscutting areas of work such as awareness raising and soil information and data are to be at the centre of GSP's work, moving from a pillar-based system to a more action on-the-ground approach, which is more attractive to donors and easier to implement. The PA recommended that the new Action Framework should focus on establishing equitable and neutral systems that are inclusive of all countries and on providing capacity-building support to those that are being left behind.

The GSP members and partners supported the concept of a new Action Framework based on areas of work and targets, keeping the Implementation Plans of the Pillars as reference for setting priorities in different areas. The PA expressed concern about the process of refining the GSP Action Framework and endorsed the establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to consolidate the Action Framework in order to maximise the strengths of the Partnership. The consolidated Action framework should be submitted to the 10th GSP Plenary Assembly for consideration.

The PA also noted that the creation of a GSP steering committee is under consideration, and its creation, composition, terms of reference and rules of procedure will be assessed by the OEWG as part of the new Action Framework.

Regarding recommendation 3 on elevating the GSP to a formal statutory body, the Secretariat informed that the assessment will be performed by a group of consultants who are knowledgeable of all the matters related to FAO, GSP and the global soil agenda. The PA requested that the results of the

assessment will be presented to the 10th GSP PA for information and then submitted to the 28th COAG session in 2022.

The GSP Secretariat clarified that non-state actors are key to the GSP and hence different scenarios will be included in the assessment of implications of GSP institutionalization to reflect their important role.

Item 3: Work of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel of Soils (ITPS) (GSPPA: IX/2021/3)

3.1. Report by the chairperson on main activities and outcomes of the work programme 2019-2020

The PA thanked Mr David Lobb, Vice-chair of the ITPS, who spoke on behalf of Ms Rosa Poch, Chair of the ITPS, for providing an update on the activities since the previous session in 2020.

The PA noted with appreciation the efficient cooperation of the ITPS with other intergovernmental and scientific panels.

The GSP PA appreciated the work done by the ITPS and requested the ITPS to materialize the preparation of the study on economic benefits of SSM, particularly after the launch of the SOC manual of good practices.

3.2. Extension of ITPS members due to COVID-19

The GSP PA unanimously endorsed the exceptional extension for one year of the current panel due to the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic and welcomed the work done despite the difficulties during the past year. The workplan for 2021-2022 was therefore endorsed.

The replacement of the European ITPS member Ms Maria Konyushkova by Mr Alexey Sorokin was endorsed by the PA without objection according to the Rules of Procedure of the GSP.

3.3. Towards the Second edition of the Status of the World's Soil Resources

The PA welcomed the progress made by the ITPS on the preparation of the Second edition of the Status of the World's Soil Resources and encouraged the panel to work intensively on the preparation of this key piece of work following an inclusive process.

The PA agreed to assign Dr Dan Pennock as the Managing Editor and encouraged the GSP Secretariat to seek the support of previous ITPS experts and authors of the first edition as well. The PA reiterated that this is an ITPS report, thus does not require any endorsement by the PA.

Item 4: Report on the financial status of the GSP (GSPPA: IX/2021/4)

The PA acknowledged the resource mobilization efforts and thanked the support of all GSP donors. The GSP PA also insisted on the need to maintain the multilingualism of the GSP and therefore encouraged donors to financially support activities related to the normal functioning of the GSP apart from technical activities. The PA also agreed that it was necessary to move faster to boost soil health and mobilise the financial resources to support work on soil.

The PA also acknowledged the in-kind contributions of members and partners and encouraged the GSP Secretariat to continue to promote and recognise these contributions in all products in which they participate.

Several countries called for continued financial support for capacity building in order to achieve better results in all regions on an equal basis.

Item 5: Report on normative tools and actions on sustainable soil management (GSPPA: IX/2021/5)

5.1. Compliance of the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management

The PA acknowledged the progress done in the support provided to countries in the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM). These normative tools are essential to advance the adoption of SSM practices.

The PA suggested that further guidance is provided to all stakeholders on how to translate these principles into practice via natural resources management. The PA requested to make available a revised Protocol for Assessing SSM practices with clear baseline and reference values. The PA suggested including micronutrients as important elements for SSM. The PA recalled that the use of the Protocol will be voluntary.

The PA encourage the elaboration of a concept note on a rewarding system for the VGSSM compliance to be submitted to the next PA.

5.2. International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers

The PA recognised the role of the Fertilizer Code – released in 2019 – in raising awareness of sustainable use of fertilizers among governments, industry, research and academia, and farmers across the world. The PA agreed on the need to promote capacity development and educational programmes for all stakeholders involved in the fertilizer value chain, thus encouraging members to assist others in creating infrastructures to manage fertilizers throughout their life cycle. The PA encouraged the Secretariat to move into full implementation of this important normative tool.

5.3. RECSOIL: recarbonization of global soils

The PA welcomed the progress done in establishing RECSOIL and endorsed the strategy of RECSOIL to recarbonize global agricultural soils.

The PA underpinned the benefits of applying the RECSOIL mechanism to enhance carbon sequestration to improve the provision of soil ecosystem services. The PA appreciated the progress done in some countries such as Mexico, which will serve as an example for the implementation of the initiative. RECSOILMEX demonstrates the usefulness of the RECSOIL toolkit and the potential of such initiative to mobilise funds for SSM with a direct positive impact on smallholder farmers. The PA called on members and partners to support and improve national contributions to the RECSOIL toolkit, including the GSOCseq.

The PA also invited donors and resource partners to provide financial resources to RECSOIL initiative through the RECSOIL MUL project so that actions on the ground can be implemented and encouraged countries to also explore other financing opportunities for having RECSOIL projects at national level, including with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

5.4. Soil Doctors

The PA expressed particular enthusiasm for the Global Soil Doctors programme as an effective tool to promote sustainable soil management on the ground. The PA acknowledged the work done in defining the implementation plan and endorsed it.

The PA thanked the resource partners who have financially supported the Global Soil Doctors Programme, and encouraged new resource partners to fund the upcoming implementation activities.

The PA unanimously agreed on the importance of involving farmers in SSM implementation actions and urged the GSP Secretariat to facilitate farmers to share their knowledge on the best soil management practices, based on their experiences, mistakes and successes, as vital components of SSM.

The PA welcomed the translation of the Soils Doctors' training materials into a number of local languages and encouraged its members to contribute to further translations in order for communities to learn and spread their technical know-how.

Item 6: Status about Global Symposia (GSPPA: IX/2021/6)

6.1. Global Symposium on Soil Biodiversity

The PA acknowledged the great success of the Global Symposium on Soil Biodiversity (GSOBI21) held in April 2021 in a virtual format and encouraged the GSP Secretariat to use this virtual format as much as possible as it is more open and fair and reduces the economic impact and carbon footprint of GSP's events.

The PA thanked the resource partners who have financially supported the organization of this symposium and encouraged new resource partners to fund the upcoming ones.

The PA called on its members and partners to support the filling of critical knowledge gaps and information, and promote discussion among policy makers, food producers, scientists, practitioners, and other stakeholders on solutions to live in harmony with nature. The PA encouraged the Secretariat to implement the recommendations of the outcome document.

6.2. Global Symposium on Salt Affected Soils

The PA acknowledged the work done in the preparation of the Global Symposium on Salt-affected Soils (GSAS21), under the theme: "Halt soil salinization, boost soil productivity" to be held in a virtual format from the 20 to the 22 October 2021.

The PA urged countries to disseminate the information regarding this important event and encouraged national experts to submit their management experiences. The PA also called on members and partners to contribute to the Global Salt-affected soils map and the associated report.

6.3. Global Symposium on Soils for Nutrition

The PA agreed with the proposed theme for 2022, which is more specific than the initial Soil Fertility proposal, and urged the GSP Secretariat to cover aspects related to the connection among the nutrition in soil, plant, organism and human health in this symposium.

The PA encouraged members and partners to actively participate in the Global Symposium on Soils for Nutrition to be held in the first semester 2022.

6.4. Themes for the next Symposia

The PA welcomed the work done to organise these global symposia, including in times of COVID-19, and recognised the importance of the symposia outcome documents in setting priorities and an agenda for action for the different topics. The PA endorsed the themes of the 2023 and 2024 symposia proposed by the ITPS: Global Symposium on Soil and Water in 2023 and Global Symposium on Soil Sealing and Urban Soils in 2024. However, the PA requested that the soil compaction, soil governance be considered for future symposia and that the areas covered during the symposium are kept within FAO mandate.

The PA encouraged the GSP Secretariat to integrate soil acidification into one of the upcoming Symposia in order to cover the major ten soil threats identified in the Status of the World's Soil Resources report.

In particular, for the 2023 Symposium on Soil and Water, the PA requested the GSP Secretariat to involve all Regional Soil Partnerships to gather good soil and water management practices and identify needs.

Item 7: Highlights of the GSP work on soil threats and global assessments (GSPPA: IX/2021/7)

7.1. Soil pollution

The PA welcomed the findings of the Global Assessment of Soil Pollution and acknowledged the contribution from members and partners who provided data and information and contributed to its review. The PA voiced resounding concern over rising levels of pollution in soils, which is having a knock-on effect across the food chain from planting, harvesting to production and consumption.

The PA endorsed the conclusions of this global assessment and the recommendations for a way forward, but stressed that the implementation of the recommendations must be coupled to the availability of financial resources to ensure adequate availability of technical and human resources to guarantee the quality of the products.

7.2. Soil biodiversity loss

The PA recognised the work done in the production of the report “State of Knowledge of Soil Biodiversity – Status, challenges and potentialities” and welcomed the findings of potentialities and knowledge gaps.

The PA underlined the importance of these global assessments as support to the preparation of the second edition of the State of the World's Soil Resources Report and as an in-depth regional and global analysis of the status of threats to soil.

Finally, the PA endorsed the conclusions of this report and the recommendations for a way forward, but stressed that the implementation of the recommendations must be coupled to the availability of financial resources to ensure adequate availability of technical and human resources to guarantee the quality of the products.

7.3. Soil salinity

The PA recognised that the negative effects of soil salinity are exacerbated by climate change and need to be addressed as a global issue. The PA also welcomed the progress done in the preparation of the Global Assessment of Salt-affected Soils and the Global Soil Salinity Map following a bottom-up approach and encouraged members and partners to submit their national contributions.

7.4. Soil erosion

The PA encouraged donors to support the proposals to connect science and policy to tackle the challenges of soil erosion mitigation, and in particular to address the study of the costs of soil erosion control and the practicalities of applying best management practices to turn this from theory to results.

7.5. Soil governance (SoiLEX)

The PA welcomed the launch of the SoiLEX platform and the working group on soil legislation and encouraged members to contribute to its update and completion. Soil governance at all levels is a political issue of growing concern worldwide, so the PA suggested considering this topic for a future global symposium, thus connecting science with policy.

The PA requested that the status of soil governance at national, regional and international level be included in the second edition of the Status of the World's Soil Resources report.

The preparation of global assessments must be accompanied by quality data and the improvement of national capacities in soil data collection and sharing, and therefore the PA urged the GSP Secretariat to work in a coordinated manner between GLOSOLAN and INSII as key supporters of the areas of work.

To conclude this agenda item, the PA endorsed the work proposed to assess soil nutrient budget accompanied by a global mapping exercise to be carried out in 2022.

Item 8: Report on Regional Soil Partnerships (GSPPA: IX/2021/8)

The PA recognised all of the achievements made over the last 12 months by the Regional Soil Partnerships (RSPs), reiterating the need for strong partnerships and knowledge sharing and mobilising resources. Focal points to the GSP were encouraged to get involved in regional activities and to share expertise.

The PA welcomed the two new partnerships established under the European Soil Partnership, the Alpine and Pyrenean Soil Partnerships.

The PA praised efforts to extend and strengthen RSPs and encouraged the GSP Secretariat to continue the efforts to work more closely with FAO Regional and National offices and facilitate communication between them and the RSPs. The PA welcomed the initiative of the Secretariat to conduct regular meetings with the Chairs of the RSPs.

The PA made a plea for parties to strengthen the interactive consultative process with national soil entities across regions reinforce capacity building and availability of soil information, to build on existing regional networks and to provide guidance on priorities and their required implementation mechanisms.

The PA concluded that the regional networks had been consolidated and encouraged RSPs to continue working on their viable Regional Implementation Plans (RIPs) containing a concrete range of actions to promote sustainable soil management and reverse soil degradation.

Item 9: Progress of the GSP Technical Networks: (GSPPA: IX/2021/9)

9.1. International Network of Soil Information institutions (INSII)

The PA acknowledged the efforts made by INSII members in raising awareness on data-driven and evidence-based decision-making, as well as in improving national capacities in digital mapping and

modelling of soil properties. The PA also recognised the importance of improving countries' capacities to collect, store, share and use soil information and therefore called on donors to continue to invest in capacity building and development of GloSIS and National Soil Information Systems, especially in developing countries.

The PA encouraged members to prepare national maps according to the technical specifications provide by INSII. The PA also approved the start of the preparation of the global maps on soil erosion and on soil nutrient budgets as part of the INSII work plan for 2021/2022.

The PA appreciated the progress made in the development of the Global Soil Salinity Map (GSSmap) and the Global Black Soil Distribution Map (GBSmap), and encouraged the remaining countries to contribute their national maps to these important global efforts. The PA also welcomed the launch of the Global Soil Organic Carbon Sequestration Potential Map (GSOCseq) and acknowledged the in-kind effort of all members and partners in preparing this key product. The PA also encouraged them to make use of it, including for implementing the RECSOIL initiative at the national level.

The PA agreed that the OEWG to be established (mentioned in Item 2: Implementation of the Recommendations of the GSP Evaluation (GSPPA: IX/2021/2)) will address cross-cutting issues of the GSP Action Framework such as soil governance, awareness raising, and soil information and GloSIS, to provide a common approach and vision. The new Action Framework including GloSIS vision and governance will be submitted to the 10th GSP PA for endorsement. In the meantime, the PA agreed to continue with the preparation of the country-driven global mapping products that were endorsed in this item, including the preparation of the global maps on soil erosion and soil nutrient budgets.

9.2. Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN)

The PA acknowledged the progress made by the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN) since its creation in 2017. The PA welcomed the holding of training sessions to strengthen the analytical capacities of soil laboratories worldwide. Particular recognition was given to the series focusing on soil spectroscopy to help countries to understand soil conditions, improve agricultural productivity and reverse land degradation.

The PA invited members to nominate National Reference Laboratories and to support them in establishing and strengthening the National Soil Laboratory Networks and the implementation of their workplan.

The PA urged the wide adoption/use of the Resolution on the international exchange of soil samples for research purposes under GLOSOLAN, as agreed during the 27th Session of the FAO COAG and encouraged GLOSOLAN to maintain updated the SIMPLE (Soil Import Legislation) database.

The PA also encouraged members and partners to widely promote and adopt GLOSOLAN publications and technical material, such as guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in order to standardize the methodologies adopted by soil laboratories worldwide.

9.3. International Network on Fertilizers Assessment (INFA)

The PA acknowledged the progress made in consolidating the International Network on Fertilizers Assessment (INFA). The PA also called on the GSP Secretariat to further coordinate the activities of the INFA and to ensure that the GLOSOLAN work plan on fertilizer analysis be executed under the INFA.

The PA called on members and partners to continue to support the INFA in building and strengthening laboratory capacity in fertilizer analysis and harmonising quality standards.

9.4. International Network of Black Soils (INBS)

The PA acknowledged the progress made in the preparation of the Global Status of Black Soils report and the GBSmap and encouraged all countries with black soils to join the International Network of Black Soils (INBS) and to actively participate in achieving its goal.

The PA welcomed the proposal of the People's Government of Heilongjiang Province of China to establish an International Research Institution on Black Soil under the INBS provided resources are available to support it. The institution would aim at capacity building and promoting international cooperation in research and knowledge exchange for sustainable use and management of black soils.

9.5. International Network of Salt Affected Soils (INSAS)

The PA welcomed the latest developments in the International Network of Salt Affected Soils (INSAS) including the increase in the number of partners to 600 specialists and institutions. The PA acknowledged efforts to facilitate the sustainable and productive management of salt-affected soils for current and future generations and called on members and partners to complement national soil information systems with information on the distribution of salt-affected soils to maximise capacity development programmes.

Item 10: World Soil Day (theme for 2022), awareness raising on soils and Prizes (GSPPA: IX/2021/10)

The PA acknowledged the efforts made in raising awareness on soil during 2020. The PA welcomed the increase in the number of events organised by members and partners and the number of countries celebrating World Soil Day (WSD) using the GSP campaign kit.

The PA unanimously congratulated the latest winner of the Glinka World Soil Prize, an annual award given since 2016 to individuals and associations for their direct contributions to soil conservation, the 2020 edition of which went to Mr Luca Montanarella from the European Commission. The PA thanked the Russian Federation for its continued support for this prestigious award.

As the deadline for nominations coincided with the last day of the PA and to give other countries the opportunity to submit their nominations after having been informed, the PA approved the extension of the deadline for nominations until 17 September 2021.

The PA also congratulated the Indian Council of Agricultural Research for having been awarded the World Soil Day Prize, sponsored by the Kingdom of Thailand, for their outstanding celebration of WSD in 2019.

The PA noted that World Soil Day (WSD) 2021 dedicated to "Halt soil salinization, boost soil productivity" would be celebrated on 5 December 2021. The PA endorsed the WSD theme 2022 that will be "Soils, where food begins".

Item 11: Report on efforts towards sustainable soil management by partners

The PA acknowledged and appreciated the efforts of all members and partners in promoting sustainable land management. The PA also conceded that action to promote sustainable soil management is an "SDG Accelerator" which can help meet the 2030 Agenda in a cost effective and ecologically sound manner.

The PA recognised that farmers should be at the centre of actions related to SSM adoption. Hence, the PA encouraged the GSP Secretariat to prepare a concept note regarding the establishment of a Farmers' Working Group within the GSP to test sustainable management practices and improve the compendium of practices, identify farmers' needs and support capacity building of farmers in good practices through the exchange of experiences and local and technical knowledge.

The PA concluded that sustainable soil management could be best achieved through enhanced global and regional cooperation.

Item 12: Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, and appointment of the Rapporteur for the next period: for decision

The 10th Plenary Assembly will be chaired by the FAO's European Regional Group and vice-chaired by the FAO's Middle East and North Africa Regional Group. The rapporteur will be appointed by FAO's African Regional Group.

Item 13: Date and venue of the next Plenary session

The PA noted that the dates and venue for the 10th Plenary Assembly in 2022 will be communicated as soon as FAO and the Rome-based UN Agencies will have structured the calendar of events according to the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Annex I – List of participants

FAO members

Country	Participants
Argentina	Carlos Cherniak Guillermo Spika
Brazil	Angelo Santos Fernando José Marroni de Abreu Leonardo Isolan Lucianara Fonseca
China	Gao Yang Machangbao
Colombia	Claudia Katherine Ortiz Vaca
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Kim Chon Gil
Dominican Republic	Berioska Morrison
Egypt	Sayed Ahmed El-Tohami
European Commission	Alexandra Valkenburg Cara Stauss Goda Milasiute Helene Quentrec Luca Montanarella Marc Van Liedekerke Mirco Barbero Nele Anders Renate Hahlen
Germany	Ingo Boettcher Nicole Wellbrock
Ivory Coast	Adeline Gale
Jamaica	Joan Morrison
Kuwait	Salah Albazzaz
Mexico	José Luis Delgado Crespo
Netherlands	Hans Brand
Nigeria	Victor Chude
Panama	Bettina Carbone
Peru	Maria Carolina Carranza Nuñez
Philippines	Angelica Ecito Angelita Marcia

	Bertolio Arellano Edna Samar Ernesto Brampio Gina Nilo Jacqueline Rojas Nadine Rosario Morales Nina Cainglet Oscar Carpio
Russian Federation	Ekaterina Fomina Kirill Antyukhin
Thailand	Federica Veschi Pattaraporn Sojajya Ratchanok Sangpenchan Supajit Sriariyawat Thanawat Tiensin
Turkey	Hakki Erdogan
Uzbekistan	Nuriddin Kushnazarov
Venezuela	Carmen Teresa Parra Saida Rivero
New Zealand	Don Syme

Other participants

Affiliation	Participants
4 per 1000 Initiative (France)	Paul Luu
Aarhus Universitet (Denmark)	Mogens Greve
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Bob Turnock
AgriLab - Farming and Engineering Services (Malawi)	ma Feldmann
Argentina No-till Farmers Association – AAPRESID	Maria Cecilia Gines
Asociación Costarricense de la Ciencia del Suelo - ACCS (Costa Rica)	Floria Bertsch
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