

AfSP-VI/22/Report



Report of the sixth plenary meeting of the African Soil Partnership

Virtual meeting, 26–27 April 2022

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Rome, 2022

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1. Introduction

The sixth meeting of the African Soil Partnership (AfSP) was held virtually on 26 and 27 April 2022 via the Zoom Video Communication Platform (see agenda in Annex I). The meeting was attended by 54 participants from 32 countries (see Annex II). The meeting was opened by Mr Victor Chude (AfSP Chair), Mr Ronald Vargas (Secretary to the GSP) and Mr Eugene Rurangwa (Land and Water Officer, FAO SFW) who stressed the need to reactivate the AfSP, as it had assumed a reduced level of activity over the years. In this regard, the meeting focused on: (i) updating participants on GSP developments of regional interest to sub-Saharan Africa; (ii) identifying activities for immediate implementation for 2022/2023; and (iii) reviewing the governance of the partnership (electing a new Chair and introducing the position of vice-Chairs and their subsequent elections).

There was also a call on the need for: (i) focal points to be more active in engaging with the FAO offices in their countries; (ii) for focal points to be more concerned about issues happening on the continent and be involved in engagements at regional and global levels on soil; and (iii) to know what the African Union Commission agenda was with respect to soils, particularly the upcoming Soil Health and Fertiliser Summit in June 2023 and the Soil Initiative for Africa (and to build synergies with those involved to promote the GSP/AfSP agenda); and (iv) to review and update the AFRISOIL project proposal to reflect current issues at the national level.

Ultimately, Mr Rurangwa announced the FAO Regional office for Africa programme on Ecosystem Restoration which would cover soil and land and that there were opportunities to support some activities of the Partnership within the programme. He encouraged focal points to approach the FAO offices so that they would know what they were doing in terms of soil and how they could team up to mobilize resources to implement soil-related projects.

Mr Ronald Vargas closed by updating country representatives on the new action framework of the GSP, to be discussed during the GSP 10th Plenary Assembly (23–25 May 2022). The current structure which shows pillars of actions will be converted to a more action-oriented framework, aimed at identifying new clear targets and indicators to better respond to challenges such as climate change and food insecurity. All national focal points were encouraged to attend the Assembly. Mr Vargas informed participants that the eventual institutionalization of the GSP as a statutory body of FAO will also be discussed during the Assembly.

The opening session ended with an introduction of participants and the endorsement of the agenda.

2. GSP developments of regional interest

Mr Sebastian Brahene (AfSP facilitator) presented GSP activities of regional interest, requesting national focal points (NFPs) to take action to facilitate their implementation at the national level:

- **SoiLEX**

It is a GSP tool to promote soil governance, designed to provide countries with easy access to information on existing legal instruments for soil protection and soil degradation prevention.

Mr Brahene requested that NFPs respond to the SoiLEX [questionnaires](#), contribute to the

regional legal analysis, support the update and growth of SoILEX and promote the use of SoILEX at the country level, since this tool could encourage countries to improve their legislation systems.

- **Global Soil Doctors programme**

The programme is a farmer-to-farmer training programme to build the capacity of local farmers for sustainable soil management and support the work of national extension services. The programme relies on the identification of a national promoter to closely work with the GSP on the implementation of the programme at the national level. The promoter supports the GSP in identifying and training champion farmers to become Soil Doctors, who then support other farmers on the practice of sustainable soil management by using educational materials and soil testing kits. A successful example of how the programme is being implemented in the region is reported in section 4.

- **International Network on Black Soils (INBS)**

At present, Mozambique, Zambia and South Africa are members of this network. Countries with soils that fall under the following definition were kindly invited to register to the INBS:

Black Soils are characterized by a thick, dark-coloured soil horizon rich in organic matter. Due to their inherent high fertility, these soils remain very sensitive to anthropogenic intervention and are prone to severe degradation. Because of their high soil organic carbon (SOC) content, they are also very sensitive and can be potential large sources of greenhouse gases. Extensively and intensively farmed, they constitute the food basket for many countries. Notwithstanding the relatively small percentage (7%) of the world's ice-free land surface Black Soils cover, it is crucial to promote their conservation and sustainable use to maintain their functioning in order to sustain their supporting food security while protecting the environment and mitigating climate change (approved in 11th ITPS Working Session in 2019).

Note that the distribution of black soils is being reported in the global black soil map.

NFPs from INBS member countries were kindly invited to support the development and endorsement of an International Agreement on Black Soil Conservation, the International Guidelines on Sustainable Black Soil Management and an international platform of open courses on best available practices in black soil management.

- **Activities on salt-affected soils**

Activities on salt-affected soils (SAS) fall under the coordination of the International Network on Salt-Affected Soils (INSAS), which is organized in four working groups:

- (WG1) Assessment: mapping, assessing and monitoring of salt-affected soils;
- (WG2) sustainable management of salt-affected soils (practices, policy);
- (WG3) SAS and crops: Halophyte agriculture and salt-tolerant crops; and
- (WG4) SAS and Water: integrated soil and water management under saline and sodic conditions.

NFPs were encouraged to promote this network and to invite their national experts on the topic to join the working groups. They were also invited to complete a questionnaire on the status of monitoring and management of salt-affected soils by contacting the INSAS coordinator, Ms Maria Konyushkova at maria.konyushkova@fao.org.

Ultimately, NFPs were reminded that INSAS activities build on the recommendations of the Global Symposium on Salt-Affected Soils, which was held virtually in October 2021. The symposium's forthcoming outcome document was advertised.

- **Digital soil mapping**

The GSP is currently working on the development of the Global Soil Organic Carbon Sequestration Potential Map (GSOCseq v1.1). At present, six countries have submitted their national GSOCseq maps. These are Senegal, Nigeria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Africa and Lesotho. Six other countries namely Ghana, Burkina Faso, Niger, Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya have started working on the production of their maps. The remaining countries are yet to start. National experts and NFPs were asked to reach out to Ms Isabel Luotto (Isabel.Luotto@fao.org) to report on the preparation of the map and to seek technical support.

In terms of the Global Salt-Affected Soils Map (GSASmap v1.0), four countries in Africa- Sao Tome and Principe, Cape Verde, Mauritius and Comoros were yet to submit their maps before the meeting. The rest had submitted their finished products. National experts and NFPs were asked to reach out to Mr Christian Omuto (Christian.Omuto@fao.org) to report on the preparation of the map and to seek technical support.

Participants were informed of products in the pipeline for 2022 and 2023 namely, the Global Soil Nutrient and Soil Nutrient Budget Maps (GSNmap), and the Global Soil Erosion Map (GSEmap). Regarding the establishment of national soil information systems, these were fully established in Sudan and Lesotho, and being established in Liberia and Sao Tome and Principe.

Because of the role of the International Network of Soil Information Institutions (INSII) in defining the criteria and technical guidelines for the preparation of global maps and on the establishment of national, regional, and global soil information system (GLOSI), NFPs were kindly asked to update or nominate their experts in INSII.

- **Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN)**

The [Global Soil Laboratory Network \(GLOSOLAN\)](#) was established in 2017 to harmonise soil laboratory methods and data and build laboratories' capacity in soil analysis. The network consists of 840 laboratories from 151 countries, and focuses its work on internal and external quality control, the harmonisation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and capacity building on many topics including the purchasing, use and maintenance of laboratory

equipment. GLOSOLAN operates through the [Regional](#) and [National Soil Laboratory Networks](#) (RESOLANs and NASOLANs). In the African region, GLOSOLAN operates through the African Soil Laboratory Network (AFRILAB). Since GLOSOLAN's establishment in 2019, 144 laboratories from 48 countries have registered with GLOSOLAN and AFRILAB.

Additional information on AFRILAB activities is available in section 4.

Looking at the role of NFPs in this activity, Mr Brahene kindly requested the national focal points to ensure that they had nominated a [National Reference Laboratory](#) to downscale GLOSOLAN activities and to trigger actions in the country, including establishing National Soil Laboratory Networks. NFPs were also asked to motivate laboratories to participate in GLOSOLAN meetings and training sessions, to support the establishment of NASOLANs and to translate GLOSOLAN materials into their local languages as needed.

- **International Network on Fertilizer Analysis (INFA)**

INFA was established in December 2020 to build and strengthen the capacity of laboratories in fertilizer analysis and improve quality standards. At present, the network relies on 154 members from 80 countries (40 labs from 23 countries from Africa are included in the network). INFA operates through three working groups on: (WG1) the harmonisation of methodologies for fertilizers analysis; (WG2) capacity building of fertilizer laboratories; and (WG3) governance, policy, and regulation of fertiliser use.

INFA kindly requested NFPs to encourage soil laboratories and other key stakeholders in their country to join the network, to facilitate the implementation of activities related to the inter-comparison tests to be performed, and to facilitate the search and access to information related with regulatory frameworks regarding fertiliser use and imports at the national, regional, and global levels.

- **Soil biodiversity**

Activities on soil biodiversity are coordinated by the International Network of Soil Biodiversity (NETSOB), which is the implementing body of the Global Soil Biodiversity Observatory (GLOSOB). GLOSOB aims to monitor and forecast the condition of soil biodiversity and soil health, and will serve as the framework for developing policies, promoting good practices, and developing national capacities on the state-of-art tools and methods on soil biodiversity and soil health assessment and maintenance. NETSOB is connected to the Global Soil Biodiversity Initiative (GSBI) and to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Its work is organized into four working groups: (WG1) measurement, and assessment and monitoring of soil biodiversity; (WG2) policies and legal instruments related to soil biodiversity; (WG3) economics of soil biodiversity; and (WG4) sustainable use, management, and conservation of soil biodiversity.

NFPs were kindly asked to invite their experts to join NETSOB and its working groups. The coordinator of NETSOB is Ms Rosa Cuevas Corona (Rosa.CuevasCorona@fao.org).

- **Soil pollution**

The GSP is currently investing in three activities on soil pollution:

1. The writing of technical guidelines for assessing, mapping, monitoring and reporting soil pollution. Interested experts were asked to contact Mr Sergejus Ustinov (Sergejus.Ustinov@fao.org)
2. The launch of the International Network on Soil Pollution (INSOP) in April 2022 to stop soil pollution and achieve the global goal of zero pollution. INSOP will work to improve knowledge on the full cycle of soil pollution, strengthen technical capacities and legislative frameworks for the prevention of soil pollution, and will promote the exchange of experiences and technologies for the sustainable management and remediation of polluted soils. Institutions and individuals can join the network and contribute to its workplan.
3. The launch of pilot site studies to assess, manage and remediate contaminated agricultural soils. This activity aims at agricultural areas that are contaminated (or that may become contaminated) by heavy metals due to agricultural practices. Eventually, this project will support national and local governments in developing a methodology to perform risk assessments. These will define which practices can be adopted to reduce the availability of heavy metals in soils, hence reducing the uptake by plants and the contamination of the food chain. If interested, countries are encouraged to contact Ms Natalia Rodriguez Eugenio (Natalia.Rodriguezeugenio@fao.org) with the region's basic information on hydrogeology and agricultural practices.

- **RECSOIL**

RECSOIL is the GSP initiative on the recarbonization of global soils (RECSOIL) that aims to scale-up the implementation of SSM practices (SOC-centered) while helping to decarbonize the economy and foster sustainable development. The initiative will provide technical support and improve the national and regional capacities on SSM, while providing financial support to smallholder farmers through payment of annual financial incentives to support the transition and implementation of SSM. The implementation of RECSOIL happens in six steps:

1. identification of priority areas at a regional level (supported by GSOCmap, GSOCseq (optional GloSIS maps) coupled with National Soil data information);
2. identification of Farmers Associations and stakeholders (description of roles and responsibilities);
3. RECSOIL-Terms of Agreement (ToR), bilateral and multilateral agreements with Farmers Associations, technical and extension services, and advisers;
4. extension programme support: Soil Doctors programme. Technical training: MRV protocols and capacity development: GLOSOLAN. Financial incentives, first payment: implementation-based approach: based on total costs of SSM implementation, X% total cost (annual fees over a period of 4 years, first at time 0);
5. implementation of SSM (supported by VGSSM + Fertilizer Code + RECSOIL Technical Manual + other GSP tools); and
6. MRVs: Green Path, SSM Protocol and C-Market Path, MRV Protocol and support from GLOSOLAN for laboratory analysis. Second payment: Result-based

approach: Green Path: compliance with SSM (4 years after implementation) and C-Market: t CO₂e / year.

The project is currently being implemented in pilot countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Based on the tools already present in a country or region, RECSOIL can be adapted case by case, involving different actors, from soil laboratories to farmers associations. In this regard, RECSOIL might play an important role in facilitating the implementation of SSM by farmers. Participants were encouraged to contact Ms Carolina Cardoso for further information at Carolina.CardosoLisboa@fao.org.

3. National focal points and National Soil Partnerships

Ms Isabelle Verbeke, communication officer from the GSP Secretariat, introduced participants to the roles and responsibilities of the national focal points (NFPs), which are:

- to promote sustainable soil management (as a nominee by the government, NFPs are encouraged to refer to the revised World Soil Charter, which stipulates recommended actions by governments);
- to act as a contact person in the country, to share and distribute relevant communications, information material, invitations to symposiums, meetings, and webinars among networks in their country;
- to consolidate Regional Soil Partnerships (RSPs) and actively engage in the annual regional assemblies, like the African Soil Partnership;
- to bring all actors at the national level together and ensure coordination among the different national stakeholders dealing with soils;
- to promote GSP tools, priorities and activities and the wealth of resources available at the country-level;
- to identify potential new partners in their own country and liaise with them;
- to create a soil mailing list in each country to be used by the GSP as a channel to disseminate newsletters;
- to facilitate the GSP implementation and awareness-raising activities, actions and contests. It is important to include all actors in the GSP activities (for example, not only soil scientists but also teachers, students, and children, to celebrate World Soil Day); and
- to promote the inclusion of soils in the national agenda and at international conventions.

Ultimately, participants were informed that each national focal point can nominate an alternate: for example, from different competent authorities or different levels of administration (state or federal) to support them on this role. Preferably, focal points should be senior government officials (such as the Ministry of Agriculture), dealing with soil management and conservation matters.

In addition, Ms Verbeke explained and advertised the National Soil Partnerships (NSPs) which comprise all interested and active partners in a country willing to contribute to sustainable soil management under the framework of the GSP. At present, there are no NSPs in the region. Finally, she touched on NSPs structural governance, main functions, operational tasks, and the way to establish an NPS, which are also available on the [GSP website](#).

4. The added value of working with the Global Soil Partnership and FAO

Since its establishment, the GSP has developed a number of tools and products aimed at building the technical capacity of countries to tackle issues that threaten their soil health. Over the years, a number of successes have been recorded and the number of country requests for support is increasing. The added value of working with the GSP is that it makes use of existing FAO structures at a global, regional, and country level to deliver quality support to countries, offering value for money while enhancing existing national capacities and scaling up good practises already being implemented by FAO projects and programmes.

4.1 The implementation of the Soil Doctors in the Gambia

In the Gambia, the Global Soil Doctors programme is implemented with the support of The Soil Solution, a non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) that is acting as the promoter of the programme.

Mr Ebrima Jarra from The Soil Solution reported that his NGO, together with the Department of Agriculture are providing ten personnel who will undergo a training of trainees' (ToT) session to ultimately select, identify, train, and certify 50 champion farmers as Soil Doctors. The soil doctors will receive a back-pack containing a soil testing kit and training materials to train at least 30 farmers in their communities or villages. Ultimately, 1 500 farmers are being targeted as beneficiaries to the programme.

The FAO country office in the Gambia is participating by providing five personnel from its Farmer-Field School (FFS) projects who will join those from The Soil Solution for the ToT session and afterwards train other FFS facilitators to identify and train farmers within the FFS programme to become Soil Doctors. These are ultimately expected to train 6 000 farmers in five regions. Progress made so far include successfully defining the terms-of-reference of each partner, translation of all the training posters into the two most widely spoken local languages in The Gambia (Wollof and Mandinka), and the review and validation of the materials for publication through the FAO system. Benefits that have been seen so far include the strengthening of relation between The Soil Solution and FAO Gambia as well as with government institutions and other partners, including the GSP Secretariat.

4.2 Implementation of GLOSOLAN in Botswana

Ms Lesego Mooketsi-Selepe, Chair of the African Soil Laboratory Network (AFRILAB) introduced participants to GLOSOLAN and to the role of its national focal points:

- the appointment of the national reference laboratories;

- the provision of support to the establishment of the National Soil Laboratory Networks (NASOLANs); and
- the implementation of their work plans.

NASOLANs aim to break down language and cultural barriers, allow laboratories from the same country to share information and experiences, facilitate and downscale the implementation of GLOSOLAN activities at a national level, and bring national priorities and needs to the attention of GLOSOLAN and AFRILAB.

Ms Mooketsi-Selepe then talked about Botswana’s experience in GLOSOLAN. In 2022, the Botswana National Soil Laboratory Network (BOSOLAN) was established under the leadership of the national reference laboratory for the country, the Soil and Plant Analytical Laboratory. At present, BOSOLAN counts on six laboratories. The reference lab participated in the 2019 and 2022 proficiency testing organised by GLOSOLAN and received some new equipment in recognition of its good performance in the PT 2019. In addition, the laboratory benefitted from the webinars and online trainings organized by GLOSOLAN and was working on transferring this knowledge to BOSOLAN members, through the organization of local training.

4.3 National Soil Information Systems

Soil information (data) is an important resource which helps in knowing more about soils, such as the status of nutrients, suitability, potential productivity and soil health. The GSP has developed a number of tools and packages to help countries in building their capacities and producing maps.

Mr Christian Omuto, soil information specialist with the GSP, explained that all countries had soil data in some format. However, soil information systems organized data in an accessible and useful format for improved sustainable exploitation and management of soil resources. The GSP approach on the strengthening and development of national soil information systems was country-driven, consisting of the following steps:

- awareness raising, mobilization and capacity building;
- country-driven soil data generation (SOC, SAS, GSOCSEC, etc.);
- data sharing agreements (primary data copyright, secondary data sharing, etc.); and
- discovery hub (GloSIS to enhance visibility of country soil information system).

As part of its copyright policy, the GSP respects and strongly supports primary information being held by the country and not by any other institution. It is to the advantage of each country if the issue of managing its own data and information is taken seriously, due to the huge benefits associated with it.

5. Financial resources mobilization opportunities

Ms Lucrezia Caon informed participants that the GSP is a self-financed initiative that received no financial support from the FAO. Financial resources came from projects granted to the GSP. As a result, the budget was mostly allocated to the implementation of global activities, since the GSP had very few regional and national projects. In this regard, national focal points were kindly invited to make an effort to mobilize financial resources for the implementation of national and regional activities. The

African Soil Partnership facilitator at the GSP, Mr Sebastian Brahene, could help countries in preparing the concept notes to submit to donors upon request.

There was the possibility for countries to approach FAO as a donor by submitting requests for Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) projects. General information is as follows:

- TCP projects are assigned by FAO every two years. All proposals should be submitted within specific deadlines;
- TCP projects provide a maximum USD 500 000;
- TCP projects should be implemented on average within one and one and a half years; and
- TCP projects can be used to kick off activities, assess needs and write a second phase project proposal.

Application steps:

1. Know what you want in terms of activities and a final objective. The African Soil Partnership coordinator can support the country with the project formulation if needed.
2. Ask your government (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture) to send an official letter requesting a TCP project to your country's FAO office (for national TCPs) or to the regional FAO office (for regional TCPs). The letter should mention: the problem or challenge faced by your country, the request for a TCP project with a note on how the TCP will help to tackle the problem or challenge. Please copy the African Soil Partnership coordinator on your email for an internal follow up on the request.
3. Prepare the project document. Please note that there is a template for this, so that countries do not have to prepare it on their own. The African Soil Partnership coordinator and the TCP officer at the FAO country or regional office should be involved in the preparation of the project document.
4. Submit the project document and wait for approval (and an eventual start of its implementation).

A successful example of a national TCP project in Liberia was presented by Mr Keita Gelboikai. The project focused on "Strengthening soil analysis and information systems to enhance sustainable soil management and support evidence-based decision making in Liberia" and was currently under implementation. The project had two components:

1. Soil laboratories: (the assessment of laboratories' capacities and needs, procurement of laboratory equipment and consumables, provision of training based on the identified needs, and analysis of the samples collected through the soil survey (see 2.); and
2. Soil survey (data management and mapping, and the establishment of the Liberian Soil Information System.

As part of engaging with the European Union (EU) office in Monrovia, the project managers were seeking to use the project results to mobilise resources to scale up and cover more areas in the country, while widening its scope to include other aspects of soil health and sustainable soil management. Mr Gelboikai concluded his presentation by mentioning why countries need to apply for TCPs:

- TCP projects help strengthening the relationship between FAO and government stakeholders.
- TCP projects open the way to larger project applications. In this regard, project outcomes should be used to source additional funds.
- TCP projects should provide concrete outcomes, highlighting potential national scale products donors could support.
- TCP projects allow the FAO country office and government stakeholders to better understand risks and mitigate for them in larger projects.

5.1 National TCP projects: The Successful Case of Lesotho

A national TCP for Lesotho was presented by Mr Polao Ishmael Moepi (alternate GSP focal point). The project aimed to establish the national soil information system for Lesotho (LeSIS) as a basis for improved decision-making within some sectors of the country. The project outcomes were:

- soil information system (maps) successfully generated;
- national protocols now in place and operational;
- Lesotho was currently compiling report for UNCCD through Praise4 Platform using locally generated data for UNCCD 3 indicators;
- country carbon sequestration potential map submitted under GSP;
- incoming projects and programmes now considered the presence of LeSIS protocols in place when conducting baseline information;
- apart from promotion of SSM, the department was now able to help institutions in conducting further research related to soil information (e.g. Environmental Impact Assessments); and
- national climate adaptation plan in place (the country had a fully functioning and well-maintained national soil information system that helped to promote sustainable soil management to guarantee agricultural productivity and food security and to identify and quantify various threats and pressures on soil and development).

6. African Soil Partnership: *a reflection on its accomplishments, challenges, and the way forward*

Mr Victor Chude, Chair of the AfSP gave a brief overview on what has been achieved from 2020 to date. This includes:

- capacity building of national experts in the production of soil salinity and soil organic carbon sequestration potential maps;
- participation of some focal points to the GSP Plenary Assemblies, the AfSP meetings and the global symposia organised by the GSP;
- celebration of World Soil Day at national level; and
- participation in the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) for the GSP Action Framework: 2022–2030.

The challenges faced by the partnership over the years include:

- lack of financial resources to implement activities;
- low commitment and support from different governments on the issues of soils and the GSP;
- uncertainty of focal points and countries' engagement on the different activities of the GSP for implementation;
- infrastructure challenges especially with internet services (making it difficult for some countries to participate in online meetings and trainings due to COVID 19);
- some focal points lacked the skills for engaging with the FAO country offices and other organisations and institutions (to collaborate for resource mobilization and implementation of activities for which capacity building needed); and support for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Sustainable Soil Management, the Fertiliser Code and normative tools by the GSP was needed.

He concluded by mentioning that the implementation of the Soil Doctor programme at a regional and national level should be pursued, and the participation of national focal points in GSP and AfSP activities, programmes and projects implemented by partners and institutions was needed and should be enhanced.

7. Regional challenges and priorities: presentation of the online survey results

Mr Filippo Benedetti (GSP Secretariat) presented the results of an online survey, undertaken to identify the regional challenges and priorities. The results were to serve as a basis for the development of the workplan of the partnership for 2022/2023 (see Annex IV). A total of 24 countries responded to the online survey. The main areas identified included:

- writing of policy brief;
- development of regulation and policies per gaps identified;
- dissemination of policies and regulations to land users, including farmers and promoting better implementation;
- development of national fertiliser plan;
- raising awareness of soil resources in countries;
- improving awareness-raising on soil ecosystem services;
- development of practises and programmes to address soil threats;
- capacity building for countries in addressing constraints to SSM;
- Creation of a regional database on SSM practises to collect more data and share knowledge;
- Need of more awareness on the benefits of SSM; and
- Resource mobilisation.

Focal points decided that the new AfSP governance team should draft work plan for 2022–2023 which should envisage the writing of a policy brief. Indeed, policy briefs have been demonstrated to be a valid tool for mobilizing financial resources in other regions. The endorsed work plan is available in Annex IV.

8. Fertilizer and soil health conference 2023 and the soil initiative for Africa

The role of the RSPs include to engage relevant institutions and actors in any region to identify common areas of interest for collaboration and partnership.

The forum for agricultural research in Africa (FARA) has been working to put together a programme called the Soil Initiative for Africa (SIA) to help address soil degradation threatening agricultural production, soil health and food security. Ms Liesl Wiese-Rozanov informed participants that the SIA was a response to the African Union's request to deal with the problem. The formulation of the SIA was in parallel with the organisation of the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit, both of which should help in producing a Soil Health Action Plan for the region. She highlighted the development and implementation of a soil management system as an important component of the programme, and that AfSP focal points would be contacted to assist in the process.

In conclusion, she pointed out the essential issues and the approach to be undertaken in the development of the programme, ahead of its launch in June 2023:

- The active mobilization of African stakeholders to contribute to the design and implementation of the initiative;
- align the previous point with existing challenges and dealing with it in a heterogeneous manner;
- explain the effects of land degradation on the economy to policy-makers;
- align the initiative with existing frameworks and Africa's own trajectory to develop the agricultural sector;
- establish a strong coordination mechanism and accountability system; and
- consider the unique social process of African agriculture.

9. Status of the World's Soil Resources Report 2025: *updates and way forward*

Ms Lydia Mumbi Chabala, from the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS), introduced participants to the Status of the World's Soil Resources (SWSR) report 2025. The report is the continuation of the SWSR 2015 report, updating the scientific community on the soil information gathered in the period 2015–2025, and to make such information available to policy makers and other decision makers involved in SSM. The SWRS 2025 report will focus on eight risks to soil functions that are linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are:

- soil erosion;
- nutrient mismanagement;
- salinization and sodification;
- soil carbon change;
- pollution;
- soil sealing and urbanization;
- soil biodiversity change; and

- physical degradation.

The report will consist of two main parts: 1) update on the risks to soil functions; and 2) regional assessments. Focal points will be asked to nominate regional experts to join the editorial board, which is currently composed of ITPS members. This should be completed by December 2022, according to the proposed timetable. The final report will be published in 2025, during the celebration of the World Soil Day.

10. AfSP governance

In line with GSP rules on the governance of the RSPs, the African Soil Partnership was called to elect its new Chair and vice-Chair. To facilitate the implementation of activities and overcome cultural and language barriers, Mr Brahene proposed the election of three vice-Chairs representing English, French and Portuguese-speaking countries. The ToR for the position are reported in Annex III. Following the endorsement of this proposal, candidates for the position were:

Chair:

1. Edward Yeboah (Ghana); and
2. Anne Muriuki (Kenya).

vice Chair (English-speaking countries):

1. Patrick Dlamini, (Eswatini); and
2. Klaas Mampholo (South Africa).

vice Chair (French-speaking countries):

1. Aissatou Diallo Tarran (Guinea); and
2. Mamoudou Traore (Burkina Faso).

vice chair (Portuguese-speaking countries):

1. Jacques Tavares (Cabo Verde); and
2. Antonia Dos Santos Neto (Sao Tome and Principe).

After election, the Chair and vice-Chairs of the African Soil Partnership for the next two years are:

- **Chair:** Ms Anne Muriuki (Kenya);
- **Vice Chair (English-speaking countries):** Mr Ramagkwale Klaas Mampholo (South Africa);
- **Vice Chair (French-speaking countries):** Mr Mamoudou Traore (Burkina Faso); and
- **Vice Chair (Portuguese-speaking countries):** Ms Antonia Dos Santos Neto (Sao Tome and Principe).

11. Conclusions and way forward

Mr Chude, former AfSP Chair congratulated the new AfSP Chair and vice-Chairs and wished them the very best in their work to move the Partnership to another level. Ms Muriuki, the new AfSP Chair,

expressed her appreciation to the focal points for electing her and colleagues to the position of Chair and vice-Chairs of the partnership for the next two years. She took the opportunity to recall that the success of the new AfSP governance relied on the support and collaborative efforts of national focal points. In this regard, there was a need for focal points to be more proactive in pushing the soil agenda on the continent, and especially at the national level. To improve communication and engagement, every focal point needed to designate an alternate focal point and collaborate with in-country institutions and organisations to mobilise technical and financial resources to implement soil-related activities. The GSP Secretariat and the FAO Regional Office for Africa were available to assist countries and partner institutions to raise awareness on soils and implement activities but actions needed to be country-driven.

In conclusion, there was a general agreement on the need to update the AFRISOIL project document that should reflect current national issues. In 2022, countries could benefit from the Ecosystem Restoration Programme that the FAO Regional Office for Africa planned to implement in 2022 to address issues of land and soil, and agriculture. Focal points needed to know and align themselves to the Africa Union Commission's soil agenda (in particular, the Soil Health and Fertilizer Summit 2023 and the Soil Initiative for Africa).

Annex I. Agenda



Tuesday, April 26, 2022

TIME	TOPIC	MODERATOR/SPEAKER
9:00–9:10	Welcome and opening remarks	Prof Victor Chude (AfSP Chair), Mr Ronald Vargas (GSP Secretary, FAO) and Mr Eugene Rurangwa (FAO Regional Office, Accra)
9:10–9:20	Endorsement of the agenda, tour de table and group picture	Mr Sebastian Brahene (African Soil Partnership facilitator, FAO)
9:20–9:45	Item 1. GSP developments of regional interest	Mr Sebastian Brahene (African Soil Partnership facilitator, FAO)
9:45–10:15	Item 2. Communication activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP focal points clarifications • GSP <u>alternate</u> focal points • Communication with FAO offices and GSP Secretariat • Engagement during GSP PA Meetings • National Soil Partnership establishment and webpages 	Ms Isabelle Verbeke (GSP Secretariat, FAO) and Mr Sebastian Brahene (African Soil Partnership facilitator, FAO)
10:15–11:00	Item 3. The added value of working with the Global Soil Partnership and FAO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of the Soil Doctors in Gambia (10') • The implementation of GLOSOLAN in Botswana (10') • Country Soil Information System 10') 	Mr Ebrima Jarra (The Soil Solution, Gambia), Ms Lesego Mooketsi-Selepe (Soil and Plant Analytical Lab, Botswana), and Mr Christian Omuto (GSP Secretariat, FAO)
11:00–11:40	Item 4. Financial resources mobilization opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to apply for a Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) project. Donor: FAO 	Ms Lucrezia Caon (GSP Secretariat, FAO), Mr Keita Gelboikai (FAO Liberia) and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National TCP projects: the successful case of Liberia and Lesotho 	Ms M'aseeiso Hlongwane (Lesotho)
11:40–12:00	Item 5. AfSP Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal to have three vice-Chairs to support the Chair in working with English, French and Portuguese speaking countries Presentation of the candidates to the AfSP Chairman and vice-Chairman positions 	Moderator: Mr Sebastian Brahene (African Soil Partnership facilitator, FAO)
12:00	Closure of the day	

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

TIME	TOPIC	MODERATOR/SPEAKER
9:00–9:20	Item 6. Status of the World's Soil Resources report 2025: updates and way forward	Ms Lydia Mumbi Chabala (ITPS and member of the SWSR2025 Editorial Board from Zambia)
9:20–9:35	Item 7. African Soil Partnership: a reflection on its accomplishments, challenges and the way forward	Prof Victor Chude (AfSP Chair)
9:35–9:50	Item 8: Fertilizer and Soil Health conference 2023 and the Soil Initiative for Africa	Ms Liesl Wiese-Rozanov (FARA)
9:50–10:25	Item 9. Regional challenges and priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the online survey results Open discussion 	Mr Filippo Benedetti (GSP Secretariat, FAO)
10:25–11:00	Item 10. Activities for immediate implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy briefs. The successful story of the NENA Soil Partnership Open discussion. Proposal to organize sub-regional meetings to define sub-regional work plans 	Ms Lucrezia Caon (GSP Secretariat, FAO)
11:00–11:30	Item 11. Elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AfSP Chair AfSP vice-Chair(s) 	Mr Sebastian Brahene (African Soil Partnership facilitator, FAO)
11:30–11:45	Item 12. Review of the AfSP work plan for the year 2022/2023	Mr Sebastian Brahene (African Soil Partnership facilitator, FAO)
11:45–12:00	Closure of the meeting	Prof Victor Chude (former AfSP Chair) Newly elected AfSP Chair

Annex II. List of participants

Country	Affiliation	Participant name
Burkina Faso	BUNASOLS	Traoré Mamoudou
Cabo Verde	INIDA	Jacques Tavares
Eswatini	Ministry of Agriculture	Patrick Dlamini
South Africa	Department of Agriculture and Land Reform	Ramakgwale Mampholo
Madagascar	Ministère de l'environnement et du Développement Durable	Hanitra Razafindrahanta
Nigeria	Registrar/CEO Nigeria Institute of Soil Science	Victor Chude
Ghana	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research - Soil Research Institute	Edward Yeboah
Mozambique	Instituto de Investgacao Agraria de Mocambique (IIAM)	Mamudo Ibraimo Momade
Lesotho	Ministry of Forestry , Range and Soil Conservation	Hlongwane Maseeiso
Lesotho	Ministry of Forestry , Range and Soil Conservation	Polao Moepi
Zambia	University of Zambia	Lydia Chabala
Sierra Leone	University of Sierra Leone	Abdul Rahman Kamara
Liberia	Central Agricultural Research Institute	Victor Sumo
Gambia	The Soil Solution	Ebrima Jarra
Kenya	Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation	Anne Muriuki
Zambia	Zambia Agriculture Research Institute	Stalin Sichinga
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Ministère de l'agriculture	Gaius Elenga
Guinea	Ministère de l'agriculture et de L'elevage/Senasol	Aïssatou Taran Diallo
Togo	ITRA (Institut Togolais de Recherche Agronomique)	Koffi Afawoubo
Djibouti	CERD	Mohamed Egueh Walieh
Niger	INRAN	Saidou Addam
Central African Republic	Institut Centrafricain de la Recherche Agronomique (ICRA)	Jean-Arsene Yamale
Botswana	Botswana Envirolife Trust	Titus Thomba
Botswana	Department of Agricultural Research	Lesego Mooketsi-Selepe
Gambia	Koli's Farm	Jallow Koliyba
Cameroon	Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement (IRAD)	Arlende Flore Ngomeni Epouse Nguengoue
Gambia	Soil Solution- The Gambia	Njie Adama

Sudan	Plant Protection Directorate	Malik Abaker
Cameroon	Department of Soil Science, University of Dschang	Georges K. Kome
Cameroon	Cameroon Soil Science Society (CASSS)	Yemefack Martin
Senegal	Institut National de Pédologie	Macoumba Loum
Cameroon	Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement (IRAD)	Yvette Clarisse Mfopou Mewouo
Cameroon	Institut De Recherche Agricole pour le Développement	Amina Aboubakar
Mauritius	Mauritius Cane Industry Authority	Laval Ronald Ng Cheong
Sao Tome and Principe	Comissão Nacional Técnica para Iodização do Sal	Antónia dos Neto
South Africa	Independent Consultant	Liesl Wiese-Rozanov
Niger	National Institute for Agricultural Research of Niger	Abdourahaman Elh Moustapha
Cameroon	IRAD (Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Developpement)	Aline Beatrice Nzeket
Liberia	FAO Liberia	Gelboikai Keita
Senegal	FAO SFW	Eugene Rurangwa
Italy	GSP Secretariat	Filippo Benedetti
Ghana	GSP Secretariat	Sebastian Brahene
Mexico	GSP Secretariat	Vinisa Saynes Santillán
Italy	GSP Secretariat	Yuxin Tong
Italy	GSP Secretariat	Giulia Stanco
Italy	GSP Secretariat	Silvia Pioli
Italy	GSP Secretariat	Julia Mousquer
Kenya	GSP Secretariat	Christian Omuto
Spain	GSP Secretariat	Natalia Rodriguez
Italy	GSP Secretariat	Isabel Luotto
Germany	GSP Secretariat	Carolina Lisboa
Bolivia	GSP Secretariat	Ronald Vargas
France	GSP Secretariat	Yi Peng
Germany	GSP Secretariat	Moritz Mainka

Annex III. Terms of Reference for Chair and vice-Chairs of the Regional Soil Partnership



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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Positions of Chair, and vice-Chair for the Regional Soil Partnerships

CHAIR

The African Soil Partnership is led by a chair who works in coordination with the vice-Chair(s) and the African Soil Partnership facilitator at the Global Soil Partnership. The Chair of the Regional Soil Partnership has the following tasks:

- facilitating the functioning of the RSP;
- maintaining the communication with the member of the RSP and the GSP Secretariat;
- *encouraging the execution of the Regional Implementation Plan (RIP); (subject to decision by tenth GSP plenary assembly)*
- participating in the GSP Plenary Assembly and present the report of their RSP;
- representing the Regional Soil Partnership in official meetings, conferences and other national, regional, and global events as requested by the GSP Secretariat, or as invited by other bodies;
- supporting the GSP in mobilizing financial resources for the region; and
- supporting the organization and chairing the RSP workshops.

Their mandate is two years after election, extendable to a second term.

VICE-CHAIRS

During its sixth meeting, the African Soil Partnership decided to have three vice-Chairs tasked with assisting the Chair in complying with their mandate. The number of vice-Chairs is based on the need to overcome cultural and language barriers, which may be present between countries in the region. In this regard, the vice-Chairs represent English, French and Portuguese speaking countries.

The vice-Chair of the regional soil partnership has the following tasks:

- assisting the Chair in complying with his/her functions and duties as needed;
- facilitating the communication with the national focal points in their sub-group;
- supporting the GSP Secretariat and the African Soil Partnership chair in implementing national and regional activities; and
- taking the role of Chair in case of unavailability of the elected Chair by a forced cause.

Their mandate is two years after election, extendable to a second term.

Annex IV. AfSP work plan 2022–2023



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African Soil Partnership workplan for 2022/2023

Area of work	Activity	Output/Product	Responsible Party	Timeline
Sustainable soil management	Establishment of working group on soil erosion	Policy brief, Manual and guidelines, Videos and case studies, Awareness-raising events	Kenya, Ghana, Eswatini, Cabo Verde, Lesotho, Rwanda, Cameroon, Mauritania, DRC (Sebastian)	Now to June 2023
	Establishment of working group on soil nutrient depletion	Policy brief, Manual and guidelines, Videos and case studies, Awareness-raising	Kenya, Ghana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Rwanda, Burkina Faso, Sao Tome e Principe, Mozambique, DRC (Sebastian)	Now to June 2023
Resource mobilisation	Writing project proposals	Training and webinar	GSP (should be in different languages)	July to August 2022
	Bilateral meetings with focal points	Enhanced engagement with FAO offices	GSP Regional facilitator (Lucrezia and Filippo)	July to December 2022
	Engagement with donors and partners	Webinar	GSP Regional facilitator	July to December 2022

	Engagement with FAO country offices	Webinar	GSP communication team (supported by Sebastian)	July to December 2022
	Review of the AFRISOIL Project document	Update of national information	GSP and focal points	July to December 2022
Capacity building	Building the capacity of farmers and extension agents on the Fertiliser Code	Training workshop, EduSoil platform, Soil Doctor programme	GSP regional facilitator	July 2022 to June 2023
	Digital Soil Mapping training per the workplan of the soil information and data team at the GSP.	National capacities strengthened National maps generated	GSP soil information and data team	June 2022 to June 2023
World Soil Day	Countries organize and celebrate WSD	National celebration of WSD (pictures, videos, etc. shared)	Focal points GSP Regional facilitator	5 December 2022 (preparations to start now)
Establishment of National Soil Partnership	Development of terms of reference (ToR)	ToR NSPs established	Focal points GSP regional facilitator	July 2022 to June 2023