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## Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly

### Eleventh session

Hybrid, 12–14 July 2023

**Work of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS)  
(GSPPA: XI/2023/4)**

### Executive summary

- The annual progress report by the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) complements reports submitted to previous sessions of the Plenary Assembly (PA). It provides a succinct overview of the main activities carried out by the panel and the conclusions reached. The document also introduces the revised ITPS work programme for 2023 and 2024 for consideration and endorsement by the PA. The ITPS Chair is also due to deliver a presentation.
- It may be noted that the members of the fourth panel were appointed at the tenth session of the PA and, since then, they have been working at full speed to continue the activities previously initiated and to support the implementation of new activities.
- The seventeenth working session of the ITPS took place virtually from 17 to 19 October 2022 and the eighteenth working session of the ITPS was held in person for the first time for the fourth panel at the FAO headquarters from 21 to 23 March 2023. The panel has continued to operate through virtual channels throughout the year.

### Suggested actions by the GSP Plenary Assembly

The Plenary Assembly may wish to:

- review and comment, as relevant, on the range of activities undertaken by the ITPS over the past 14-month period;
- endorse the ITPS workplan 2023–2024 and invite donors and partners to support it by providing financial and in-kind resources;
- welcome the progress made in the preparation of the second edition of the Status of the World's Soil Resources (SWSR) report and encourage ITPS members to actively contribute to its preparation by involving a wide range of experts from all the regions; and
- invite countries and partners to encourage their experts to participate in the different activities led by the ITPS, particularly during the preparation of the second edition of the SWSR report.

#### **4.1 Report by the Chairperson on the main activities and outcomes of the work programme 2022–2023**

1. Over the past 14 months, the present panel has performed the following activities:
  - published two ITPS letters: issue #6 *How can soils continue to sustain the growing need for food production in the current fertilizer crisis?* and issue #7 *A call to protect the world's food basket soils: black soils*;
  - led the organization of the Global Symposium on Soils for Nutrition (GSOIL4N22) held from 26 to 29 July 2022 and the development, review and publication of the GSOIL4N22 outcome document;
  - guided the preparation of the Global Soil Nutrient and Nutrient Budget Maps (GSNmap);
  - supported the launch of the Global Soil Biodiversity Observatory (GLOSOB) in the framework of the International Network of Soil Biodiversity (NETSOB) at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in December 2022;
  - supported the development and implementation of the Recarbonization of agricultural soils (RECSOIL) initiative as a contribution to the implementation of decision 16/COP14 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);
  - contributed to the preparation of the report on the Global Status of Salt-affected Soils;
  - reviewed the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6 WGIII) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC);
  - led the organization of the Global Symposium on Soils and Water (GSOWA23) to be held in October 2023;
  - supported the preparation and dissemination of the SoILEX platform and the associated comparative analysis of international and national soil legal instruments;
  - led the preparation of the second edition of the Status of the World's Soil Resources (SWSR) report to be issued in 2025, including the establishment of the editorial board, with one ITPS member representing each region. Dr Dan Pennock has been appointed as Managing Editor of the report and is receiving due support from the GSP Secretariat to allow for an inclusive process towards a comprehensive second edition, especially in depicting the dynamics of soil threats since the first edition published in 2015;
  - contributed to the celebration of World Soil Day (WSD) 2022, including the dissemination of campaign materials, selection of the WSD Award, the Glinka World Soil Prize, and the selection of winners for the poster, booklet and soil cakes contests;
  - led the work of the Working Group to develop the Indicator System of the GSP Action Framework (ISAF);
  - presented several abstracts related to the ITPS/GSP's activities as posters and oral presentations at the 22nd World Congress of Soil Science, held in Glasgow, Scotland from 31 July to 5 August 2022; and
  - contributed to the preparation of the document on the institutionalization of the Global Soil Partnership, including guidance on the implementation of the Action Framework.

#### **4.2 ITPS work programme 2023–2024**

2. The ITPS workplan until mid-2024 will include the following:

- ensuring follow-up actions to the Global Symposium on Soil Erosion (GSER19), including advising on the preparation of the methodology to evaluate the costs of erosion and value of erosion control practices as public benefits and for the conservation of ecosystem services;
- supporting the implementation of the GSOIL4N22 outcome document, including the launch of the International Soil Fertility and Fertilizer Network (INSOILFER) and the development of its workplan;
- leading the organization of the Global Symposium on Soils and Water (GSOWA23) in October 2023 and its implementation, development, review and the publication of its outcome document;
- guiding the finalization and launch of the Global Soil Nutrient and Nutrient Budget Maps (GSNmap);
- supporting the implementation of GLOSOB;
- continuing support to the development and implementation of the RECSOIL initiative as a contribution to the implementation of decision 16/COP14 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);
- contributing to the publication of the report on the Global Assessment of Salt-affected Soils;
- continuing to support and guide the different international networks of the GSP;
- leading the preparation of the second edition of the SWSR report scheduled for 2025. The elaboration of the report will involve the Regional Soil Partnerships through the compilation and analysis of the vast number of materials generated since the publication of the first report in 2015;
- assisting with the celebration of WSD 2023 devoted to *Soil and Water: a source of life*, including the dissemination of campaign materials, selection of the WSD Award, the Glinka World Soil Prize, and the review of submissions and selection of winners for the poster and booklet contests;
- leading the work of the Working Group to develop the Indicator System of the GSP Action Framework (ISAF);
- assisting with the organization of the Global Symposium on Soil Data and Information to be held in 2024;
- preparing and publishing future scientific and technical notes (ITPS letters) on soil pollution and water quality, soil biodiversity, soils and One Health, soil monitoring, biochar, soil management under a changing climate, soil governance, soil awareness, and developing ITPS manuscripts to be published in scientific journals; and
- continuing collaboration with international organizations and panels, such as:
  - International Union on Soil Science (IUSS);
  - Science-Policy Interface of the UNCCD;
  - 4per 1000 Initiative;
  - Operationalizing the International Research Consortium (IRC) on Soil Carbon (ORCaSa) project;
  - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC);
  - International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
  - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); and

- Global Soil Biodiversity Initiative (GSBI).

#### **4.3 Preparation of the second edition of the Status of the World's Soil Resources Report**

3. Over the past 14 months, the present panel has performed the following activities in furtherance of the preparation of the SWSR report:
  - completed a first draft of the summary of new information on the threats to soil functions, published in the 2015 report;
  - established a review process for the summaries of soil threats and the regional assessment of threats to soil functions;
  - recommended the appointment of Megan Balks (New Zealand) as Review Editor of the report;
  - established Regional Assessment Panels for each region consisting of the ITPS members for that region and the Chair of the Regional Soil Partnership;
  - established subregions for regions and revised the table of contents for the report in accordance with these subregions;
  - initiated the selection of lead authors for the Regional Assessment chapters; and
  - initiated the writing of a stand-alone document on the thresholds for individual soil threats beyond which significant impairment of soil functions can occur (in accordance with the definition of sustainable soil management established in the revised World Soil Charter).
4. The workplan until mid-2024 includes the following items:
  - completion of the first draft of the Regional Assessment chapters for the seven GSP regions;
  - initiation of the review process for the Regional Assessment chapters;
  - review and revision of the summary of the new information (since 2015) on the threats to soil functions; and
  - preparation of a working paper on global and regional thresholds for soil threats.