


June 2013

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|  | منظمة الأغذية<br>والزراعة للأمم<br>المتحدة | 联合国<br>粮食及<br>农业组织 | Food and<br>Agriculture<br>Organization<br>of the<br>United Nations | Organisation des<br>Nations Unies<br>pour<br>l'alimentation<br>et l'agriculture | Продовольственная и<br>сельскохозяйственная<br>организация<br>Объединенных<br>Наций | Organización<br>de las<br>Naciones Unidas<br>para la<br>Alimentación y la<br>Agricultura |
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# Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly

## First Session

Rome, 11-12 June 2013

## Regional Soil Partnerships

### Executive Summary

- Section 5.4 of the GSP Terms of Reference (CL 145/REP/F1) covers the desirable establishment of Regional Soil Partnerships (RSPs), which should constitute a major conduit of cooperation and fruitful exchanges among national soil entities and relevant regional institutions. They should also carry out specific activities at regional level, while respective regional priorities are expected to be expressed by and channelled through these partnerships.
- The Secretariat has started consultations with the aim of supporting the establishment of RSPs. These afforded an opportunity to canvass needs and priorities, at least in a preliminary manner and also to implement several concrete activities. On that basis, this document provides brief information on progress made towards the establishment of RSPs.

### Suggested action by the GSP Plenary Assembly

The Plenary Assembly may wish to:

- a) request partners to establish active regional soil partnerships, either across entire regions, or based on common language, physical location or culture of the interested countries.
- b) emphasize existing and future regional soil partnerships as essential frameworks for implementing fruitful actions in the field.
- c) encourage the use of regional soil partnerships in activities related to food production and sustainable development.
- d) request the Secretariat to further support and facilitate the establishment of Regional Soil Partnerships.

1. Section 5.4 of the GSP Terms of Reference (CL 145/REP/F1) stipulates the establishment of Regional Soil Partnerships (RSPs), which should foster dialogue, ensure an interactive consultative process with national soil entities and relevant regional institutions and carry out activities at regional level. The respective regional priorities should be channelled through these partnerships.
  
2. The Secretariat has started consultations with the aim of supporting the establishment of RSPs. Activities in relation to capacity development on digital soil mapping and initial efforts to systematize soil legacy data took place in Asia, Latin America and the Near East. Regional consultations were carried out in Western/Central Africa and Eastern/Southern Africa. National soil institutions from most countries in those regions have actively participated in these activities, assessing current situations and prioritizing needs towards sustainable soil management.
  
3. From the national reports and regional workshops it was inferred that the following constitute the main challenges towards managing soils in a sustainable manner in order to increase food production and ecosystem services:
  - a) **Soil institutions**
    - i) Soil institutions are non-existent in some countries. In the majority of other cases, national soil institutions are very weak and require much strengthening.
    - ii) Collaboration between soil institutions, the national agronomic research system, and universities needs to be strengthened
    - iii) Staff is often not up to date on latest scientific and technological developments.
    - iv) The required tools and equipment are not available.
  
  - b) **Needs and priorities**
    - i) Capacity development in all soil applications.
    - ii) Addressing soil degradation by establishing a national or regional soil conservation and restoration program.
    - iii) Need to update and upgrade national, regional and global soil information systems.
    - iv) Development of concrete programs to implement sustainable soil management with special attention to sustainable intensification of food production.
    - v) Development of more adequate national soil management policies.
  
4. A series of Communiqués were prepared by the national institutions which participated in this process, which may be consulted on the [GSP website](#).