

27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture

Item 3.3: Report of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP)

Introduction notes

Since its establishment in 2012, the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) has made significant progress in promoting sustainable soil management and advocating the inclusion of soils on the global agenda, notably through the support of its Regional Soil Partnerships and the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soil (ITPS).

During the period 2018-2020, the GSP consolidated its work by focusing on the ten threats to soil identified in the State of the World's Soil Resources report, through the organization of global symposia, the preparation of global assessments and maps, the implementation of final documents and projects on the ground, and the development of new tools to facilitate the exchange of information and experience among all soil stakeholders. Specifically, main achievements were: launch of RECSOIL: recarbonization of global soils, the global assessments of soil pollution and soil biodiversity, the international Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers, mapping on soil salinity and soil organic carbon sequestration potential following a country-driven approach, preparation of the GSOC-MRV Protocol, the Sustainable Soil Management Protocol, launch of Soil Doctors and SoiLEX among others.

In view of the increasing number of GSP activities, the 7th Plenary Assembly held in June 2019 suggested an evaluation of GSP performance to identify future opportunities and challenges. The evaluation highlighted the fact that the GSP has come a long way since its formal establishment by the FAO Council at the end of 2012, while reaching a point where it needs to recalibrate its strategy by moving from what could be called a phase of global positioning, highly justified so far, to the top priority given to concrete actions (including the use of tools developed in this first phase) on the ground to help countries take full advantage of sustainable soil management practices. The evaluation report proposes five recommendations to the GSP, which were suggested as beneficial for the future development of the GSP and were discussed at this year's Plenary Assembly.

The 7th Plenary Assembly also recognized the importance of inter-laboratory comparisons to assess the performance of soil laboratories and to monitor the progress of the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN), but also recognized that there are international barriers to the exchange of soil samples for research purposes. The Plenary stressed the importance of these barriers that could hinder the efficient conduct of inter-laboratory comparisons within GLOSOLAN.

The Committee is invited to:

- Take note of the reports of the 7th and 8th meetings of the GSP Plenary Assembly, as well as the progress made in combating soil degradation and promoting sustainable soil management.
- Request the Secretariat to provide further information on the legal and financial implications, including the impact on the participation of non-state actors, of the proposal by the Evaluation of the GSP to institutionalize the GSP as a FAO Statutory Body, for further consideration.
- Consider the endorsement of the “Resolution for the International Exchange of Soil Samples for Research Purposes under GLOSOLAN” ([Annex 1](#)), as requested by the 7th GSP Plenary Assembly.
- Support the implementation of key tools and initiatives such as the International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers, the GSOC-MRV Protocol for measuring, reporting, verification and monitoring of soil organic carbon in agricultural landscapes, the RECSOIL: recarbonization of global soils, and the Global Soil Doctors Programme, among others.

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