



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

AGENDA

Launch of the International Network on Soil Fertility and Fertilizers (INSOILFER)

**17th July
2023**

13:00 - 14:30 CEST

Online Meeting



Insoilfer

International Network on
Soil Fertility and Fertilizers



Background

Food insecurity is one of the great challenges of our times directly affecting 828 million people worldwide in pre-pandemic COVID19 (in 2021) (FAO *et al.*, 2022). After the pandemic, 150 million more people suffering from hunger were reported (Poch *et al.*, 2020; FAO *et al.*, 2022). Food insecurity is a multifactorial problem caused by interactive factors such as poverty, marginalization, migration, war, water scarcity and global climate change. One of the main factors driving and aggravating food insecurity is the degradation of one third of the world's agricultural soils (FAO, 2017). Considering that soils produce more than 95 percent of the food we eat, the conservation of soil health and fertility should be one of the guiding principles in food insecurity eradication plans (FAO and ITPS, 2023).

Preserving the health and fertility of soils is therefore a prerequisite for achieving food security and it is simultaneously part of the solution to the problem (FAO and ITPS, 2023). However, the preservation of soil health and fertility is not an easy task with the prevailing approach of agri-food systems based on low crop diversity, high-yield objectives and high rates of mineral fertilizer applications, frequently overlooking nutritional quality and the contribution to the emission of greenhouse gases. In contrast, other regions of the world face fertilizer shortages or inaccessibility. These problems have been greatly exacerbated by the current global fertilizer crisis resulting from a 30 percent increase in prices and more than 100 percent in some cases (World Bank Group, 2022). In addition to the increase of prices, other factors such as post COVID-19 and war have led to an acute mineral fertilizer crisis.

FAO's Global Soil Partnership organized the *Global Symposium on Soils for Nutrition* (GSOIL4N) in 2022 in order to review the state of the art on the science-policy interphase of soil fertility and its impact on human nutrition. Sustainable soil management, fertilizers use efficiency, technological innovations and nature and bio-based solutions represent a cost-effective, environmentally friendly and climate change mitigation option that can support the sustainable use of nutrients for crop production. As reported in the [Outcome Document](#) of the GSOIL4N (FAO, 2023), one of the main recommendations was the establishment of the ***International Network on Soil Fertility and Fertilizers (INSOILFER)*** under the umbrella of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP).

The International Network on Soil Fertility and Fertilizers (INSOILFER) aims to address nutrient imbalances and promote the adoption of soils for nutrition concept for making soils healthy and fertile by 2030 as a contribution to the transformation of agrifood systems. The network will foster the adoption and implementation of sustainable soil management, avoiding the underuse, misuse and overuse of fertilizers, and reducing the environmental and health impacts of their use. INSOILFER will bring stakeholders working on the technical aspects of soil fertility and fertilizers together for implementing the recommendations of the GSOIL4N in the framework of the [International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers](#) (Fertilizer Code) (FAO, 2019) and as an important vehicle for the adoption of the [Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management](#) (FAO, 2017).

Draft Agenda

13:00 - 13:05	Opening of the event, Mr Lifeng Li, Director Land and Water Division, FAO
13:05 - 13:15	The need of fertile soils for a food secure world, Mr Zack Stewart, USAID
13:15 - 13:25	Soil fertility in Africa: towards the African Conference on Fertilizers and Soil health, Mr Wole Fatunbi, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
13:25 - 13:40	Changing the perception of what fertilizers are: beyond synthetic and mineral sources, Mr Deli Chen, University of Melbourne, Australia
13:40 - 13:55	Biofertilizers: an alternative solution to boost soil health and productivity of agri-food systems, Ms Mariangela Hungria, EMBRAPA, Brazil
13:55 - 14:05	The International Network on Soil Fertility and Fertilizers: why the network?, Ms Vinisa Saynes Santillán, GSP, FAO
14:05 - 14:25	Questions and answers
14:25 - 14:30	Conclusions and the way forward

International Network on
Soil Fertility and Fertilizers

Moderator: Mr Ronald Vargas, Land and Water Division, FAO



The Global Soil Partnership (GSP) is a globally recognized mechanism established in 2012. Our mission is to position soils in the Global Agenda through collective action. Our key objectives are to promote Sustainable Soil Management (SSM) and improve soil governance to guarantee healthy and productive soils, and support the provision of essential ecosystem services towards food security and improved nutrition, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable development.

Land and Water division - Natural Resources and Sustainable Production

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