

WELCOME ADDRESS

of

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delivered at the

4rd Asian Soil Partnership Workshop: *towards a regional implementation plan for Asia*

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Your Excellencies,

Mr. Zhao Yongzhi, Director of Beijing Soil Fertilizer Extension Service Station

Mr. Rapibhat Chandarasrivongs, Functional chair of the ASP

*Distinguished delegates and participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a great honour for me to welcome you to the fourth Asian Soil Partnership workshop, which is kindly hosted by the Beijing Municipal Agriculture Bureau and the Beijing Soil Fertilizer Extension Service Station. I wish to express our special gratitude to each of you who are attending this workshop, given recognition to the importance of soil resources and join in our important efforts and undertakings, despite of busy schedule in your own country.

The Asian Soil Partnership implementation plan was endorsed during the Third ASP meeting in December 2016. Since then, efforts were put to:

- Develop national soil organic carbon maps, which contributed to the global soil organic carbon map;
- Harmonize regional soil laboratory analysis under the framework of the South-East Asia Laboratory Network (SEALNET) and the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN);
- Develop the first ever Soil Atlas of Asia, a project financed by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission;
- Develop the Soil Doctors Global programme, which attracted the interest of many countries in the region;
- Implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management, a strongly country-driven activity.

No doubts that the year 2017 has been busy and demanding year for all but I am confident in saying that the year 2017 has also been a year of successes. Therefore, thanks for

believing in the Global Soil Partnership and the FAO, and for investing time and resources in implementing our proposed activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During this meeting you will be called to make important decisions for the period 2018-2020. Activities for immediate execution have to be identified and ASP leaders have to be appointed. After three years of highly committed work, the mandate of Thailand as Chair of the ASP and ASP Secretariat came to an end, together with the mandate of the ASP Chairs for the five Pillars of Action of the GSP. These are high-level positions that bring the voice of Asian countries to global forums and to international decision making meetings.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to thank the Land Development Department of Thailand for taking the Chair and the Secretariat role of the Asian Soil Partnership, and the ASP Chairs for the five pillars of action attending this meeting for their commitment and for the hard work they have been performing since their appointment in 2015.

[applause]

I would also like to recall that Thailand is actually re-candidating for the position of regional Chair and that the ASP Chairs for the five pillars also showed enthusiasm in continuing to serve the partnership for another mandate. But the decision is on you attending this meeting.

I hope that this workshop would bring us one step closer to the achievement of sustainable soil management in Asia.

I wish you all for a productive meeting.

Thank you.