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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

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Report of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP)

Executive Summary

The Committee on Agriculture (COAG) is the parent body of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP). The main Governing Body of the GSP, the GSP Plenary Assembly, reports to COAG.

The GSP Plenary Assembly has met twice since the 28th Session of COAG (COAG 28), respectively from 12 to 14 July 2023 (11th Session of the GSP Plenary Assembly)¹ and from 3 to 5 June 2024 (12th Session of the GSP Plenary Assembly).² Both were held in a hybrid mode at headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and on the Zoom platform. The main outcomes of the two above-mentioned meetings are set out in the documents and reports of the Plenary Assemblies. Several key GSP activities have been carried out by, or under the aegis of, its main technical advisory body: the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS).

During this two-year period, significant progress has been made in the implementation of the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030 *Healthy soils for a healthy life and environment: from promotion to consolidation of Sustainable Soil Management* (GSP Action Framework 2022-2030).³

The GSP Action Framework 2022-2030 is structured around six action areas, replacing the former five pillars of action included in the GSP Terms of Reference (ToRs)⁴ approved by the 145th FAO Council in December 2012. The 12th GSP Plenary Assembly highlighted the need to revise these ToRs according to the new Action Framework to reflect the six action areas. According to the Rules of Procedure⁵, the GSP Secretariat shall prepare the revised ToRs following an open consultation process and submit them to the GSP Plenary Assembly, and subsequently to COAG 30 and the FAO Council for endorsement.

The GSP is working on the development of key performance indicators of the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030 and the Global Soil Health Indicator System (GSHIS) that will be integrated in SoilSTAT.

¹ FAO. GSP Plenary Assembly. 2023. www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/about/plenary-assembly/elevanth-session-2023/en/

² FAO. GSP Plenary Assembly. 2024. www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/about/plenary-assembly/twelfth-session-2024/en/

³ GSP Action Framework 2022-2030. <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/about/gsp-action-framework-2022-2030/en/>

⁴ FAO. Terms of Reference of the Global Soil Partnership. 2012. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/855896ff-64bc-4cb2-a651-4969f817855b/content>

⁵ FAO. Rules of Procedure of the Global Soil Partnership. 2017. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/94dcf9c9-6ca1-45f9-a564-5da746baae7e/content>

With regard to the proposed institutionalization of the GSP through the creation of a COAG Sub-Committee on Soils while maintaining the GSP in its current structure, the 12th GSP Plenary Assembly has decided to maintain the GSP in its current structure including all its structures and participation of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, and suggested establishing a Working Group to prepare a detailed analysis on the possible mandate and ToRs of the proposed COAG Sub-Committee on Soils and on how it would complement the GSP without duplication.

The 12th GSP Plenary Assembly called upon Members to facilitate the implementation of the *Resolution for International Exchange of Soil Samples for Research Purposes under the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN)*, which was endorsed by the 27th Session of COAG (28 September - 2 October 2020), and to promote the organization of national and international proficiency tests. It also encouraged FAO Members and resource partners to support the development and implementation of the Global Soil Biodiversity Observatory (GLOSOB) for measuring and monitoring soil biodiversity.

Significant progress has been achieved in the implementation of the *Recarbonization of Global Agricultural Soils (RECSOIL)* initiative and the Global Soil Doctors Programme. The GSP is implementing the *Scaling up of the Soil mapping for resilient agrifood systems in Central America and sub-Saharan Africa (SoilFER)* project to support countries address the fertilizer crisis and improve productivity in a sustainable way.

At the 11th GSP Plenary Assembly, the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand put forward a suggestion to work towards a proposal for a United Nations Decade on Soil Health. The 12th GSP Plenary Assembly supported the establishment of a UN Decade on Soil Health for the period 2031–2040 and encouraged Members championing the proposal for this UN Decade to prepare a detailed proposal, with the support of the GSP Secretariat, and to submit it for consideration by COAG at its 30th Session.

Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- a) *welcome* the reports of the 11th and 12th Sessions of the GSP Plenary Assembly, as well as all the progress made in combating soil degradation and promoting sustainable soil management at all levels;
- b) *welcome* the progress made in the implementation of the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030 *Healthy soils for a healthy life and environment: from promotion to consolidation of Sustainable Soil Management*;
- c) *acknowledge* the need to update the ToRs of the GSP and *request* the GSP Secretariat to prepare a revised version, following an open consultation with the GSP Partners, and to submit it for endorsement by the GSP Plenary Assembly, and subsequently by the COAG at its 30th Session and the Council;
- d) *call* on the ITPS and the GSP Secretariat to facilitate the prompt finalisation of the GSHIS to enable monitoring of progress and *encourage* Members to contribute to its reporting as soon as the system has been finalised;
- e) *welcome* the recommendation of the 12th Session of the GSP Plenary Assembly to establish an open and inclusive Working Group to prepare a detailed analysis on the possible mandate and ToRs of the proposed COAG Sub-Committee on Soils, and on how it would complement the GSP without duplication;
- f) *reiterate* the call upon Members to facilitate the implementation of the *Resolution for International Exchange of Soil Samples for Research Purposes under the Global Soil Laboratory Network*;
- g) *encourage* Members and resource partners to support the development and implementation of the GLOSOB for measuring and monitoring soil biodiversity;

h) *call on* Members to support the implementation of GSP initiatives and programmes aimed at improving soil health and agricultural productivity and resilience through sustainable soil management, including, the RECSOIL initiative and the Global Soil Doctors Programme among others;

i) *welcome* the proposal from Thailand, endorsed by the 12th Plenary Assembly on the establishment of a United Nations Decade on Soil Health for the period 2031–2040 and, in line with relevant FAO policies and processes, and *encourage* Members championing the proposal to develop a comprehensive proposal, with the support of the GSP Secretariat, and to submit it formally to the Director-General of FAO and for the consideration of COAG at its 30th Session.

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I. Update on the Global Soil Partnership (GSP)

1. Since its establishment in 2012, the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) has made significant progress in promoting sustainable soil management (SSM) and advocating the inclusion of soils in the global agenda, notably through the support of its international technical networks, the Regional Soil Partnerships, and the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS).
2. In 2022, the GSP adopted the Action Framework 2022-2030.⁶ During the period 2022–2024, the GSP continued its work focusing on advancing its six action areas. The main actions were related to the organization of global symposia on soils for nutrition, and soils and water, the celebration of the World Soil Day (WSD), the advancement in the implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management* (from capacity development to field activities), the implementation of the work plans of the seven GSP technical networks,⁷ their annual meetings and meetings of the Working Groups (WGs), and the publication of key knowledge products and guidelines.
3. The GSP Plenary Assembly has met twice since COAG 28: from 12 to 14 July 2023 at the 11th Session of the GSP Plenary Assembly^{8,9} and from 3 to 5 June 2024 at the 12th Session of the GSP Plenary Assembly.^{10,11} Both sessions were held in hybrid mode at FAO headquarters and through the Zoom platform. The main outcomes of the two above-mentioned meetings are set out in the documents and reports of the Plenary Assemblies. Several key GSP activities have been carried out by, or under the aegis of, its main technical advisory body – the ITPS.
4. The Recarbonization of Global Agricultural Soils (RECSOIL) initiative,¹² established in 2019, aims to scale up the adoption of sustainable soil management (SSM) practices centred on soil organic carbon (SOC) maintenance and sequestration to boost soil health and halt soil degradation and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The implementation of the RECSOIL initiative has started in Costa Rica, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Togo, and Uzbekistan, and is at different stages of implementation, from the definition of stakeholders and responsibilities in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, to the finalisation of the baseline and implementation of SSM practices in Costa Rica and Mexico. The implementation of RECSOIL will start during the third quarter of 2024 in Armenia and Morocco. To date, 127 farmers are participating in the initiative and adopting SSM practices in about 900 hectares. These actions have a SOC sequestration potential of 1 077 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year and are contributing to reduce GHGs emissions from the participating farms.
5. The Global Soil Doctors Programme,¹³ launched in October 2020, is a farmer-to-farmer training initiative that aims to support farmers to enhance their capacities and knowledge of SSM. The Programme has expanded its implementation to Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Gambia, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Saint Lucia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Uzbekistan, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. To date, 657 trainers and 1 826 soil doctors have been trained, and 11 545 farmers are estimated to have been trained by certified soil doctors. The programme is also planned to be implemented in Nicaragua, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turkmenistan. The success of the programme relies on the financial and in-kind commitments of the national promoters. The GSP Secretariat is working to strengthen the monitoring of farmers' adoption and application of the knowledge gained through the training sessions, to be able to report on the medium and long-term impact of the programme on farmers' soil knowledge and ability to make informed management decisions.
6. The RECSOIL initiative, Soil Doctors and other GSP tools and initiatives have also been included in other FAO projects, particularly in those funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) aimed at strengthening national capacities to monitor SOC

⁶ FAO. 2022. GSP Action Framework 2022-2030.

www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/GSP/tenth_PA/Annex_1_GSP_Action_Framework.pdf

⁷ FAO. GSP Technical networks. <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/technical-networks/en/>

⁸ FAO. GSP Plenary Assembly. 2023. www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/about/plenary-assembly/eleventh-session-2023/en/

⁹ FAO. GSP Plenary Assembly. 2023. [Eleventh Session of the Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly - Report](http://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/about/plenary-assembly/eleventh-session-2023/en/)

¹⁰ FAO. GSP Plenary Assembly. 2024. www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/about/plenary-assembly/twelfth-session-2024/en/

¹¹ FAO. 2024. [Twelfth Session of the Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly – Report](http://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/about/plenary-assembly/twelfth-session-2024/en/)

¹² FAO. GSP. RECSOIL <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/areas-of-work/recsoil/recsoil-home>

¹³ FAO. GSP. Global Soil Doctors Programme <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/soil-doctors-programme/about-the-programme/en/>

and adopt sustainable management practices that contribute to sequester carbon in soils and to restore soil health in the framework of land degradation neutrality projects.

7. Following the main recommendation of the *Global Symposium on Soils for Nutrition*, organized in 2022, the International Network on Soil Fertility and Fertilizers (INSOILFER) was launched in July 2023 to contribute to the implementation of the *International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers* (Fertilizer Code).¹⁴ The network is formed by 260 members and 186 laboratories from 80 countries, and operates with three Working Groups (WGs): WG1– Soil nutrient monitoring, WG2– Soil fertility and fertilizer management, and WG3– Fertilizer safety and quality assessment. Several activities have been undertaken addressing the underuse, overuse and misuse of fertilizers, as well as quality and safety of organic and inorganic fertilizers.

8. Voluntary contributions to the GSP reached their highest level during 2022–2024, including the financial contribution of USD 30 million granted by the Department of State of the United States of America to FAO to support efforts in soil mapping initiatives, thus enhancing integrated data driven soil nutrient management at local and national levels through the SoilFER,¹⁵ which is being implemented in Guatemala, Honduras, and Zambia and is about to start in Ghana and Kenya. Additional voluntary contributions have been received from PhosAgro (amounting to USD 3 million) to support the activities of the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN), the Global Soil Doctors Programme (GSDP), and RECISOIL, and from the European Commission (worth EUR 1.5 million) to globally scale up the principles of the *EU Mission: A Soil Deal for Europe*. During 2024, additional contributions are anticipated from China, Germany, Japan, and the State Department of the United States of America.

9. The major events carried out during the reporting period 2022–2024 are:

- observation of the World Soil Day (WSD) 2022¹⁶ and WSD 2023¹⁷ (which reached a record number of over 10 000 celebrations worldwide) and awarding of the 7th and 8th Glinka World Soil Prizes¹⁸ and 5th and 6th King Bhumibol WSD Awards;¹⁹
- organization of the Global Symposium on Soils for Nutrition²⁰ in July 2022;
- organization of the side event *Innovations in soil and plant nutrient management*²¹ held in a hybrid mode during the FAO Science and Innovation Forum in October 2022;
- High-Level Breakfast on Soil Biodiversity: Launch of the Global Soil Biodiversity Observatory²² during the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Montreal on 17 December 2022;
- eleventh session of the GSP Plenary Assembly²³ held in a hybrid mode from 12 to 14 July 2023;
- organization of the Global Symposium on Soil and Water²⁴ in a hybrid mode from 2 to 5 October 2023;
- organization of the side event *Innovative solutions for soil and water management for climate action*²⁵ held in a hybrid mode during the FAO Science and Innovation Forum in October 2023;

¹⁴ FAO. 2019. The International Code of Conduct for the sustainable use and management of fertilizers <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ca5253en>

¹⁵ FAO. 2024. Soil Mapping for Resilient Agrifood Systems (SoilFER) <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc9430en>

¹⁶ FAO. 2022. World Soil Day <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/1a1c0692-e6e1-4a43-bf86-918e3408acb4/content>

¹⁷ FAO. 2023. World Soil Day <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/da897d1f-f259-431f-9ec6-2711a9d7a401/content>

¹⁸ FAO. 2024. World Soil Day <https://www.fao.org/world-soil-day/glinka-world-soil-prize/en/>

¹⁹ FAO. 2024. World Soil Day Award <https://www.fao.org/world-soil-day/wsd-award/en/>

²⁰ FAO. 2022. Global Symposium on Soils for Nutrition <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/events/detail/en/c/1309843/>

²¹ FAO. 2022. FAO Science and Innovation Forum <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/events/detail/en/c/1609920/>

²² FAO. 2022. Launch of the Global Soil Biodiversity Observatory <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/events/detail/en/c/1633884/>

²³ *Ibid* <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/events/detail/en/c/1636256/>

²⁴ FAO. 2023. Global Symposium on Soils and Water <https://www.fao.org/events/detail/symposium-soils-and-water/en>

²⁵ <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/highlights/detail/en/c/1653165/>

- organization of 29 workshops, webinars and trainings on a wide range of topics,²⁶ spanning from methodologies and quality control in soil laboratories and soil spectroscopy to digital soil mapping soil governance, fertilizer use and management or sustainable management of black soils, and salt-affected soil; and
 - twelfth session of the GSP Plenary Assembly, held in a hybrid mode from 3 to 5 June 2024.
10. The main publications released during the reporting period 2022–2024 are:
- *Soils for nutrition: the state-of-the-art* booklet;²⁷
 - *Учебное руководство - Инновационные подходы и технологии управления засолением маргинальных земель Центральной Азии*²⁸ (Training manual - Innovative approaches and technologies for management of salinisation of marginal lands in Central Asia);
 - *Country guidelines and technical specifications for global soil nutrient and nutrient budget maps*;²⁹
 - *Global Status of Black Soils* report;³⁰
 - *Regional assessment of soil laboratories capacities and needs in the Near East and North Africa region*³¹ project report;
 - *Technical guidelines on soils for nutrition: Sustainable soil management for nutrition-sensitive agriculture*;³²
 - *Addressing gender equality in sustainable soil management. A technical guide for policymakers and field practitioners*;³³
 - *Soil Atlas of Asia*;³⁴
 - ITPS Soil Letter #7 *A call to protect the world's food basket: black soils*;³⁵ and
 - ITPS Soil Letter #8 *Biochar in sustainable soil management: potential and constraints*.³⁶
11. Upcoming activities for the period 2024-2026 are:
- launch of the Global Assessment of Salt-affected Soils;
 - organization of the Global Symposium on Soil Data and Information³⁷ in a hybrid mode to be held in Nanjing, the People's Republic of China from 25 to 28 September 2024;
 - launch of the Global Soil Nutrient Budget Map (GSNmap);
 - preparation of the Global Soil Erosion Map (GSERmap);
 - continued implementation of RECISOIL and Soil Doctors initiatives;
 - organization of the Global Symposium on Soil Sealing and Urban Soils in 2025;
 - development of national soil information systems;
 - dissemination of the Fertilizer Code and training on sustainable fertilizer use;
 - implementation of WSD, Glinka World Soil Prize, and WSD Award;
 - implementation of the work plans of the seven international technical networks;
 - implementation of the Global Soil Biodiversity Observatory; and
 - development of the indicator system of the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030 and the Global Soil Health Indicator System (GSHIS), and the mechanism for countries to report to both.

²⁶ Full list of events available in the GSP Events Archive at: <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/events/en/>

²⁷ FAO. 2022. *Soils for nutrition: state of the art*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc0900en>

²⁸ FAO publication. *Учебное руководство* <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb9685ru>

²⁹ FAO. 2022. *Country guidelines and technical specifications for global soil nutrient and nutrient budget maps* – GSNmap: Phase 1. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc1717en>

³⁰ FAO. 2022. *Global status of black soils*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a363b8ca-6856-4e57-8907-fdac9b911b78/content>

³¹ Dafalla, M.S. & Caon, L. 2023. *Regional assessment of soil laboratories capacities and needs in the Near East and North Africa region*. Rome, FAO. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc4735en>

³² FAO. 2023. *Technical guidelines on soils for nutrition – Sustainable soil management for nutrition-sensitive agriculture*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/daf25621-7a13-461e-9fe5-bdaf6b04ac6a/content>

³³ FAO. 2023. *Addressing gender equality in sustainable soil management – A technical guide for policymakers and field practitioners*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/7635da9a-a0aa-4b0e-818d-a3495b378098>

³⁴ European Commission, JRC and FAO. 2023. *Soil Atlas of Asia*. Luxembourg, European Union & Rome, FAO. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc6094en>

³⁵ FAO. 2023. ITPS Soil Letters #7. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/8c387cc0-9df9-4595-ad65-8c8bc93aadfa>

³⁶ FAO. 2023. ITPS Soil Letters #8. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/cb64dd40-dc05-4bfe-9106-880a00b39532>

³⁷ FAO. 2024. *Global Symposium on Soil Information and Data*. <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/gsid24/en/>

12. In view of the steady increase of activities and especially field activities with grassroots organizations, there is a clear need to mobilize more financial resources to be able to respond to all requests from Members and partners. Therefore, the 12th Plenary Assembly has appealed to its members to increase their financial support to the GSP.

II. GSP Action Framework 2022-2030

13. The GSP Action Framework 2022-2030, building on the successful work performed by the GSP members and partners in the previous ten years, was endorsed by COAG 28.

14. The six action areas of the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030 follow a results-oriented approach and focus on addressing different global challenges through improving and maintaining soil health and replace the previous five pillars included in the ToRs of the GSP approved by the 145th Session of the FAO Council in December 2012.

15. The 12th GSP Plenary Assembly highlighted the need to revise these ToRs according to the new Action Framework. The revision of these GSP ToRs should reflect the organizational changes and guide Members and partners and the Regional Soil Partnerships in its implementation.

16. According to the GSP Rules of Procedure,³⁸ the revision of the GSP ToRs must follow an open consultation process with all Partners, facilitated by the GSP Secretariat, and requires submission to the GSP Plenary Assembly, and subsequently to COAG and Council for endorsement.

17. A robust system of GSP key performance indicators is needed to monitor the implementation of activities and progress towards defined goals and targets stated in the Action Framework. A Global Soil Health Index (GSHI) was also proposed to monitor progress towards this vision.

18. As requested at the 10th GSP Plenary Assembly, a Working Group (WG) was established to define the indicator system of the GSP Action Framework (ISAF WG) and the GSHI. Chaired by the ITPS Chair, the ISAF WG agreed to establish a GSHIS, given the complexity of creating a single soil health index, and presented its proposal for consideration at the 12th GSP Plenary Assembly.

19. The 12th GSP Plenary Assembly requested the ISAF WG to finalise the proposal of the GSHIS and the indicator system of the GSP Action Framework in consultation with the national focal points and ultimately present it for endorsement at the 13th GSP Plenary Assembly. FAO Members and GSP partners will be supported to develop their capacity to report on progress against these indicators where necessary.

III. Proposed institutionalization of the GSP as an FAO Statutory Body

20. In response to the COAG 28 recommendations,³⁹ an in-depth analysis of the implications of maintaining the GSP with all its components and creating a new COAG Sub-Committee on Soils was prepared and submitted for consideration at the 11th GSP Plenary Assembly.⁴⁰ After consideration, the Plenary Assembly requested further detailed information on the legal, governance, and financial implications. The Secretariat presented an additional detailed analysis at the 12th GSP Plenary Assembly.⁴¹

21. The 12th GSP Plenary Assembly took the detailed analysis into consideration. However, it did not reach a consensus on whether to propose to the COAG the establishment of a Sub-Committee or not, and suggested to establish a WG, including Regional Soil Partnerships, national focal points, and the ITPS, to prepare a detailed analysis on the possible mandate and terms of reference of a COAG Sub-Committee on Soils, and on how it could complement the GSP without duplication.

³⁸ FAO. Rules of Procedure of the Global Soil Partnership. 2017.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/94dcf9c9-6ca1-45f9-a564-5da746baae7e/content>

³⁹ COAG 28 REP, paragraph 24 d.) <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e9afa285-7dd8-44e7-a606-e16a6ad9181e/content>

⁴⁰ FAO. 2023. Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly 11th Session (GSPPA: XI/2023/3).

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/24b51748-bf32-47b6-acc1-fa5cb639305f/content>

⁴¹ FAO. 2024. Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly 12th Session (GSPPA: XII/2024/3)

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/2fbb8dc5-1b82-4320-880b-7e3e2f7569a8/content>

IV. Proposal of a United Nations Decade on Soil Health

22. At the 11th GSP Plenary Assembly, building on the successful achievements of the International Year of Soils (2015) and the outstanding achievements over the past 11 years by the GSP, the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand put forward a suggestion to work towards a proposal for a United Nations (UN) Decade on Soil Health, which was welcomed by the Plenary Assembly.⁴²

23. In response to the request, the Secretariat prepared an information note on the background and the process for an eventual proposal of a UN Decade on Soil Health with FAO's support, for consideration by the 12th Plenary Assembly.⁴³

24. The 12th GSP Plenary Assembly supported the proposal for the establishment of a UN Decade on Soil Health for the period 2031–2040 and requested the GSP Secretariat, in coordination with other relevant FAO units, and relevant stakeholders, under the guidance of championing countries, to start preparing a detailed proposal including lessons learned from other UN Decades, concrete actions beyond the awareness raising, timelines, and budget requirements, to be submitted to the GSP Plenary Assembly for consideration. In line with relevant FAO policies and processes, the champion country or countries should submit their proposal formally to the Director-General of FAO and for the consideration of the relevant FAO Governing Bodies, by COAG first, and, upon endorsement, by the Council, and the Conference.

⁴² *Ibid* <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a428fbd8-41c9-4e89-ae8f-574368811d8a/content>, page 8.

⁴³ FAO. 2024. Global Soil Partnership Plenary Assembly 12th Session (GSPPA: XII/2024/11) <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/214f51d6-ec15-4e41-8c34-ff2c727c1500/content>