

29th Session of the Committee on Agriculture

Written correspondence procedure – inputs from Members – English version

Item 3.5 – Report of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP)

Member name	Comments
<p><b>Argentina</b> Tuesday, 10 September, 10:10AM</p>	<p>Argentina thanks Dr Lifeng Li for preparing document COAG/2024/9. As previously stated, our country emphasizes the importance of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) as a broad and inclusive platform for addressing critical issues such as soil conservation, restoration, and health. Through its initiatives (e.g. INSOP, GLOSOLAN, and INBS), the GSP continues to demonstrate its relevance by generating knowledge, fostering technical cooperation, and facilitating the exchange of science-based information on soil health. Argentina, as a country with vast areas of black soils, is committed to all GSP initiatives and restates its firm commitment to continue collaborating in developing new activities. In this context, we welcome Thailand’s proposal to promote the Decade on Soil Health from 2031 to 2040. Finally, Argentina is of the view that the establishment of a Working Group to analyze the potential mandate of a Subcommittee on Soils does not, first, indicate consensus among Members to endorse the creation of a new body within the COAG framework, and second, does not imply a positive outcome regarding the conclusions that the Working Group may potentially reach. As we have stated previously, we believe that the GSP’s structure should not be subject to overlap or competition with new bodies addressing the same issues.</p>
<p><b>Switzerland</b> Friday, 20 September 12:58PM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The GSP is an excellent example of a very successful multi-stakeholder collaboration, and we commend the Partnership, its members and its Secretariat on their spirit of exchange and collaboration, both on global and regional level, and on the significant results achieved, in terms of recognition (such as the collaboration with the Rio conventions), awareness (such as global participation in world soil day), implementation (such as the project RECSOIL) or empowerment (such as the farmer-to-farmer training in the soil doctors programme).</li> <li>• Switzerland is committed to maintain a strong participation from all actors and a shared governance system that also spans over regional partnerships. The engagement and dynamism of the members in the Partnership is a key success feature of the GSP and needs to be fully restored.</li> <li>• This wide participation should be clearly considered when revising the ToR of the GSP as well as by the Ad-hoc Working Group that will look into possible ToR for a sub-committee on soils, yet to be agreed</li> </ul>

	<p>on. The mutual supportiveness and complementarity of the GSP and a possible sub-committee need to be ensured. A direct reporting line to the COAG of the GSP should still be maintained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With these considerations, Switzerland can support the way forward decided by the GSP plenary assembly regarding the possible creation of a sub-committee on soils.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Australia</b> Friday, 20 September 2:51PM</p>	<p>Australia appreciates the work of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) Secretariat to produce the additional papers on the implications of the proposed COAG Sub-Committee on Soils.</p> <p>We note the proposed COAG Sub-Committee on Soils does not currently meet the relevant provisions governing the establishment of a statutory body under Resolution 13/97 of the FAO Conference, noting the benchmark for the establishment of new bodies is quite high.</p> <p>We welcome the creation of the Working Group to discuss the possible mandate and TORs of the proposed COAG Sub-Committee on Soils to understand how it would complement the GSP without duplication.</p> <p>We look forward to hearing more on the processes envisaged to establish this working group, its modalities and timeframes to undertake its role.</p>
<p><b>Peru</b> Friday, 20 September 4:58PM</p>	<p>Peru conveys its regards to all Global Soil Partnership (GSP) members. It recognizes the vital importance of soil as a natural resource that is essential in ensuring food security for present and future generations, and its critical role in addressing current environmental challenges and combating soil degradation. However, we also know the land available to meet these demands will not increase. On the contrary, the natural resource base is diminishing because of land degradation.</p> <p>As observers and members of the Global Soil Partnership, we acknowledge its work and can attest to its progress and efforts in strengthening sustainable soil management. It achieves this by implementing various measures and actions through its networks and programmes (GLOSOLAN, INBS, INSOILFER and INSAS, among others)<sup>1</sup>. We also recognize the importance of its role in addressing current environmental challenges and ensuring food security. Likewise, given Peru's significant variability in soils and climatic conditions, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting and cooperating with the GSP's initiatives in sustainable soil management.</p>

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<sup>1</sup> GLOSOLAN: Global Soil Laboratory Network

INBS: International Network of Black Soils

INSOILFER: International Network on Soil Fertility and Fertilizers

INSAS: International Network of Salt-affected Soils

	<p>In this regard, concerning the institutionalization of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP), we support <b><i>maintaining its current structure</i></b> to avoid destabilizing or disrupting the progress made so far. On the contrary, it is crucial to provide the GSP with predictability and steadiness, enabling it to conduct the activities mandated by its members and, most importantly, to ensure greater stability and continuity in sustaining the progress achieved to date.</p> <p>Finally, we endorse <b><i>Thailand's proposal to establish a United Nations Decade on Soil Health from 2031 to 2040</i></b>. This initiative will emphasize the importance of sustainable soil management in addressing current environmental challenges and soil degradation and its crucial role in maintaining global food security.</p>
<p><b>Canada</b> Monday, 23 September 11:35AM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada welcomes the reports of the 11th and 12th Sessions of the GSP Plenary Assembly.</li> <li>• Canada welcomes the progress made on the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030 and is supportive of the identified actions and targets focused on addressing through the improvement and enhancement of soil health the global challenges of food insecurity, climate change, pollution, land degradation, and the loss of biodiversity. Through this approach the GSP will increase the visibility and relevance of soils globally.</li> <li>• Canada acknowledges the need to update the ToRs of the GSP to reflect the structure of the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030.</li> <li>• With respect to the invitation to 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 finalized, Canada is supportive: robust indicators are needed to monitor progress.</li> <li>• Canada remains skeptical of the need for the proposed COAG Sub-Committee on Soils, with concerns over duplication of effort and resources, mandate, governance, and finances. Canada understands and supports the need to increase the visibility and relevance of soils in the work of the FAO; however, it remains unclear how a COAG Sub-Committee on Soils would facilitate this objective while maintaining the GSP in its current structure. Canada welcomes the establishment of a working group to complete the analysis on the possible mandate and ToRs of the proposed COAG Sub-Committee on Soils.</li> <li>• Canada agrees with, and will act on as appropriate, the remaining invitations to the Committee to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ f) <i>reiterate</i> 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;</li> <li>○ g) <i>encourage</i> Members and resource partners to support the development and implementation of the GLOSOB for measuring and monitoring soil biodiversity;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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; and</li> <li>○ i) <i>welcome</i> 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</li> </ul>
<p><b>European Union and its 27 Member States</b> Monday, 23 September 4:16PM</p>	<p>Madam/Mr Chair,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.</li> <li>2. We welcome the intense activities and the progress of the Global Soil Partnership towards promoting sustainable soil management at a global level. This resonates with the goals of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy and also the ambitions reflected in the EU’s Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.</li> <li>3. We agree that healthy soils and their sustainable management are essential to ensure the resilience of the agricultural sector supported by agroecological practices and other innovative approaches, in order to ensure food security and also to meet the SDGs and the international commitments on biodiversity loss and climate change. Thus we recognise that GSP actions, implemented in reinforced coordination with other international efforts, are a fundamental element in addressing present-day global challenges, and these must be ever more strongly supported and developed.</li> <li>4. We would like to emphasise the need for enhanced coordination on monitoring at the regional and global level.</li> <li>5. We acknowledge the need to update the GSP’s Terms of Reference (ToRs), and we request that the GSP Secretariat prepare a revised version, following an open consultation with the GSP’s Partners, and that it submit this for endorsement by the GSP Plenary Assembly, then by the COAG at its 30th Session, and finally by the Council.</li> <li>6. We call on the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) and the GSP Secretariat to facilitate the prompt finalisation of the Global Soil Health Indicator System (GSHIS) in order to enable the monitoring of progress and encourage Members to contribute to its reporting as soon as the system has been finalised.</li> <li>7. We 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 of the possible mandate and ToRs of the</li> </ol>

	<p>proposed COAG Sub-Committee on Soils, and on how it could complement the GSP without duplicating its activities.</p> <p>8. We invite the GSP and FAO to meet the high environmental ambitions set out in the European Green Deal, scaling these up to a global level.</p> <p>Thank you, Madam/Mr Chair.</p>
<p><b>United States of America</b>  Wednesday, 25  September  3:56PM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We appreciate FAO’s regular reporting on the Global Soil Partnership (GSP). The United States welcomes the progress that has been made on the implementation of the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030.</li> <li>• The United States remains an active member of the Global Soil Laboratory Network (GLOSOLAN) and supports the GSP call for Member to facilitate the implementation of the “Resolution for International Exchange of Soil Samples for Research Purposes under the Global Soil Laboratory Network” that was endorsed in the 27th Session of COAG (2022) and supports GSP efforts to promote the organization of national and international laboratory proficiency tests.</li> <li>• We support the formal institutionalization of a laboratory proficiency testing program administered by an organization with the requisite credibility to implement a program that is both impartial and technically sound, as well as the Recarbonization of Global Agricultural Soils (RECISOIL) and the Global Soil Doctors Program.</li> <li>• We support deliberate, transparent efforts to identify needed changes to the GSP TORs to reflect the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030. The United States does not currently see the need to create a working group to provide detailed analysis of a proposed COAG Sub-Committee on Soils at this time and suggests that the matter be removed from consideration with the understanding that it may be reconsidered in the future</li> <li>• Finally, the United States is willing to evaluate and discuss a proposal for a UN Decade of Soil Health for the period 2031-2040 should one be developed and submitted to the next GSP Plenary Assembly for consideration and, upon approval, submitted for consideration at the 30th session of COAG in 2025.  Thank you.</li> </ul>