



NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

newsletter

LAND RESOURCES

The launch of the Global Soil Partnership: Next steps



A THREE-DAY MEETING HELD AT FAO Headquarters in Rome 7-9 September 2011 launched the Global Soil Partnership. The meeting attracted 200 participants from across 120 organizations, in addition to country representation from FAO's Permanent Representatives.

"Soil is an essential component of the world's production systems and ecosystems," FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf noted to participants. "But it is also a fragile and non-renewable resource. It is very easily degraded and it is slow, difficult and expensive to regenerate."

In 1982 FAO adopted a World Soil Charter, which addressed the basic principles and guidelines for sustainable soil management, yet FAO's Director-General noted "... there have been long delays in applying the Charter in many countries and regions of the world. New efforts to implement it must be made as soon as possible."

According to Ronald Vargas, Technical Officer in FAO's Land and Water Division, "Soil science has been very low on the radar in the international development communities for the past 15 years or so, but in recent years we've seen soil science back again on the international agenda. This renewed interest is due to several factors, including the debate about climate change, the increased interest in carbon sequestration in soils, and growing concerns about halting soil and land degradation. The Partnership hopes to capitalize on this increased attention

by pooling our knowledge, contacts and expertise."

The Global Soil Partnership intends to create a network charged with building capacity and exchanging knowledge and technologies for the sustainable and productive management of soil resources through an inter-governmental mechanism. The Partnership plans to create strong linkages between scientists and farmers across countries and regions and to propose national and international soil quality best practices, standards, guidelines and monitoring systems.

World soil institutions together with FAO member countries are currently nominating members of a Technical Working Group that will be charged with drafting terms of reference for the establishment of the new Global Soil Partnership. These terms of reference for the new Partnership will be discussed throughout early 2012 by FAO's governing bodies and stakeholders.



To learn more:

[Global Soil Partnership brochure](#)
[Report of the GSP launch meeting](#)
[Press release: Global Soil Partnership for Food Security launched at FAO](#)

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Natural Resources and Environment Newsletter



WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE of the Natural Resources and Environment Newsletter.

In this issue, we look at the launch of the new Global Soil Partnership here at FAO Headquarters this past September and examine the next steps.

We also look report on FAO's collaboration with NASA to create an international fire-reporting system, the Global Fire Information Management System, which delivers key data to remote regions of developing countries.

Finally, we introduce FAO-MOSAICC, an integrated package of models designed to carry out climate change impact assessment at the national level.

To learn more:

Natural Resources Management and Environment Department
 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

www.fao.org/nr

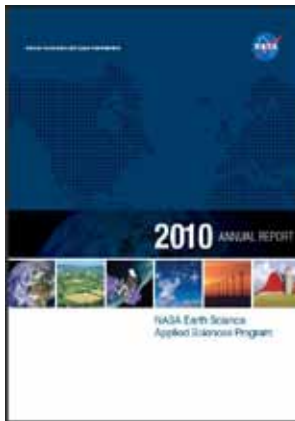
LAND RESOURCES

Collaboration with NASA to create an international fire-reporting system

FAO WORKS CLOSELY WITH MANY INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS, including the United States' National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The recent NASA Earth Science Applied Sciences Program publication highlights this collaboration in one specific program designed to deliver crucial information about active fires and hotspots to natural resource managers and firefighters in some of the world's most remote areas.

Many developing countries lack the resources and the coordinated fire response policies to effectively fight fires in the most remote areas. The Global Fire Information Management System was designed with these challenges in mind, providing natural resource managers access to timely satellite information that can be accessed in near-real time from a laptop or mobile device.

Active since 2010, the Global Fire Information Management System provides near real time as well as historical fire locations in various formats, generates daily fire maps and images, and provides country-specific reports, which are then made available to all potential users.



This system is ideal for delivering timely information to local and emergency response teams, who can then use this data for more accurate analysis and a better coordination of fire response teams.

According to John Latham, Senior Environment Officer in FAO's Land and Water Division, the Global Fire Information Management System is such an important tool because it provides essential data to its users while the fires are still burning. "Natural resource managers are often challenged by incomplete information that makes analysis difficult. The Global Fire Information Management System is so important because it can deliver essential data to users in remote areas of developing countries while the fires are still burning."

The Global Fire Information Management System is freely accessible to all users from its web site. Information is available in English, French and Spanish.

To learn more:

[NASA Earth Science Applied Sciences Program: 2010 Annual Report \(12 MB\)](#)

[Global Fire Information Management System web site](#)

[Global Fire Information Management System: Transitioning to an operational system at UN FAO](#)

CLIMATE CHANGE



FAO-MOSAICC: Climate change impact assessment on agriculture

INFORMATION ON THE IMPACTS of climate change is fundamental for designing policies and making informed decisions in all areas. With this in mind, FAO in partnership with other specialized European Institutions, has developed an integrated package of models to carry out climate change impact assessment studies at national level. The "FAO-MOSAICC" (MOdelling System for Agricultural Impacts of Climate Change) package combines different models in an integrated modelling system.

Although it can be used for a wide range of analyses - climate change impacts on water resources, crop yields, etc. - the ultimate objective of MOSAICC is to assess the effect of changing crop yields on national economies and which adaptation strategies would be most adequate to reduce the potentially adverse effects of climate change on national food security.

To learn more:
[FAO-MOSAICC](#)