

IZMIR COMMUNIQUÉ FOR DEVELOPMENT WITH PARTICIPANTS

Izmir (Turkey), 18 June 2015

We, the Eurasian soil partnership focal points and representatives of 9 countries from Eurasia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russian Federation Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan), as well as representatives of ICARDA and CAREC, participated in the Eurasian Soil Partnership Consultation workshop held in Izmir, Turkey on 16-18 June 2015. The meeting was organized and supported by the GSP Secretariat and FAO sub-regional office in Ankara together with the host, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Livestock (MOFAL) of Turkey, and was conducted in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Global Soil Partnership building on the results of previous meetings held in Samarkand (September 2014) and Antalya (October 2014). As representatives of the Eurasian soil partnerships, we have duly developed this communiqué to be shared with stakeholders in our countries and with the representatives of Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus and Turkmenistan who are absent from this current meeting, for their agreement and active contribution to the partnership.

Recognizing the vital importance of sustainable soil management as a basis for sustainable production systems worldwide, for the production of food, fiber, fuel, fodder, timber and energy, and essential for achieving food security and enhancing resilience to climate change.

Aware of the great potential and diversity of soils in the region and the experiences gained over generations in managing the soil resources for a multitude of goods and ecosystem services - provisioning, regulating, socio-cultural and supporting services.

Conscious:

- that soils have been neglected for many years in the development agenda and are being increasingly degraded due to inappropriate land use and management practices and inadequate attention at all levels;
- that soils are under increasing pressure due to population growth, competition over limited resources, unsustainable management practices, urban expansion and impacts of climate change;
- that the area that is reaching the limits of its productive capacity is fast increasing limiting our capacity to meet increasing demands on this precious resource
- that costs of restoring degraded soils are prohibitive compared to the costs of ensuring soil conservation and sustainable use.
- Conscious also of the need for enhanced awareness, education, extension, knowledge and information, as well as policy and institutional support for prioritizing soil protection, sustainable soil management and restoration in the development agenda.

Calling to attention that soil degradation and problem soils are a serious process that is affecting the soils in the region through various processes, in particular, salinization, erosion and landslides, soil organic matter, nutrient and biodiversity depletion, soil acidification, compaction as well as soil sealing through urbanization.

Committed therefore to increasing the area of land in agriculture and forestry under sustainable management” in line with indicator 15.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Considering that the close cooperation and joint efforts garnered through a sub-regional soil partnership towards promoting sustainable soil management and restoring degraded lands is expected to make a significant contribution to achieving multiple economic, social and

environmental benefits at all levels and especially for the direct beneficiaries, the farmers, livestock keepers and other land users.

Also noting the need for integrated natural resources and ecosystems management for the responsible and coordinated management of soil, water, forest and biological resources, and for responsible governance over land resources, as a means to sustain both the productivity of agricultural production landscapes and the flow of ecosystems services.

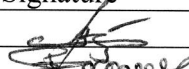






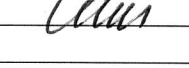
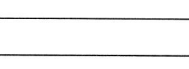
Appreciating the contribution of governments, academic and research organizations, non-governmental and civil society organizations, donors and regional initiatives in supporting soil protection, management and restoration and calling upon them to join, collaborate in and actively support the Eurasian Soil Partnership towards achieving an effective transformation from unsustainable to sustainable soil management.

We, the participants and representatives of 9 countries from the region participating in the Eurasian Soil Partnership (EASP) consultation workshop (Izmir, June 2015) hereby:

- Acknowledge the important role of the designated focal points of the Eurasian soil partnership for effective communication and cooperation with the EASP and Global Soil Partnership (GSP) Secretariats, with all partners and stakeholders in each country and with other country members of the EASP for effective implementation of the regional plan of action.
- Agree to the finalization and approval of a five year rolling Regional implementation plan for the Eurasian Soil Partnership as a means for promoting wide uptake of sustainable soil management and restoration of degraded soils in the region and for mobilizing adequate policy, institutional, technical and financial support to that end.
- Further agree to the priorities, activities, responsibilities, timing, proposed budget allocations and expected outcomes, as elaborated in the Eurasian Soil Partnership Implementation Plan for the initial five year period.
- Call to attention that increasing investment in the promotion of sustainable soil management is a pre-condition for achieving sustainable development through regional partners, programmes and financing, such as CACILM-2, but especially through national budget allocations, human resources, knowledge development, technology transfer, databases and equipment to support the execution of actions and priorities identified herewith.
- Acknowledge the need for a participatory, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder process for implementing the Regional implementation plan at all levels.
- Agree that the development of this plan will be facilitated by the Steering Committee (SC) with support from the Secretariat and working groups of the 5 GSP Pillars of action, ensuring a very inclusive process where all interested parties are invited to register as partners and all partners in the region are encouraged to play an active role.
- Further agree to consolidate the Eurasian Soil Partnership by renewing and revitalising the Steering Committee (SC), under the overall guidance of the designated GSP Focal Points and supported by FAO through the GSP Secretariat

- Agree that the EASP should meet once a year and should convene virtual electronic consultations, as and when required
- Recognize the need to monitor the progress and impacts through execution of this Eurasian soil implementation plan in terms of achievements including area under sustainable soil management, area of degraded lands restored to productive purposes and their contributions to achieving food and nutritional security, sustaining a range of ecosystem services, enhancing resilience of land users, wider populations and ecosystems, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable economic development.
- Further recognize the need for monitoring and assessment and communication during the implementation and to share results of the plan to guide the execution and regular updating of the plan in accordance with other development efforts and commitments and as part of a longer term development process
- Consider, for the implementation of the EASP Regional implementation plan, the establishment, under Article 14 of the constitution of FAO, of a “Regional Eurasian Soil Commission” and drafting of an agreement outlining its organization, objectives and functions, geographical scope, financial regulations and administration.
- Further consider, in this context, the establishment of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) (composed of the members of Working Groups on Pillars), to provide technical and scientific advice to the soil commission and its work supplemented by any other specific working groups.
- Finally, we hereby commit to making the International Year of Soils 2015 and the World Soil Day each year on 5 December 2015, a successful foundation for advocating “healthy soils for healthy life” in the region and especially to continue this momentum beyond 2015.

IZMIR Communiqué (Izmir 18 June 2015)

Country	Function	Signature
Armenia,	SAMVEL SAHAKYAN VARANES	
Azerbaijan	SEYMUR SAFARLI MoA	
Kazakhstan	Bazilejanov Ezbolat	
Moldova	Head of Department Min. Agr.	
Russian Federation	PO, FOCAL POINT, EXEC. SECRET	
Tajikistan	Alanazar Abizov	
Turkey	Bulent Sonmez	
Ukraine	Deputy Focal Point	
Uzbekistan	Focal Point	
Belarus		
Georgia		
Kyrgyzstan		

Annex on Working groups (countries and GSP focal points)