

OPENING THE 2015 YEAR OF SOILS

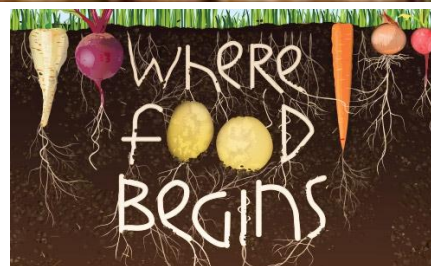
2015 has been declared the [International Year of Soils](#) by the 68th UN General Assembly. The IYS aims to be a platform for raising awareness of the importance of soils for food security and essential eco-system functions.

The campaign of the International Year has been launched 5 December 2014 by the FAO Director-General in Rome headquarters, and at events in New York and Santiago de Chile. The campaign underlines that healthy soils are related to positive effects on food security and nutrition, climate change adaptation and mitigation, essential ecosystem services, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. *Healthy soils for a healthy life* is the motto for the International Year of Soils which aims to promote awareness on the fundamental roles of soils for human life. Maintaining healthy soils required for feeding the growing population of the world and meeting their needs for biomass (energy), fibre, fodder, and other products is at the core of the guiding principles for the establishment of a Global Soil Partnership.

The Global Soil Partnership will support the process leading to the adoption of sustainable development goals for soils. It will contribute to environmental wellbeing through, for example, preventing soil erosion and degradation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting carbon sequestration and promoting sustainable use of agricultural inputs for soil health and ecosystems management. It will equally contribute to human wellbeing and social equity through improved use and governance of soil resources, finding alternatives to soil degrading practices through participatory experiential processes, and being sensitive to issues of gender and rights of indigenous peoples.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Global Soil Partnership should address five main pillars of action:

- Promote sustainable management of soil resources for soil protection, conservation and sustainable productivity
- Encourage investment, technical cooperation, policy, education awareness and extension in soil
- Promote targeted soil research and development focusing on identified gaps and priorities and synergies with related productive, environmental and social development actions
- Enhance the quantity and quality of soil data and information: data collection (generation), analysis, validation, reporting, monitoring and integration with other disciplines
- Harmonization of methods, measurements and indicators for the sustainable management and protection of soil resources



On the Soils Portal managed by FAO, information about objectives and lines of action of the initiative is available. The Portal also includes useful documents and materials like the [Soil Map of the World](#) produced on 1961 by UNESCO and FAO through a world-wide collaboration between soil scientists. More materials on world's knowledge of soil types will be produced and published in the Soils Portal during the Year.

The International Year of Soils will involve governments, institutions and other stakeholders at various levels. These partners could come from any kind of international, regional and national institutions/organizations working on soils (Governmental Organizations, universities, civil institutions, research centres, soil science societies, UN agencies, NGOs, private companies, farmer associations and donors.

To know more

[FAO Soils Portal](#)

[FAO International Year of Soils](#)

[Soil Map of the World](#)

[FAO World Soil Charter](#)

[Materials for Global Soil Partnership](#)

[European Soil Portal – Atlas de Suelos de América Latina](#)

[European Soil Portal – Soil Atlas for Africa](#)

