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سلطنة عمان
وزارة الثروة الزراعية
والسمكية وموارد المياه

Sustainable Soil Management in the Near East and North Africa Region

AGENDA

7-8 March 2023
Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman



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A two-day regional event on sustainable soil management in the Near East and North Africa region will be held March 7-8, 2023 in Muscat, Oman. During the first day a declaration reaffirming the importance of sustainable soil management as well as soil health for the NENA region will be presented for endorsement. During the second day the regional NENA Soil Partnership meeting will be held partially in person for the first time since the pandemic. During this meeting, countries will be invited to review the progress made towards sustainable soil management in the region and to propose their action plan for 2030.

The Minister of Agriculture of the Sultanate of Oman, the FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa and the head of the League of Arab States will open the event that will be moderated by the FAO office in Oman.

The objective of the event are to:

- ◇ Raise awareness of the importance of soils in the NENA region;
- ◇ Present the status of soils in the NENA region;
- ◇ Identify the regional priorities and needs, and define the regional actions to take;
- ◇ Endorse the “Muscat Declaration on Sustainable Soil Management in the NENA region”;
- ◇ Improve partnership and cooperation between countries and regional stakeholders; and
- ◇ Explore opportunities for mobilizing financial resources for sustainable soil management.

The event will be held in a hybrid format to ensure the participation of as many countries and stakeholders as possible in the region. The Ministers of Agriculture from the NENA Soil partnership countries have been invited to nominate their senior representatives to attend virtually or in person. The meeting also extended an invitation to the national coordinators of the Technical Cooperation Programme project on “Capacity development for the sustainable management of soil resources in the NENA region to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the national focal points and all GSP partners from the NENA region.

Expected outcomes

Through the participation of government representatives from all countries within the region, the event is expected to result in the adoption of the “Muscat Declaration on Sustainable Soil Management in the NENA region”. This timely declaration is meant to foster the establishment of a common ground for the NENA region to translate political will into coordinated and concrete actions aimed at scaling up sustainable soil management and improving soil health within the region.

The event advocates for the safeguarding and improvement of soil resources in the region by presenting national action plans on soils, with the aim of increasing awareness on the status of soils and its main threats within the region. Additionally, it includes two panel discussions on resource mobilization to encourage potential financial donors to invest in soils.

Agenda

Tuesday, 7 March 2023

8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:30	<p>Opening</p> <p>Dr. Hamdan Al Wahaibi, <i>Director General of Agriculture Research Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Sultanate of Oman</i></p> <p>Mr Abdulhakim R M Elwaer, <i>Assistant Director General, Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa</i></p> <p>Mr. Mubarak Abdelrahman Abdalla Ali, <i>Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, League of Arab States</i></p>
9:30 - 9:40	<p>The Global Soil Partnership and the NENA Soil Partnership</p> <p>Mr. Rachid Moussadek, <i>Chair of the NENA Soil Partnership</i></p>
9:40 - 9:45	<p>The support of the FAO's regional office for the Near East and North Africa to regional collaborations on soils</p> <p>Ms. Theodora Fetsi, <i>FAO</i></p>
9:45 - 10:00	<p>The importance of healthy soils for water scarcity and climate change in the Near East and North Africa</p> <p>Mr. Ronald Vargas, <i>Global Soil Partnership, FAO</i></p>
10:00	Video on the 10th birthday of the GSP – a decade of achievements
10:00- 10:30	Group Photo and coffee break
10:30 – 12:30	<p>The Muscat Communiqué for Sustainable Soil Management in the NENA region</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Ronald Vargas, <i>Global Soil Partnership, FAO</i></p>
12:30 – 13:00	Adoption of the Communiqué
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 14:30	<p>Keynotes on sustainable soil management in the NENA region:</p> <p>Data management and mapping in the NENA region (10') - Mr. Talal Darwish, <i>international consultant FAO</i></p> <p>The status of soil laboratories in the NENA region (10') - Mr. Mohamed Dafalla, <i>international consultant FAO</i></p> <p>Questions and answers (10')</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Dr. Malik Al Wardy, Sultan Qaboos University</i></p>
14:30 – 15:30	<p>Panel Discussion on how to enhance investment and partnership on sustainable soil management in the NENA region</p> <p>Mubarak Abdelrahman Abdalla Ali, <i>Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, League of Arab States</i></p> <p>Ibrahim Daoud, <i>Soil Conservation Expert, Lands and Water Uses Department, Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands</i></p> <p>Habiba Khiari, <i>program officer, Land Degradation Neutrality programme Global Mechanism, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification</i></p> <p>Rémi Tier, <i>Lead of Agriculture and Food Global Practice, World Bank</i></p> <p>Maude Veyret-Picot, <i>Technical Officer – Regional Lead for Africa and the Near East, GEF Coordination Unit, FAO</i></p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Ronald Vargas, <i>Global Soil Partnership, FAO</i></p>
15:30	Closure of the first day meeting
18:00	Reception dinner

Agenda

Wednesday, 8 March 2023 - 8th NENA Soil Partnership meeting

9:00 – 9:10	Opening remarks Mr. Rachid Moussadek, <i>Chair of the NENA Soil Partnership</i> Mr. Ronald Vargas, <i>Global Soil Partnership, FAO</i>
9:10 – 9:20	Tour the table and group picture
9:20 – 10:00	Summary of the conclusions of the 7th NENA Soil Partnership meeting (March 2022) and its extraordinary meeting (August 2022) - how to implement the GSP Action Framework 2022-2030 Mr. Ronald Vargas, <i>Global Soil Partnership, FAO</i>
10:00- 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30 - 13:00	TCP RAB 3802: how to turn National Action Plans into concrete actions Recap of the main conclusions and actions of the National Action Plans Country presentations (5 min each) followed by an open discussion on the following topics: Target 1 (T1): Strengthen Soil Policies and Legislation Target 2 (T2): Development of National Soil Information System (NSIS) Target 3 (T3): Realize the soil organic carbon sequestration potential of the country. Target 4 (T4): Reclaim salt-affected soils and improve their productivity. Target 5 (T5): Support and invest in soil laboratories. Ms. Isabel Luotto, <i>Global Soil Partnership, FAO</i>
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:00	Financial resources mobilization Global Environment Facility Maude Veyret-Picot, <i>Technical Officer – Regional Lead for Africa and the Near East, GEF Coordination Unit, FAO</i> The Resilient Land and resources Management project Ammar Salahat, <i>Director General of Agricultural Land, Palestine</i> Morocco's experience on project preparation and financial resource mobilization Mr. Rachid Moussadek, <i>Chair of the NENA Soil Partnership and GSP focal point for Morocco</i> Q&A Mr. Ronald Vargas, <i>Global Soil Partnership, FAO</i>
15:00 – 15:30	Improving the communication between the GSP national focal points and FAO country offices and Ministerial offices responsible for the management of soil resources Status and challenges Open discussion Moderator: Isabel Luotto, <i>Global Soil Partnership, FAO</i>
15:30 – 16:00	The NENA Soil Partnership work plan 2023 and governance Mr. Ronald Vargas, <i>Global Soil Partnership, FAO</i> Mr. Rachid Moussadek, <i>Chair of the NENA Soil Partnership</i>
16:00	Closure of the meeting



The Global Soil Partnership (GSP) is a globally recognized mechanism established in 2012. Our mission is to position soils in the Global Agenda through collective action. Our key objectives are to promote Sustainable Soil Management (SSM) and improve soil governance to guarantee healthy and productive soils, and support the provision of essential ecosystem services towards food security and improved nutrition, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable development.

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