



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



3 June | 12:00 13:00

Plenary Hall

The Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS)

*Building a resilient food system grounded in
diverse, nutritious, and climate adapted crops
grown in healthy, fertile soils.*

Organizers

The U.S. Department of State



GLOBAL SOIL PARTNERSHIP | 12th Plenary Assembly

03-05 June 2024





BACKGROUND

This event is dedicated to discussing the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS), a transformative movement aimed at creating a resilient food system through the promotion of diverse, nutritious, and climate-adapted crops grown in healthy, fertile soils.

VACS addresses some of the most pressing challenges facing the global food system today. Over 700 million people are undernourished, with widespread child stunting and nutrient deficiencies in developing countries. Additionally, food demand is projected to increase significantly, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it is expected to rise by more than 50 percent by 2050. At the same time, climate change and land degradation are leading to decreasing crop yields, exacerbating food insecurity and malnutrition.

VACS seeks to mitigate these challenges by promoting sustainable land use and the cultivation of opportunity crops. These are crops with significant unrealized potential to improve food and nutrition security, particularly in the context of climate change. Many of these opportunity crops are nutrient-rich traditional and indigenous crops that have historically been underinvested in, yet they hold the key to enhancing food resilience and dietary diversity.

OPPORTUNITY CROP

A crop with great unrealized potential to improve food and nutrition security in the context of climate change. Most are nutrient-rich traditional and indigenous crops that have suffered historically from underinvestment.

Many of these crops also have the potential to improve soil health. VACS is promoting a holistic, integrated approach to crops and soils. By supporting decision support systems that ensure crops are planted on suitable soils with management systems adapted to the unique crop x soil combination, and breeding for crops that improve soil health, VACS will simultaneously increase productivity and sustainability while improving human nutrition.



The speakers will provide insights into various aspects of VACS, including sustainable land use practices, the benefits of opportunity crops, and innovative agricultural practices. The discussion will also cover the VACS Investment Framework, which outlines interventions at global, national, subnational, landscape, farm, and field levels to support sustainable agriculture and food security.

The VACS Integrated Approach

The Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS) employs an integrated approach to build resilient food systems through sustainable land use, diverse crop management, and innovative agricultural practices. This framework includes global interventions like developing land use planning tools and advancing fertilizer efficiency and technology, national and subnational efforts to inform policies and build R&D capacity, and landscape, farm, and field level initiatives to provide tailored recommendations, enhance crop suitability information, and support precision farming. Collectively, these interventions aim to empower stakeholders with knowledge and tools for sustainable agriculture and improved food security.

AGENDA

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| 12:00 | Opening Remarks (Video Message)
Dr Cary Fowler – The U.S. Special Envoy for Global Food Security |
| 12:05 | Opening Remarks
Mr Maximo Torero – Chief Economist, UN-FAO |
| 12:10 | VACS Movement
Mr Jeff Herrick – Senior Advisor, The US Department of State, Office of Global Food Security |
| 12:25 | Nutritional Aspects of VACS
Ms Lynnette Neufeld – Director, Food and Nutrition Division (ESN), UN-FAO |
| 12:30 | ISRIC – World Soil information
Mr Rik Van den Bosch - Director, ISRIC World Soil Information |
| 12:40 | VACS on the ground
Mr Axel Schmidt – Science and Research Advisor, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) |
| 12:50 | Discussion & Q/A |
| 13:00 | Closing |

*The event will be webcast at: fao.org/webcast/home/en/item/6583/
A light lunch will be served following the event.*



Useful Links

- [The US Department of State Office of Global Food Security](#)
- [Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils](#)
- [VACS – SoilFER](#)
- [VACS Champions](#)
- [VACS Research Agenda](#)

