

## SUMMARY OF THE GLOBAL SOIL WEEK 2017: 22-24 MAY 2017

Global Soil Week 2017 (GSW 2017) convened from 22-24 May 2017 in Berlin, Germany, and addressed the theme, ‘Catalysing SDG Implementation through a Land and Soil Review.’ GSW 2017 aimed to contribute to the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by looking at the subset of SDGs that are under review by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2017 through the perspective of land and soils, thereby providing an integrating perspective across the SDGs. The meeting, which was attended by nearly 300 participants, developed a set of policy messages as input to the HLPF scheduled to convene in July 2017. GSW 2017 was co-hosted by 22 partners representing governments, intergovernmental and scientific organizations and civil society networks.

Following the opening plenary, participants held three thematic workshops to explore the following topics: Sustaining and upscaling achievements of sustainable land management (SLM) initiatives, addressing in particular the need for integrated approaches and upscaling successful soil rehabilitation practices; Right to (defend) land - strengthening accountability at the local level through thematic reviews, addressing in particular the principle of inclusion as a necessary step to raise accountability; and Protecting land resources for shared prosperity, addressing in particular the principle of universality and the question of limited available land and soil resources. The workshops were informed by the experiences of some of the 44 countries that will present voluntary national reviews at this year’s HLPF, and by expert contributions.

The meeting included an experimental “Thematic Review LAB” on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning which piloted contributions to the seven SDGs – 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), 5 (gender equality) 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 14 (life below water) and 17 (partnerships) – that will be the focus of the HLPF’s thematic review in 2017. The LAB aimed to, *inter alia*: identify progress, gaps and synergies in implementing the 2030 Agenda; synthesize knowledge, and discuss tradeoffs and synergies in SDG implementation; make proposals on the use of different data methods in the review process; discuss concrete policy actions needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda; and highlight opportunities for further collaboration and partnerships among UN agencies, national and international organizations, scientific institutions and civil society.

On Wednesday morning, participants discussed five draft policy messages to the HLPF that emerged from the first two days of discussions and proposed additional changes to be included in the final conference outcome. Participants were also

invited to contribute to and endorse a longer summary of the GSW 2017 outcomes to be made available on the conference website ([www.globalsoilweek.org](http://www.globalsoilweek.org)).

During the final plenary session, a high-level panel discussion reflected on the methodology introduced at GSW 2017 and provided further inputs on how to enhance the usefulness of such preparatory processes to the overall monitoring of the SDGs.

Closing the meeting, the co-moderators thanked the German government for offering to continue its support for the GSW and announced that the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) will hand over coordination of the GSW platform and process to TMG. Töpfer, Müller, Gaßner – Think Tank for Sustainability (TMG), under the leadership of Klaus Töpfer, TMG founding director and Alexander Müller, TMG Managing Director. During a brief ceremony, Klaus Töpfer, GSW initiator, received the Distinguished Service Award from the International Union of Soil Scientists (IUSS) for his work in fostering the recognition of soils in development policy at various levels, particularly in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GLOBAL SOIL WEEK

**GSW 2012:** The first Global Soil Week convened in Berlin, Germany from 18-22 November 2012 as a forum for interactive exchange and dialogue among stakeholders from science, government, business and civil society regarding their land and soil-related experience and expertise, and to develop plans of action for sustainable land and soil management and governance. The meeting also initiated follow-up actions on land and soil-related decisions made at the UN Convention on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20, in June 2012.

### IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History Of The Global Soil Week . . . . .	1
Report Of The Meeting . . . . .	
Opening Plenary: An Integrated Perspective	
Across the SDGs - How Land and Soils Will Contribute to Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity . . . .	2
Thematic Review Lab: Synthesis Session . . . . .	3
Closing Plenary: Finding Innovative Ways to Approach the Follow-Up and Review of Soil and Land – Lessons Learned from this Pilot Thematic Review . . . . .	4
Upcoming Meetings . . . . .	6

**GSW 2013:** The second Global Soil Week took place in Berlin, Germany from 27-31 October 2013, on the theme 'Losing Ground.' Discussions were organized around four thematic threads: transforming global material and nutrient cycles; upscaling sustainable land management and soil engineering at the landscape level; integrating land and soils in the 2030 Agenda; and responsible land governance.

**BRAZILIAN SOIL GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE:** The conference took place from 25-27 March 2015 in Brasilia, Brazil and produced the 'Letter from Brasilia' to provide input for policy makers on national soil governance.

**GSW 2015:** The third Global Soil Week convened from 19-23 April 2015 in Berlin, Germany under the theme 'Soil. The Substance of Transformation.' Taking place during the International Year of Soils 2015 and just months prior to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the discussions focused on the role of sustainable soil management and responsible land governance in realizing multiple SDGs and contributing to a new climate agreement.

**HIGH-LEVEL EVENT "TOWARDS THEMATIC REVIEWS FOR AN INTEGRATED FOLLOW-UP & REVIEW OF THE 2030 AGENDA":** Held from 7-8 July 2016 in New York, US, this event highlighted how global thematic reviews of progress, with a focus on natural resources such as land and soil, can best support an integrated and inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

**1ST AFRICAN SOIL SEMINAR:** This inaugural regional meeting of African soil and land management stakeholders convened from 28-30 November 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya, on the theme, 'Soil Restoration for Achieving the 2063 and 2030 Agendas in Africa: Linking Global Ambitions to Local Needs.' The meeting was inspired by inputs from African stakeholders at the GSW 2015, who expressed strong interest in creating a regional platform for sustainable soil management and responsible land governance in Africa. The seminar concluded with a set of key messages to be considered at GSW 2017, as part of preparations for the HLPF on Sustainable Development in July 2017.

## REPORT OF THE MEETING

### **OPENING PLENARY: AN INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVE ACROSS THE SDGS - HOW LAND AND SOILS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ERADICATING POVERTY AND PROMOTING PROSPERITY**

**OPENING STATEMENTS:** Global Soil Week 2017 (GSW 2017) opened on Monday morning, 22 May, with opening statements. This session was co-moderated by Ivonne Lobos Alva, GSW Coordinator, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) and TMG, and Alexander Müller.

Müller lauded GSW partners involved in convening the first African Soil Seminar in November 2016, and noted that beyond feeding into the HLPF, GSW 2017 will build a bridge to the review of SDG 15 (life on land) in 2018.

Lobos Alva explained that the SDG review process being piloted at GSW 2017 comprises: two high-level plenaries, three thematic workshops that will discuss in-depth perspectives on some key priorities and gaps in an integrated approach to SDGs, and a Thematic Review LAB where policy messages will be discussed in plenary. She said that GSW 2017 aims to produce key policy messages from these discussions to be taken to the HLPF; and a full report of the meeting that will include reflections on the methodology piloted by GSW 2017 to inform the SDG review process at country and global levels.

Stefan Schmitz, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), called for greater attention to rural areas, highlighting the adoption of the Berlin Charter at the close of the conference 'ONE WORLD – No Hunger. Future of the rural world,' which was convened by the German G20 presidency in April 2017. Noting that implementing the SDGs requires a profound transformation of society, politics and the economy, he said the GSW can help showcase how the review of the SDGs can become a collective learning process.

In his keynote address, Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, referred to the often-quoted saying about giving people fish versus teaching them to fish, and noted that when there are no fish left, the



Co-Moderators **Lindiwe Sibanda**, Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), South Africa, with **Alexander Müller**, TMG. Think Thank for Sustainability

discourse can no longer be about teaching people to fish but about tackling the complex underlying causes for the decline of fish stocks, such as climate change and pollution. In this regard, he said that soil and land actors can help to enhance the HLPF's expertise by highlighting important interlinkages among the various SDGs and targets. He further noted that the active contribution of a wide range of actors towards "The Future We Want" has helped to create a new social contract on accountability between rights holders and duty bearers.

**HIGH-LEVEL PANEL DISCUSSION:** Anna Onyango, Director Policy, Research and Regulation, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Kenya, said growing food demand calls for focus on sustainably increasing food production in semi-arid areas. She also reported on Kenya's national soil fertility, youth engagement and gender strategies.

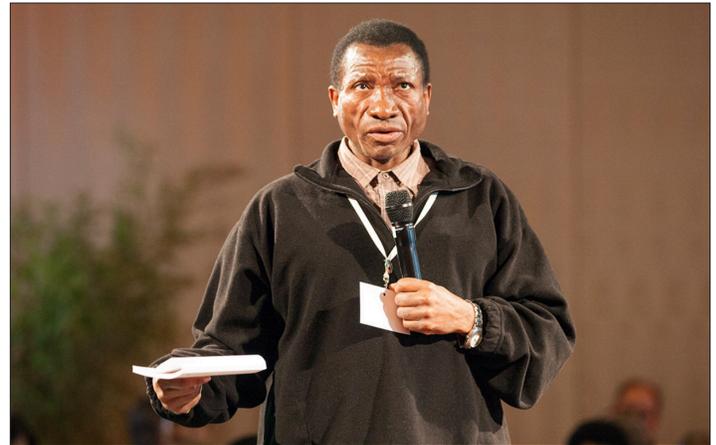
Daouda Maiga, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Fisheries Development, Burkina Faso, reported a positive correlation between land reform and sustainable land management. Stressing that there can be "no sustainable development with sick soils," he described measures to increase agricultural productivity, including support for producer organizations and establishing an agricultural bank.

Noting that 75% of soils in her country are degraded Françoise Assogba Komlan, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Benin, emphasized improving soil quality for food security. She outlined Benin's reforestation programme, its strategic agricultural plan and increased investments in agricultural research.

Louissette Clémence Bamzok née Mbadobe, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Cameroon, stressed the need to break the vicious cycle of resource exploitation and land degradation, noting that key challenges include the creation of a "state of the soil" map, land reform and water management.

Participants urged focusing on support for implementation, strategies to enhance and maintain soil productivity, and establishment of consensus priorities for forest, land and soil conservation.

Ferew Lemma, Federal Ministry of Health, Ethiopia, explained the linkages between soil, nutrition and health. He stated that taking care of the soil helps to address micronutrient



**Johns Muleso Kharika**, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

deficiencies which affect more than two billion people worldwide and, citing Pope Francis, observed that "to take care of mother earth is to take care of us."

Johns Muleso Kharika, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), said that soil is at the heart of the fight against desertification and drought. He stated that achieving the SDG target on land degradation neutrality will contribute to combatting hunger, poverty, migration and inequality while supporting economic growth and providing opportunities for the youth.

#### **THEMATIC REVIEW LAB: SYNTHESIS SESSION**

Opening the final part of the LAB on Wednesday morning, Alexander Müller explained the reasoning behind sending GSW key messages to the HLPF, noting: it improves linkages between the HLPF and action on the ground; it contributes to reviewing SDGs in an integrative way; it highlights partnerships and participatory approaches; and it supports integration of all forms of knowledge. He presented five "stories" that emerged during the discussions: healthy nutrition starts with healthy soils; SDGs are the missing piece of globalization; coastal fisheries depend on sustainable land management to curb pollution; access to land and healthy soils can reduce pressures for migration and are part of the solution for young people; and equal access to land for women could reduce hunger by 30%.

Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network, summarized the five key policy messages that the GSW can bring to the HLPF 2017: increase investments in responsible land governance and monitor them; change consumption patterns in high consuming countries, because they are responsible for land degradation in other parts of the world; recognize the need for spatial planning addressing the rural-urban continuum in an integrated way; improve land tenure and land rights for vulnerable people by recognizing that human rights are under pressure because of shrinking space for civil society; and build a bridge between SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG target 15.3 (achieving land degradation neutrality) to ensure food security through the rehabilitation of degraded soils and managing landscapes for people. She highlighted some entry points for this, including community empowerment, high quality and accountable extension services that embrace the youth, and open data access.

Many participants welcomed the draft messages and noted that they reflect the discussions in the thematic sessions. On increasing investments in responsible land governance one



**Louissette Clémence Bamzok née Mbadobe**, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Cameroon, and **Ivonne Lobos Alva**, IASS

participant called for a reference to the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. A speaker posed the question of whether the biophysical components of soils have been sufficiently addressed, while another contribution stressed the need for a more positive focus by referring to “rights holders” rather than “vulnerable people.” Other speakers highlighted the need to: ensure that the SDGs contribute to a real shift in consciousness; address the links between sustainable consumption and land management; involve a broader range of actors in the review process; align spatial planning with territorial approaches to food security; and address the implications for land management, of mergers among multinational agricultural companies.

Presenting country and partner reactions, Jeanne Josette Achaï Akoha, Benin, stressed the need to change the current development paradigm by building bridges across sectors. José Francisco Calí Tzay, Ambassador of Guatemala to Germany, called for a greater focus on land tenure and increased scrutiny over the activities of multinationals in different countries. Louisette Clémence Bamzok née Mbadobe, Cameroon, called for improved training and research in agriculture, including better training for those in charge to support farmers.

R.B. Sinha, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, India, expressed his government's high commitment to the implementation of the SDGs. He noted that the second GSW policy message on sustainable consumption and production is in line with India's experience, reporting that the country reduced its fertilizer consumption by 15% in 2016. Almaz Messele Massa, Chairperson, Parliament Standing Committee of Agriculture Affairs, Ethiopia, highlighted access to land by youth and women, and noted the need for coordination among policy making processes to implement SDGs.

Stefan Schmitz, BMZ, urged the German government to convey the GSW messages to the HLPF and pledged continued support to make the GSW a permanent forum. He supported referring to “territorial approaches” rather than “spatial planning,” noting that this is widely accepted in other forums and helps highlight that SDG implementation is a process, not a project. Barbara Unmüßig, Heinrich Böll Foundation, stressed: raising awareness of the consequences of consumption patterns; developing SDG-based rules for trade and investment; and

guaranteeing fundamental human rights to counter the shrinking democratic space and create opportunities for civil society participation.

Responding to the announcement by the BMZ, Günther Bachmann, German Council for Sustainable Development, expressed his organization's support to the continuation of the GSW process. On the proposed policy messages, he said they must be bold, concrete, and backed up with data. He proposed addressing new soil frontiers in the urban environment and stated that integration starts with challenging existing practices and standards. Bachmann also suggested that acknowledging that we already live in the Anthropocene opens discussions on innovative human-made solutions to human-made problems. Unmüßig



Barbara Unmüßig, Heinrich Böll Foundation

added that if we do desire to live in the Anthropocene we will need more radical solutions to ensure that the planet can continue to support human life.

Mark Smith, IUCN, underlined the importance of integrating ecosystem conservation and restoration with sustainable food production, thus managing landscapes for

people and nature. He urged participants “not to let the HLPF get away with adopting compartmentalized solutions,” and to use the GSW key messages as a step towards developing a language for integrating complex issues.

Responding to a question on the kinds of investments needed to drive sustainability, Töpfer said that finance cannot only come from government, and noted that the World Bank increasingly sees its role as that of an “honest broker” to channel funding from diverse financial sources. Decrying the rise of unsustainable global value chains, he posed the question: “who will pay a fair price for food in this context?” and stressed that implementing the SDGs on a global scale will require a sound understanding of the complexity and unexpected consequences of policy decisions.

Closing the session, Lobos Alva highlighted the next steps in the lead up to HLPF 2017, notably: a short policy summary containing the main messages from thematic workshops and the LAB will be available on the GSW website from 5-7 June 2017 for endorsement; a longer GSW 2017 Outcome Report will be published ahead of the HLPF, containing a more comprehensive overview of the discussions, including reflections on the methodology piloted at the GSW. She further noted that the official German delegation and GSW partners plan to organize a side event at HLPF to present the revised policy messages.

#### **CLOSING PLENARY: FINDING INNOVATIVE WAYS TO APPROACH THE FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW OF SOIL AND LAND – LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS PILOT THEMATIC REVIEW**

**AWARD CEREMONY:** Rattan Lal, Ohio State University, and President of IUSS, introduced an award ceremony for former IASS Director Klaus Töpfer. In his laudatory speech, Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary, German Federal Ministry for the



R. B. Sinha, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, India

Environment, recognized Töpfer's achievements in protecting soils at regional, national and international levels and ensuring that soils are considered in the SDGs. Lal then presented Töpfer with the IUSS Distinguished Service Award for his achievements in putting soil on the international agenda.

In his acceptance speech focusing on challenges ahead, Töpfer suggested: an international conference on soils modeled on the high-level UN conference to support the implementation of SDG 14 (life under water); a bottom-up approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda 2030, including nationally determined contributions to the SDGs; and an open platform to contribute to a knowledge repository for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Regarding the influence of multinational companies, he suggested exploring novel ways to engage private businesses.

**HIGH-LEVEL PANEL:** Opening the session, Jes Weigelt, Coordinator, Global Soil Forum at IASS and TMG, invited the panelists to reflect on whether GSW 2017 had succeeded in supporting a strong HLPF preparatory process.

Chantal Clément, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), applauded the diversity of formats used to encourage broad participation and acknowledge synergies between GSW and IPES-Food. Among challenges, she highlighted the need to effectively harness different types of knowledge and confront unequal

power relations in global governance processes, noting as one example, the need to tackle the concentration of power in food systems. She further suggested that the next GSW should engage underrepresented sectors, such as trade ministries and private sector representatives.

Rattan Lal, Ohio State University, highlighted the importance of food security, and called on scientists among the GSW stakeholders to engage directly with the public, for instance, by speaking with journalists and not just other soil

scientists, and communicating with policy makers to translate science into action.

Marianne Beisheim, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, said the greatest contribution of GSW 2017 was in testing an approach to link the three core principles of the 2030 Agenda - accountability, universality and integration - to the HLPF thematic review process. She proposed making greater efforts to link current "high salience" policy dialogues, such as the links between environmental degradation, poverty, security, and migration. Beisheim also welcomed the use of a "real process" to arrive at the final policy messages.

Hilary Ogonna, Programme Specialist and Focal Point for Africa and the Arab States for the UN SDG Action Campaign, reminded participants that the SDGs are about people and suggested that the next GSW could focus on engaging people

in land and soil issues. On how to achieve impact beyond the HLPF, he reiterated that Agenda 2030 implementation rests with national governments, and supported Töpfer's proposal for an international conference on soils.

Celine Charveriat, Executive Director, Institute for European Environmental Policy, urged better integration of soil issues and the climate agenda, stressing that enhancing soil carbon is the only viable option to achieve negative emissions. Regarding opportunities to influence European Union policy, she noted the Joint Research Commission's Foresight scenarios, review of the Common Agricultural Policy, and the European Commission's Multiannual Financial Framework. She also suggested engaging in a discussion about a common European soil policy.

During discussions, participants highlighted that as a voluntary review process, the HLPF should explore opportunities to use reputational risk to deter unsustainable practices.

Highlighting additional outcomes from the thematic workshops, Weigelt listed: the creation of a peer support and review platform by the governments of Benin, Burkina Faso and Kenya, focused on creating sustainable extension services; outlining a broad range of soil and land management methodologies that can contribute to SDG implementation and especially the principle of universality; and a set of guidelines for government-led multistakeholder reporting on land and soil governance.

Wrapping up the session, Weigelt thanked the other co-hosts and announced that the coordination of future GSW-related work would move from IASS to TMG. He closed the meeting at 1:15 pm.

GSW 2017 was co-hosted by the following partners: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ); Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Benin; Ministère Du Cadre de Vie et du Développement Durable, Bénin; Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Kenya; Ministère de l'Agriculture et des Aménagements Hydrauliques, Burkina Faso; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH; European Commission; UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); UN Environment; International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN); International Union of Soil Scientists (IUSS); Global Water Partnership; The German Development Institute (DIE); TMG. Töpfer, Müller, Gaßner - Think Tank for Sustainability; Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS); Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDR); The UN SDG Action Campaign; Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Germany; Together 2030; German Federal Environment Agency; The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF); and World Resources Institute (WRI).



Rattan Lal, Ohio State University, USA



Hilary Ogonna, UN SDG Action Campaign

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**Drought Resilience in Sub-Saharan Africa:** This event series is organized on the margins of the “One World – No Hunger” Initiative by the UNCCD, the German Development Institute, the University of Bonn, the German Corporation for International Cooperation, the Center for Development Research, Deutsche Welle, the Reconstruction Credit Institute and BMZ. The seven-part series aims to explore strategies for improved drought management in contexts where poverty, conflict and migration exacerbate the challenges of drought. **dates:** 6 April - 13 July 2017 **location:** Bonn, Germany **www:** <https://www.die-gdi.de/veranstaltungen/drought-resilience-in-sub-saharan-africa/>

**World Day to Combat Desertification (WCD) 2017:** WCD 2017 will focus on the linkages between land degradation, migration and security, under the slogan, ‘Our land. Our home. Our Future.’ Diverse events will explore how to strengthen the resilience of local communities in areas affected by land degradation, desertification and drought, through investing in land productivity, food security and generating local employment. The global observance event will take place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 15 June, hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change. **date:** 17 June 2017 **location:** worldwide **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **e-mail:** [secretariat@unccd.int](mailto:secretariat@unccd.int) **www:** <http://www2.unccd.int/news-events/2017-world-day-combat-desertification-2017wcd>

**5th Global Soil Plenary Assembly:** The Plenary Assembly of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) is the main yearly meeting of all GSP partners. This assembly is in charge of reviewing and prioritizing GSP actions, and facilitating a balanced regional decision-making process. **date:** 20-22 June 2017 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** GSP Secretariat **e-mail:** [Ronald.Vargas@fao.org](mailto:Ronald.Vargas@fao.org) **www:** <http://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/events/detail/en/c/462867/>

**HLPF 2017:** The HLPF 5, convening under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council, will address the theme ‘Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world,’ as decided by UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution A/70/299. The session will undertake an in-depth review of

SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17. **dates:** 10-19 July 2017 **location:** New York City, US **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

**Resilience 2017:** Following previous Resilience conferences held every three years since 2008, Resilience 2017 will discuss resilience as a key lens for biosphere-based sustainability science. The Conference will explore four major themes: social-ecological transformations for sustainability; connectivity and cross-scale dynamics in the Anthropocene; multi-level governance and biosphere stewardship; and approaches and methods for understanding social-ecological system dynamics. **date:** 20-23 August 2017 **location:** Stockholm, Sweden

**contact:** Resilience 2017 **e-mail:** [resilience2017.src@su.se](mailto:resilience2017.src@su.se) **www:** <http://resilience2017.org/>

**UNCCD COP 13:** The 13th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) to the UNCCD, along with the 16th session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 16) and the 13th session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST 13), will convene in Ordos, Inner Mongolia, China. At COP 13, UNCCD Parties are expected to adopt the Strategic Framework that will guide action under the Convention from 2018-2030, among other decisions. **dates:** 6-16 September 2017 **location:** Ordos, Inner Mongolia, China **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **e-mail:** [secretariat@unccd.int](mailto:secretariat@unccd.int) **www:** <http://www2.unccd.int/cop13>

**CFS 44:** The 44th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS 44) will address the following topics: CFS and the SDGs; nutrition; policy convergence; workstreams and activity updates; an independent evaluation of CFS; and critical and emerging issues for food security and nutrition. **dates:** 9-13 October 2017 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** CFS Secretariat **www:** <http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/plenary/cfs44/en/>

**World Soil Day 2017:** World Soil Day has been commemorated annually since 2013, following the adoption of a Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) Council resolution and subsequent recognition by the 68th UN General Assembly. **date:** 5 December 2017 **location:** worldwide **contact:** Global Soil Partnership Secretariat **e-mail:** [GSP-Secretariat@fao.org](mailto:GSP-Secretariat@fao.org) **www:** <http://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/world-soil-day/en/>



Klaus Töpfer receives a Distinguished Service Award from the International Union of Soil Scientists