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Global Soil Week Bulletin

A Summary Report of the First Global Soil Week

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in collaboration with the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS)

First GLOBAL SOIL WEEK SOILS FOR LIFE



BERLIN, 18-22 November 2012 Scandic Hotel Berlin Potsdamer Platz

ONLINE AT [HTTP://WWW.IISD.CA/SOIL/GSW1/](http://www.iisd.ca/soil/gsw1/)
VOLUME 206, NUMBER 1, TUESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2012

FIRST GLOBAL SOIL WEEK: SOILS FOR LIFE 18-22 NOVEMBER 2012

The first Global Soil Week gathered over 400 representatives of governments, scientists, international organizations, business and civil society in Berlin, Germany, from 18-22 November 2012, to consider the theme “Soils for Life.” The event took place within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership and served as a platform to initiate follow up on the land and soil-related decisions in the outcome from the June 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20). It was organized by the Global Soil Forum, which was established by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) Potsdam.

The first Global Soil Week commenced with a film festival open to the public and a reception on 18 November 2012. From 19-21 November, participants convened in plenary, platform and dialogue sessions to consider topics related to an integrative perspective on soils, lessons learned in addressing challenges to soils, and a number of thematic topics. A wrap-up session on Wednesday afternoon, 21 November, reviewed Chair Klaus Töpfer’s conclusions and an Outcome Paper and discussed plans for the future.

The Chairman’s Conclusions suggest that responding to the challenges identified and discussed during Global Soil Week requires urgent and consolidated action in: strengthening science and technology; capacity building; partnerships for change; and soil awareness-raising. To accomplish this, the following steps were proposed: facilitating the science-policy-public interface; making the Global Soil Week a continuous process; and developing an agenda for action that may focus on multi-level governance for zero net land and soil degradation, sustainable land and soil management, and communication for change. The Outcome Paper indicates that the goal of a land degradation neutral world needs to be made operational and implemented, and that, therefore, a zero net land and soil degradation target is called for. It suggests that soil policy should form part of global endeavors towards food security, embedded in a sustainable development goal on food security that emphasizes the link between development and environment. Among other issues, the paper also notes that a strategic partnership needs to build on an interdisciplinary approach, and that the first Global Soil Week was the beginning of a process.

On Thursday, 22 November, participants convened in four working groups to discuss next steps for Global Soil Week, related to the following themes: the soil and water nexus for sustainable livelihoods; natural resource governance, securing the commons and voluntary guidelines; urbanization; and global land and soil degradation, and global soil policy.

This report summarizes the discussions that took place in plenary, platform and discussion sessions, from 19-21 November, along with the Chairman’s Conclusions and Outcome Paper that were distributed on 21 November.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GLOBAL SOIL WEEK

The Global Soil Forum, which was established by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) Potsdam in 2011, organized and hosted the first Global Soil Week. Global Soil Week convened in the framework of the Global Soil Partnership, which was launched in 2011 by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and a group of partners, to improve global governance of the world’s soil resources to guarantee healthy, productive soils for a food secure world. The first Global Soil Week benefited from collaboration with the following partners: FAO, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the European Commission (EC), the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The first Global Soil Week was organized to provide 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/soil management and governance. The event also served to initiate follow-up actions on land and soil-related decisions made at Rio+20. In particular, the outcome document from Rio+20, titled “The Future We Want,” recognizes the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation, and in view of this indicates that governments will “strive to achieve a land degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development.” At Rio+20, governments also called for the creation of “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs), and established a process through which they would be created over the next two years.

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History Of Global Soil Week	1
First Global Soil Week Report	2
Upcoming Meetings	11

The *Global Soil Week Bulletin* is a publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) <info@iisd.ca>, publishers of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org>. This issue was written and edited by Wangu Mwangi, Laura Russo and Lynn Wagner, Ph.D. The Editor is Robynne Boyd <robynn@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James “Kimo” Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. Funding for coverage of this meeting has been provided by IASS. IISD can be contacted at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada; tel: +1-204-958-7700; fax: +1-204-958-7710. The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in other publications with appropriate academic citation. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists (in HTML and PDF format) and can be found on the Linkages WWW-server at <http://www.iisd.ca/>. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11D, New York, New York 10022, United States of America.



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UNCSD took place in June 2012, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20 years after the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) convened in Rio de Janeiro. Two multilateral environmental agreements, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), were opened for signature at UNCED, and one of the adopted texts from that meeting – Agenda 21 – called for the negotiation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Together, these three conventions are referred to as the “Rio Conventions.”

FIRST GLOBAL SOIL WEEK REPORT

The first Global Soil Week officially opened on Monday, 19 November, with a premiere of “Let’s Talk About Soil,” a short film by Uli Streckenbach, which underscores the need to raise the profile of soil and land issues among policymakers and the general public. This film is available on the event’s website: www.globalsoilweek.org

Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director, IASS, welcomed participants and emphasized that the key objective of the first Global Soil Week was to develop an agenda for action that effectively links science to policymaking and civil society initiatives. He said the event would seek to enhance collaboration among existing soil-related efforts, in order to accelerate implementation.

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES AND DYNAMIC KNOWLEDGE PANEL

Five keynote speeches were presented on Monday morning, 19 November, followed by a “Dynamic Knowledge Panel.” Four keynote speeches and a video message were also presented on Tuesday morning, 20 November. The following section summarizes the keynote speeches on both days, and statements offered during the discussions and the Panel.

KEYNOTE SPEECHES: MONDAY: Sheikh Hamad bin Ali bin Jassim Al-Thani, Vice-Chairman, Qatar National Food Security Programme, presented the Qatar National Food Security Programme, which addresses the challenges that result

from importing 90% of all food products, as only 1% of soils in the country are arable. He also highlighted the launch of the Global Dry Land Alliance, a partnership among dry countries.

Alexander Müller, Assistant-Director General, Natural Resources and Environment, FAO, said sustainable development cannot be realized without addressing hunger and malnutrition, changing food and consumption systems to make them sustainable, and addressing governance of natural resources as a central issue. He highlighted the Global Soil Partnership as a tool for coordination of soil policy interventions at the global, regional and national levels.

Reinhard Hüttel, Scientific Director, German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ), presented a conceptual framework that incorporates three core functions of all soils, production, habitat and regulation. Noting the challenge of building on this understanding to develop adequate legislation for soil rehabilitation and protection, he underscored the role of the Global Soil Partnership and Global Soil Week in raising awareness and achieving scale at the implementation level.

Severin Kodderitzsch, Sector Manager, Agriculture and Irrigation Unit, World Bank, noted the scale of the challenge of sustainable development in Africa, where 83% of land is seriously degraded and cannot cope with additional demand from population growth, urbanization and climate change. He emphasized the role of multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in scaling up sustainable land management, but cautioned that this will require securing land rights, ensuring coherence between emergency and long-term development approaches and good governance of agricultural markets.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary, CBD, noted that the UNCCD seeks to halt and reverse land degradation, the UNFCCC addresses soil issues as they relate to climate change mitigation, and the CBD seeks to address soil restoration. He called attention to the CBD’s International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity, which is managed by FAO, and soil-related elements in the Aichi Biodiversity targets, as well as elements of the Rio+20 outcome that relate to soil health. He said there are many opportunities among existing initiatives and suggested focusing on how implementation can be



Participants at the first Global Soil Week posed for a photo outside the Scandic Hotel. Photo credit: Agentur StandArt

enhanced, what the constraints are, and whether further global frameworks will help or hinder implementation, among other questions.

DYNAMIC KNOWLEDGE PANEL: The “Dynamic Knowledge Panel” involved the following panelists: Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director, IASS; Karl Falkenberg, Director-General Environment, EC; Jochen Flasbarth, President, UBA; Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary, UNCCD; Reinhard Hüttl, Scientific Director, GFZ; Alexander Müller, Assistant-Director General, Natural Resources and Environment, FAO; Anjan Datta, UNEP/GPA Coordination Office; and Manfred Konukiewitz, Deputy Director General, Global and Sectoral Policies, BMZ. Panelists discussed why soils have not received appropriate political attention, highlighting: low awareness among the general public that soil is –in human terms- a finite resource; the direct economic interests that influence land use; national sovereignty over soils and lands; and the lack of convincing evidence for soil degradation. They also discussed the economics of land degradation, and addressed issues such as: the incentive framework leading to land degradation; the need to show to finance ministries that soil restoration can be accomplished even with low investment levels; and a North-South divide in soil management and conservation.

Several panelists argued that legislation is best pursued at national and regional levels and called for a focus on public awareness and developing a common political agenda at the global level. On how to raise the profile of soil issues, panelists highlighted the need to focus on the economics and risks of not taking action. Underscoring the mutual responsibility of developed and developing countries, Klaus Töpfer regretted that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) did not mention energy or soil. Reflecting on Germany’s experience, Manfred Konukiewitz noted the role played by national legislation in sensitizing local planners about the value of soils.

Panelists noted the benefits and drawbacks to developing an international agreement on soils. Müller suggested developing a global agreement on principles, norms and standards of soil management, stating it would not necessarily have to be legally binding. Töpfer said the time for legally binding solutions has passed, and noted that the more difficult the issue is, the lower the agreed international standards are. The value of a dynamic monitoring and assessment system was also noted. Konukiewitz noted that it is difficult to implement global agreements, so the focus has turned to developing global goals, but he said these goals have come from professional communities and have not leveraged related government efforts. He said the focus needs to change from establishing burden-sharing agreements that seek to encourage all actors to move at the same time, to identifying the advantages of being front runners and taking action, even without a global agreement in place.

Participants suggested examining the incentives and disincentives to farmers for adopting soil conservation methods, among other proposals. In response to questions submitted on twitter, panelists said subsidies for biofuel production have been harmful and demand in Europe for biofuel has negative global consequences such as deforestation in developing countries.

Speakers also called attention to: the lack of knowledge on whether soils are carbon sinks or sources; the role of urban soils; the cultural role of soils; the need for better communication with the general public, scientists and policy makers; the role played by the transfer of inappropriate

technologies and land management practices at the local level; the importance of combining top-down legislative measures with bottom-up and voluntary initiatives to foster sustainable land use; and the need to involve all stakeholders in the debate.

KEYNOTE SPEECHES: TUESDAY: On Tuesday morning, participants heard four keynote presentations in a session moderated by Joachim von Braun, Center for Development Research, University of Bonn. Yaya Adisa Olaitan Olaniran, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to FAO and Chair of the FAO Committee on Food Security, emphasized the need for science to connect with policy makers and farmers, and for governments to create an enabling environment for small farming business such as transport and storage infrastructures. He highlighted the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security as a joint effort led by the Rome-based agencies FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP) and Bioversity International, and the work on responsible investments in agriculture led by the High Level Panel of Experts on food security and nutrition.

Olivier de Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, in a video message, lamented the lack of support from public policies to small-scale farming in spite of the positive environmental and social externalities of this type of agriculture. He identified obstacles to small-scale farming development, such as its lower competitiveness, lack of security of tenure for farmers, lack of research focused on small-scale farming, and cultural prejudice against small-scale farmers. He called for government agricultural policies to shift the focus from large-scale industrial agriculture to small-scale farming and agroforestry to achieve sustainable food systems.

Rainer Horn, President-Elect, International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), highlighted ongoing international initiatives, including the development of a global soil map to enhance understanding of changing soil properties and decision making on land use options. He supported calls for an international framework directive to focus attention on the crucial functions of soils in human and ecosystem survival.

Madiodio Niassé, Director, International Land Coalition (ILC) Secretariat, outlined some characteristics of the emerging “geopolitics of food security,” noting that it is contributing to a new scramble for Africa’s land resources and undermining the continent’s capacity to meet its own food needs. He highlighted the lack of transparency around large-scale land acquisitions by foreign investors, the targeting of countries with poor governance systems, and the minimal benefits that accrue to local communities due to, *inter alia*: the slow rate of developing acquired land; a preference for non-food crops and/or the re-export of food produced to investor countries; and excessive water withdrawals. While welcoming initiatives such as the CAADP in refocusing attention on agriculture, he noted that so far only seven African countries have met the goal of allocating at least 10% of the national budget to sustainable agricultural development. He called for African countries to set aside and safeguard a “bottom line of arable land” as part of a comprehensive national food security strategy aimed at improving agricultural productivity, food security and employment opportunities.

In the ensuing discussion, participants called for, *inter alia*: greater recognition of traditional practices and the role of female small-scale farmers in sustainable agriculture; enhanced techniques to monitor changes in land quality, for

instance, through the creation of a worldwide network of soil observatories; analyzing the role of multilateral financial institutions in funding large-scale land acquisitions; investing in rural development to attract youth to farming and farm-based enterprises; and addressing water-borne diseases and other health problems linked to expansion of irrigated land.

PLATFORM SESSIONS: AN INTEGRATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON SOILS

On Monday afternoon, six platform sessions convened simultaneously to address the following topics: the soil and water nexus for sustainable livelihoods; ecosystem services of soils – competition and synergies; soil security; ecosystem services for business; the syndrome perspective – a focus on soil contamination; and holding actors accountable – instruments for monitoring and transparency of large-scale land acquisitions and investments. The following summaries offer an overview of three presentations and discussions: the soil and water nexus for sustainable livelihoods; ecosystem services of soils – competition and synergies; and the syndrome perspective – a focus on soil contamination.

THE SOIL AND WATER NEXUS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS: The session was moderated by Sergio Zelaya, UNCCD Secretariat. Johan Bouma, Wageningen University, introduced an issues paper prepared for this conference, noting that combining soil and water expertise, or hydro-pedology, is an effective approach to study major environmental challenges of the future. He observed that while soil science is a productive and innovative discipline with effective international networks, there is need to “get out of the soil box” to demonstrate the importance of soils in their wider context. In this regard he noted that a focus on soil functions, as defined by the European Soil Protection Strategy for instance, could help enhance the profile of soil science in a highly competitive research environment. To kick off an interdisciplinary research agenda, Bouma called for a hands-on workshop where hydrologists and soil scientists could jointly explore the use of soil data in hydrological watershed models.

Citing the case of natural arsenic poisoning in Bangladesh, Kurt Roth, Heidelberg University, stressed the need to better understand underlying physical, chemical and biological mechanisms in environmental systems.

Hanspeter Liniger, World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), highlighted practical examples of sustainable land and water management around the world. He called for a greater role for local university students in monitoring and documenting land use patterns and water flows to fill knowledge gaps on the costs and benefits of land degradation.

Susanne Nebel, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), presented a case study of conservation initiatives in the Pamir/Alai Mountains of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan that demonstrates how soil science and research can contribute to participatory land use planning.

Sally Bunning, FAO, noted that land use options are determined by soil fertility and water availability, which in turn influences the capacity of the land to sustain livelihoods. She called for increased investment in district-level technical capacity to enhance and scale up integrated land use planning and catchment management approaches.

Deborah Bossio, International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), observed that while soils are back on the research agenda, winning people’s “hearts and minds” requires demonstrating the interlinkages between land degradation, water scarcity and food insecurity. She highlighted several pathways to eco-efficient and climate-smart agriculture,

including the large-scale adoption of better crop varieties and providing incentives for farmers to invest in sustainable agriculture.

Wolfram Mauser, Ludwig Maximilians University Munich, noted that while large data gaps exist with regard to soil properties and heterogeneity, multidisciplinary research can help to make better use of the rich stock of observed local information to improve the quality of spatial data derived from remote sensing.

In the ensuing discussion, participants noted there are good examples of landscape approaches at the local level but they need to be better packaged and linked to robust scientific data and business models to support long-term planning. On multidisciplinary research, several contributors highlighted the difficulty of bridging local and global knowledge and called for innovative approaches that transcend existing scientific traditions.

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES OF SOILS: COMPETITION & SYNERGIES: This session was moderated by Diana Wall, Global Soil Biodiversity Initiative, and Hubert Wiggering, Leibniz-Zentrum für Agrarlandschaftsforschung ZALF, with opening statements by Katarina Hedlund, Lund University, Braulio Dias, CBD Executive Secretary, Anne Glover, Chief Scientific Adviser, EC, Stephan Bartke, Helmholtz-Zentrum für Umweltforschung UFZ, and Katharina Helming, ZALF.

Participants were encouraged to think about the task of agenda creation and the benefits of building synergies. Speakers noted that the concept of ecosystem services is complex, and the links between different ecosystems and soils and the services they provide are not all known. Wall highlighted that improved scientific tools over the past decade have provided more information about soils, enabling a better understanding of various ecosystems and global experiments that will lead to more information about what works and under what conditions. The multifunctional nature of soil was also highlighted, and Bartke noted that not all soil services are valued at market prices.

Many speakers focused on the role of information to influence the public debate and to pressure governments to react. Farmers’ interest in productivity and running a business were noted. In addition to agricultural ecosystems, a speaker noted that attention should be given to other ecosystems, such as rangelands.

Many speakers stressed the roll of the interplay between scientists and policy makers in addressing cooperation and synergies among ecosystem services. Research to relate ecosystem services to human wellbeing was suggested as a promising approach to influence policy makers. The role of extension services in providing a link between science and implementation was highlighted. Studies such as The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) and the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) were noted to help make the topic of soil more tangible for decision makers. It was noted that the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) could provide a platform for the development of consensus assessments to facilitate the policy making process. The need for simple messages was highlighted, with a suggested slogan of “healthy soils give healthy food.”

Glover said there is a failure of those who generate knowledge to capture the interest of politicians, in part because politicians are not comfortable with uncertainty. She suggested, *inter alia*, developing smart, integrated measures, involving social scientists in the delivery of messages, and being imaginative in how the value of soil is taught.

THE SYNDROME PERSPECTIVE: A FOCUS ON

SOIL CONTAMINATION: This session convened on Monday afternoon and was moderated by Günther Bachmann, Secretary General, German Council for Sustainable Development. Christian Poggendorf, Prof. Burmeier Ingenieuresellschaft mbH, presented “The Bhopal disaster: damages, rehabilitation planning and challenges from the perspectives of a German contractor.” He stressed that residents around the Union Carbide site face health risks due to the continued presence of wastes and the contamination of soils and groundwater and the inadequate clean up by the Indian Government in 2005. Poggendorf said urgent measures, costing US\$25-30 million, were needed, such as fencing the site, supplying clean water for the population, disposing of stockpiles, soil remediation, and waste management. He reported that GIZ had stopped negotiations with India following the protest by German NGOs against importing and treating the toxic waste in Germany.

Ravikumar Kandasamy, Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Rural Industrialisation, discussed the Bhopal gas tragedy from an Indian perspective, emphasizing the scientific, political and social recognition of Union Carbide’s operations in India at the time of the accident. He said crises such as the Bhopal tragedy could lead to alternative development strategies and innovations, including organic farming, green pesticides, and locally adapted technologies.

Nguyen Hung Minh, Viet Nam Environment Agency, presented a case study on dioxin contamination in rural areas in Viet Nam from the use of the defoliant “Agent Orange” by the US military during the 1961-1971 war. He outlined the reforestation efforts by the Viet Nam Government and its partners, and said that, due to the transfer and handling of the defoliant, large areas were contaminated outside the former US military bases, with health risks for the local populations. He clarified that a formal agreement from the US Government to cover soil remediation cost does not exist as yet.

Harald Mark, enVIET- Consult, presented on experiences with environmental projects in Viet Nam, underscoring that the management of contaminated sites should follow a multi-stage approach, including historical investigations, risk assessment and remediation measures.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed, *inter alia*: the lack of awareness on contamination among the affected populations; the difficult identification of the liability for remediation; and ways to bring soils and soil contamination to the attention of the wider public and in the SDGs.

PLATFORM SESSIONS: LESSONS LEARNED IN ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TO SOILS

Seven parallel platform sessions convened on Tuesday morning, 20 November. Two of the sessions continued the discussions that took place under the platform sessions on “an integrative perspective on soils.” These continued sessions addressed the syndrome perspective and holding actors accountable. The other five sessions addressed greenbelt movements, payments for ecosystem services, raising soil awareness, soil information for environmental and societal sustainability, and voluntary guidelines on land governance. The following summaries present the discussions on greenbelt movements, voluntary guidelines and holding actors accountable.

GREENBELT MOVEMENTS, ETHIOPIA’S TIGRAY PROJECT AND THE AGRO-ECOLOGY APPROACH:

This dialogue showcased three community-based initiatives to promote sustainable land use practices in the eastern Africa

subregion. Stephen Kiama Gitahi, Wangari Maathai Initiative for Peace and Environmental Studies, and moderator of the session, recalled the vision of the late Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, noting her contribution to raising public awareness of the links between tree planting and soil conservation.

Hailu Araya, Institute for Sustainable Development, Ethiopia, presented on the Tigray project in northern Ethiopia. He noted its contribution to improved farming practices and environmental rehabilitation through the use of techniques such as terracing, check dams, planting of multi-purpose trees and nutrient recycling through mixed farming systems.

Ingrid Hartmann, Dryland Resilience, Germany, presented a case study of Candlelight for Health, Education and Environment, a local NGO working to create alternative incomes and promote alternative energy sources in Somaliland to combat the destructive impacts of widespread charcoal production. She noted that this is contributing to greater awareness of the interlinkages between peacebuilding, environmental protection and sustainable development.

During discussions participants emphasized the need to link local and international sustainability initiatives to scale up good practices and enhance the capacity of local actors to envision alternative futures.

VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON LAND

GOVERNANCE: CAN THEY HELP TO MINIMIZE AND ADDRESS COMPETITION AND CONFLICT

FOR NATURAL RESOURCES: Jeffrey Hatcher, Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), moderated this session. Paul Mathieu from FAO, who served as the session’s chair, emphasized the value of both the content of the guidelines and the process leading to their approval.

Thomas Sikor, University of East Anglia, argued that supporting a broad coalition of actors can help leverage the political momentum created by the approval of the guidelines, and connect global and local levels, as opposed to seeing the state as the central guarantor of tenure rights. Michael Windfuhr, German Institute for Human Rights, presented a “human rights” reading of the guidelines, highlighting *inter alia*, linkages with the right to adequate food and with principles for responsible business and investments, and stressed that implementation should involve partnerships between public and private actors and monitored by civil society. Matthias Goldmann, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, stressed the procedural nature of the guidelines and discussed factors fostering compliance, including self-interest and incentives, reputational sanctions and exclusion, and enforcement through hard law.

During the discussion, participants highlighted, *inter alia*: challenges for the promotion and dissemination of the guidelines at national and international level, and the interest of donors in supporting dissemination; linkages with the CBD and particularly the work on indigenous people and common properties; the inclusion of the Guidelines in the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD)+ process and REDD+ national strategies to address tenure of forests; interdependence of social and legal pressure for compliance; the need to keep in view the impacts of the

guidelines on the intended beneficiaries; and that monitoring and evaluation of the guidelines should build on existing systems or bodies rather than creating new ones.

**HOLDING ACTORS ACCOUNTABLE:
INSTRUMENTS FOR MONITORING AND
TRANSPARENCY OF LARGE-SCALE LAND**

ACQUISITIONS AND INVESTMENTS: On Tuesday morning, Lasse Krantz, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), moderated the session and summarized the discussion from Monday afternoon. Participants had heard about: accountability efforts and suggested measures, based on Brazil; how the private sector and investors would view efforts to raise transparency and accountability of investments; and examples of initiatives on transparency and accountability, by GIZ, open contracting initiatives of the World Bank and partner organizations, and a proposed dispute resolution mechanism.

Presenter Duncan Pruett, Oxfam, said that, even if the best possible international accountability and transparency mechanism is in place and is well implemented, landgrabbing will not stop. He said the solution will come through strengthening land rights and governance of land tenure, moving away from overreliance on the dominant model of agribusiness investment, and widespread adoption of community consent mechanisms. He said the challenge of being a watchdog is enormous, and the process can be punishing to communities.

Michael Taylor, ILC, presented the "Land Matrix," an online public database that permits all users to contribute to and improve data on land deals located at <http://landportal.info/landmatrix/>. He also presented "The Land Observatory," a pilot project in selected countries that is working with multi-stakeholder platforms in each country and seeks to incorporate databases that may not be combined or online yet. He said next steps include: increasing tools for interactivity; encouraging engagement with the private sector and by governments; increasing information on each deal that is recorded in the Land Matrix; and developing more structured data collection and checking processes.

During the discussion, one participant suggested that issues of democracy and justice should be addressed. Another participant called for an international convention to prohibit landgrabbing. Proposed entry points into related policy were highlighted as feasibility studies, consultation processes, contract details, investor performance and conflict resolution.

In conclusion, Ali Hines, Global Witness, said communities need to understand what they are entitled to and that transparency has to be accompanied by broader government reforms. On open contracting, she emphasized disclosure of information before contracts are awarded. She also highlighted the role for free, prior informed consent and voluntary initiatives as a first step, among others.

Reinier de Mann, the Netherlands, cautioned that if there are too many stakeholders involved in setting the agenda, it may end up enormous, and suggested that participants should ask "what little thing could I do to improve this one aspect?" He also said there needs to be a case developed for why governments should be interested in transparency.

DIALOGUE SESSIONS

In addition to the eleven topics covered in the platform sessions noted above, Global Soil Week participants gathered in a series of four and eight-hour dialogue sessions, to address twelve additional topics. Participants discussed the following topics in eight-hour sessions over the course of Tuesday and Wednesday, 20-21 November: urbanization - challenges to

soil management; global land and soil degradation; global soil policy; natural resource governance; and securing the commons.

The following seven issues were discussed during four-hour sessions: nutrients for food or pollution?; sustainable land management; economics of land degradation; markets for soil organic carbon; the soil-energy nexus; challenges for intensifying international soil research cooperation; and from deep down - a social sculpture soil seminar. The following summaries review the discussions in the full eight-hour dialogue on global land and soil degradation; and four hours of the discussions on global soil policy, economics of land degradation, urbanization, and natural resource governance.

GLOBAL LAND AND SOIL DEGRADATION: This session convened on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning. On Tuesday, the discussions focused on framing soil and land degradation as a global problem and outlining some general trends. On Wednesday, participants considered some implications for the science-policy interface, with a focus on zero net land degradation as a specific target within the SDGs framework. The session was moderated by Ivonne Lobos Alva, IASS.

Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary, UNCCD, noted that meeting growing demand for land while protecting the environment can only be achieved if concerted efforts are made to restore degraded land. He noted that the Rio+20 outcome document laid the foundation for global efforts towards this end by adopting the concept of land degradation neutrality.

Quang Bao Le, Institute for Environmental Decisions, Switzerland, stressed the need for robust and reliable indicators to capture the complexity of land degradation and support decision making. He called for greater harmonization of existing global and regional land degradation assessment approaches and for ensuring that identified indicators are responsive to the needs of different stakeholders.

Joaquin Etorena, Directorate of Soil Conservation and Combating Desertification, Argentina, analyzed the impact of productive land use changes in Argentina. He noted that agricultural exports have quadrupled over the past decade, driven by demand for oilseeds and biofuels, especially in Europe, but said this has accelerated deforestation and threatened fragile ecosystems. He also noted a rise in social conflicts due to increasing concentration of land ownership and competition for water resources.

Mariné Pienaar, Terra-Africa Consult, presented a case study on South Africa's mining sector, identifying mine subsidence, water pollution and sedimentation of waterways as key impacts. Noting that both large scale and artisanal mining contribute to land degradation, she outlined possible solutions as improving land use planning techniques, conducting systematic research on the costs and benefits of different types of mining, and "grow what you eat, eat what you grow" as a guiding principle in the remediation of degraded land.

During an interactive panel, participants outlined some global trends in land and soil degradation. The panelists were: Lindsay Stringer, Sustainability Research Institute; Ronald Vargas, FAO; Quang Bao Le, Institute for Environmental Decisions; Luca Marmo, European Commission; Anneke Trux, GIZ; and Ivonne Lobos Alva, IASS. Several contributors reiterated that no country is immune from land and soil degradation although the scale and type may differ. Noting the difficulty of arriving at consensus on the degree of scientific certainty needed before action can be taken, some speakers called for a pragmatic approach that entails compiling existing studies, complemented by pilot implementation projects to identify land degradation hotspots and trends. One contributor called for an authoritative global assessment of land and

soil degradation modeled on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Participants also highlighted the role of visionary leadership, knowledge dissemination and economic incentives in making the transition from land degradation to land care approaches.

Thereafter, four working groups convened to formulate more specific conclusions and messages. On the need for a global land and soil degradation assessment, participants agreed that this should build on existing studies and integrate local, national and regional data. They also noted the need to identify simple tools for farm-based assessments of soil and land quality.

On linkages to the global environmental governance system, participants concluded that there is no clear overarching framework for monitoring soil and land degradation and took note of the proposed SDG on zero net land degradation as a possible tool for defining context-specific priorities and tracking progress.

With regard to measurement tools at the national level, participants proposed a phased approach that would start with defining land degradation processes and the relationships between different drivers, pressures and impacts.

On specific drivers of land and soil degradation in the context of a globalized economy, participants identified four key variables: land use and production systems; market and governance frameworks that influence land use decisions and choices; ecological characteristics and carrying capacities; and types of land tenure and user rights.

On Wednesday morning, discussions opened with two keynote presentations on the global governance environment. Anne Glover, Chief Scientific Advisor to the European Commission, noted that soil and land degradation is one of the most pressing issues of our time but attracts little policy attention. She attributed this to the absence of a compelling voice on soil issues, inability of individual policy actors to work imaginatively across sectoral boundaries and the lack of clear messages for decision makers on the scale of the problem and priority actions needed. She observed that soil scientists should draw lessons from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on what it takes to build an authoritative global voice on soil and land issues.

Carol Hunsberger, Institute of Social Studies, The Netherlands, shared insights from UNEP's Fifth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5) and related studies. She outlined key drivers of land degradation as: rising competition for access to land, the role played by long distance connections in shaping land use decisions and outcomes, and the impact of urbanization, all of which point to the need for putting a realistic value on ecosystem services. Hunsberger underscored that progress in meeting internationally agreed goals is most evident where there are measurable targets in place, while they are less likely to succeed if science and policy are disconnected and "responsibilities are greater than the resources." In conclusion, she noted that the emerging policy dialogue on land and soil governance should address how to legitimately and effectively link global standards to local control over land use, and address questions of ethics and equity.

In the ensuing panel discussion on operationalizing SDGs, Luis Rios, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, Guatemala, provided an overview of the evolution of the SDG proposal, which was first tabled by Colombia. He noted the aim is to overcome the limitations of the MDGs by moving away from a one-size-fits-all target to take into account different national and regional realities.

Uriel Safriel, Hebrew University, Israel, explained that the target of zero net land degradation aims to convey the positive message that, while land degradation cannot be totally avoided, its negative impacts can be "offset" at the local level by restoring degraded or unproductive land.

Henry Tachie-Menson, Ghana Permanent Mission to the United Nations, noted that, from an African perspective, land degradation neutrality entails investing in sustainable land management and restoring unproductive land in order to meet the ultimate goals of food security and poverty reduction.

Noting growing dissatisfaction with a 'lowest common denominator' framework of UN processes, Eduardo Viola, University of Brasilia, called for the creation of a progressive reformist coalition that would pursue more ambitious goals. Martin Rokitzki, Oxfam GB, noted that targets have a normative as well as operational value and called for a more strategic approach focused on defining a number of scenarios and impact pathways to trigger action.

Following a final round of workshop discussions, participants highlighted a number of issues for consideration in the emerging dialogue on global governance. With regard to elements of a soil degradation neutral world, carbon content was identified as an important indicator of healthy soils and adaptation to climate change. On means of implementation and delivery mechanisms for zero net land degradation, participants noted the need to move the discussion beyond official development assistance flows and explore incentives for long term land and soil management. They proposed that institutional frameworks should: be cross-sectoral and nationally driven; enhance the mainstreaming of land degradation strategies in all land and soil related sectors; and incorporate monitoring mechanisms.

On the role of Global Soil Week and international scientific community, participants stressed the need to make a strong case for policy makers by articulating the costs of action and inaction and impacts on food security and sustainable development. They further noted the need for research on transferability of success stories as not all practices can be replicated or scaled up, the need for a long-term focus in soil research, and bridging the research-extension gap.

On post-2015 scenarios, participants noted that a zero net land degradation target could help to operationalize the concept of planetary boundaries, and called for an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral dialogue approach.

GLOBAL SOIL POLICY: Ulrich Irmer, UBA, introduced this session, which considered the potential of existing and alternative international policy instruments for improving the sustainable use, management and restoration of soils and their functions. The first four hours of the dialogue focused on the three Rio Conventions as examples of global "hard law." The second four hour session considered "soft law" options, such as voluntary declarations, goals and guidelines, non-binding cooperative partnerships, and the science-policy interface. This summary focuses on the "hard law" segment.

Sergio Zelaya, UNCCD Secretariat, discussed the scope and options for further development of the UNCCD. He noted that this convention addresses desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD), with a geographical focus on the drylands, and incorporates issues such as gender and migration. He said an as-yet-unagreed zero net land degradation target could focus on conservation and rehabilitation and ways to achieve this target would include a stronger institutional framework, the completion of the ongoing assessment of the ELD, and a global scientific authority on land and soils.

Braulio Dias, CBD Executive Secretary, presented on the scope and options for further development of action for soils under the CBD, which he recalled focuses on conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing. He identified initiatives that could serve as entry points or models for furthering action on soil issues, including: the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity; the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020), which was established as a flexible framework and was accompanied by the 20 Aichi Biodiversity targets; the Bonn Challenge, an initiative of the Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration; and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, which established a global partnership with goals and principles. He suggested that participants consider the role of monitoring and indicators, and, preferably, of indicators that already exist.

Ian Hannam, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), presented on options under the UNFCCC and a comparative analysis of the three Rio Conventions. He noted that global drivers in soil legislation reform have included the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, UNEP's Montevideo Program III and Strategy on Land Management and Soil Conservation, and the FAO Global Soil Partnership. He suggested that the selection of the option should be compatible with an integrated approach and should contribute to soil and land related aspects of international environmental law.

Participants then convened in two groups to discuss: the strengths and weaknesses of the UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC; options within and beyond the three conventions including forms and methods of cooperation; and pros and cons of legally binding concepts. The groups reported back that the UNCCD has the most obvious linkages, although it is limited in scope to the drylands and developing countries and does not incorporate soil contamination, urban issues, and other components. The CBD was noted to offer a natural link between soil and biodiversity, although soil issues would compete with other biodiversity issues in this Convention, and the US is not a party to it. The group noted that the UNFCCC does not incorporate all soil issues either, and has an "over complex" bargaining process.

Participants also suggested focusing on objectives, such as ability of an instrument to be implemented, targets, technical instruments, political likelihood of adoption, feasibility, relevance, geographical scope, access to funding, holistic approach to the management of soils, and ability to be monitored. They noted that food security and soil functioning are not incorporated into any of the Rio Conventions, and suggested that, before the next Global Soil Week, there should be an effort to develop scenarios and possible approaches to fill these gaps.

ECONOMICS OF LAND DEGRADATION: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN DECISION MAKERS AND SCIENTISTS: On Tuesday afternoon, Joachim von Braun, ZEF chaired this session, which was organized as four panel discussions.

In Panel 1, moderated by Joachim von Braun, panelists Rattan Lal, Ohio State University, US; Stefan Schmitz, BMZ; Luca Montanarella, Joint Research Centre-EC; and Janyl Kozhomuratova, Kyrgyzstan, presented their perspectives on visions and strategies for addressing land and soil degradation. Participants stressed: the complexities of soil and land degradation, and of defining and measuring it; networking

for raising public and political awareness on soil degradation and its economic impacts; the challenges and costs of data collection and economic analysis of soil degradation in different regions; and the economic incentives for sustainable management of mountain pastures.

Panel 2, moderated by Deborah Bossio, CIAT, heard statements by panelists Constance Neely, World Agroforestry Centre; Ephraim Nkoya, International Food Policy Institute; Franz Makeschin, University of Dresden; Franz Gatzweiler, ZEF University of Bonn; and Soo Jin Park, Republic of Korea. They addressed state of the art approaches in the economics of land degradation, emphasizing the problem of limited data on soil degradation to support economic analysis, and methodological difficulties, for example in scaling up studies for global assessments of soil degradation. During the discussion, participants noted the difficulty of making a compelling case for policy makers on why to invest and who should invest in combating land degradation; the marginalization of pastoralists who manage 40% of lands in sub-Saharan Africa; the Economics of Land Degradation initiative and its approach to calculate the total economic value of land degradation. The discussion concluded that economic valuation of soils doesn't mean automatically giving soil and soil functions a value, and that, for doing this, pricing mechanisms need to be developed.

Panel 3, moderated by Victor Chude, Nigeria, showcased successful country and local experiences on sustainable land management from central Asia, Europe and Kenya, with presentations by panelists Pavel Krasilnikov, Russia; Alim Pulatov, Uzbekistan; Richard Thomas, UN University-Institute for Water, Environment and Health; Nina Hagemann, Germany; and Wellington Mulinge, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute. In the discussion, interventions focused on the criteria for success stories in sustainable land management, and highlighted: accessible and cost effective technology that must show adaptability and capacity for upscaling.

The Panel 4, moderated by Stefan Schmitz, BMZ, discussed ways forward for policy actions and investments in sustainable land management, with panelists Luc Gnacadja, UNCCD; Alexander Müller, FAO; Madiodio Niasse, ILC; and Michael Obersteiner, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Austria.

Gnacadja stressed the need to bring the macroeconomic context in the picture, as land degradation is the consequence of misplaced policies, investments and developments, and the need to look beyond the agricultural sector. Niasse agreed on the need for a macroeconomic focus, and underscored the importance in all countries of ensuring food security and independence, saying economists should not be reductionist and should take into account the land identity, dignity, and culture and not just its productive value. Müller emphasized the agricultural sector is an important component of the macroeconomic perspective, as shown by the high food prices in 2007-2008, and, recalling the process leading to the approval of the Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure, urged for a process for a voluntary agreement on sustainable land management. Obersteiner stressed the importance of disseminating the results of ELD and of its key messages, and noting the success story of Brazil in reducing deforestation, highlighted the political momentum of governance and law enforcement and of green growth as opportunities for sustainable land management.

URBANIZATION: CHALLENGES TO SOIL MANAGEMENT: The discussion in this group on Wednesday began with a summary of the topics presented on Tuesday: how urban issues are addressed in the Emilia-Romagna

Region, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Poland, Germany, in Guangzhou, China, and in Recife, Brazil. The session was moderated by Klaus Lorenz, IASS.

Luca Marmo, EC, reported that soil threats in Europe include soil sealing, erosion, organic matter decline, compaction, landslides and salinization. Craig Johnson, University of Guelph, reported that urban expansion in India is being driven by: population growth; stagnating agricultural incomes; land scarcity and land prices; liberalization, especially in software, IT and real estate; and the growing middle class. Armando Sarmiento Lopez, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia, said elements that affect land use in the country include: geology, with most of the population living in mountains; climate, with high precipitation causing landslides, among other things; and current land use history, institutional background and social conflict. Jean-Louis Morel, Chair of Soil of Urban, Industrial, Traffic, Mining and Military Areas (SUITMA), said a major urban soil issue in sub-Saharan Africa is achieve “food for all.” He noted that issues in Africa include land tenure, waste management, soil pollution and adaptation to climate change, and highlighted that, similar to other regions, urbanization seals off the best agricultural land.

Small groups then formed to discuss policy options in developed and in rapidly developing regions, urban-rural linkages, and “extreme strategies.” On policy options, recommendations included: adopting taxes on soil sealing; promoting economic growth in rural areas; investing in research on soil quality inventories to inform urban planners; and developing tax incentives to encourage high density development and stop development in greenbelts. On urban-rural linkages, participants suggested exploring functions and drivers of the linkages, and cycle management. Participants’ “extreme” strategies ranged from making gardening compulsory, to requiring the study of soil science in school, to moving to a new planet.

The general discussion then considered, *inter alia*: the value that a zero net land degradation goal could give to political initiatives; the role of energy demand and supply in relationship to urban soil issues; the need to create incentives to promote investment in soil conservation; the fact that, in some countries, purchasers of brownfields have to pay back taxes and clean up the soil, which was highlighted as a disincentive to using existing urban land rather than expanding into greenfields; and enhancing education, internet and cultural option in rural areas, to reduce population flows into cities.

Participants were asked to offer ideas for the next Global Soil Week, and some suggested that the meeting could move to other areas of the world and invite researchers from a variety of disciplines.

NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE: On Wednesday morning, the Natural Resource Governance group continued work started on Tuesday, facilitated by Constanze von Oppeln, Welthungerhilfe, Franziska Linz, and Charlotte Beckh, both from IASS.

The group reaffirmed the importance of keeping in mind the social and political perspective when addressing soil and land governance. Roman Herre, Food First Information and Action Network – FIAN, addressed how to link the debate on human rights with natural resource governance, emphasizing that imbalances exist both at national and global level between powerful interest groups and rural populations. He highlighted the Maastricht Principles on Extra Territorial Obligations of States in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as a tool to influence pro-poor land governance.

During the participatory session, participants provided ideas to be included into the outcome document of the First Global Soil week, focusing on three aspects: how to make marginalized groups participate in land tenure and land administration; how to develop an integrated understanding of soil and land issues between technical and governance communities; and how to promote policy change.

CLOSING PLENARY AND CHAIR’S CONCLUSIONS

On Wednesday afternoon, 21 November, Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director, IASS, opened the closing plenary and reviewed his three-page “Chairman’s Conclusions,” which includes sections on the situation, responses, and way forward. He noted that responding to the challenges requires urgent and consolidated action in: strengthening science and technology; capacity building; partnerships for change; and soil awareness-raising. On the way forward he highlighted participants’ calls for: facilitating the science-policy-public interface; making Global Soil Week a continuous process; and developing an agenda for action that may focus on multi-level governance for zero net land and soil degradation, sustainable land and soil management, and communication for change. Töpfer noted that 408 participants had registered for the event, and more than 220 had contributed with presentations and statements, which he said demonstrates a high degree of interest in the topic. He reported that summaries from workshop chairs would be sent to participants. He highlighted that there are



Participants in the closing plenary (L-R): Jes Weigelt, Project Leader, Global Soil Forum, IASS; Henry Tachie-Menson, Ghana Permanent Mission to the UN; Manfred Konukiewicz, BMZ; Anne Glover, Chief Scientific Advisor, EC; Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary, UNCCD; Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director, IASS; Pia Bucella, Director, Nature, Biodiversity and Land Use, EC; Ronald Vargas, Global Soil Partnership; and Molly Jahn, University of Madison, US. Photo credit: Agentur StandArt

rich and fundamental findings on soil science, but that those results are not transported into politics, and they need to be communicated.

Anne Glover, Chief Scientific Advisor, EC, said it would be useful if participants could find their areas of consensus, and possible tipping points, as a way to enable policy makers to act. She recalled that most land is under private ownership, and challenged participants to identify how to motivate these owners and to involve them as partners in delivering change. She also suggested examining unintended consequences of agricultural and other land related policies.

Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary, UNCCD, observed that while farmers understand the value of soil, their actions are influenced by existing policy frameworks. He noted that the ELD initiative is crucial in mobilizing political will for the transition towards more efficient use of resources and addressing the disconnect between soil and food security, poverty, health and prosperity.

Pia Bucella, Director, Nature, Biodiversity and Land Use, EC, noted that per capita consumption in Europe requires 1.3 hectares of land, compared to 0.4 hectares in China. Outlining efforts to enhance resource efficiency, she noted the EC would continue to seek support for a regional soil directive to complement efforts by member states.

Manfred Konukiewicz, BMZ, stressed the importance of strengthening the science-policy interface to ensure that available resources are used as efficiently as possible. He commended the convenors of Global Soil Week for bringing the knowledge community together to focus on finding solutions to the challenges of soil and land degradation, rather than focusing on institutional and funding imperatives. He called for continuing the dialogue to establish links between the soil agenda, human wellbeing and sustainable development.

Henry Tachie-Menson, Ghana Permanent Mission to the UN, said the document addresses the key issues for Africa and, on the post-2015 development agenda, suggested referring to “land and soil” rather than only to soils.

Ronald Vargas, Global Soil Partnership, underscored the need to show concrete action and provide responses to real problems. Molly Jahn, University of Madison, US, said there has never been a moment that is better for the soils community than now, and that the discussions during this first Global Soil Week had linked soil science with the human dimension of development.

Jes Weigelt, Project Leader, Global Soil Forum, IASS, distributed an Outcome Paper, which he said should be seen in connection with the Chairman’s Conclusions. The Outcome Paper reviews the discussions on four key thematic threads: soil and land degradation policy; governance of soil and land resources; sustainable land management; and making science accountable. For global responses, the paper notes that the goal of a land degradation neutral world needs to be made operational and implemented, and that, therefore, a zero net land and soil degradation target is called for. It suggests that soil policy should form part of global endeavors towards food security, which are embedded in a sustainable development goal on food security that emphasizes the link between development and environment. For governance, the paper indicates that participants provided advice for effective land administration institutions, governance by democratic and representative institutions, and addressing the equity dimension. For sustainable land management, participants, *inter alia*, requested a critical evaluation to assess if rewards for soil carbon are sufficient incentives for smallholders to manage their land in a sustainable way. For science, the paper notes that a strategic partnership needs to build on an interdisciplinary approach, and could involve joining forces



Star chef Sarah Wiener, with some help from Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director, IASS, prepared the Global Soil Week Dinner and soil-smart cooking event “Cook it Green!” on 20 November. Photo credit: Agentur StandArt

for state-of-the-art remote sensing tools and standardizing soil related data, among other efforts. The paper also reiterates the importance of the Rio+20 goal of a land-degradation neutral world, and acknowledges the needs of the Global South. Finally, the paper notes that Global Soil Week is the beginning of a process.

Töpfer said he looked forward to seeing participants at Global Soil Week 2013, and closed the meeting at 5:07 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

UNFCCC COP 18: The 18th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 18) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 8), among other associated meetings, are scheduled to take place in Doha, Qatar. **dates:** 26 November - 7 December 2012 **location:** Doha, Qatar **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **e-mail:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** http://unfccc.int/meetings/doha_nov_2012/meeting/6815.php

Agriculture, Landscapes and Livelihoods Day 5 - Solutions for People in Drylands and Beyond: This event provides an opportunity for the natural resource and agriculture community to share solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation in agricultural landscapes that can feed into 2013 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) discussions. The event will take place alongside the 18th session of the Conference of Parties (COP 18) to the UNFCCC, in Doha, Qatar, on 3 December 2012. The Day is co-hosted and co-organized by, *inter alia*, CGIAR and the World Bank, IFAD, FAO and WFP. **date:** 3 December 2012 **location:** Doha, Qatar **www:** <http://www.agricultureday.org>

Securing Healthy Soils for a Food Secure World - A Day Dedicated to Soils: This event is organized by FAO in the framework of the Global Soil Partnership, to raise awareness on the importance of soils in achieving food security, as well as their pivotal role for providing a range of ecosystem services. It will take place in the framework of World Soil Day, first proposed by the International Union of Soil Sciences in 2002 and commemorated annually on 5 December. At its 144th meeting, held from 11-15 June 2012, the FAO Council adopted a decision requesting the wider UN System to recognize and 5th December as World Soil Day and to institutionalize its observance. **date:** 5 December 2012 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Global Soil Partnership Secretariat **www:** <http://www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/events/en/>

Managing Living Soils: The objective of this three-day technical workshop, which will open on World Soils Day, is to review the state of the art in regard to soil management across the world. It will explore knowledge of the status and trends in specific countries and contexts, practical experiences and case studies, including relevant processes or mechanisms that can be built on or scaled up to support sustainable soil management. The workshop is jointly organized with the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) and the Joint Research Centre of the EC. **dates:** 5-7 December 2012 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Global Soil Partnership Secretariat **www:** <http://www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/events/en/>

First Meeting of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-1): Hosted by the Government of Germany, the meeting aims to reach agreement on the remaining rules

of procedures for the meetings of the platform, consider other rules of procedure for the platform, elect Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel members, and agree on the next steps by which the IPBES work programme can become operational as soon as possible. Regional and stakeholder consultations will take place one day prior to the meeting, on 20 January 2013. **dates:** 21-26 January 2013 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** Makiko Yashiro **e-mail:** Makiko.Yashiro@unep.org **www:** <http://www.ipbes.net/plenary/ipbes-1.html>

UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference and CST S-3: The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 2nd Scientific Conference is scheduled to take place in Fortaleza, Brazil, during the 3rd special session of the Committee for Science and Technology (CST S-3). The scientific conference will consider the theme "Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas." **dates:** 4-7 February 2013 **location:** Fortaleza, Brazil **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49 228 815 2800 **fax:** +49 228 815 2898/99 **e-mail:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <http://2sc.unccd.int/home/?HighlightID=111>

Second International Conference on Water Resources and Environmental Management (ICWRE 2013): This conference will convene around the theme "Water, Food, Energy Security and Climate Change." Discussions will be organized around sub-themes including: water for sustainable future; global water security; water supply and sanitation; integrated water resources management (IWRM); and environment, water and health. **dates:** 12-14 February 2013 **location:** Marrakesh, Morocco **contact:** Amira Laribi **phone:** +41 (0) 22 733 75 11 **fax:** +41 (0) 22 740 00 11 **e-mail:** amira.laribi@icwre.com **www:** <http://www.icwre.com/index.php>

UNFF 10: The focus of the tenth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF 10) is forests and economic development. **dates:** 8-19 April 2013 **location:** Istanbul, Turkey **contact:** UNFF Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-3401 **fax:** +1-917-367-3186 **e-mail:** unff@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session.html>

UNCCD CRIC 11: The eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 11) is scheduled to convene from 15-19 April 2013. Regional meetings preparatory to CRIC 11 are expected to convene prior to the event. **dates:** 15-19 April 2013 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49 228 815 2800 **fax:** +49 228 815 2898/99 **e-mail:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <http://www.unccd.int/en/Pages/default.aspx>

Soil Carbon Sequestration, a Solution for Climate, Food Security and Ecosystem Services: The aim of this conference is to highlight the growing importance of conserving and restoring soil organic carbon for a multiple of win-win benefits within various land type and land use settings. **dates:** 26 - 29 May 2013 **location:** Reykjavik, Iceland **contact:** Conference Secretariat **www:** scs2013.land.is

Global Soil Week 2013: The First Global Soil Week was convened in Berlin, Germany, in November 2012, through a collaboration between the Global Soil Forum of the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) and partners, in the framework of the Global Soil Partnership. IASS will coordinate activities leading up to the next Global Soil Week. **dates:** to be announced **contact:** IAAS **e-mail:** globalsoilweek@iass-potsdam.de **www:** <http://www.globalsoilweek.org/>