



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



3rd December 2021

12:30 - 13:30 CET

Virtual format (Zoom)

Simultaneous interpretation available in Arabic, Chinese,
English, French, Russian, and Spanish

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World Soil Day

Halt soil
salinization,
boost soil
productivity



AGENDA

3 DECEMBER 2021 | 12:30 - 13:30

Soils are essential for life on Earth but are threatened by multiple forms of degradation. One of them is the **accumulation of salts** in the soil which hinders soil productivity. This can be natural due to the release of salts from rocks, infiltration and evaporation of seawater, or the deposition of salts due to their proximity to coastal areas. **Natural salt-affected soils (SAS)** harbour rich ecosystems that need to be conserved and protected. However, salt accumulation can also be caused by unsustainable human activities such as irrigation with poor quality or insufficient water, deforestation, the unsustainable use of fertilizers, or the overexploitation of aquifers in areas prone to marine intrusion, among others. These practices have severe impacts on some of the ecosystem services that soils typically provide, which are critical for sustaining human life and biodiversity, such as reduced agricultural productivity, increased soil erosion, reduced buffering, and filtering capacities against contaminants, and decreased soil fertility and micronutrient availability. SAS contain salts and exchangeable sodium at levels that adversely affect the growth and development of many plants, either directly (due to toxicity), or indirectly (due to effects on soil's physical properties that restrict root growth and water percolation).

SAS are found all around the world and **impact some 833 million hectares of land**. This value may grow significantly in the coming years, exacerbated by climate change and unsustainable human activity, so that areas without SAS may be hit. Efforts must be made to understand the processes that lead to the development of SAS, prevent human-induced soil salinisation and sodification, and safeguard soil health for better production, nutrition, robust environments and health – so that no-one is left behind.

The **Glinka World Soil Prize** and the **King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award** will be also awarded during the celebration.

12:30 - 12:35	Opening by Dr QU Dongyu, Director-General FAO
12:35 - 12:40	Opening remarks by H.E. Ms Alexandra Valkenburg, Permanent Representative of the European Union to FAO and Holy See (TBC)
12:40 - 12:45	Opening remarks by H.E. Victor Vasiliev, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to FAO (TBC)
12:45 - 12:55	Delivery of the Glinka World Soil Prize 2021 by Dr QU Dongyu, Director-General FAO and by H.E. Victor Vasiliev, Permanent Representative of Russian Federation to FAO
12:55 - 13:05	Keynote presentation by ... the Laureate of the Glinka World Soil Prize 2021
13:05 - 13:10	H.E. Thanawat Tiensin, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Thailand to FAO, delivery of the King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award 2021 and donation of Soil Kits to FAO/GSP
13:10 - 13:15	A musical/artistic performance "Soil is life"
13:15 - 13:20	Launch of the Global Soil Laboratory Assessment report, Ms Lucrezia Caon, FAO/GSP
13:20 - 13:25	Announcement of the winners of the Contest for Children on Soils, Ms Laura Bertha Reyes, President International Union of Soil Sciences
13:25 - 13:30	Conclusions and closure of the event, Mr Lifeng Li, Director, Land and Water Division
<i>Moderator: Ms Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy-Director General FAO</i>	

Interpretation in all UN Languages

Special performances and music will also be a feature!

