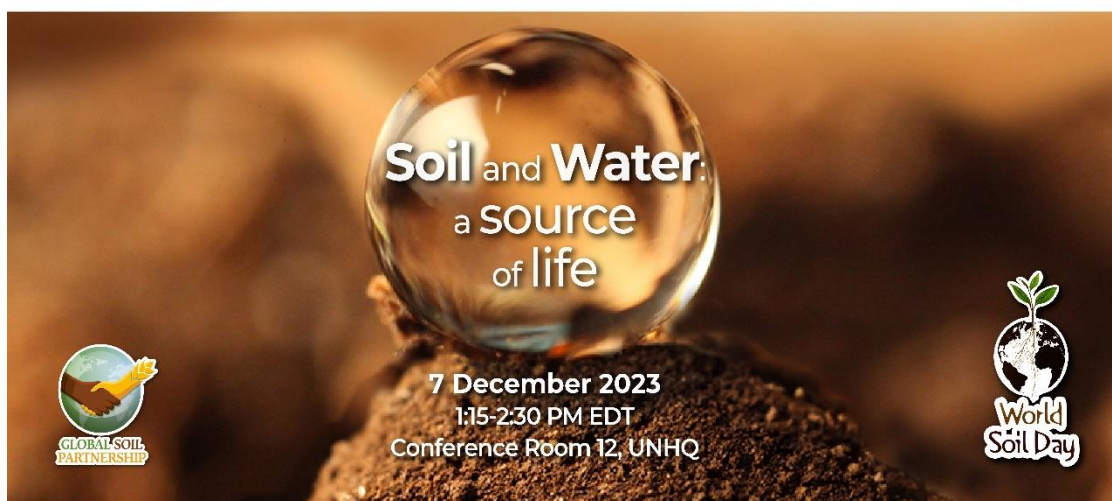


World Soil Day celebration

“Soil and water: a source of life”

7 December 2023, 13.15 – 14.30 hrs

Conference Room 12, UNHQ



Overview on World Soil Day

In December 2013 the United Nations General Assembly designated 5 December as World Soil Day (WSD)¹. The WSD 2023 and its campaign aim to raise awareness on the importance and relationship between soil and water in achieving sustainable and resilient agrifood systems. WSD is a unique global platform that not only celebrates soils but also empowers and engages citizens around the world to improve soil health. The day, which is the birthday of Thailand’s His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great, marks the occasion to pay tribute to His Majesty and his lifelong work on sustainable soil management.

The Permanent Missions to the United Nations of the Kingdom of Thailand, Australia, and the Republic of Namibia, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, invite you to a celebration of WSD in New York, on Thursday 7 December 2023, from 13.15 – 14.30 hrs at Conference Room 12, UN Headquarters. The event conducted in English will also be webcasted on UN WebTV.

At the event a variety of voices will be featured, including Member States, UN Agencies, scientists, and the winners of the **Glinka World Soil Prize** and **King Bhumibol WSD award**. Together, let us pave the way for a future where soil and water are the steadfast guardians of our environment.

Soil and Water: a source of life

The precious link between soil and water plays an essential role in maintaining healthy environment and human activities. Over 95 percent of our food originates from these two

¹ [A/RES/68/332](#)

fundamental resources. Soil and water, vital for nutrient absorption by plants, bind our ecosystems together. This symbiotic relationship is an indispensable foundation of our agricultural systems.

However, in the face of environment challenges and human activity, our soils are being degraded, putting excessive pressure on our water resources. Erosion disrupts the natural balance, reducing water infiltration and availability for all forms of life. Sustainable soil management practices, such as minimum tillage, crop rotation, organic matter addition, and cover cropping, improve soil health, reduce erosion and pollution, and enhance water infiltration and storage. These practices also preserve soil biodiversity, improve fertility, and contribute to carbon sequestration, playing a crucial role in the fight against climate change.

As the health of soil and the quality and availability of water are interconnected, soil and water management in the agri-farming must not be overlooked. A mismanagement such as poor drainage, water logging and bad irrigation system can result in soil salinization, which proves to be major challenges to agriculture production. It affects crop production, causes soil erosion, damages the water supply, and destroys biodiversity of the area. To reduce saline soil, better irrigation and water management can help remove salt on the ground and keep the soil damped. Implementing sustainable soil management practices enhances water availability for agriculture. Healthy soils, enriched with organic matter, play a crucial role in regulating water retention and availability. WSD’s theme this year “**Soil and Water: a source of life**” is, therefore, of critical importance as integrated soil and water management practices provide essential ecosystem services, supporting life on earth and enhancing ecosystem resilience.

To this end, it is crucial to create global awareness on the importance of soil management that will help create sustainable agriculture, prevent resources scarcity, improve the quality of life of the people, while ensuring food security and achieving the SDG2.

Agenda

The event will be moderated by Dr. Nandhini Krishna, Deputy of Office, UNCCD/CBD Liaison Office, New York

13:13 – 13:15	Video
13.15 –13.20	<p>Welcoming remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Dr. Suriya Chindawongse, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations
13.20 – 13.40	<p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of General Assembly • H.E. Mrs. Paula Narváez Ojeda, President of the Economic and Social Council, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations • H.E. Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations (TBC) • H.E. Mr. James Martin Larsen, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations • H.E. Mr. Neville Melvin Gertze, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Namibia to the United Nations
13.40 – 13.43	Video

13.45 – 14.10	<p>Panel Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Meagan Schipanski, Associate Professor, Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, Colorado State University • Dr. Angela Bedard-Haughn, Dean and Professor, College of Agriculture and Bioresources, University of Saskatchewan • Ms. Charitie Ropati, Scientist and Researcher at Harvard Forest and Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory • Mr. Rapibhat Chandarasrivongs, President of the Soil and Fertilizer Society of Thailand 2023 • Professor Ravi Naidu, Laureate Professor at University of Newcastle
14.10 – 14.27	<p>Intervention from the floor</p>
14.27 – 14.30	<p>Closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Guangzhou Qu, Director of FAO Liaison Office in New York