IUSS Corner (International Union of Soil Sciences – www.iuss.org)

18th World Congress of Soil Science (WCSS)

9–15 July 2006, Philadelphia, PA

Frontiers of Soil Science: Technology and the Information Age (<http://www.18wcscs.org>)

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Theme and Scientific Program. The scientific program will focus on soil science advances with emphasis on:

- remote sensing,
- geographic information systems,
- landscape analysis,
- state-of-the-art molecular-scale analytical techniques,
- environmental soil biology,
- plant/soil interface processes,
- computer and computational modeling of soil processes and reactions,
- precision agriculture,
- and other applications of information science and technology.

The technical program will include over 2,700 oral and poster presentations, which have been assembled into 83 oral, poster theater, and poster symposia. Authors of abstracts recently received confirmation of their paper(s) and format of presentation, and the complete program is now available via the WCSS website (www.18wcscs.org). Two key interdivisional symposia include 'Global Priorities of Soil Science Research' and 'Innovation, Speculation, and Disneyfication in Soil Science Education'. The education symposium will address soil science education by analyzing trends and developments in various parts of the world. Questions that will be addressed during the symposium are:

- Do we hide our light under a bushel?
- What are the trends in soil science teaching and student numbers?
- How do we translate soil dynamics and its role in ecosystem functioning into inspirational learning products?
- How can we ensure the delivery of well-equipped soil scientists for the future?

Keynote speakers will discuss the possibilities for exciting soil science education in the 21st century with examples from the USA and Australia. The former symposium will feature leading soil scientists from North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and New Zealand who will discuss soil science research needs and frontiers in their particular region of the world.

A new element for poster presentations in this Congress is utilization of **poster theaters** to enhance their visibility. The symposium convenors/co-convenors will have flexibility in setting the format for the poster theater session to meet the needs of the topic. Some theaters may involve poster authors presenting key

points about their poster, discussion led by selected poster authors, or demonstration of software or models. The goal of poster theaters is to enhance the value, prestige, and image of poster presentations, and even more importantly, to provide an additional venue for the networking and interchange among soil scientists. This is especially important because only about 15% of the papers that will be presented will be given in oral format.

Workshops will be offered to enhance learning skills of participants at the Congress. For example, the International Atomic Energy Agency is sponsoring a workshop entitled 'Use of Nuclear Techniques in Addressing Soil-Water-Nutrient Issues for Sustainable Agricultural Production' to promote nuclear techniques that play a significant role in the search for more productive, sustainable, and profitable farming systems. There will be workshops offered to illustrate modern methods for measuring soil moisture and new geospatial imaging analysis of landforms and cultural features.

Opening Session. The opening session will be kicked off by one of America's most illustrious historical figures, Benjamin Franklin, the great inventor, publisher, politician and diplomat, who is celebrating his 300th birthday. Other opening speakers will include Dr. Michael Clegg, the Foreign Secretary of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences; Ambassador Kenneth Quinn, who will recognize the 2006 World Food Prize Laureate; and Dr. Ed De Mulder, Past President of the International Union of Geological Sciences, who will discuss the Year of Planet Earth (YPE) initiative, which the United Nations (UN) recently approved for 2008. The International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) is a sponsor of the YPE. Bruce Knight, Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), will also address the attendees at the opening session. The plenary address will be given by Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs, the noted economist at Columbia University and author of the acclaimed book, *The End of Poverty*. Professor Sachs is the Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia and serves as Special Advisor to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the Millennium Development Goals.

Opening Reception. The opening reception will be held in the historic Grand Hall of the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

'The Future of Soil Science' contains the views from 55 soil scientists in 28 countries – from Finland to South Africa, from Canada to Ghana, Malaysia and China. The result is a palette of opinions and views reflecting great diversity but also several commonalities. It aims to feed the discussion of the pessimists ('pedology is dead and buried') and the optimists ('future for soil science is brighter than ever'), and makes background reading for the 18th World Congress of Soil Science in Philadelphia, USA. This book is compulsory reading for anyone interested in soil science and its future directions.

The book will be freely available for participants of the 18th World Congress of Soil Science in July.

Copies can be ordered. The book costs Euro 25 (including postage); please transfer to: ISSS, Postbus 353, 6700 AJ Wageningen, The Netherlands. Account number: **4088603**, IBAN-NL31PSTB0004088603, Swift code: PSTBNL21. Post address of the bank: Postbank, Financial Plaza, Postbus 1800, 1000 BV Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

In Dutch: Giro 4088603 t.n.v. ISSS Wageningen o.v.v. The Future of Soil Science Book.

You will receive the book when the money has been transferred. If you have any questions send an e-mail to alfred.hartemink@wur.nl

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