

Wageningen Soil Conference 2017 – Soil Science in a Changing World

The third edition of the Wageningen Soil Conference – Soil Science in a Changing World was held from 27th until 31st of August 2017. As in previous editions, the aim was to discuss the importance of soils and the developments in soil science in the light of the global issues of food security, water resources, biodiversity loss, land degradation, and climate change.

Each of these issues was discussed for half a day with key-note speeches, plenary debates, presentations of recent research, and 1-minute poster pitches. Additionally, we spent half a day discussing the cross-cutting nature of the Governance & Policy aspects vis-à-vis the importance of soils in these issues.

One of the highlights from the plenary sessions was an inspiring keynote by Simon Moolenaar on a successful business approach to land restoration, resulting in improved land management practices that prevent land degradation as well as improved livelihoods for the local population.

Another one was the highly entertaining crash course on soil organic carbon dynamics given by Karen Vancampenhout entitled *The ways of the dead: ecosystems handle their organic matter differently*.



During the previous (second) edition of the WSC in 2015, the organising committee strived for practical outcomes of the conference that could be applied in society. This resulted in a [Resolution](#) that was used in the COP21 meeting in Paris and a [white paper](#) on the role of soils and soil science in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (<http://bit.ly/2xwAgSn>).

This years' edition of the WSC built upon those two outcomes of the previous edition. In the resolution we called for several urgent actions, and in this conference we have seen great examples of how our call was heeded.

Urgently identify soil-based solutions towards SDG:

We saw many examples in the parallel and keynote presentations; both research towards understanding soil processes for soil-based solutions, but also how to apply these together with stakeholders. Soil-based solutions towards addressing SDGs has been a cross-cutting theme during this conference.

A prime example of the cooperation between scientists and policymakers on the SDGs was the workshop on Monday, where participants worked towards operational indicators for SDG 15.3 on Land Degradation Neutrality.

Develop convincing narratives on soil based solutions:

We saw several interesting new narratives that are being developed, having soil-based solutions and systems thinking at their core. The above mentioned business approach to land restoration that involves researchers, land-owners and investors, is one of them. But even more striking are the policy offices in Brussels, where people discuss soil and SDG issues with the now famous infographic from the white paper on their desks (see link: [infographic](#)).

The Wageningen Soil Conference 2017 was completed by a day of excursions, conference dinner and a few side events: a workshop on the Fertile Grounds Initiative and the launch of the [ISRIC Soil Data Facility](#) of the Global Soil Partnership.

The final abstract book can be downloaded here: [Book of Abstracts WSC 2017](#)

For further highlights, photos and videos: [Highlights WSC 2017](#)

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