



Some History and Accomplishments of the IUSS

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The International Society of Soil Science (ISSS) was founded in 1924 in Rome, Italy, by European agro-geologists who were interested in establishing standardized methods of soil analysis and soil classification. It was admitted as a Union member of the International Council for Science (ICSU) in 1993 and was restructured into the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) in 1998. The objectives of the IUSS are to promote all branches of soil science, and to support all soil scientists across the world in the pursuit of their activities.

The IUSS has encouraged international exchanges of ideas and collaborations through the organization of international congresses, known as the World Congress of Soil Science. A total of 19 international congresses have been organized, with eight of these congresses held in Europe, five in the Americas, three in Asia, two in Australia, and one in Africa. The 20th congress will be held in Korea in 2014. The IUSS maintains a website (www.iuss.org) since 2001 with a variety of information about soils, publishes twice per year a Bulletin (since 1952) and publishes a monthly electronic newsletter (IUSS Alert) since 2005. The IUSS initiated the Soil Map of the World, which was prepared in the 1960s and 1970s and a whole range of other scientific initiatives, publications and cooperating journals.

Divisions, commissions, working groups and standing committees have been established to deal with all aspects of soil science and its applications. There are four divisions (Division 1 - Soil in Space and Time, Division 2 - Soil properties and processes, Division 3 - Soil Use and Management, and Division 4 - The Role of Soils in Sustaining Society and the Environment). Each division is further divided into five or six commissions. In addition, there are eight active working groups (Acid Sulphate Soils, Cryosols, Digital Soil Mapping, International Actions for the Sustainable Use of Soils, Land Degradation, World Reference Base, Forest soils, and Urban Soils) and three standing committees (Committee on awards and prizes, Committee on budget and finances, and Committee on statutes and byelaws). Membership in ISSS/IUSS increased from around 550 after WWII to over 60,000 today. The IUSS also provides Honorary Membership to soil scientists who have significant accomplishments in the field; to date 87 soil scientists have been so recognized from all over the globe. The IUSS is the most important global link to the world's leading soil science and soil scientists.