SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETY OF EAST AFRICA (SSSEA) 

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT 

Given by: 
Dr. ANTHONY ESILABA, Chairman SSSEA

1. INTRODUCTION

The Soil Science Society of East Africa (SSSEA) has members from the East African Community countries that include Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania Rwanda and Burundi. South Sudan and Ethiopia may soon join the SSSEA. The Soil Science Society of East Africa (SSSEA) is a non-political and non-profit making organization that draws membership from individuals, soil scientists, agronomists, socio-economists and corporate organizations for purposes of advancing society aims and objectives and sharing of professional experiences.

Further, the SSSEA as a regional organization for advocating, raising awareness and coordinating EAC actions on soils as a vital resource for achieving sustainable development into the future.

The SSSEA promotes linkages between food security, ecosystem services, sustainable development and poverty reduction by addressing the sustainable management of soils at all levels based on the best science available and considering the diverse regional contexts.

The aims and objectives of the Soil Science Society of East Africa is to promote the study, research, teaching and application of soil sciences and related subjects and disciplines in East Africa.

The aims and objectives of the Society are pursued though:

(i) Biennial Scientific Conferences of the Society during which members, invited guests and professional soil scientists and related sciences present and discuss scientific papers in soil science and allied sciences.

(ii) Biennial General Meeting of the Society during which members discuss matters of interest and advancement and other issues pertaining to the Society.

(iii) Encouragement of members of the Society to publish their research work and findings in relevant referral regional and international journals/periodicals.

(iv) Compilation of summaries or bibliographies of soil science research carried out in or relevant to East Africa.

(v) Promotion of proper conservation, development and utilization of East African soils and other related resources.

(vi) Any other means which the Society may determine.
2. PROGRESS/MILESTONES FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS (2011-2013)

The present executive committee of the Soil Science Society of East Africa Kenya Chapter was voted into office in November 2011 during the 26th Annual General Meeting of the SSSEA. Since then the Committee has held 19 meetings during which various issues were deliberated upon.

The milestones for the Society have been:
- Started planning and preparations of the 27th SSSEA/6th ASSS Conference
- Initiated various collaborative NRM projects in the ASARECA region
- Started preparation of the Strategic Plan for the SSSEA (2014-2018)
- The SSSEA became a member of FAO’s Global Soil Partnership
- The Chairman presented three Keynote addresses on the ASARECA regional soil research and development priorities at the FAOs, Global Partnership Meeting held in Nairobi in from 25-28th March 2013, the ICRAF Pedometrics Conference on 28th August at the WAC ICRAF in Nairobi and at an ASARECA regional Consultative workshop in Juba Southern Sudan from 2-5 September 2013.
- Held the 27th SSSEA/6th ASSS Conference in Nakuru Kenya this week from 20 to 25th October 2013
- Compiled Conference Programmes, book of abstracts etc.

3. DONOR SUPPORT TOWARDS AND ORGANIZATION OF CONFERENCE.

The SSSEA acknowledges support from the Director Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), the Nakuru County Governor, ICRISAT, AGRA, Africa Soil Health Consortium, ASARECA, NACOSTI, MEA Ltd, Virginia Tech, International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) & the University of Sydney and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Union (EU) for supporting this conference.

4. EXCURSION REPORT

The excursion comprised of two groups. One group visited MEA fertilizer factory and the other group visited Mogotio and KARI Perkerra station.

Visit to MEA fertilizer factory: To see different types of fertilisers including BIOFIX manufactured in the factory.
Visit to Mogotio and KARI Perkerra station: To view soil profiles and discuss their classification. Participants also visited a beekeeping group at Kipkuikui.

The participants visited KARI (Kenya Agricultural Research Institute) Perkerra (Marigat District) through Mogotio where they viewed the soil profiles. The classification of the soil profiles was reviewed and the inputs from the participant were incorporated in the criteria of classification. In addition to soil profile classification soil management issues and farming systems in the drylands were discussed. The participants had opportunity see some demonstration on crossing of equator effects water compass.

The participants visited Kapkuikui Self Help Group in Marigat. The group deals with honey processing. It is a success story of ‘farmer-demand-driven technology initiative’ (ATIRI Programme).

5. STRATEGIC PLAN

There is need for a SSSEA Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan will address five main strategic interventions:

- Promote sustainable management of soil resources for soil protection, conservation and enhance agricultural productivity for food and nutrition security in East Africa.
- Encourage people public private partnerships (PPPP) as well as resource mobilization and investment.
- Foster technical cooperation, policy review and advocacy, awareness creation, education, research and extension in soils.
- Promote targeted IAR,D focusing on identified gaps and priorities and synergies with related productive, environmental and social development actions.
- Enhance the quantity and quality of soil data and information, reporting, monitoring and evaluation;
- Promote integration of soil science activities with other related disciplines;
- Harmonization of methods, measurements and indicators for the sustainable management and protection of soil and related resources.

6. ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE CONFERENCE

(Mailing list, website with information, country keynote addresses over brownbag, opportunities for joint proposal writing)

7. REGISTRATION FEE AND CHALLENGES OF THE LOW RATES CHARGED

8. POSSIBILITIES OF LAUNCHING REFEREED JOURNAL
9. FARMERS PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE

Farmers attending the soil conference, Nakuru, Kenya

1. Leah Kimani-Mau Narok
2. Sally Shaban-Lanet
3. Daniel Langat-Keringet
4. Moses Cheruiyot-Mauche
5. Joshua Cheruiyot-Molo
6. John Kabiru-ndundori
7. James Simiyu-Ndundori
8. Simon Kosgei-Solai
9. Robert Too-Kuresoi

Farmers’ Background

The farmer’s were drawn from across the county and they undertake different small-scale agricultural enterprises. These enterprises include;

a) Bee keeping
b) Local poultry farming
c) Fish farming
d) Dairy
e) Irish potatoes
f) Maize
g) Pyrethrum
h) Beans

Issues and concerns raised

Changing seasons- the seasons have changed tremendously. Currently in Nakuru, it ‘s harvesting season, but it is raining
Fear of herbicides - the farmers’ are afraid that the chemicals in the herbicides will destroy their soils.

Some herbicides are destroying/killing the bees once they forage on them

Soil diseases affecting yield of crops especially potatoes. There's need for soil screening for pathogens in the soil and use of clean seed. Furthermore, education of the farmers is of utmost importance to curb the problem

Soil and water management issues in fish farming - the soil on which to build ponds, water management, fish nutrition

Poor soils/infertile soils

- Lack of knowledge on soil testing
  - high fee being charged

- Farming mostly being undertaken by the old generation who are slow in investing in new technologies

- Farms are small, so the farmers are forced to overuse the farms
  - what technologies can be safely applied on small farms and preserving our lands?

- Meteorological data...can we believe in it?

- Soil erosion and flooding is a big problem

- Frost problems increasing (highlands)

- Fertilizer recommendations (awareness/training) for farmers very important - farmers do not have the application recommendations

- Mea should undertake this service for the farmers as part of the CSR

- Seed potato problems (spreading diseases from farms to farm)

- KARI/KEPHIS to fast track clean seed for farmers

10. THE WAY FORWARD

- Finalize the SSSEA Strategic Plan
- Finalize the Conference Proceedings, books and Special East African Agriculture and Forestry Journal
- Collaborate more closely with national, sub-regional, regional and International partners