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NEWSLETTER

ESAFS

EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA FEDERATION OF SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETIES

Letters of the member Societies of ESAFS

SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETY OF BANGLADESH

Prof. Gong Zi tong
Secretary General, ESAFS
C / O Institute of Soil Science
Academia Sinica
P. O. Box 821, Nanjing 210008
P. R. China

Dear sir,

This is to inform you that the election to the Council of the Soil Science Society of Bangladesh(SSSB) was held on 19th May, 1993. Mr. S.M.Saheed, Director, SRDI, Khamar Bari Road, Dhaka–1215, and Dr. S.M. Imamul Huq, Professor, Department of Soil Science, University of Dhaka, Dhaka–1000, Bangladesh, have been elected President and Secretary General respectively of the SSSB for 1993 and 1994. From now on all correspondence may kindly be addressed to prof. Huq.

Thanking you very much,

Yours Sincerely,

(Prof. T.H.Khan)
Secretary General (Past)

Prof. Gong Zitong
Secretary General, ESAFS

28th August 1993

Dear sir,

The Soil Science Society of Bangladesh plans to hold a conference of the Soil Scientists of East and South Asian Nations during the first week of December, 1994. The theme of the conference, though not final yet, is somewhat like, "Current research and state of affairs of Soil Science and Soil Science Studies in the East and South Asian Countries".

We wonder how ESAFS could render its support, moral and financial, to make this conference successful. This could be by providing us with a few noted soil scientists of ESAFS and also by providing the SSSB with some funds. We will also welcome any suggestions from your end in this matter.

Expecting your kind cooperation, we thank you in anticipation.

Sincerely yours,

(S.M.Qaheed)
President

(S.M. Imamul Huq)
Secretary General

VIETNAM SOCIETY OF SOIL SCIENCE

VISSS
61 Hang chuoi, Hanoi
SR Vietnam

Phonne: 263452
FAX: 84 42 53093

To: Prof. Zhao Qiguo
Chairman of SEAFS

Hanoi, 28 March 1993

Dear Professor,

Thank you for letter and enclosed documents of September, 1992 and newsletter No. 05 of December 1992 informing us of the activitiesof ESAFS, next two year and of the official meeting of SEAFS at Nanjing. I wish the ESAFS all success. The Vietnam Society of Soil Science would like to enroll as a member of the SEAFS. We are trying to participate in compilation of soil map of East and Southeast of Asia at scale of 1:4 mil. according to soil taxonomy. We think it is also neccessary for our country. However, at present time, we can find only financial support to compile the soil map of the our country at scale of 1:1 mil. according to soil taxonomy.

Yours sincerely

Prof. Ton That Chieu
Secretary General of VISSS

Leffer from ISSS
International Society of Soil Science
Association Internationale de la Science du Sol
Internationale Bodenkundliche Gesellschaft

Prof. Dr. Gong Zitong
Institute of Soil Science, Academia Sinica
East Beijing Road 71#
P.O.Box 821, Nanjing
CHINA

November 5, 1993

Dear Prof. Gong Zitong,

Thank you very much for your letter of October 9, 1993 and for your excellent report on the Workshop on Classification and Management of Desert Soils. We will publish the report in our Bulletin 85, which is in preparation now.

Thank you also for your kind invitation, I would certainly like to visit you. I might have the opportunity to travel to China next year. I cannot yet fix an exact date, but I will inform you in time of my travel plans.

Looking forward to seeing you, I remain for today,

Yours sincerely,

Winfried E.H. Blum
Secretary–General, ISSS

For further information, please contact:
Prof. Gong Zitong
Secretary General
ESAFS–Office (1993–1994)
C / O Institute of Soil Science, Academia Sinica
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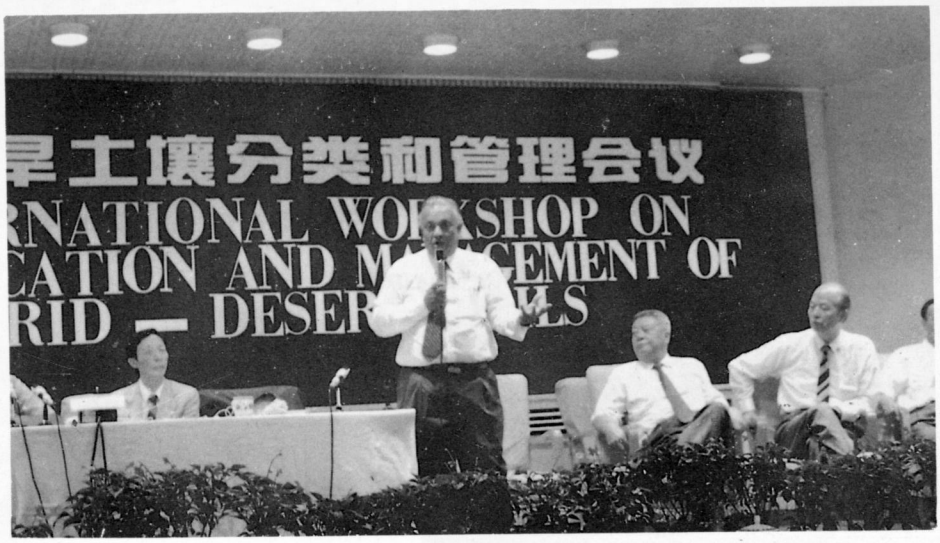
Contribution to the ESAFS–Newsletter are invited and should be sent to the above address.



Opening Ceremony of Workshop on Classification and Management of Arid–Desert Soils.

Part of the Participants are in the Excursion.

Flaming Mountain in Desert Area Xingjiang.

CLASSIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF DESERT SOILS

URUMQI, CHINA, AUGUST 21–29, 1993

The Soil Science Society of China, the International Society of Soil Science, and several local Chinese Institutions organized the International Workshop on "Classification and Management of Desert Soils" in the Xinjiang Province of North West China.

The Workshop was attended by about 100 participants, about 20 of whom were foreigners. There were four days of technical sessions and five days of field tours. Some of the issues that prompted the Workshop are:

1. Population pressures are increasing in most desertic areas of the world and in some places, the carrying capacity of the land is being exceeded;
2. Deserts are fragile ecosystems and many desert soils are being degraded by overgrazing and misuse;
3. The oases, which traditionally were the foci of settlements and agriculture, are being stressed due to population increases and greater demands of the finite water supply. Oases are drying out or are being salinized;
4. Canal irrigation is destroying the fragile desert ecosystem and upsetting natural ecological balances in many countries;
5. Land degradation, the result of a combination of the above, is rampant.

Some of these concerns were demonstrated during the field tours to old oases. The most important oasis is the city of Turpan (Tulufan) which dates back to more than 2,000 years and was an important trading post of the Silk Road. Due to intensified agriculture and greater consumptive use of water, traditional and historical methods of irrigation are no more adequate and so pumping of aquifers is taking place. The population is no more confined to the oasis but has spilled over onto the adjacent bare lands. There is ample evidence of unsustainability in the system.

Major discussions during the technical sessions and the field tours focused on the classification of soils of deserts. It was recognized that some progress has been made in the last twenty years on the classification of desert soils but lack of detailed studies and supporting data resulted in much discussions. There was unanimous support to developing an international database on desert soils which would serve not only to evaluate classification systems but also support work on sustainable agriculture and global climate change. There was also

general consensus that the aridic soil moisture conditions should not be used at a high level to classify soils of desertic areas. The Chinese classification, similar to recent proposals in the FAO–UNESCO legend of the Soil Map of the World, has proposed the use of an aridic or yermic epipedon. There was wide support for this and it was suggested that this concept be developed and refined. Other features, unique to desert soils, must be developed to better evaluate such soils. Dr. Zhao Qi–guo's proposal for the establishment of an international network to consider these and other suggestions was unanimously supported.

Some of the workshop conclusions include:

1. An international working group be established to evaluate the characterization, classification, and management of desert soils.
2. There is an urgent need to develop indicators of unsustainability / sustaiunability in these ecosystems and establish long term monitoring sites to evaluate ecosystem quality.
3. There is a need to evaluate traditional irrigated lands to evaluate their sustainability and / or rates of degradation. In addition, it would be useful to examine the resilience of these ecosystems to regenerate them.
4. International organizations such as FAO and USDA–SCS / WSR have been called upon to assist Central Asian countries of the former Soviet block in evaluating their desert resources and their management.
5. There is a need to assemble global databases on desert soils of the world for use in sustainable agriculture and global climate change evaluations.

The Workshop also recommended that an international committee, under the auspices of FAO be established to assist in the development of databases and classifications of desert soils. This committee will be the nucleus of an international network and will consider the possibility of establishing soil–environmental monitoring sites in the desert areas of the world, so that we can obtain better data on processes in deserts.

Closing Address at the Workshop on Classification and Management of Arid–Desert Soils in Urumqi, August 21–29, 1993

R. Arnold

1. A number of years ago there was a class in Beijing who talked about remotely sensing land resources and discussed how one might classify soils, several of us of that class are here today still aiming to learn.

2. There have been many, many changes since that class. The green leaves have turned to red a number of times. The situations throughout all world are in sharp contrast to these of a decade of two ago.

3. One such change has been the strong leadship of Prof. Zhao Qiguo, as he actively took part in international affairs——especially in the International Society of Soil Science, he went, he saw, he listened and he discussed, soil resilience was one such topic.

4. The executive secretary of our organizing committee, Prof. Gong Zitong, was also a busy man participating in conferences in many parts of the world, slowly, the Chinese Soil Taxonomic Classification System formulated and presented its own ideas.

5. And one day, in concert with their colleagues throughout China, a notice was sent from Box 821 in Nanjing, "Please consider participating in a workshop on desert soils in Urumqi", it said.

6. If you work in arid or semi–arid areas–anywhere–your imagine was fired up, a little known place, a new opportunity——a challenge.

7. Oh, yes we know something about the hardness of some desert environments. Some of you live there–some only visit there.

8. We were also aware of the human discomfort that often is associated with a simple thing like cooked millet or a little sip of water.

9. I even asked a minuter of the environment in South America what he thought about the conditions of arid environments, "Frankly, "he said," it sticks we need to do more, to im-

prove the quality of these ecosystems".

10. There it was--are often to make progress in the struggle for a sustanbiable one world. Not easy--not quickly--but an absolute necessity.

11. In a utopian world of plenty--the human species can conceivably live in harmony with nature. The dream, the ideal and reality still differ.

12. Where the pressure of survival is not too strong--we find that people voluntarily accept conservation and wise use of resources as a meaningful way of life. The very rich and very poor do not live a conservation ethic.

13. As we move along the pathway, the river of life, the future is not always clear. There are mists and early morning fog; there is fear and uncertainty. —But that too is life.

14. As man pushed the soil resources harder and harder--he created his own clouded vision of the future.

15. Science describes things, then turns to quantify things. The wind erosion equation is one attempt to better understand the behavior of our pedosphere.

16. New equation, new technologies, new data collection and information management, it goes on all around the world.

17. Using water to make a desert bloom becomes more and more difficult as the water must be recycled, again and again. The slow initials build up of undesirable salt concentrations which takes it toll on the life of soil resources.

18. Technologies suggest warp to prolong the economic collapse of water–starved ecosystem. Yet each new innovative technology does bump us a little more time on the clock of actualization.

19. The wide variety of soils has been known by pedologists, and their ancestors, for thousands of years. The rest of the world just was not aware.

20. Soil scientists study the presence of carbonates and develop a story about slow, incremental changes that are preserved in the desert. Stories of long, long term aridity; and stories of multiple climatic changes.

21. Some scientists delve into the relationships between the atmosphere and pedosphere, variations in temperature and moisture are thought to be reflected in changes in soil temperature and soil moisture. Pieces of information–bricks or perhaps the mortar improved data bases and knowledge.

22. Soil classification for soil scientists, is an important way to organize and collection of concepts, we try all kinds of schemes to show relationships that we think are important.

23. Why does this happen? Because we have different experiences–– we have different training and background–– we develop different opinions. As yes–it is the wonderful world of pedology.

24. But when it is all said and done with all of us are quick to agree that as ecosystem scientists are real good is to reach out and offer assistance to others. Helping others is the real acheviement of concerned scientists.

25. Helping others takes many forms––but we speak about technology transfer. When an idea is technology, share it; when equipment is technology, share it. Whatever you consider technology to be–transfers it to others–give it away. Try to make a diference.

26. Some people are smarter, or better observers, or perhaps a little wiser, Li C.K. And Xi Chen–fan are such people. The woman on the left is Helen Arnold, my wife. Once years she has provided me with imagines that have changed my world.

27. She reminds me that soil scientists seem to spend a lot of time digging holes in the ground, holding some mysterious ceremony at the soil pit, and then filling it all in, she says it does represent cooperation–but is that all you do?.

28. She noted that the world has limited resources and that they are important to take care of. But she also said that there are many ways to buried a future with the same bricks and mortar, some people buried–just buried–others take the common things and give them new meaning–they creat patterns of interest where before there was only drudgery and drabness.

29. Helen explained to me being an envious mentalist should be easy––it is a natural, normal instinct, maybe, she said, women understand the need to care for, and mature life, much more than man.

30. Helen mentioned that the bond of friendship and understanding––of concern and car-

ing ––of love and dreams––is universal. Open your eyes and see it. Open your ears and hear it. Open your heart and feel it!

31. I thought about what Helen had told me and I realized––that conservation is an attitude. It is a belief––a set of values––of great importance to the survival of all mankind.

32. What a great vision for this conference. The good hands hold the good earth. WCMDS––a Workshop on Classification and Management od Desert Soils. Look at the logo––the symbol of this workshop, soil scientists gently cradle the earth receiving life giving water.

33. Together we have listened and discussed––eaten together, laughed together. A beginning yes beginning to practice conservation as a way of life.

34. In the desert––prosperity, beauty and harmony revolve around the management of water. Without water––what then? who has the right to mismanage such precious resources? not you not I––not everybody.

35. As a concept I propose that we keep in mind the simple thought that conservation leads to global harmony. The key to success––to far more then mere existence––or survival––is a better world because we understand and live conservation.

36. A network of interested persons, scientists, educators, politicians, law makers and the people on the land. This workshop has guided us to the door––we are the ones who can, and must open the door, build the network share the technology and continue to cause the right kinds of change to occur.

37. The way of the future is very clear indeed, if we only pause a moment and learn from the rose. The spread of knowledge, the well spring of caring, the love of life comes from a central love, as the petals grow and reach to the sunlight––they support each others. One is not independent nor does it have to try to stand alone. Being supported from below––and supporting each one above. The symbol of a new way ––a network of participants of WCMDS––is surely like rose–– a beauty that is possible if we so choose.

Thank you.

SHORT NEWS

* The 3rd conference of expert consultation of the Asian Network on problem soils was held from 25–29 Oct. 1993, in Bangkok Thailand. 13 countries attended the meeting which organized by Regional office for Asia and Pacific, FAO. The secretary general of ESAFS, Gong Zi–tong presented at the meeting.

* The Soil Society of Viet Nam wrote to secretary general of ESAFS, Gong Zi–tong, recently for application to be a member of ESAFS. It has been approved by president of ESAFS, Zhao Qi–guo and secretary general, Gong Zi–tong.

* An international conference "The Management of Red Soils and Latosols in Sustainable Agriculture" was held by the Soil Society of India and International Soil Society from Sep. 24 to 28, 1993, in Bangalore India. More than 100 soil scintists attended the workshop. The president of Soil Society of China, director of Nanjing Institute of Soil Science, Academia Sinica, professor Zhao Qi–guo was awarded the honour member of the Soil Society of India by the organizing officer.

* The 2nd of the 7th enlarged council & academic annual meeting was convened by the Soil Science Society of China in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, September 17–20, 1993. 91 representatives from the whole country attended the meeting.
  The subject during two day's session is "Soil Science and the Development of Sustaninable Agriculture". 65 papers were presented. 21 participants elaborated and discussed enthusiastically in terms of soil science and sustainable agriculture, land resources, regional development, soil imperovement and fertilization, crop nutrition, management of soil moisture, environmental protection etc. All these reports are the sign of new trends of soil science research in China.
  A proposal on "suggestions about sustainable agricultural development under new situation" was passed in the meeting.