

## Proposal for new Working Group in IUSS

15 July 2010

To: Prof. S. Nortcliff, Secretary General, IUSS  
Prof. A. Mermut, Chair, Division 1., IUSS  
Prof. A. McBratney, Vice Chair, Division 1., IUSS

Dear Mr. Secretary General and Division 1 officers,

On May 6<sup>th</sup> 2010 I addressed an email to Prof. Nortcliff, in which I asked for discussion in the Council, during the 19<sup>th</sup> WCSS in Brisbane. I hope my request was considered when planning the Council meeting agenda. In this email, I would like to confirm the original request with more specifics.

In September 2009, several events were organized to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference of Agrogeology and to overview the 100 years of advances in soil sciences, in Hungary. One of the events was the Conference "From the Dokuchaev School to Numerical Soil Classifications". As result of the discussion, a resolution was prepared and recommended to be addressed to the IUSS Council at the 2010 World Congress of Soil Sciences in Brisbane, Australia. Please find attached the resolution that declares that there is a need to develop common standards, methods and terminology in soil observations and investigations and a universal soil classification system and there is also a proposal for a new Working Group to coordinate the efforts.

Related topic was discussed during the IUSS Inter-Congress Council Meeting in summer 2008. I copied below item 25. from the Minutes of the Council Meeting (25. Nomenclature and Taxonomy):  
... "Paul Bertsch on behalf of the US National Committee raised that IUSS on behalf of Soil Science needs to address the problem of our lack of a common language within the Soil Science community, particularly in relation to the taxonomy of soils. There followed some discussion of the background and structure of the Soil Taxonomy and the World Reference Base, in particular stressing that WRB was originally designed to act as an 'umbrella' for National Soil Classification Systems, rather than as a specific soil classification system. 'Council recommends that IUSS through its WRB Working Group should make steps towards the establishment of uniform definitional observations and criteria and appropriate quantification within the various soil classification systems. (Proposed by Winfried Blum, seconded by Rainer Horn). "

The above two paragraphs were part of my original request for council discussion. In the meantime most of the scientists\* who participated in the wording of the "Godollo Resolution" had a formal meeting in Rome during "Digital Soil Mapping 2010" meeting (24. May, 2010) and further discussed the issue. There was a general agreement that there is a need for evaluation of current spatial soil definition and classification systems and new innovative approaches should be investigated to develop a common universally accepted system. It was also agreed that a new working group should set up to coordinate the work. It was also agreed that the development of a Universal Soil Classification (USC) may need several years, hence national systems and the official correlation system of IUSS, the WRB (World Reference Base for soil Resources) should be maintained.

Based on the above mentioned documents and meetings hereby, I would like formally propose a new Working Group of IUSS to carry out the proposed investigations and development of a universal soil classification. I also propose Jon Hempel (USDA, NRCS) to chair the working group. All participants of the Rome meeting supported this proposal and Jon Hempel accepted the nomination.

Dear Mr. General Secretary and addressed officers please put this proposal for discussion to the agenda of the Council meetings in Brisbane.

Erika Michéli  
Vice-chair of Commission 1.4 Soil Classification  
President, Hungarian Soil Science Society

\* Colleagues who participated in the Rome meeting:

M. Golden (USA), L. Montanarella (EC,JRC), Freddy Nactergaele (FAO), J. Hempel (USA), P. Schad (Germany) P. Krasilnikov (Russia), A. McBratney (Australia), A. Hartemink (ISRIC), E. Dobos and, E. Michéli Hungary)