

STATUTES OF THE ASSS

(Draft version_13082009)

PRE-AMBLE

The principle of the Universality of Science is fundamental to scientific and technical progress. This principle embodies freedom of movement, association, expression and communication for scientists, as well as equitable access to data, information and research materials. It is based on this principle that African agro-pedologists who were interested in establishing standardised methods of soil analysis and soil classification founded in 1986 the African Soil Science Society (ASSS).

During the conferences of Kampala (Uganda, 1988), Cairo (Egypt, 1990) and Ibadan (Nigeria, 1994), ASSS has gained strong leadership in soil science promotion in Africa and worldwide. Nowadays, taking into account the important role that soil science can play in addressing the issues of sustainable development, climate change, sustainable land management and food security in Africa, the present version of the Statutes of ASSS have been elaborated in 2007 after the 4th International Conference held in Accra (Ghana), to adapt the association to the new global context and challenges.

ARTICLE 1. ABOUT THE ASSS: NAME, NATURE, LOGO AND WEBSITE

CLAUSE 1. The name of the society is the AFRICA SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETY referred to as ASSS.

CLAUSE 2. The ASSS is a non-profit making scientific organization grouping scientists working in the area of soil science (and related sciences) and application of soil information in Africa.

CLAUSE 3. The logo of the ASSS is made of Africa continent with a handful of soil supporting the growth of plants. The ASSS logo shall be used on all official documents of the Society.

CLAUSE 4. The ASSS website is www.asss.online.org or www.asssland.org.

ARTICLE 2. OBJECTIVES AND AIMS OF THE ASSS

CLAUSE 5. The objectives of the ASSS shall be to promote and foster soil science in all its facets and to give support for the collaboration and cooperation amongst the Regional and National Societies of Soil Science in Africa in the pursuit of their activities.

CLAUSE 6. The ASSS shall aim at promoting studies in soil and related sciences and disseminating the acquired knowledge and technology for the benefit of the continent population. By so doing, the ASSS shall contribute to the promotion of sustainable agricultural production and environmental protection in Africa.

CLAUSE 7. Moreover, the ASSS shall facilitate information on soil resources for politics, decision makers and for the broad public in Africa, especially in view of sustainable use of natural resources, in particular soil and land. The ASSS should also provide leadership in the advancement of soil science in Africa and should advice continental Institutions in all matters pertaining to soil science in order to support their influence in the international arena.

CLAUSE 8. As a regional member of the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), The ASSS shall also aim at promoting the effective participation of member societies and of individual African soil scientists in the activities of the IUSS.

These shall be done by:

- Creating opportunities for free exchange of ideas between soil scientists in Africa and abroad;

- Advancing and disseminating knowledge, information, and practices of soil science that would address challenges and allow the wise stewardship of soil and natural resources in Africa;
- Promoting the works of its members and professionals of soil science;
- Interacting with the broader scientific community to identify emerging needs and opportunities for soil science in Africa;
- Advocating soil science education to provide a sustainable pool of expertise in the discipline;
- Promoting the public understanding of the critical role soils play in society and the environment;
- Promoting the inclusion of soil and land management issues in development policies and programs
- Acting as a consultative body on scientific issues that have a continental or international dimension;
- Leading Africa participation in the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) and international collaboration in soil science research.
- Establishing and promoting collaboration and cooperation with others bodies of similar interests;
- Fulfilling any other function that may deal with soil science related issues.

CLAUSE 9. In pursuing its objectives in respect of the rights and responsibilities of scientists, the ASSS actively upholds the principle of the Universality of Science stated in the pre-amble, and, in so doing, opposes any discrimination on the basis of such factors as ethnic origin, religion, citizenship, language, political stance, gender, sex or age. The ASSS shall not accept disruption of its own activities by statements or actions that intentionally or otherwise prevent the application of this principle.

ARTICLE 3. LANGUAGES, EXTEND AND SEAT

CLAUSE 10. English and French are the main languages of the ASSS. All documents and notifications of the ASSS shall, as much as possible, be in both languages.

CLAUSE 11. Africa shall be considered in its broadest sense. Therefore, the ASSS is assumed to be the confederation of soil science societies of the whole continent. As such, effectively active national and regional soil science societies are considered as full members (cf. bye-laws)

CLAUSE 12. The seat of the ASSS shall be the professional address of the current Secretary-General.

ARTICLE 4. ACTIVITIES

CLAUSE 13. The activities of the ASSS shall include:

- a. Arranging and facilitating meetings and conferences, principally the African Soil Science Society International Conference and the Technical meetings of ASSS;
- b. Arranging for the publication and distribution of material, relevant to the interests of the Society, and its members;
- c. Initiating and facilitating collaborative research programmes and their funding to the benefit of its members;
- d. Coordinating the related-soil science international scientific activities of its members in collaboration with IUSS and others bodies;
- e. Establishing cooperation with other related organizations;
- f. Encouraging scientific training in soil science and contributing to studies in particular fields, such as specific definitions, classifications and databases;
- g. Liaising with governments (through National and Regional adhering organisations) and continental institutions in order to advocate for more

- interest, consideration and implication of soil science knowledge in decision making;
- h. Promoting the public understanding and awareness of soil science and its applications by providing through suitable channels, information to interested parties and the public at large about progress in soil science and its impacts on society;
 - i. Establishing prizes or awards to encourage and recognize excellence in the discipline;
 - j. Representing Soil Science to a wide African audience;
 - k. Taking any other action that will advance soil science

ARTICLE 5. MEMBERSHIP

CLAUSE 14. Each Member has the obligation to support the objectives of the ASSS, uphold the principle of the universality of science, and meet its financial obligations as appropriate. The ASSS consists of several classes of members defined as follows:

- a. National Societies of Soil Science, or alternatively national organizations representing the soil scientists of that country, may join as **Full Members**. Only one organization can join from each country. Where the adhering organization is different from the National Soil Science Society, the National Society shall be a part of, or have a formal agreement with, the adhering organization. Regional associations may be formed by a group of countries that do not have a National Soil Science Society, so that the associations may become Full Members. To become a Full Member the agreed upon subscription fees must be paid as prescribed in the Bye-Laws or as negotiated.
- b. The individual members of a National Soil Science Society that is a Full Member of the ASSS, directly or through an adhering organization will be

- Members** of the ASSS. They will pay no direct subscription, because the subscription of the National Society or other adhering organization will be considered to cover them. They will have rights to attend all ASSS conferences and meetings, to receive ASSS publications through their National Societies or Regional Associations, and to vote for Divisional, Commission and Working Group officers.
- c. Individuals may have **Individual Membership** and retain their link directly with the ASSS, if they reside in a country or region that is not a Full Member of the ASSS. They will have the same rights as **Members**, but will receive publications directly from the ASSS, and will pay a subscription as defined in the Bye-laws.
 - d. Small National Societies of Soil Science, societies or associations for related disciplines, may be admitted as **Associate Members**. They will not have a vote or seat in the General Assembly, but their members will have all other rights as **Members**. Associate Members will pay a subscription fee as defined in the Bye-laws.
 - e. Organizations or individuals that wish to support soil science in various ways may become **Sustaining Members**. This carries no voting rights. They will pay a subscription fee as defined in the Bye-laws.
 - f. **Student Members**: to be qualified for this category, a person shall be enrolled in a post-secondary school program in/or related to soil science. He/she will pay a subscription fee as defined in the Bye-laws.
 - g. Membership in the Society shall be suspended if subscriptions are more than 2 year in arrears, or delay negotiated with the Treasurer in extenuating circumstances, payment becoming due on 1st January each year. If back payment is made the suspension will be withdrawn.

- h. **Honorary Members** will be elected by the General Assembly, and shall be soil scientists of great distinction and international reputation, who have given service to the ASSS and/or the ASSS. The number of Honorary Members that can be elected every 2 years at the Inter-conference meeting shall not exceed 10. The nominations for Honorary Membership shall be made with supporting documentation as defined in the Bye-Laws. Honorary members are appointed for life.
- i. Exceptionally, any other grouping of institutions acceptable to ASSS may be admitted to membership on a case by case basis.
- j. A Member of any status can be expelled on a 2/3 vote of the General Assembly if the member has broken the Statutes of the ASSS, or has brought it into disrepute, or has been persistently in arrears with subscriptions.
- k. **Observers:** A Member that has failed to fulfill its financial obligations shall only have Observer status. Observers shall be expected to resume full membership in ASSS as soon as possible. Normally no Observer shall be allowed to remain so for more than 2 years. Observers shall not have voting rights.

ARTICLE 6. THE STRUCTURE OF THE ASSS

CLAUSE 15. The decision making bodies of the ASSS shall be:

- a. The General Assembly
- b. The Executive Bureau
- c. The Executive Committee

The composition and functions of these bodies are defined in sections G, H, and I.

ARTICLE 7. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CLAUSE 16. The General Assembly is the highest authority of the ASSS and consists of the Executive Committee, one accredited representative from each full national Society member, two representatives from individual members, and 2 representatives of honorary members. **Any ASSS member that can be present physically at the general Assembly meeting can participate to the deliberation.**

CLAUSE 17. The General Assembly carries the general responsibility for the efficient functioning and the success of the ASSS. It shall, as appropriate and generally after recommendations from the Executive Committee:

- a. determine general policy;
- b. review the day-to-day administration of ASSS as overseen by the Executive Committee since the end of the previous ordinary session of the General Assembly;
- c. Determine the country and venue of ASSS International Conference. The selection should take place at least 2 years before the date of the International Conference.
- d. Appoint Officers of the Executive Bureau and if necessary renew or terminate their appointments.
- e. Determine the subscriptions fee and charges for all classes of Members
- f. Discuss and determine changes to the Division/Commission structure of the ASSS, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.
- g. Set policy guidelines for the Bureau and Executive Committee, for action during the inter-conference period.
- h. initiate scientific programmes and decide on future priorities for scientific activities of ASSS, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee;
- i. Establish Review Groups and Task Forces and provide terms of reference for them to examine scientific, political, financial, or administrative issues affecting the Society, and to decide action on the basis of their reports.

- j. Analyse the reports of the Secretary General and the audited accounts of the Treasurer, and take appropriate action.
- k. Elect Honorary Members.
- l. Establish, the Electoral Committee that oversees the elections of the ASSS upon proposition of the Executive Bureau.
- m. Ratify and publish the results of elections.
- n. Approve and modify the Statutes and Bye-Laws of the ASSS for the smooth operation of the Society.
- o. Ratify the creation of whatever bodies it may deem necessary for the scientific, educational and administrative work of ASSS, taking into account any relevant recommendations of the Executive Bureau since the previous session of the General Assembly.
- p. approve the dissolution of any ASSS-created body taking into account any relevant recommendations of the Executive Bureau;
- q. terminate, if it so decides, the status of any Member, Observer or Associate of ASSS which has failed to fulfill any of its obligations, or with which the association is no longer appropriate;

CLAUSE 18. An ordinary session of the General Assembly shall normally be held every 2 years during the ASSS International Conference, at a place and date determined by the General Assembly during the previous ordinary session or, failing that, by the Executive Bureau. The venue of the International conference shall be the place for holding the ordinary session.

CLAUSE 19. When required, the General Assembly is empowered to make decisions by means of electronic or postal ballot.

ARTICLE 8. THE EXECUTIVE BUREAU

CLAUSE 20. The affairs of the ASSS shall be managed by a bureau of 08 members, herein named members of the Executive Bureau and consisting of:

- a. A President
- b. A Vice-President
- c. A Secretary General
- d. A Vice Secretary General
- e. A Treasurer
- f. A Vice Treasurer
- g. The Immediate Past-President of the ASSS
- h. An Ex-Officio

CLAUSE 21. Members of the Executive Bureau, except for the Past-president, shall be elected by the General Assembly under the conditions described in the Bye-laws.

CLAUSE 22. The functions of the Bureau are as follows:

- a. Execute the objectives and resolutions of the ASSS
- b. Decides on applications for membership and exercises discipline
- c. Keep and maintain a current Register of Members
- d. Prepare the business meetings of the ASSS, as proposed by the Secretariat
- e. Oversees the finances of ASSS, as managed by the Treasurer
- f. Ensure the production and dissemination of information and publications to members, as managed by the Secretariat
- g. Assists in the creations and development of National Soil Science Societies
- h. Represents ASSS at international audience and maintains contacts with National soil science societies, IUSS and other unions and organisations.

CLAUSE 23. The Executive Bureau meets normally once a year. Extraordinary meeting can be organized.

CLAUSE 24. Members of the Executive Bureau are elected for one term of 2 years renewable once.

ARTICLE 9. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CLAUSE 25. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Executive Bureau and the chairpersons of the Divisions and standing committees of the ASSS.

- a. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for all scientific activities of the ASSS, including oversight of the Divisional structures, the work of scientific Review Groups or Task Forces, Working Groups, scientific liaison and collaboration, and any other actions required on scientific grounds.
- b. The Executive Committee shall normally meet at Technical session every two years in between the international Conferences or at least two days in prior to the ASSS International Conference and during this meeting. The President of the Society shall chair the Executive Committee, unless he or she has delegated his or her authority to a member of the Bureau for a specific occasion.
- c. The Executive Committee shall consider all formal proposals for changes in the ASSS structures, and shall pass them to the General Assembly for decision, with their recommendation for action or rejection. All proposals should be sent to the Executive Committee at least 3 months in advance of the next General Assembly meeting by the Secretary General.
- d. The Executive Committee shall make recommendations to the General Assembly concerning candidates for Honorary Membership, on the basis of proposals made by Full Members.

- e. The Executive Committee shall review all Recommendations/Resolutions at their meetings and pass them to the General Assembly with their suggestion for approval or rejection.
- f. The activity of all Working Groups will be reviewed by the Executive Committee at their meetings; a recommendation will be made to the General Assembly concerning the status and activities of each Working Group and whether it should be maintained or terminated.
- g. In case the General Assembly cannot meet to deal with urgent business, the Executive Committee shall act in its capacity, submitting such action to the General Assembly at its next meeting for ratification. The Executive Committee may take needed action by electronic or postal means as needed.

ARTICLE 10. FINANCE AND PROFITS OF THE ASSS

CLAUSE 26. The funds of the ASSS are obtained from:

- 1. The dues of Members
- 2. The subventions, donations and other financial support accepted by the Executive Bureau on behalf of ASSS
- 3. Any other funds generated or received through the ASSS activities

CLAUSE 27. Unless otherwise ordered by the Executive Bureau, the fiscal year of the ASSS extends from January 1 to December 31 of that year.

CLAUSE 28. Each member of ASSS shall pay adhering fee at entry and annual dues as defined in the bye-laws.

CLAUSE 29. The ASSS funds are in care of the Treasurer acting in consultation with the Secretary General. The Treasurer shall obtain legal access to and sign-

CLAUSE 30. Two auditors shall be appointed by the General Assembly to audit the accounts of the ASSS.

ARTICLE 11. AMENDMENTS OF THE STATUTES

CLAUSE 31. No change may be made in the Statutes except with the approval of the General Assembly by two-thirds of the votes cast by the Members taking part in the vote. Introduction of changes in the Statutes must follow the time limitations set in the Bye-laws. Changes to the Statutes are effective at the end of the General Assembly adopting them, unless otherwise specified by a Resolution of the General Assembly.

CLAUSE 32. In case of conflict, the English version of these Statutes shall prevail.

Revised and approved by the
5th General Assembly of ASSS, Cameroon,2009