

Soil Week looks to build on international goals

By Roz Bulleid

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International efforts to address soil degradation should be better coordinated and broad enough to include water, energy and food issues, says a draft paper from the European Commission, UN and other participants in Global Soil Week.

Delegates at the meeting, which began in Berlin on Monday, aim to develop joint measures to help implement existing soil commitments.

This includes developing a series of targets for 2030 under the [Rio+20](#) goal of “a land degradation neutral world within the context of sustainable development”.

For example, a [document](#) accompanying the draft 'agenda for action' calls for 50% reductions in the annual rate of land degradation and urban sprawl rates.

Global Soil Week delegates will also explore whether to extend the UN [convention](#) to combat desertification beyond desert areas.

They will also talk about the need for EU measures protecting soils. The commission's 2006 proposal for a soil directive is still blocked by member states and [may be replaced](#) with another initiative if Brussels cannot find a way forward.

On Monday, green group EEB and the German league for nature and the environment (DNR) called on the German government, which is one of the partners of Global Soil Week but also one of the [blocking](#) countries, to change its stance.

Other commitments in the draft agenda for action include sustainable land management, improved research on soil degradation, better integration of that research into policy making, and efforts to raise public awareness.

The meeting runs until Thursday. The final version of the agenda for action will be issued once all the comments made during the event have been incorporated.

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Follow-up:

Draft '[agenda for action](#)' (http://globalsoilweek.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/GSW_Agenda_for_Action_Draft_web.pdf) , proposed [sub-targets](#) (<http://globalsoilweek.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Soils-and-Land-in-the-SDGs-and-the-Post-2015-Development-Agenda-A-proposal-for-a-Land-Degradation-Neutral-World-goal-and-targets.pdf>) for the Rio+20 sustainable development goal, Global Soil Week [website](#) (http://globalsoilweek.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/GSW_Agenda_for_Action_Draft_web.pdf) and [press release](#) (<http://www.eeb.org/index.cfm/news-events/news/germany-urged-to-stop-blocking-european-action-on-soil-during-global-soil-week/>) from EEB and DNR

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