News & Announcements

International Efforts in the Use and Application of Soil Taxonomy
The Soil Management Support Services

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Introduction

Agricultural development efforts throughout the world, especially in the less developed countries (LDCs), call for more and accurate information on soils and land use. The urgency for such information is highlighted by scenarios of dwindling global food supplies and soaring population in the next few decades. Economic inflation, arising in large part from oil price hikes, is a major stimulus to efforts to LDC governments to seek self-sufficiency in food and fiber production at a rate faster than in previous decades. Many LDCs realize that they cannot wait for local research efforts to provide answers. Their immediate and urgent requirement is for technology transfer from other LDCs with similar agro-ecological conditions or from other sources.

Two federal agencies, the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) of the United States Department of Agriculture and the State Department’s Agency for International Development (AID), have played a significant role in projects for agricultural technical assistance to LDCs. In September 1979, SCS and AID entered into a participating agency service agreement (PASA) to coordinate their assistance efforts, particularly in soil survey, classification, and management. The PASA complements other efforts of each agency. The assistance project is called the Soil Management Support Services (SMSS).

The Purpose of SMSS

Agro-technology transfer should be site specific and even soil specific. Consequently, the purpose of SMSS is to develop the prerequisites for soil-based agro-technology transfer. Effective international transfer of technology requires a common language, and SMSS uses Soil Taxonomy (Soil Survey Staff, 1975) as the vehicle for this international transfer.

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