



SSSA—An international professional society

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Even though our name is the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA), we should never forget that we are an *international* scientific society that fosters the transfer of

knowledge and practices to sustain *global* soils (www.soils.org/about-society). As our population faces new challenges of food security, climate change, and environmental management, the importance of sharing knowledge and practices at an international scale cannot be overemphasized. In February, the SSSA Board voted to work with ASA, CSSA, and the Agronomic Science Foundation to establish a joint task force on international initiatives. This task force is charged with identifying and evaluating opportunities for international activities that will advance our science and that can engage and serve an international audience. These efforts are among the many being undertaken by the Societies to execute our strategic plans with the goal of expanding and broadening the diversity of our membership and helping our Societies grow.

Bilateral Collaborations, International Awards

Parallel to that cross-Society approach, the SSSA Board has endorsed an agreement, proposed initially by the Soil Science Society of China (SSSC), to explore the potential for new bilateral collaborations. Among the topics we will investigate with SSSC are (1) how to host joint meetings, symposia, or workshops; (2) how to offer joint membership in the two societies; (3) how to facilitate exchange of students and other scholars; and (4) how to increase access to the publications of both societies. Over the coming months, I will be working with my counterpart at SSSC, President Jiabao Zhang, as well as with our board, our members, and our external partners to determine how to turn these goals into meaningful realities. The potential benefits for both societies are many, including the opportunity for students and professionals to learn about agricultural and environmental issues from multicultural perspectives. We have much to learn together, and our scientific and professional efforts will be stronger as we promote communication and collaboration.

Other international efforts that we support include awards such as the America–New Zealand Soil Science Professional Exchange Fund (S576), the International Soil Science Award (S479), and two new awards this year: the Emerging Leader for African Agricultural Transformation (ACS469) and the Visionary Scientist for African Agriculture (ACS469). Both new awards are sponsored by OCP North America (www.ocpna.com), a recently created subsidiary of the OCP Group (www.ocpna.com), a global plant nutrition company headquartered in Morocco. These two awards will be presented to agronomic, crop, or soil scientists who have made an impact on soil fertility, crop nutrition, agronomy, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and value chain optimization. In addition to a nice check, the awardees will also get a year of membership in SSSA, ASA, and CSSA. It is exciting and humbling to see the quality of work that is being done to address some of the challenges in Africa.

International Membership, Annual Meeting Theme

SSSA is also a member of the International Union of Soil Science (IUSS; www.iuss.org), and several of our members are very active in that organization. Many of our members conduct research and outreach around the world to understand and help promote practices to sustain our precious soil resource. As the pandemic draws to a close—hopefully soon—we look forward to traveling more extensively and working in person here and abroad.

This year, the SSSA–ASA–CSSA Annual Meeting shares an international theme with the United Nations—“A Creative Economy for Sustainable Development.” Life during the COVID pandemic has certainly taught us all how to be more creative, and we are looking forward to hearing how your research, teaching, and outreach activities evolved and developed. On 8 April, the SSSA, ASA, and CSSA Boards of Directors jointly voted to host the Annual Meeting in person on 7–10 November in Salt Lake City, UT.

Thanks to my fellow Board Representative Michael Thompson for his help in articulating the potential benefits of our international efforts, and thank you ALL for your continued service on various committees and task forces in SSSA. If there is anything that you would be interested in working on or helping to promote, please feel free to contact me at [Send Message](#).

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