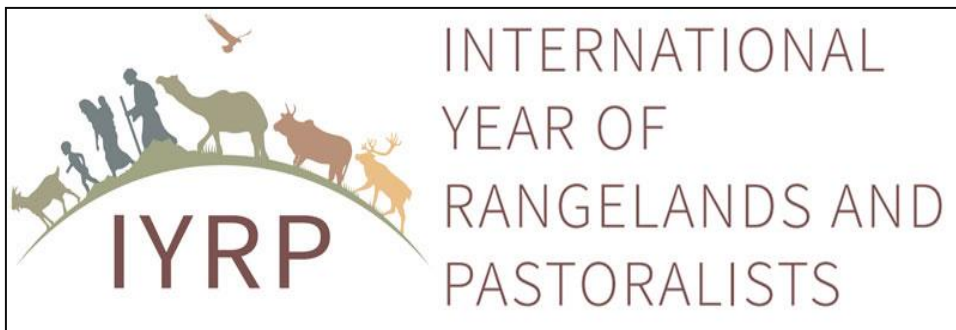


2026 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS PROMOTING THEIR VALUE FOR FOOD SECURITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

In March 2022 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Resolution to declare 2026 the [International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists \(IYRP\)](#) to increase global awareness of their importance for food security and ecosystem services.



[The resolution represents a success of an initiative that began in 2019, when the Government of Mongolia decided to submit a proposal to the United Nations](#) to declare this International year and elaborated a first proposal, following the complex official diplomatic process until the final approval of the resolution.

[As highlighted in the Mongolian Government proposal](#) “More than half of the Earth’s land surface is classified as rangeland, those lands on which the indigenous vegetation is predominantly grasses, forbs or shrubs that are or can be grazed, and which are used as a natural ecosystem for raising grazing livestock and wildlife. The health, productivity and environmental sustainability of these lands are directly critical to the livelihoods and cultures of more than 500 million pastoralists, including agro-pastoralists, rangers, and animal keepers around the world. Billions more benefit from these systems for tourism, wildlife and biodiversity, meat and milk and other agricultural products, mining, renewable energy and other uses”.

Within the framework of sustainable practices, pastoralism is increasingly recognized as a production system that plays a major role in safeguarding ecosystems and biodiversity and a consistent *IYRP International Support Group* was formed to promote this important initiative of the Mongolian Government. The International Support Group of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists IYRP has been created inviting all interested actors to support Mongolia’s proposal, joining the worldwide initiative.

The IYRP International Support Group includes, among others, UN Environment, the Food and Agriculture Organization FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), [the International Land Coalition Partners](#), the [International Livestock Research Institute \(ILRI\)](#), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), members of the [Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock \(GASL\)](#). The IYRP Group has coordinated numerous meetings and events, and has worked with members to gain the support of their respective governments for the IYRP.

[Currently 102 countries and 363 organizations from every continent have formally endorsed the proposal to celebrate the IYRP in 2026.](#) In particular the Governments of 61 countries supported the Mongolia’s proposal for IYRP co-sponsoring the Resolution and 23

International Year
of Rangelands and Pastoralists
Join the Worldwide Initiative



Mongolian goat herder
(Photo credit: PRIME/Katly Lynch)



Governments, including Afghanistan, Australia, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Canada, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, Russian Federation, Serbia, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Uganda and USA send official support letters to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of the Mongolia.

According to the proposal, the objective of celebrating IYRP 2026 is twofold:

- To focus world attention on the role that pastoralists play in food security, poverty eradication, environmental services and sustainable natural resource use, thereby increasing global understanding and action to support pastoralists and deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- To enhance dialogue among different actors and to support pastoralists in collaborating with others and making themselves seen, heard and included in policymaking and decision-making that shape their everyday lives, from the local community level to global fora.

The International Support Group, in collaboration with all the actors involved, is currently realizing a set of activities for the 2026 celebrations, which are presented on the IYRPG website, developed by the [University of Arizona](#) with support from the [Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism \(CELEP\)](#), the [JASIL Environment and Development Association](#), the [Mongolian Ministry of Food, Agriculture & Light Industry \(MoFALI\)](#) and the [Rangelands Partnership](#).

An important step in the approval process of the IYRPG took place in December 2020, when the Committee on Agriculture of the [UN's Food and Agriculture Organization FAO](#) endorsed the proposal to declare 2026 as the International Year of Rangeland and Pastoralism with a specific Council Resolution. FAO has been managing for many years the [Pastoralist Knowledge Hub](#) in collaboration with partners working towards sustainable pastoralism, including multilateral agencies, public institutions, academia, and civil society organizations.

The following key facts are highlighted in the FAO Hub's webpage:

- About 1 billion animals worldwide are herded by pastoralists. These include sheep, goats, cattle, camels, yaks, horses and reindeers.
- 65% of meat, and 70% of milk sold on local markets in the Sahel region come from pastoral systems.
- Pastoralists are key to the food security in such areas as drylands, highlands, wetlands, and shrublands where crop production is difficult.
- Pastoralists promote rangeland health by improving soil fertility, conserving biodiversity, managing fires and accelerating nutrient cycling.
- Pastoralists follow customary and community-based rangeland management practices over a range of land tenure types.
- Pastoralists employ strategic mobility to adapt to variable climatic conditions.
- Pastoralism is not just a livelihood, but also a cultural system closely linked to its natural environment. Pastoralists have a treasure of local and indigenous knowledge.
- Pastoralist women have varied roles in the pastoral household, caring for livestock, land and sometimes finances.



FAO Council resolution also points to the link between the IYRP, the 2019-2028 UN Decade of Family Farming and the 2021-2030 UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and acknowledges that efforts to achieve sustainable rangelands and pastoralism could help realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Currently, the IYRP International Support Group is organized to work through a series of 10 thematic Working Groups and a [summary of the work of the groups was drawn up in August 2024](#). In addition, the [IYRP International Support Group adopted 12 global themes for the IYRP](#), with the goal to help achieve, during the year, the best possible world-wide recognition of the value and contributions of rangelands and pastoralists to global society, with the hope that this would influence and launch beneficial country policies, legislation, programs and development and research initiatives that would fill knowledge gaps and achieve sustainability of rangelands and pastoral systems.

Scientific, educational and outreach materials and information that directly relate to the IYRP initiative are available in the [Resources section of the IYRPG website](#) for all stakeholders interested in participating. Other documents and articles highlighting the relevance of sustainable pastoral practices not only to protect human, animal and environmental health and well-being, but also to help overcome some of the greatest global challenges can also be found on the website and in information tools managed by IYRP International Support Group participants.

The IYRP website invites all interested stakeholders to support Mongolia's proposal for the International Year of Grasslands and Pastoralists, joining the global initiative

To know more

[International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists \(IYRP\)](#)

[Resolution of the General Assembly of United Nations – March 2022](#)

[Mongolian Government proposal 2019](#)

[Partners of IYRP](#)

[IYRPG in ILRI-CGIAR website](#)

[IYRP in landcoalition.org website](#)

[FAO Council and IYRPG - 2020](#)

[FAO Pastoralist Knowledge Hub](#)

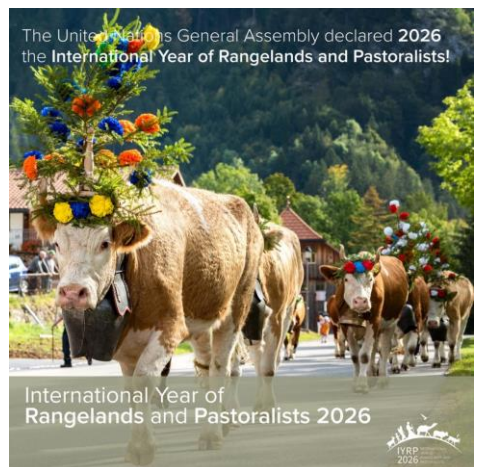
[FAO Pastoralist Knowledge Hub brochure](#)

[IYRP in UN Environment website](#)

[Publication on pastoralism and rangelands 2019 by UN Environment and GRID Arendal in gridarendal website](#)

[Maps in gridarendal website](#)

[Agroecology in Extensive Rangeland Pastoralism in the Gobi Desert of Mongolia in FAO website](#)



[Transhumance declared by UNESCO Intangible Heritage](#)

[IYRP in European Shepherds Network website](#)

[Global IYRP Resources](#)

[IYRP Working Groups](#)

