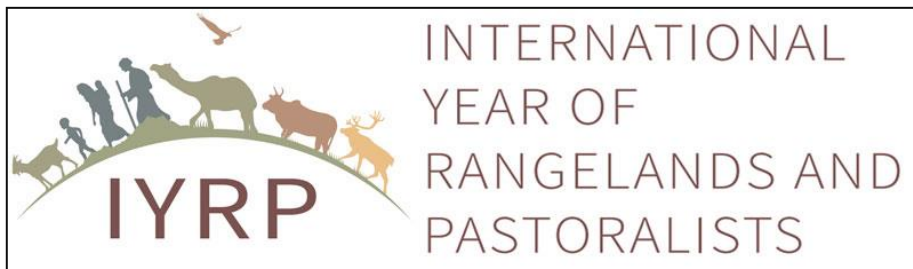


# 2026 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS

## NEWS FROM THE IYRP PROPOSAL

The proposal of the Mongolian Government to declare in 2026 an [International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists \(IYRP\)](#) is successfully following its process of engaging new sponsors internationally.



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 International Support Group was formed in 2019 to promote this important initiative of the Mongolian Government. This Group has coordinated numerous meetings and events, and has worked with its members to gain the support of their respective governments for the IYRP.

[By June 2021, 34 Governments and 291 organizations](#) including pastoralist associations, NGOs, research and academic institutes from every continent and multilateral organizations have formally expressed their support for the initiative. In the IYRP website the [list of international and national organizations backing the IYRP is available](#).

Furthermore, in May 2021 the first-ever [Global Rangelands Atlas](#) has been launched to document the enormous environmental, economic and social value of rangelands as well as their different ecosystems. The Rangelands Atlas is a collaborative initiative of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and the global Rangelands Initiative of the International Land Coalition (ILC). This Atlas, which has been developed as a key reference document for the [UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration](#), provides at the same time key elements and data for all actors interested to support the initiative of the *2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists*.

In 2019, the Mongolian Government began to petition the United Nations to declare an *International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists* to increase global awareness of their importance for food security and ecosystem services. [The proposal has been following the complex official diplomatic process to be considered](#) and the final approval of the resolution by the UN General Assembly is expected in 2021.

[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

International Year  
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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”.

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

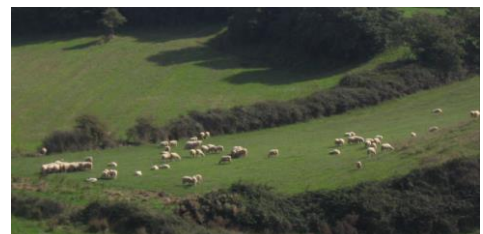
- To focus world attention on the role that pastoralists play in food security, poverty eradication, environmental services and sustainable natural resource use, thereby increasing global understanding and action to support pastoralists and deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- To enhance 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.

In December 2020, 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](#). FAO Council resolution points to the link between the IYRP, the 2019-2028 UN Decade of Family Farming, the 2021-2030 UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and highlights that sustainable rangelands and pastoralism practices could help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

FAO has been managing for many years the [Pastoralist Knowledge Hub](#) working towards sustainable pastoralism, [in collaboration with partners](#) including multilateral agencies, public institutions, academia, and civil society organizations. The following key facts are highlighted in the Hub's webpage:

- About 1 billion animals worldwide are herded by pastoralists. These include sheep, goats, cattle, camels, yaks, horses and reindeer.
- 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.

In the [Resources section of the IYRPG website](#) scientific, educational and outreach materials and information that refer directly to the IYRP initiative are available for all actors interested to participate. Other documents and articles highlighting the relevance of sustainable practices of pastoralism in protecting not only human, animal and environmental well-being and health, but also helping to overcome some of the greatest global challenges, can also be found on the websites of the participants in the IYRP proposal.



The IYRP website invites all interested actors to support Mongolia's proposal for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, joining the worldwide initiative.

### To know more

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

[Mongolian proposal for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists - 2019](#)

[Partners of IYRP](#)

[IYRP in ILRI-CGIAR website](#)

[IYRP in globalrangelands.org website](#)

[IYRP in landcoalition.org website](#)

[Rangelands in landportal.org website](#)

[FAO Council and IYRPG - 2020](#)

[FAO Pastoralist Knowledge Hub brochure](#)

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

[IYRP in UN Environment website](#)

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

[Maps in gridarendal website](#)

[Transhumance declared by UNESCO in 2019 as Intangible Heritage of Humanity](#)

[IYRP and European Shepherds Network website](#)

[Global Rangeland Atlas Document](#)

[Global Rangelands Atlas – Case studies](#)

[Rangeland Atlas in UNEP website](#)

[Rangelands Atlas in globallandscapesforum website](#)

