Kathmandu Declaration of Pastoralist Women

The Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women

26–29 May 2026, Kathmandu, Nepal

Our Planet, Our Land, Our Livestock

We, the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist women gathered here in **Kathmandu from 26 – 29th May 2026,** united across the world and the different continents, declare that pastoralism is not of the past but a solution for the future and that pastoralist women are at the heart of the solution. We stand up and speak out in one voice to claim our space, shape our future, and transform our planet.

Although reliable data are lacking, it is estimated that **pastoralism is practised by between 200 and 500 million people worldwide,** encompassing nomadic communities, transhumant herders, and agro-pastoralists (UNEP, 2015), managing around 1 billion animals, and is central to sustainable food systems, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, cultural heritage, identity and continuity. Pastoralism is the most widespread land use on Earth, and the rangelands we live on and steward cover over half of the Earth's land surface. We therefore call upon international, national, local, and customary leaders and institutions; civil society organizations; and women's groups to acknowledge the essential role of pastoralist women in caring for the planet and the environment, and contributing to national and regional economies, social well-being, peace-making, and climate resilience by nurturing land, livestock, and communities.

Recognising the diversity and continuum of pastoral systems across regions, shaped by ecological conditions, cultural traditions, governance systems, and regional economies, we call for extensive, land-based pastoral practices to be properly valued and supported for their unique contributions through legislation, climate and livestock policies, and through public investment. While our production systems may differ across regions, we share the same commitment to caring for the land, our animals, our communities and the territories and ecosystems that sustain us and recognize that our diversity strengthens the concept of pastoralism by making it more representative of the women it seeks to serve. Grounded in local and Indigenous pastoralist knowledge, these practices use herd mobility to make sustainable and productive use of natural vegetation over time (seasons) and across landscapes, including in areas where crop cultivation is limited. They support animal and human wellbeing, diverse locally adapted breeds (resilient to local conditions and disease), food sovereignty and local food cultures.

We pastoralist women will proudly mentor, inspire and empower the next generation to build a resilient future in pastoralism, ensuring the enduring legacy of family, culture and sustainable stewardship of the world's rangelands.

We build on the following key themes:

1. **Recognition, Rights and Self-Determination**
2. **Mobility and Land Rights**
3. **Economy, Food Sovereignty, Livelihoods, and Working Conditions**
4. **Environment and Climate Justice**
5. **Pastoralist Women's Knowledge, Research, Learning and Intergenerational Continuity**
6. **Health, Education, Social Support, Infrastructure and Technology**
7. **Safety, Security and Dignity**
8. **Representation and Decision-Making**
9. **Peace-Building and Conflict Resolution**
10. **Monitoring and Accountability**

1. Recognition, Rights and Self-Determination

1.1 **Recognize** the invaluable contributions of pastoralist women as herders, as livestock keepers, as stewards of land, environment, ecological services, and climate, as caregivers, as strategists, as innovators, as peace-builders, and as human rights and environmental defenders.

1.2 **Ensure** that pastoralist women's inherent rights are respected and that we are afforded equal access to land, livestock, financial services, education, and information and equal opportunities to participate in decisions that affect us and our families and communities. Review and, where necessary, revoke laws that discriminate against pastoralism and pastoralist women.

1.3 **Respect, recognise, promote, and protect** pastoralist communities' rights, based on the fundamental right to self-determination provided for in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

1.4 **Extend the principle of equal rights and self-determination** not only to Indigenous pastoralist communities but also to other groups who may have entered pastoralism more recently.

1.5 **Promote and protect** the rights of pastoralist women in a manner that respects and safeguards the rights of all people.

1.6 **Implement** legal instruments, mechanisms and processes that promote the rights of pastoralist women and girls across all UN conventions and commissions (UNCCD, UNFCCC, UNCBD, CSW).

1.7 **Implement and enforce** existing laws and policies that support pastoralist women and establish our legal rights.

2. Mobility and Land Rights

2.1 **Uphold** pastoralist women's rights to inherit and own land and implement supportive laws, policies, and customary reforms to guarantee these rights.

2.2 **Officially recognize** the rights of pastoralist communities to access and sustainably manage rangelands, water and other natural resources.

2.3 **Prevent, prohibit and halt** laws, policies, land speculation and irresponsible and unjust development projects that dispossess pastoralist communities, degrade pastoral lands, restrict mobility, undermine important sacred and cultural sites, threaten pastoralist livelihoods or damage the natural resources on which they depend. These include, among others, mining, energy, carbon offset projects and large-scale renewable energy developments such as wind and solar installations, transmission infrastructure, polluting factories and industries, the expansion of crop agriculture into pastoral lands, and the imposition of wildlife reserves and other protected areas that restrict pastoralists' access to and sustainable use of land and natural resources.

2.4 **Pastoralist women must have the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)** and meaningful participation in all decisions affecting our lands, waters, territories, mobility routes, livelihoods and cultural heritage.

2.5 **Recognize pastoralist mobility (transhumant, nomadic, and micro mobility), including seasonal grazing systems and traditional migration routes, as a fundamental right,** which should be protected and not criminalized. When designing regional and international policies, treaties and investment projects, respect and recognise traditional grazing territories and migration patterns. Do not build walls or barriers- physical or artificial- that deny access to grazing, water, sacred sites or markets and that negatively affect pastoralist livelihoods and wellbeing.

2.6 **Account** for the transborder movement of pastoralists, especially in conflict zones, and provide help in coordinating safe movement across difficult borders.

2.7 **Recognize, respect, and protect** customary land tenure systems and the mobility rights of pastoralist communities as essential components of sustainable pastoralism. Where appropriate, identify, safeguard, and maintain pastoralist migration routes and livestock corridors, including those traversing urban and peri-urban areas, in close partnership with pastoralist communities and their representative organizations. Such measures should facilitate safe and equitable seasonal mobility while ensuring continued access to grazing lands, water resources, and other essential natural resources, in accordance with national legislation and applicable international human rights standards.

3. Economy, Food Sovereignty, Livelihoods, and Working Conditions

3.1 **Recognise and support** pastoralist women's care work, which takes place within challenging contexts - in remote areas, often on the frontlines of climate change, with limited access to social services. Our private life, social life and working life are intertwined and determine how deeply we are capable of being involved in everything.

3.2 **Recognise and support** the community-based social economy of many pastoralist communities, which draws on our own internal ways of doing things, such as caring for the local area, mutual support and collective work, which helps to strengthen our communities.

3.3 **Design and implement** proactive policies that support generational succession and young women's involvement in pastoralist systems.

3.4 **Support** us in defending and achieving food sovereignty and ensuring food security, (especially during times of crisis). As pastoralist women, we need control over our livestock, production systems and products, and to make decisions about the nutrition of our families and animals. For this we need secure access to resources, including traditional grazing lands and watering points.

3.5 **Include** pastoralist women in decision-making at all economic levels, from production systems and ownership to benefitting from the profits of our production.

3.6 **Recognize and support** the multiple contributions of pastoralist systems, including adding value through nature and climate positive practices, increasing biodiversity, and conserving the genetic diversity of domesticated species.

3.7 **Support** the development of pastoralist value chains and the promotion of pastoralists' products and conducive local and global markets. This includes processing, storage, certification, product branding, marketing, and improved market access. Strengthening value chains will enhance women's economic opportunities, increase household incomes, and improve the long-term sustainability of pastoral livelihoods.

3.8 **Ensure** that raw materials can remain in the hands of women, to permit local value addition if desired.

3.9 **Facilitate and encourage** local processing, direct and on-farm sales, and provide supporting infrastructure such as local and mobile dairy and meat processing facilities.

3.10 **Encourage responsible and fair use** of mechanisms such as nature repair markets and payment for ecosystem services for the benefits provided by extensive livestock farming (fire prevention, seed dispersal, soil fertilisation, rural population retention, promotion of biodiversity, etc.).

3.11 **Design and implement** financial systems, credit facilities, insurance schemes and investment opportunities that are dynamic and flexible to cater to pastoralist women's needs and youth-led pastoral initiatives.

4. Environment and Climate Justice

4.1 **Recognise** pastoralism as a biodiversity- and climate-compatible and climate-adaptive production system and ensure the meaningful participation of pastoralist women in national climate and biodiversity action planning (NAPs, NDCs) and climate governance.

4.2 **Acknowledge and strengthen** the leadership and contributions of pastoralist women across diverse pastoral and grazing systems in the sustainable management, restoration, monitoring, and governance of rangelands, ensuring that our knowledge, experience, and leadership are reflected in policies and decision-making.

4.3 **Protect and restore** degraded rangelands in partnership with pastoralist communities by protecting native vegetation and encouraging community-led rehabilitation initiatives. This can be done **by supporting** community-led rangeland restoration programs that include pastoralist women in their design and governance.

4.4 **Promote** sustainable grazing practices, ecosystem restoration and the **prevention** of land degradation, desertification and the spread of invasive species.

4.5 **Promote** integrated and participatory rangeland management approaches that combine scientific knowledge with Indigenous and local knowledge systems to improve ecosystem health and pastoral livelihoods.

4.6 **Increase** investments in water management, rainwater harvesting, and rangeland restoration.

4.7 **Acknowledge** that climate change impacts pastoralists, Indigenous communities and pastoralist women disproportionately and recognize that those who are historically least responsible for climate change often bear its worst impacts.

4.8 **Ensure** that climate, conservation and development policies do not undermine pastoralists' access to critical pastoral resources and our customary systems of sustainable land stewardship. **Establish safeguards** to identify and prevent irreversible impacts on pastoralist lands, mobility systems and livelihoods.

4.9 **Implement** climate risk assessment as a basis for planning and implementing climate adaptation measures. Such assessments should take into account the specific characteristics of different rangeland ecosystems, including mountain pastures, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts, to ensure evidence-based and locally adapted/developed adaptation planning.

4.10 **Design and implement** climate adaptation and mitigation strategies that account for how climate change affects men and women differently and help strengthen the resilience of pastoralist communities.

4.11 **Ensure** climate justice for Indigenous groups and pastoralist communities disproportionately affected by climate change, including glacier melt and loss of rangelands and grazing land, while recognizing their contributions to the stewardship and resilience of these ecosystems.

4.12 **Make provisions for** compensation and support after climate extreme events and climate disasters especially for communities and groups who are disproportionately affected.

4.13 **Make** climate early warning systems accessible to mobile communities by making them available in local languages and broadcasting them on local channels.

5. Pastoralist Women's Knowledge, Research, Learning and Intergenerational Continuity

5.1 **Appreciate** and value pastoralist women's unique knowledge. As producers and caregivers, we manage, solve problems, strategize, and network to improve livelihoods in many different ways. We call for inclusion of pastoralist women's knowledge and research in policy-making processes and programs through pastoralist women's active participation in those processes.

5.2 **Facilitate** the preservation, documentation, and transmission of traditional knowledge systems and cultural practices across generations, assuring that Indigenous and pastoral communities retain control over our knowledge. **Develop** policies to safeguard local cultures and identities, and to promote women's wisdom and dignity.

5.3 **Enable** the participation of pastoralist women in capacity building in different spheres with the focus on adapting to pastoralist women's needs, not the other way around.

5.4 **Provide** capacity development for pastoralist women through education and training in climate risk assessment, climate adaptation planning, and sustainable natural resource management to enable women to actively participate in decision-making processes, identify and respond proactively to climate-related risks, support climate adaptation planning, reduce risks to lives and livelihoods, and to strengthen the resilience of our families and pastoral communities.

5.5 **Encourage pastoralist women-led and-designed** research, and respect our data sovereignty by ensuring data is returned to and controlled by the community.

5.6 **Recognize and promote** pastoralist women as equal partners and co-researchers in the generation, documentation, and application of knowledge by ensuring our meaningful participation in defining research priorities, designing methodologies, collecting and interpreting data, and determining how research findings are used to advance the priorities, rights, and well-being of our communities.

5.7 **Support** participatory and community-led research that values Indigenous and local knowledge systems and strengthens the intergenerational transmission of pastoralist women's knowledge, skills,

innovations, and cultural practices to younger generations so that women and girls can value their heritage, strengthen their skills, and see a future in pastoralism.

5.8 **Promote** technologies and innovations that meet the needs of pastoralist women and ensure they are easily accessible and equitable.

5.9 **Strengthen** inter-institutional community-based collaborations between universities, research institutes, CSOs, pastoralist networks, and others, that strengthen pastoralist communities' identity and agency, and enhance respectful and equitable dialogue among different knowledge types and knowledge holders.

6. Health, Education, Social Support, Infrastructure and Technology

6.1 **Design** services and infrastructure for pastoralists and pastoralist women that are adapted to our realities and treat them with respect and dignity. Women pastoralists should have the same access as men to information about services we have a right to, delivered in our languages and with an understanding of our cultures.

6.2 **Ensure that mobile services,** such as healthcare, veterinary services, social protection, and education, are made available to pastoralist women-especially to **mobile** communities along **migratory** routes.

6.3 **Ensure** the provision of care services for women, children, young people and older people. Promote programs on comprehensive sexual health education, including sexually transmitted infections, and on violence and addiction prevention.

6.4 **Create and enforce laws** that prevent and prohibit child marriage, female genital mutilation and child prostitution.

6.5 **Facilitate processes and policies** tailored to the specific needs of pastoralist women, including important life and reproductive stages.

6.6 **Provide necessary hard and soft** infrastructure, including road networks, watering points, financing, and digital connectivity to enable access to services and markets.

6.7 **Invest** in building the resilience and capacity of pastoralist communities, particularly women and youth, by improving access to education, training, climate information, digital technologies, financial services, markets, community-based monitoring, and early warning systems.

6.8 **Reduce unnecessary administrative and bureaucratic barriers** that prevent pastoralist communities, and especially pastoralist women, from accessing public services, markets, financial systems and legal rights.

7. Safety, Security and Dignity

7.1 **Ensure the protection** of pastoralist women from threats, harassment, criminalization, judicial persecution and reprisals arising from our legitimate advocacy to protect lands, water, biodiversity, cultural heritage and pastoralist livelihoods.

7.2 **Guarantee** pastoralist women safe and meaningful participation in public decision-making processes without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

7.3 **Enact and enforce** laws, policies, and programs that prevent and punish gender-based violence towards and discrimination against pastoralist women and girls, while engaging pastoralist men and boys to transform harmful gender norms and practices.

7.4 **Support** the mental health and psychosocial well-being of pastoralist women through culturally appropriate, mobile, and community-based services to restore our dignity in society.

7.5 **Provide safety and security to pastoralists,** especially in isolated and remote areas and on transhumant routes. Because violence affects men and women differently, design strategies that account for this and strengthen the resilience of women and girl pastoralists. Enforce laws that guarantee the safety of women, especially along migratory routes, border areas and conflict zones.

7.6 **Ensure** pastoralist women's access to justice and remedy through legal aid, mobile courts, reporting mechanisms that reach mobile communities, and full standing in customary forums handling cases of violence against women.

8. Representation and Decision-Making

8.1 **Ensure** that pastoralist women have equal opportunities to participate meaningfully and be fairly represented in leadership and decision-making at all levels (traditional, local, regional, national and international). Our voices, knowledge, and priorities should be recognized and reflected in decisions that affect our lives, livelihoods, and communities, including those related to peacebuilding, land and resource rights, agriculture, biodiversity conservation, land degradation, climate action, and sustainable rangeland management.

8.2 **Ensure** full membership and leadership of pastoralist women in the customary and community institutions that govern pastoral life, including grazing and rangeland committees, water user associations, cooperatives, livestock market committees and traditional councils. Similarly, ensure full participation and leadership of pastoralist women in organizations such as national herder, breed, cattle-grower and wool-grower associations.

8.3 **Promote mechanisms,** including quotas or reserved seats where appropriate, to ensure the representation of pastoralists, including pastoralist women, in national and local legislative and decision-making bodies.

8.4 Recognize pastoralist women's multiple care responsibilities for livestock, family and community and **develop approaches that make it easier for pastoralist women to attend meetings,** take part in leadership, and participate in political processes without carrying the burden alone.

8.5 **Provide dedicated funds** to enable pastoralist women's direct participation in decision-making processes that require travel and time away from home.

8.6 **Provide leadership training** tailored to pastoralist women to enhance our capacity to participate effectively in all levels of governance. At the same time, work to change cultural paradigms that silence women's voices.

9. Peace-Building and Conflict Resolution

9.1 **Ensure** the meaningful participation of pastoralist women in processes of peace-building and negotiations, conflict resolution and peace caravans, as well as post-conflict reconciliation and healing.

9.2 **Recognize and strengthen** the role and capacities of pastoralist women in conflict prevention, including our role in local and cross-border committees and customary dispute forums, to resolve conflicts over land, livestock and natural resources.

9.3 **Recognize** existing traditional ways of solving conflicts and the strategies that women use in conflict resolutions within our communities.

9.4 **Prevent** the criminalization of pastoralist mobility under counter-terrorism and security frameworks, especially at checkpoints and border zones in conflict-affected areas.

9.5 **Facilitate** visa access and accreditation for pastoralist women and youth from conflict-affected states, and support the return and reintegration of women and youth displaced by violence.

9.6 **Provide** restocking or compensation for herds lost to raids and violence.

10. Monitoring and Accountability

10.1 **Support** the development of a mechanism to monitor the development and implementation of policies affecting and protecting pastoralists and specifically pastoralist women. The mechanism must include a process for considering complaints about violations of pastoralist rights, mechanisms to hold countries accountable, and pastoralist women as members.

10.2 **Establish** a participatory monitoring and evaluation process to track the implementation of commitments, measure progress on pastoralist women's rights, ensure accountability, and strengthen women's participation in decision-making processes.

Specifically for the Declaration

10.3 **Develop** a mechanism for review and update the Declaration that includes participation of pastoralist women from all regions.

10.4 **Ensure** regular monitoring of the implementation of the Declaration through measurable indicators, periodic progress reviews, and knowledge exchange among countries and pastoralist organizations.

10.5 **Identify** an institutional host for the mechanism and agree on a timeline, with states and institutions reporting on implementation at regular intervals and a first review no later than three years from adoption.

10.6 **Ensure** the mechanism is adequately and sustainably resourced, including funding for pastoralist women's participation in its work.

In Conclusion

We draw upon the foundation laid by The Mera Declaration of 2010, an outcome of the first global gathering of pastoralist women, organized by WAMIP[1], and the regional pastoralist women's declarations and charters developed by the different regions of the world in 2025 and 2026 leading up to IYRP and IYWF and the Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women in 2026.

We respect and support pastoralist women's voices and concerns in all parts of the world.

We commit to harnessing our knowledge and passing on our skills and traditions to future generations, ensuring that our children and their children continue to benefit from this wisdom.

We also commit to sharing our knowledge with new women who enter pastoralism.

We promise to encourage and support pastoralist women and youth networks and leadership platforms to foster knowledge sharing and exchange.

The voices, struggles, knowledge and stories of thousands of women form the living foundation of this declaration and we pledge to work together in solidarity and ensure no pastoralist woman is left behind.

THIS VERSION HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED/ENDORSED BY PASTORALIST WOMEN OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES FROM EVERY IYRP REGION ON AUGUST 8, 2026. IT MAY BE SHARED AND SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS A LIVING DOCUMENT THAT WILL CONTINUE TO EVOLVE WITH ONGOING PARTICIPATION BY PASTORALIST WOMEN FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

Minor revisions to correct numbering and slightly modify wording were made on August 15, 2026.

1 World Alliance of Mobile and Indigenous Peoples and Pastoralists