

REGIONAL MEETING ON SOUTH AMERICAN PASTORALISM

Cusco, 4th–6th August 2026

Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP 2026) to raise awareness of the value of rangelands and sustainable pastoralism. Furthermore, it aims to advocate for the ongoing development of pastoralists' adaptation capabilities and resilience, to expand socio-ecological knowledge about these systems, and to promote increased responsible investment from states. To this end, global and regional meetings are being organised around the world to gather the demands and challenges faced by female and male pastoralists across the globe. Subsequently, the information collected and agreements reached during these meetings will be brought to various political decision-making and knowledge-sharing spaces. FAO is the United Nations agency responsible for leading IYRP 2026.

IYRP 2026 is an opportunity to raise the profile of pastoralist systems, their contribution to generating ecosystem services, and their role in supporting the livelihoods of vulnerable populations. Pastoralism in South America is the result of a millenary socio-cultural process, ancestral techniques, and colonial contributions. It is estimated that between two and three million people depend directly on various pastoralist systems, managing over five hundred million hectares of rangeland and similar ecosystems, ranging from five thousand metres above sea level down to sea level.

The meeting of pastoralist families from the South American region aims to promote ongoing action within pastoralist communities, establish a regional agenda to improve rangeland governance, achieve recognition for pastoralists' livelihoods, and guarantee consistent representation of the South American region at the Global Gathering of Pastoralists in Mongolia and other global events beyond 2026.

Objectives

General Objective

To promote and facilitate a meeting of female and male pastoralists from South American countries so they can recognise each other, interrelate, and present their demands, common challenges, and solutions at socio-ecological, economic, and political levels regarding the sustainable development of pastoralism, with the purpose of drafting a “South American Pastoralist Declaration” and a regional agenda.

Specific Objectives

- To recognise the diverse pastoralists and rangeland ecosystems of the South American region.
- To raise the profile of and promote the productive, economic, ecological, and socio-cultural contributions of pastoralism, the importance of rangelands and other similar ecosystems, and to encourage the appreciation of both.
- To strengthen regional pastoralist and rangeland alliances and networks in South America.
- To generate a “South American Pastoralist Declaration” for its subsequent development into thematic reports and policy proposals for government entities within the region's countries and for the global political agenda.
- To identify knowledge gaps and the information needs of pastoralists to draft a transdisciplinary research agenda.

Location and Dates

The regional event will take place at the “Casa de Cultura” in the city of Cusco, Peru, located in the historic centre. It will last for three days, on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of August 2026, comprising two working days and one field day.

Structure

The first two working days will be held at the “Casa de Cultura”, and the field day will consist of a visit to the Participatory Research and Experimentation Centre for High Andean Pastoral Use Systems – ACEMAA, located in the Pitumarca district, south-east of Cusco.

The working days will be conducted in a workshop format, organised according to the following criteria:

- Pastoralists and pastoralist leaders will discuss current problems and challenges, as well as how to achieve the necessary solutions from their perspectives.
- **Youth Dialogue:** Present youths will debate the challenges they face within their life systems and the solutions they propose to overcome them from the perspective of families, organisations, support entities, and governments. They will share and incorporate the messages from the “Global Gathering of Youth Pastoralists” held in Madrid in April 2026.
- **Regional Meeting of South American Female Pastoralists:** Framed within the International Year of Woman Farmers – IYWF 2026, and in line with the youth proposal, women will focus on problems and solutions from their own perspective. They will share and incorporate the messages from the “Global Gathering of Women Pastoralists” held in Nepal in May 2026.

- Reference support entities such as NGOs, local and national governments, and academia, among others, will have a dialogue space to analyse the status of rangelands and pastoralism from their perspectives.
- A final plenary workshop will serve to draft the “South American Pastoralist Declaration”, featuring a synthesis of the situation and action proposals for governments, support or research entities, and civil society at large, alongside the message to be delivered to the “Global Gathering of Pastoralists” to be held in Mongolia in August 2026.
- To identify knowledge gaps, academics will be convened to assess current scientific production by ecological region on topics related to pastoralism and rangelands. Together with the pastoralists, they will identify existing information gaps that need addressing for the adaptation and resilience of these systems.

The final agenda will be drafted alongside the delegations that confirm their participation. While various dimensions of pastoralist livelihoods proposed by the participants will be addressed, the 12 themes proposed for IYRP 2026 by the Global Alliance will be taken into account.

The workshops will be complemented by a “Knowledge and Experience Fair” where grassroots organisations, NGOs, academia, and governments can share their projects, programmes, and action experiences in support of rangelands and pastoralism. Likewise, side events and parallel spaces for dialogue and consultations with pastoralists will be held alongside the main sessions.

Participants

Country delegations from the region will consist of representatives from:

- Female and male pastoralists of South America
- NGOs and other civil society actors with proven experience working with pastoralists and pastoralism
- Academics with publications and/or work related to pastoralism and rangelands
- Government institutions and the public sector
- International organisations

The event is scheduled for a total participation of 65 people, of which 55 places will be allocated to the 9 country delegations (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay), and 10 places will be reserved for the organising committee.

Country delegations will consist of approximately 6 people, mostly pastoralists, ensuring age and gender equity, as well as the distribution of the region's diverse rangeland ecosystems (Figure 1):

- Savannah (Venezuela–Colombia)
- Páramos and dry forest (Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru)
- High Andean puna (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile)
- Cerrado and Caatinga (Brazil)
- Sabana (Paraguay, Argentina, Colombia)
- El Chaco (Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia)
- Pampas (Argentina, Uruguay)
- Patagonia (Argentina, Chile)



Figure 1. Rangeland ecosystems and other biomes where pastoralist communities develop in South America.

Budget

The registration cost per participant is 360 USD, covering workshops, 4 nights' accommodation (3rd–6th/08), 2 days' meals, and the field day. This does not include travel costs from South American countries or from other locations within Peru to the city of Cusco. While solidarity mechanisms may be utilised to cover some event needs, delegations will need to organise themselves to ensure their participation.

Contacts

If you are interested in taking part in this event, you may contact:

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Cooperating institutions in the coordination

