

REGIONAL GATHERING OF SOUTH AMERICAN PASTORALISTS

South American Regional Support Group for the IYRP (SA RISG)

Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2026 the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists¹ (IYRP-2026), in order to raise awareness of the value of rangelands and of sustainable grazing. It also aims to advocate for the need to further develop the adaptive and resilience capacities of pastoralists, to expand social-ecological knowledge about these systems, and to promote increasing responsible investment by States. To this end, global and regional meetings² are being organized around the world to gather information on the demands and challenges faced by pastoralists across the globe. Subsequently, the information gathered and agreements reached at these meetings will be taken to different political decision-making and knowledge dissemination forums. The FAO is the United Nations agency responsible for leading the IYRP 2026³.

IYRP 2026 is an opportunity to make visible pastoralist systems and their contribution to the generation of ecosystem services and their role in supporting the livelihoods of vulnerable populations. Pastoralism in South America is the result of a millennia-old sociocultural and ecological process, combining ancestral techniques with colonial influences. It is estimated that between two and three million people whose livelihoods depend directly on a diverse way of pastoralist systems managing more than 500 million hectares of rangelands and similar ecosystems, ranging from 5,000 meters to the sea level.

The meeting of pastoralists for the South American region aims to promote the continued action of pastoralist communities, establish a regional agenda to improve rangeland governance, achieve recognition of pastoralists' livelihoods, and ensure consistent representation of the South American region at the Global Pastoralists' Gathering in Mongolia and other global events beyond 2026⁴.

¹ <https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/76/253>

² <https://iyrp.info/calendar>

³ <https://www.fao.org/rangelands-pastoralists-2026/en>

⁴ <https://iyrp.info/events/global-pastoralist-gathering>

Goals

General objective

To promote and facilitate a meeting of men and women pastoralists of south American countries for them to present their demands and challenges at socioecological, economic and political in the sustainable development of pastoralism aiming to elaborate a regional agenda.

The specific objectives of the regional event include:

- Raise awareness of the contributions of pastoralism, the importance of rangelands and other similar ecosystems, and promote worth of both.
- Generate thematic reports and policy proposals for government entities in countries in the region and for the global political agenda.
- Identify knowledge gaps and information needs of pastoralists for the development of a transdisciplinary research agenda.
- Strengthen regional alliances of pastoralists and rangeland networks in South America.

Location and date

The regional event will be held in the city of Cusco, Peru, and two options are proposed as venues: i) the Cusco Municipal Convention Center (<https://centro-convenciones.cusco.gob.pe/>), and ii) the Central Auditorium of the San Antonio de Abad National University. Both venues are located in the historic center of Cusco.

The event will last four days, from May 6 to 9, 2026, consisting of three days of work and one field day.

Structure

The first and second days of the event will focus on management of land, rangeland ecosystems, animals, and changes, as well as governance by pastoralists. On the third day, the Regional Gathering of South American Pastoralist Women will be held as part of the International Year of Women Farmer -IYWF 2026⁵. On the fourth day, there will be a visit to the pastoralist community of Chilca, in Pitumarca, southeast of Cusco, nearby Ausangate glacier.

The event will be held in coordination with the Government of Peru, specifically with the General Directorate of Livestock Development of MIDAGRI, and with the support of the General Directorate of Climate Change and Desertification of MINAM, as well as FAO Peru and FAO RLC.

⁵ <https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/78/279>, <https://www.fao.org/woman-farmer-2026/en>

Participants

The delegations from the countries in the region will consist of:

- Representatives of men and women pastoralists.
- Representatives of government institutions and the public sector.
- Representatives of academia with publications and/or work related to rangelands and pastoralism.
- NGOs and civil society institutions with proven work on issues related to pastoralists and pastoralism.
- Representatives of international organizations.

In all cases, age and gender equity among participants will be considered, as well as the time supporting the organization of the IYRP 2026. Likewise, for the representation of pastoralists by country, the distribution of pastoral communities in the diverse rangeland ecosystems of the region where they are located will be considered (Figure 1):

- Llanos (Venezuela-Colombia)
- Páramos y bosque seco (Ecuador, Colombia y Perú)
- Puna andina (Ecuador, Perú, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile)
- Cerrado y Caatinga (Brazil)
- Sabana (Paraguay, Argentina, Colombia)
- El Chaco (Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia)
- Pampas (Argentina, Uruguay)
- Patagonia (Argentina, Chile)

Of the 100 participants, 10 places will be reserved for the organization, leaving 90 places to be filled by the nine country delegations, each with 10 people. For each delegation, it is suggested that the majority of participants be representatives of pastoralists.



Figure 1. Rangeland ecosystems and other biomes where pastoral communities thrive in South America

Budget

The total cost of this event has been estimated at US\$150,000 for a total of 100 participants. This cost would include travel fares, accommodation, and food expenses, along with other expenses related to the organization. Although we may use solidarity mechanisms to cover some of the event's needs, we will request support from international and national cooperation agencies and organizations.

Contacts

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Cooperating institutions for coordination

