



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
**RANGELANDS AND
PASTORALISTS**
2026



ASSOCIATION DES FEMMES PEULES &
PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES DU TCHAD

AFRICAN INDIGENOUS PASTORALISTS GATHERING: BUILDING A COMMON AFRICAN PASTORALIST AGENDA IN PREPARATION FOR IYRP.

📅 25 - 29 January 2025.

📍 Nairobi, Kenya.





Background:

In recognition of the vital role that healthy rangelands and pastoralism play in ensuring sustainable environments, resilient livelihoods, and economic growth, the United Nations (UN) has declared 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP). The IYRP aims to raise awareness and advocate for the value of healthy rangelands and sustainable pastoralism. It also seeks to strengthen capacity and promote responsible investment in the pastoral livestock sector — through sustainable land management practices, ecosystem restoration, improved livestock health and breeding, and equitable access to markets.

Nomadic and transhumance pastoralism represents one of the most dynamic and widespread sustainable livelihoods globally, practiced by an estimated 100 to 200 million people, of whom 50 to 100 million live across 43% of Africa. Pastoralism contributes significantly to environmental stewardship, economic stability, and peace-building across savannas, grasslands, and semi-arid ecosystems. Through traditional land stewardship, grazing practices, and indigenous knowledge systems, pastoralists maintain many biodiversity hot spots and safeguard over 80% of Africa's livestock genetic resources. Wildlife densities on pastoral lands often rival those found in formally protected areas.

In the 20th century, a committee of the International Astronomical Union took it upon itself to accurately delineate the 88 constellations. It included 48 ancient constellations enumerated by the Greek astronomer Ptolemy, plus 40 new constellations. Each constellation is a region of the sky, and together they cover the entire celestial sphere.

These 88 constellations divide the entire night sky as seen from Earth. Star maps are made from the brightest stars, and the patterns they form give rise to the constellation names.

Pastoralists' sustainable land management helps maintain soil health and enhance carbon storage. African rangelands are estimated to sequester 20-30 tonnes of carbon per hectare, depending on vegetation type and management practices. Pastoralist communities also play a key role in climate resilience and food sovereignty through their indigenous livestock breeds, such as the MboÃrro cattle and Red Maasai sheep, and through traditional seed conservation.

Despite these contributions, pastoralism faces increasing threats from climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, and water scarcity. These environmental crises are exacerbating land-use conflicts and undermining traditional governance systems that have long sustained peaceful coexistence between pastoralists and neighboring communities. Social and economic challenges such as land grabs, insecure tenure, and extractive industries as well as expansion for critical minerals further threaten pastoralists' livelihoods and territories. Strengthening collaboration between pastoralist communities, governments, and financing partners is critical to address these challenges, promote climate justice, and ensure that pastoralists among the least contributors to the climate crisis can access financial resources to sustain their stewardship of the environment.

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Despite significant contributions to climate resilience, food sovereignty, and peace-building, pastoralism faces growing threats from climate change, biodiversity loss, and desertification.

Objective(s):

In light of the upcoming International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP 2026), this initiative seeks to:

- Highlight the contributions and challenges of pastoralism in Africa.
- Amplify pastoralist voices in shaping and implementing IYRP activities.
- Foster long-term partnerships that ensure the continued contribution of rangelands and pastoralism to sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Build a common African agenda to be presented at the UNCCD COP17 in Mongolia, showcasing locally grounded strategies and innovations by pastoralists.



Expected Outcomes:

- a) **Harmonized Voices:** Consolidated and unified messages from African pastoralists on the value and challenges of rangeland management.
- b) **Knowledge Documentation:** Collection of compelling stories and case studies on pastoralist resilience, environmental stewardship, and contributions to local and national economies.
- c) **Policy Advocacy:** Development of common policy positions for national, regional, and international platforms, including IYRP 2026 and UNCCD COP17.
- d) **Visibility and Recognition:** Showcasing pastoralism as a cultural identity, livelihood system, and biodiversity conservation model rooted in indigenous knowledge.
- e) **Inclusive Representation:** Highlighting the specific roles of women, youth, elders, and PWDs in sustaining pastoral livelihoods and shaping future strategies.
- f) **Strengthened Networks:** Enhanced collaboration among pastoralist organizations, governments, and development partners towards shared advocacy and action.

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Pastoralists are severely threatened by land grabs, insecure tenure, extractive industries, and expansion for critical minerals, which undermine their livelihoods.

Event Delivery Approach:

As an initial step to organize and strengthen pastoralist participation and contribution to IYRP 2026 and COP17, the Association des Femmes Peuples Autochtones du Tchad (AFPAT), IMPACT, NDMA and the State Department for ASALS and Regional Development will convene a regional meeting of key pastoralist organizations and stakeholders from across Africa.

- The meeting will be held in Nairobi, Kenya 25th Arrival (conference setting-Dates between 26 and 27th January 2026).
- The field visit will be one day - 28th January 2026 - of field visits to Indigenous pastoral communities in Suswa, Narok County, fostering peer learning and community-grounded dialogue.
- 2 days of meetings and 1 days of field visits, excluding travel days (total 5 days).
- Departures will be on 29th January 2026.



Expected Outcomes:

Approximately 100 participants representing all African regions:



- 30 women and youth representatives, 30 male leaders, 30 youth delegates, and 10 representatives from government and partner agencies;
- Inclusive participation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs);
- Pastoralist-led NGOs and CSOs advocating for rights, livelihoods, and rangeland management.





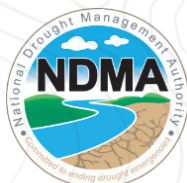


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