

**MOBILIZING COORDINATED ACTION FOR RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS UNDER IYRP 2026:
FROM MANDATE TO IMPLEMENTATION**

Organizers: Yolda Initiative, Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists (GA4RP), Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)

Date and time: 5 June 2026, 15.00-16.00

Place: Agate, Room 3, Congress Center, Samarkand, Uzbekistan

Description:

With 2026 designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), there is a clear global mandate to raise awareness, fill knowledge gaps, promote innovative solutions, and strengthen coordinated action for the sustainable management and restoration of rangelands, while recognizing, empowering and supporting pastoralists as rights holders.

This side event will explore how this mandate is being operationalized across institutions, such as FAO, UNCCD, CMS, UNDP and GEF and countries and stakeholders by highlighting concrete commitments, ongoing initiatives and practical experiences, while identifying opportunities to better align efforts and generate impact at the scale required.

Conservation and sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism directly contributes to multiple focal areas of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), including biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, and land degradation neutrality and also integrated programmes of food systems, drylands and drought management, and global wildlife for development.

Healthy and connected rangelands maintained by sustainable pastoralism harbour some of the most diverse and biologically unique systems on the planet, support migratory species, maintain ecosystem services, strengthen resilience to climate impacts and reduce pressures on fragile ecosystems, particularly in dryland and mountain regions.

A practical example from the Central Asian Mammals and Climate Adaptation (CAMCA) project will demonstrate how nature-positive pastoralism and wildlife-friendly grazing management can serve as cost-effective, scalable and community-driven solutions relevant for future GEF integrated programming.

The discussion will further explore opportunities to enhance alignment across policy frameworks, programmes and financing mechanisms including through future GEF investments, ensuring that rangelands and pastoralists are more effectively integrated into global and national agendas on biodiversity, climate and land.

Room set up:

#people	70
#microphones	6
#chairs	78
#tables	21
#screens	1L + 5m
Interpretation booths	No
Plugs	yes
Seating arrangement	Theater

Format: presentations/panel discussion

Moderator: Engin Yılmaz, Executive Director, Yolda Initiative; Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists (GA4RP)

Show run:

Discussion item	Substantive part	Speaker	min	Σ
Welcome & introduction	Welcome, IYRP as a global political opportunity, importance of rangelands and pastoralists including for GEF-9, outline of the session	Moderator: Engin Yılmaz, Yolda & GA4RP	5	5
Global vision and mandates (panel 1)	Representative of the Government of Mongolia, as the main sponsor of the IYRP resolution and co-chair of its official International Secretariat hosted by FAO, will present Mongolia's planned activities under IYRP 2026, including the Global Pastoralist Gathering to be convened in the context of UNCCD COP17, while also reflecting on opportunities to strengthen coordinated action, long-term commitments, and resource mobilization, including beyond 2026, towards the sustainable management and restoration of rangelands and pastoralism.	Representative TBC, Government of Mongolia	6	11
	Representative of FAO will present FAO's role in facilitating the implementation of IYRP 2026, including hosting the International Steering Committee and Secretariat, while highlighting ongoing efforts to operationalize and achieve the objectives of the Year towards the sustainable management and restoration of rangelands and pastoralism, including perspectives beyond 2026.	Dr Lifeng Li, Director, Land and Water Division, FAO	6	16
	Representative of the UNCCD Secretariat will highlight the Silk Road Caravan, a landmark journey connecting Riyadh to Ulaanbaatar in the year of UNCCD COP17 and IYRP 2026, aimed at raising visibility for often overlooked rangelands that sustain livelihoods, biodiversity, and food systems. The presentation will focus on land restoration efforts, pastoralist knowledge, and local solutions across diverse rangeland landscapes, while also highlighting opportunities for enhanced collaboration and engagement.	Representative TBC, UNCCD	5	21
	CMS will present the newly adopted CMS COP15 decisions on Pastoralism, including on IYPR, and highlight the role of sustainable rangeland management in maintaining ecological connectivity and supporting migratory species conservation.	Ms. Laura Cerasi, Programme Management Officer, CMS Secretariat	4	25

Financing & Implementation (Panel 2)	Representative of the GEF Secretariat will highlight GEF's support to the rangeland's agenda, including through the COP Legacy Initiative and other opportunities under GEF-9, with a particular focus on support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities towards achieving the objectives of IYRP 2026 across the wider GEF family of funds.	Ulrich Apel, Senior Environmental Specialist, GEF	6	31
	Representative of UNDP will present UNDP's engagement and direct support related to rangelands and pastoralists, with a particular focus on the GEF Small Grants Programme, including a forward-looking perspective beyond 2026.	Diana Salvemini, Senior Technical Advisor, SGP/Local Action, UNDP	6	37
	CMS will present practical experiences from the Central Asian Mammals and Climate Adaptation (CAMCA) project which implements the CMS Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI), highlighting how climate-smart pasture management, wildlife-friendly grazing practices and ecological connectivity approaches can strengthen climate resilience, support pastoral livelihoods and contribute to the conservation of migratory species in Central Asia.	Ms. Fariza Adilbekova, Associate Programme Management Officer, CMS Secretariat	6	43
	The Government of Uzbekistan will share national perspectives, actions and experiences in advancing the conservation and sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism, including the interdependencies between sustainable rangeland use, pastoral livelihoods and migratory species conservation using the example of Bukhara deer, jeyran and urial.	Representative TBC, Government of Uzbekistan	6	49
Q&A		Moderator: Engin Yilmaz, Yolda & GA4RP	6	55
Closing remarks		Moderator: Engin Yilmaz, Yolda & GA4RP	4	60