



Concept Note

International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026

Opening Ceremony

Sheikh Zayed Centre, FAO HQ, Rome (Italy) | Hybrid meeting
2 December 2025, 12:30 – 14:00 (CET)

I. Background

Following resolution 5/2021 of the 42nd Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), at its 76th Session, declared 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) in its Resolution A/RES/76/253. FAO has been designated as the lead agency for the observance of the IYRP and is responsible for coordinating its implementation in collaboration with Member Nations, United Nations organizations, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

The IYRP aims to raise awareness of the important role that rangelands and pastoralists play in food security, climate adaptation and mitigation, ecosystem health, and rural economies. Rangelands cover around half of the Earth's land surface, support unique biodiversity and contribute to the livelihoods and nutrition of millions of people, while being at the heart of their cultural identity. Pastoralists manage natural resources through strategic mobility, traditional knowledge and adaptive strategies that enhance ecosystem services such as carbon storage, soil fertilization and biodiversity preservation while providing high-quality animal source food and contributing to national economies. However, these systems are under pressure from land conversion, growing climate-related disasters, and ecosystem degradation. The IYRP offers a critical opportunity to shift global narratives and mobilize support for sustainable and inclusive rangeland and pastoralist development. Key priorities include investing in land and livestock management, restoring degraded ecosystems, securing access and governance rights, and strengthening markets and value chains.

The UNGA also declared 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF) through its Resolution A/RES/78/279. This International observance will take place in parallel with the IYRP. The IYWF aims to raise awareness of the vital yet often invisible roles that women farmers play in agrifood systems, including their contributions to food security, nutrition and poverty eradication.

II. Rationale

As the lead agency, FAO will facilitate the implementation of the IYRP 2026 with governments, United Nations organizations, other international and regional organizations and relevant stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia.

III. Objectives

The launch event aims to raise awareness and create momentum for the IYRP by engaging Members, United Nations organizations, intergovernmental organizations, pastoralist groups, research organizations, and other relevant stakeholders for the implementation of the International Year.

In particular, the objectives of the event are:

- to inform a global audience about the importance of rangelands and pastoralists in advancing climate action, ecosystem restoration, food security, and resilient rural economies;



- to present the IYRP vision, planned activities, and opportunities for collaboration at global, regional, and national levels; and
- to mobilize political, technical, and financial support from governments, development partners, and other institutions to implement the IYRP Global Action Plan, build capacity, and increase responsible investment in the pastoralist sector and the sustainable management of rangelands.

IV. Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness of sustainable rangeland management practices and pastoral systems to promote innovative solutions for the preservation of healthy rangelands and the development of pastoral communities;
- Enhanced engagement of United Nations organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to celebrate the IYRP 2026 with global, regional, national or local events and initiatives;
- Stronger collaboration and commitment from governments, donors, and other actors to contribute technically and financially to the IYRP Global Action Plan and follow-up processes;
- Increased global and regional visibility of the IYRP through broad media coverage, contributing to amplified awareness and engagement with the IYRP key messages.

V. Key Actions

The key actions to be taken in the lead-up to the event include:

- Engage IYRP Steering Committee members and other relevant partners in promoting global, regional and national-level activities;
- Develop and disseminate an outreach and communication package for the launch event including with key communication products, including the dedicated website; and
- Finalize and present the IYRP Global Action Plan and planned flagship events.

VI. Exhibition

The IYRP launch ceremony will feature a four-day exhibition in the FAO Atrium, in parallel with the FAO Council. This exhibition will highlight the key messages of the IYRP, featuring a photo exhibition, the IYRP promotional video and booths showcasing products from pastoralist communities.

The inauguration of the exhibition will take place before the launch ceremony and may include a tasting and viewing of products from pastoralist communities. This inauguration will also feature cultural and artistic performances from pastoralist communities.

The exhibition will serve to highlight the vital contribution of pastoralist communities to sustainable food systems and ecosystem management.

The IYRP exhibition will display the FAO 80 branding. The detailed plan for the exhibition will be developed in close consultation with the OCCO exhibition team, following the approval of the plans for the launch ceremony event and the exhibition.

VI. Draft Agenda

Moderator: Thanawat Tiensin, Assistant Director-General, Director, Animal Production and Health Division (NSA) and Chief Veterinarian, FAO.

Time	Agenda Item	Speakers
12:30 – 12:45 Section A: Opening and keynotes		
12:30 – 12:35	Opening Remarks	Dr QU Dongyu, Director-General, FAO
12:35 – 12:40	Statement	H.E. Mr. Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, President of Mongolia
12:40 – 12:45	Statement	H.E. Mr. Matías Carambula, Vice-Minister of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay
12:45 – 12:50	Promotional IYRP video	
12:50 – 14:00 Section B: Panel discussions		
12:50 – 13:15	Panel discussion 1	- Igshaan Samuels, Agricultural Research Council (South Africa) - Fernando Miranda, Deputy Permanent Representative (Spain) - Una Jones, CEO and Founder, Sustainable Fibre Alliance (UK) - Jemmali Bayrem, Institution for Agricultural Research and Higher Education (Tunisia) - Marcy Vigoda, Director, International Land Coalition Director (Canada)
13:15 – 13:20	Q&A with the audience	
13:20 – 13:45	Panel discussion 2	- Anders Oskal, Association of World Reindeer Herders (Norway) - Tezera Getahun, Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (Ethiopia) - Munkhtsetseg Tserenbaatar, Pastoralist of the Uyanga soum of Uvurkhangai aimag (Mongolia) - Bhavana Rabari Desai, MARAG (India)
13:45 – 13:50	Q&A with the audience	
13:50 – 14:00	Closing Remarks	Godfrey Magwenzi, Deputy Director General, Director of Cabinet, FAO