

ASIAN PASTORALIST WOMEN'S DECLARATION : MERA+15

ASIA PASTORALIST WOMEN'S GATHERING: RISING FOR RECOGNITION



We are pastoralist women of Asia. We are nomadic and semi-nomadic indigenous women herders who have walked with our livestock across vast landscapes for generations. Our lands are our homes, our livestock are our identity, dignity and future.

As herders, we care for our livestock.

As food producers, we feed communities across globe with milk, meat and based traditional foods.

As custodians of mobility, we keep our migratory way of life alive that keep ecosystems alive.

As protectors of biodiversity, we save our local breeds, native grasses, and different landscapes.

As environmental stewards, we protect soil, water, and climate by living simply and in harmony with the Earth.

As carrier of culture, we carry forward our languages, songs, crafts, embroideries and collective memories from one generation to another.

As guardians of rangelands, we protect our commons and support life across deserts, forests, mountains, and borders.

This is our way of life, and we want to continue living like this. While carrying all these roles and responsibilities, we claim to be recognised and respected as **"Pastoralist Women"**.

After doing all this for generations, we now raise our voices to claim our rights and our vision for the future.

- **Our Land, Pastures, and Collective Rights**

We need permanent and collective rights to our grazing lands, water sources, and commons. These rights cannot be denied because of forest exclusions, company encroachments, and land grabbing. Also such fenced, taken, or destroyed land must be immediately returned and restored under the leadership of pastoralist women.

We do not accept our lands being taken over in the name of "development", "conservation" or "renewable energy" including mining, solar project, infrastructure or climate related activities without our free, prior, and informed consent. Clear and separate consent from pastoralist women is mandatory.

- **Our Mobility and Migration Routes**

Our seasonal migration is our lifestyle. Our traditional and identified migration routes, within and across the countries, must be legally protected. When climate shocks, extreme weather or forced barriers stop our movement, we must receive fair compensation while on migration.

- **Our Services, Markets, and Livelihoods**

We do not seek services that require us to settle. Instead, we ask that essential support of health, education, animal care, disaster support, food and insurance must reach us along our migration routes and seasons. We want freedom from exploitative traders and middlemen, We demand direct access to markets, fair and guaranteed prices, and green value chains for our milk, meat, wool, fibre, and crafts.

- **Our Knowledge, Leadership, and Intergenerational Renewal**

Our traditional knowledge include native grasses, animal breeds, herbal medicines, handicrafts, weather patterns, climate change and land management, passed from one generation to another.

Under our leadership, government and non-government bodies should include our knowledge in education, rangeland governance, customary laws, community protocols, public policies and research — and we should be the ones who own it and teaching it.

- **Our Safety, Dignity, and Accountability**

Our way of life truly protects nature and supports climate action. We therefore claim legal recognition and protection for pastoralist women and our communities. Acts of Violence, harassment, humiliation and criminalisation against us must stop. When our rights are violated, there must be fair processes of justice, accountability and redress at all levels, with our leadership and full participation. We also claim just compensation wherever our lives and livelihoods are harmed.

We speak for ourselves in our own voices and claim rightful authority over our lives, livelihoods, and territories. We stand together as pastoralist women across all borders of Asia. We will not settle, compromise, or disappear. We will not give up on our way of life.

**We herd. We teach. We lead.
This is our declaration. This is our word.**



This Asian Pastoralist Women's Declaration – MERA+15 has emerged from the collective voices of more than 100 pastoralist women across eight Asian countries. We came together on 10–12 December 2025 in Gujarat, India, for the Asia Pastoralist Women's Gathering, where we reflected on the five core themes of the MERA Declaration through the lens of our regional realities and lived experiences.

After returning to our communities, we continued these dialogues, sharing, refining, and strengthening our perspectives. This Declaration carries the wisdom, struggles, and aspirations of all of us—woven together as one collective voice.

