



## **UN Committee on Agriculture endorses International Year of Rangelands & Pastoralists**

*The initiative for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) has taken a huge step forward. In its online meeting last week, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) endorsed the Mongolian Government's proposal to declare an IYRP in 2026.*

In a united global effort, numerous national governments, research institutes and above all civil society – including pastoralist\* – organisations had sent support letters and logos for the “online booth” set up especially for the COAG meeting ([www.iyrp.info](http://www.iyrp.info)). By the time the Mongolian proposal was discussed in the meeting, more than 150 organisations from all continents had expressed support.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> day of the meeting, the Mongolian Ambassador to the FAO H.E. Jambaldorj Tserendor presented pastoralism as a source of livelihood for millions of people and as a sustainable food production system that safeguards ecosystems and biodiversity. He called for the COAG to endorse an IYRP so as to increase global awareness of the importance of the rangelands and pastoralists for global food security and ecosystem services. He thanked pastoralist organisations worldwide for their support for this proposal.

Numerous speakers from other countries underlined the importance of the Mongolian initiative to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contribute to the current UN Decade of Family Farming (2019–28) and the upcoming UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–30).

In its final statement on 2 October 2020, the COAG acknowledged the important role of rangelands and pastoralists in contributing to national economies and supporting livelihoods and food security for millions of people, as well as providing ecosystem services, particularly in dryland and mountainous areas. It acknowledged the potential of rangelands and pastoralism to contribute significantly to the SDGs. It recognised the numerous challenges faced by pastoralists and rangelands, such as the impact of climate change. It requested FAO to mainstream its work on rangeland and pastoralism to ensure that these are considered systematically in its technical and policy programmes.

The COAG also acknowledged the broad support of Member Countries; international, national and local civil society organisations; United Nations organisations; and international institutions to the Mongolian proposal for an IYRP.

The proposal will now go on to the FAO Council meeting in December 2020 and the FAO Conference in June 2021, to be recommended for the UN General Assembly's official designation, expected in October 2021.

\* “Pastoralists” are people who – as their primary source of livelihood – raise animals that graze predominantly on natural vegetation, often called rangelands