



Calling for your support to designate an International Year of Rangelands & Pastoralists

*The condition of the world's rangelands is critical to our sustainable future – not only for people directly depending on these lands for their livelihoods but also for the billions benefiting from them for tourism, biodiversity, agricultural products, energy and more. To increase understanding of these unique ecosystems and the people who rely on them, we urge you to join the effort to gain a United Nations (UN) resolution designating an **International Year of Rangelands & Pastoralists (IYRP)**.*

Over half of the Earth's land surface is classified as rangeland, and its health is critical to the wellbeing of more than 500 million people. Pastoralists and others who derive their livelihoods from rangelands are both users and stewards of the land. This stewardship is critical for achieving food and water security, resilient economies and improved environmental conditions. However, many forces, including land conversion and fragmentation, urbanization, damaging fire, invasive plants, harmful subsidies and rural exodus threaten the productivity and ecological integrity of these lands and their caretakers. Rangeland degradation increases pressure on diminishing natural resources, compromises economic productivity and robs our youngest generation of opportunities for a prosperous future. Yet, rangeland systems remain subject to widespread misperceptions, biases and knowledge gaps. These landscapes and livelihoods therefore need urgent attention from many sectors (e.g. agriculture, environment, health, education, trade) and many stakeholders (e.g. herders, land managers, legislators, businesspeople, scientists, civil society, consumers, youth, women and policymakers).

An International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) could provide the impetus and momentum necessary for realizing an ambitious agenda. It would increase understanding of the importance of rangelands for global food security and environmental services. By focusing attention on the need for policies that foster innovation toward sustainability, it could help overcome regional poverty and boost efforts for investment in restoring degraded rangelands. Countries could improve access to funding that will increase scientific capacity to monitor and predict trends in rangelands and exchange experiences and best practices, resulting in a global community working toward the sustainability and well-being of rangelands and livestock producers well beyond the IYRP.

An IYRP would complement other ongoing, global initiatives by responding to calls to action from the UN Environment Programme, while also helping to meet the goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, land degradation neutrality and climate-change agreements. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Committee on Agriculture, Council and Conference have endorsed the IYRP, building on support from 58 countries, led by the Government of Mongolia, and 300 non-governmental partners worldwide (see <https://www.iyrp.info>).

Some examples of IYRP outreach actions about rangelands and pastoralists:

- Coordinated local to global social media and awareness campaigns to promote pertinent rangeland themes and visibility of producers, consumers and policymakers worldwide
- National-level events, awards, technology fairs, video documentaries and educational materials
- Regional and global assessments of rangeland systems to fill identified knowledge gaps
- Scientific congresses and livestock producer gatherings to share knowledge and strategize solutions
- Regional strategies for coordinated global actions uniting environmental, social and economic aspects in an integrated vision