



MINISTRY OF FOOD,  
AGRICULTURE AND LIGHT INDUSTRY

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

More than half of the Earth's land surface is classified as *rangelands*, which are used as a natural ecosystem for grazing livestock and wildlife. The health, productivity and environmental sustainability of these lands are directly critical to the livelihoods and cultures of pastoralists, agro pastoralists and other animal keepers around the world. There are even more benefits from these systems for tourism, wildlife, biodiversity, meat and milk and other agricultural products for non-pastoralists. To increase knowledge and understanding about these ecosystems and the people who rely on them, the Government of Mongolia proposes to establish the observance by the United Nations (UN) of an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Pastoral agriculture is a way of life for many communities worldwide and, over time, it has evolved and supported environmental protection of rangeland landscapes and herders' livelihoods. For example, in Mongolia as of 2017, one-third of the national labor force was employed in pastoral agriculture and the sector comprised 8.4 percent of the country's exports and 24 percent of its GDP. Rangelands are faced with increasingly erratic climates, rapidly increasing human populations in some countries and rapidly declining or even abandonment in others, and a fast pace of unsustainable land-use change.

An International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists could provide the impetus and momentum necessary for a worldwide understanding of the importance of these lands to global food security and environmental services. It could also enhance governments' awareness and capacities to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global development and environmental goals in such marginal areas. Pastoralists are explicitly recognized in the 2030 Agenda as a group of peoples who should benefit from achievement of the SDGs.

Pastoralist organizations, communities and herders in many countries are requesting and supporting to declare an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. Currently, we have received letters of support from 7 governments, namely Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Finland, Iran, Jordan and Kyrgyzstan, and 42 non-governmental national/international organizations, as well as support signatures by 264 Mongolian herders.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and support.

STATE SECRETARY,  
MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE  
AND LIGHT INDUSTRY, MONGOLIA

T. JAMBALTSEREN