

CBD COP 13
SIDE EVENT #2249

14th December 2016, 13:15 pm.

Sunrise Building,
2nd Floor,
Africa/G77 + China group
meeting room.

CONCEPT NOTE

WORLD 'S GRASSLANDS AND RANGELANDS AT RISK: THE ROLE OF PASTORALISTS AND LIVESTOCK TO CONSERVE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Pastoralist
Knowledge Hub



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Concept Note for a Side Event at CBD COP 13

Title of Side Event: World's Grasslands and Rangelands at risk: the Role of Pastoralists and Livestock to Conserve Global Biodiversity.

Date: 14th December 2016, 13:15 pm.

Venue: Sunrise Building, Second Floor, Africa/G77+China group meeting room.

Co-organizers: IPICYT (Mexico), Conservation International, FAO, UNEP, ILRI, IRCC

Nearly half of the Earth's land surface is classified as natural grassland and rangeland¹, and the ecosystem health and productivity of these lands are critical to the livelihoods of an estimated 500 million people around the world. Pastoralists (and other people) play a key role in the management of these ecosystems.

Yet grasslands are among the most endangered ecosystems in the world, and many forces threaten them as well as the livelihoods of pastoralists. Common threats in both developed and developing countries include: cropland expansion and land fragmentation, unsustainable grazing practices, breakdown of common property regimes, rural exodus, invasive plants and damaging fire regimes, and harmful policies and subsidies. Mobile pastoralists such as nomads and transhumant herders face discrimination and conflict. Products derived from extensive production in rangelands face intense economic competition from commercial intensive livestock systems.

Pastoralists are often blamed for damaging the environment. However, evidence shows that the root causes are elsewhere. When rangelands are converted to other land uses, no real choice or compensation is given to pastoralists to help them adjust their practices and livelihoods. When borders are closed, or landscapes are fragmented, pastoralists cannot practice traditional mobility patterns, and this restriction leads to both conflict and land degradation. When tropical forests are cut down for soybean and other feed production, all livestock raisers are blamed when in fact such feed is used only by intensive commercial systems.

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in May 2016 recognized that pastoralists are both livestock herders and environmental stewards of rangelands. Sustainable pastoralist practices are critical to achieving food security, resilient local and

¹ Although these terms are frequently used as synonyms, the former highlights the biome or ecosystem and all its elements, while the later emphasizes its productive use.

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regional economies, cultural diversity, conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, carbon sequestration, and land and water rehabilitation. Ministers gathered at UNEA-2 passed Resolution L.24, which – among other things – called upon nations to raise global awareness on sustainable rangelands and pastoralism. The SDGs recognize pastoralists as important stakeholders for achieving sustainability.

Several countries and many stakeholders have called for the designation of a UN International Year to raise awareness and support for such issues. The CBD COP 13 offers an important opportunity to showcase many instances where pastoral practices and environmental stewardship have benefited biodiversity conservation, and for delegates to better understand the benefits and opportunities of sustainable pastoralism for achieving the Aichi Targets.

The Side Event will specifically focus on the relationship between pastoral practices and biological diversity. Several key speakers will cover issues such as:

- ✓ Pastoralism and the conservation of nature and biodiversity
- ✓ Conservation of genetic diversity of livestock
- ✓ Pastoralism and forest management
- ✓ Grasslands as endangered habitats
- ✓ Tourism and pastoral conservancies

A moderated discussion with the audience will follow.

Key Note Speaker and Moderator:

- DR. ELISABETH HUBER-SANNWALD, IPICYT

PANELISTS:

- MR. HIGINIO PORTO, Indigenous Pastoralist, Peru
- DR. ELLEN INGA TURI, Saami Indigenous Pastoralist, Norway
- MR. HELE PIERRE, Minister of Environment, Cameroon
- DR. IRENE HOFFMAN, ADG FAO
- DR. MARIA FERNANDEZ GIMENEZ, Colorado State University
- Dr. JURGEN HOTH, Conservation International

