**ESA-RISG MEETING REPORT HELD ON 2ND DECEMBER 2022**

On the 2nd of December 2022, ESA-RISG held a meeting hosted by RECONCILE, which is a member of the Regional IYRP Support Group (RISG) for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP). This meeting was facilitated by Ken Otieno, who is the Co-Chair of the ESA-RISG. This meeting aimed at discussing ongoing initiatives or activities that are critical for pastoralists in the preparation for IYRP ahead of 2026.

**Participants present**

1. Ken Otieno; RECONCILE; Kenya.
2. Ann Waters-Bayer; AGRECOL; Germany
3. Tezera Getahun; Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia; Ethiopia
4. Laureen Ongesa; RECONCILE; Kenya
5. Jacob Wanyama; League for Pastoral Peoples (Germany); Kenya
6. Alvin Mbeche Mutiso; RECONCILE; Kenya
7. Abdirahman Caabi; Representative for Somalia and Somaliland; Somalia
8. Hannah Longole; Ateker Cultural Centre; Uganda
9. Loupa Pius; African Wildlife Foundation/COPACSO; Uganda
10. Rashid Mohamed; Arid Lands Action Forum; Kenya
11. Andiswa Finca; Agricultural Research Council; South Africa
12. Ochepa Peter Ekiru; SORUDA; Uganda
13. Isaac Tobiko; Programs Director, Community Land Action Now; Kenya
14. Marie Chantal; International Land Coalition (ILC); Rwanda
15. Juliana Rono, women’s association

# **Meeting agenda**

The agenda of this meeting was to discuss:

* Progress at national, regional and global levels concerning the IYRP
* The regional actions as proposed to ISG towards IYRP 2026
* Any other emerging opportunities in the region with global bearing to IYRP
* The way forward and next steps

**Progress at national, regional and global levels concerning the IYRP**

* There is a well-functioning and coordinated international support group as a framework for mobilizing voices and building momentum at different levels and all regions in Africa have similar platforms
* The Eastern and Southern African (ESA) network has been established with two functional working groups in place that is, the Communications Working Group and the Policy Working Group.
* The Policy Working Group has started to develop a matrix of policies and legal frameworks that have a bearing on rangelands and pastoralism in Africa. Awareness has also been raised in different forums/ platforms specifically making great contributions to the Global Landscape Forum and COP 27.
* The Communications Working Group ensures efficient and effective communication between the different organizations present, ensuring communication takes place between the regional and global levels, creating linkages with other networks, e.g., CELEP, and acting as the pastoralist knowledge hub for FAO.
* A lot is being done at the global level to bring in regional pastoralist voices to various international events, e.g., COP 27. There are also various working groups established focusing on specific thematic areas, for example, afforestation in rangelands, biodiversity, water and desertification, that have been put in place to research, collect data and information, and package that information for dissemination at different levels, especially among pastoralist communities and policymakers.
* Using the GIZ platform, a sensitization workshop was organised containing 180 participants cutting across the entirety of Ethiopia and had information disseminated on rangeland management with pastoralism as a positive focal point.
* Uganda has seen an increase in the number of land meetings held within the country highlighting its rising importance including the IGAD high-level conference on land and conflict supported by IDLO in partnership with ILRI, UN-Habitat, ILC and Uganda Government, bringing together different pastoralist organizations to discuss how to minimize land conflict in Africa. Therefore, 7 states in Eastern Africa under the IGAD secretariat have signed the MOU that supports the transhumance protocol for pastoralists.
* Andiswa reported that, at a recent Grassland Society of Southern Africa conference, Igshaan organised a session to raise awareness about the IYRP and also gave a brief report on the African Journal of Range and Forage Special issue on IYRP. The ARC Range and Forage Science Unit was mandated by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to identify champion farmers who remained resilient throughout drought with the aim of upscaling some of the strategies they are using in order to assist struggling farmers who are farming under similar conditions. There are many activities with communal livestock farmers in Southern Africa but not deliberately linked to IYRP because there is insufficient awareness among the actors. The RISG members in Southern Africa would like to bring pastoralist voices from the area more strongly into policy influence and to exchange with pastoralists elsewhere in Africa, e.g., on involving youth in pastoralism.

**Regional actions proposed to ISG towards IYRP 2026**

* Formulation and implementation of an advocacy policy project aimed at empowering camel herders and securing funds for investment in their rearing and grazing practices in Kenya and India. It could be linked to the International Year of Camelids in 2024.
* Pastoralists’ annual caravans/festivals across several national borders, involving the Turkana of Kenya, Karamojong of Uganda, Toposa and Jie of South Sudan, Teso of Uganda and Nyangatom of Ethiopia, have been planned to give pastoralists from different countries a chance to interact and learn from one another.
* Based on the success of the GIZ workshop, a proposal to sensitize parliamentary members in Ethiopia has been put forward pending budgetary approvals and support.

**Emerging opportunities in the region with global bearing to IYRP**

Somalia has recently created an independent ministry that speaks directly to pastoralism, rangelands and their development. This is therefore a clear roadmap towards supporting pastoralists and pastoralism as a good practice ahead of 2026 that other regions need to embrace.

Civil society organizations within Uganda that specifically deal with rangeland management and pastoralism are looking for partnerships/support to reawaken the civil society network in an attempt to gain traction on the importance of pastoralism and rangeland management.

Ken reported on a proposal for 2023–24 at global level developed by Igshaan, Maryam and Jurgen, combining different regional action plans to amplify pastoralist voices and to engage pastoralist and conservation organisations. Wanyama suggested that RISG-ESA members develop certain parts of the plan and take responsibility to implement these at regional level without waiting for global resources. He suggested strategic events that 2–3 RISG members plan and implement together.

Ann suggested including all activities being done by RISG member organizations and giving them an IYRP “stamp”.

Marie reported that ILC is working on a rangeland strategy for all of sub-Saharan Africa. Efforts of the ESA RISG and the ILC could be combined.

# **Way forward**

* A camel advocacy policy project, to be possibly implemented in 2023, aimed at empowering camel herders and securing investment funds for the rearing and grazing requirements of camels both regionally and worldwide.
* Further dialogue on climate change-induced effects and impacts on dryland forest restoration practices is needed.
* Pastoralist communities need to take a larger role in formulating and implementing any existing and future policies that involve rangelands.

**Conclusion**

A third working group was formed on resource mobilization chaired by Jacob Wanyama to support discussions on fundraising and partnerships by coming up with a clear roadmap for resource mobilization in support of the IYRP and working together with the two existing working groups. Others in the group include Ken, Abdirahman, Hannah and Ann.