**Joint Meeting: Mongolian National Support Group (NSG) and IYRP Support Group (ISG)**

**DRAFT Meeting Notes**

**15 October 2020**

*Participants included: Gregorio Velasco-Gil (FAO); Serena Ferrari (FAO/PKH); Ganbayar Ganbold, Hijaba Ykhanbai, Tungalag Ulambayar (Mongolia); Engin Yilmaz (Turkey); Ruijun Long (China); Barry Irving (Canada); Dana Kelly, David Phelps (Australia); Ann Waters-Bayer (CELEP/EU); David Borre and Elisabeth Huber-Sannwald (Mexico); Pablo Manzano (University of Helsinki); Gabriel Oliva (Argentina); Pedro Herrera (Spain); Francesca Pasetti (Italy); Loupa Pius (ALIN Africa); Fiona Flintan (ILRI); Kevin Kirkman (South Africa); Jim O’Rourke, Greg Perrier, Maryam Niamir-Fuller and Barbara Hutchinson (USA)*

Maryam opened the meeting with congratulations to all for the support and effort in preparing for COAG and for the success in gaining COAG approval for the Mongolian Government’s IYRP proposal. Now preparing for next steps.

**1. COAG process**

Ganbayar and Gregorio briefing on COAG and implications for future. Ganbayar appreciated the support from everyone on behalf of the Ambassador (who asked to convey his appreciation); COAG went smoothly; in the written correspondence prior to the meeting, there were no objections from member countries, but some suggestions were made. Endorsed unanimously. Next steps – COAG sends proposal to FAO Council that will meet early December, then to FAO Conference in July 2021.

Gregorio – Strong support from many countries including Peru & Philippines. He had prepared for many questions, e.g. about source of finance and contributions of Year to SDGs, but did not have to use his answers. The proposal was completely endorsed as written. EU (agreement of 27 countries) approved as a block. He expects no new comments at the Council. It was endorsed that work on rangelands and pastoralism should be mainstreamed within FAO; need to work on roadmap for this within FAO programmes. He is very happy with the outcome.

**Discussion:**

Ann – can we find out which countries supported or spoke up during COAG meeting?

Gregorio – written comments came from Peru, Dominican Republic, Argentina, Australia, EU, Philippines, China, Mexico and Canada (no comment from New Zealand). Surprised that also non-pastoralist countries supported the proposal.

Ganbayar:

* Countries expressing verbal support at COAG: Turkey, Myanmar, Kenya, China, Sudan, Philippines, Mali, Peru
* Countries providing comments in Zoom chat: Cuba, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Egypt, Italy
* Letters of support: Spain, Italy, Finland & Kenya (received on day of discussion).

Maryam – looks like another 10–15 countries are supportive, in addition to the original 14 letters of support. Strategic question: would it be helpful if supporting countries would co-sponsor the proposal with Mongolia? Is this done in FAO context? It is at UN General Assembly (UNGA) level.

Gregorio – Co-sponsorship requests should come from political level by Mongolian ambassador to those from other countries. We can promote, but discussion happens at a higher level.

Ganbayar – will discuss with headquarters (Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Foreign Affairs). He thinks it is possible to gain support from other countries before UNGA.

Maryam – we are ready to help if needed. What about Germany’s comment on International Years (IYs): would this mean discussion at FAO Council?

Gregorio & Ganbayar – the Council has a higher-level discussion; there will no objections since EU has already approved. The EU wants future IY proposals to be assessed according to criteria in the UN policy for IYs.

Maryam – do we need to do any extra efforts before FAO Council and FAO Committee?

Gregorio – don’t need to do more for those specific meetings, but any action to improve impact is a good idea. Keep the momentum going toward 2021 and then 2026. Work on the roadmap.

Ganbayar – attended one FAO Conference. If things go smoothly, the proposal will be sent to the 2nd Committee of UNGA. We should continue campaign and focus on certain dates when the proposal will be discussed (Council & Committee); also work on broadening support from stakeholders, including further developing website, flyers and presentations.

Maryam – what about encouraging supporting partners to provide concrete details about resources they will contribute? There are already 35 letters of commitment for IYRP. Is this needed for FAO Council? What tools would be useful for us to develop? These could be useful for UNGA.

Loupa (question in Chat) – is it necessary to reach out to regional blocks such as IGAD and ECOWAS?

Ganbayar – discussed with Gregorio at beginning of 2020; agendas for regional conferences already approved, but there will be discussions at FAO level among ambassadors. They plan to organize side events for Asia–Pacific conference that was to take place in Feb 2020. Focus is now on regional conferences before the FAO Conference, rather than Council. There is more opportunity for discussion at these meetings.

Gregorio – agrees with Ganbayar and Loupa: focusing on regional conferences and putting the topic into agendas of more informal regional group meetings at FAO is opportunity to discuss this with specific countries. Dates for the regional conferences are still not known and change very quickly; sometimes, FAO staff has only one day’s notice.

Maryam – perhaps important that the IYRP regional groups pull together key information about rangelands and pastoralists in their regions, to be able to influence regional conferences and regional economic commissions. We should use every opportunity to raise awareness, find champions in the FAO regional offices.

Engin – not clear on role of ISG and its collaboration with the Mongolian delegation, because even regional conferences are at ambassador level.

Maryam – there are two levels of regional meetings: more informal discussions among ambassadors at FAO and formal regional conferences.

Engin – is the transition to the New York Mongolian delegation in NY underway now?

Ganbayar – yes, the NY Mongolian delegation is well aware of the IYRP proposal and is looking forward to when the task is transferred to NY.

Fiona – the Mongolian ambassador in NY participated in the Global Landscapes Forum Sept 2019, so the NY embassy has already been engaged.

Maryam – if FAO Conference is held in July, is that too late to transfer materials etc. to NY?

Ganbayar – FAO policy approved by conference says the proposal should be decided by UNGA. He will look into the process and report back.

**2. Communications**

Maryam – must keep up the campaign and bring in more partners and institutions.

Barbara – appreciated having this wonderful team to work with and for everyone who provided content from all regions of the world; intensive but rewarding, and pleased we could provide support to the Mongolians and to everyone.

Ann – the website is something concrete that people could focus on to offer materials; served to make many more organizations – especially pastoralist organizations – aware of IYRP. Combination of website and Twitter campaign by Engin was fantastic. Should keep the discussion and outreach going to gain additional support. Haven’t finished what we had originally planned; more documents and videos will be added. Perhaps regional groups could take ownership of their part of the website, and use it as a tool to gain more organizational support as well as to identify more content to add. This should be incorporated into the guidelines for the regional groups.

Barbara – question from chat about needing a list of countries that supported the proposal. On the homepage of IYRP online booth are resource materials with list of letters of commitment and a map of organizational distribution.

Gregorio – need to continue to alert more people to IYRP effort. Need to connect with countries that spoke up at COAG to support the proposal. Good momentum in Spain now. Ministry of Mongolia sent letters to other ambassadors. Now really promote at the national level and connect with policy level. For instance, West Africa is a gap; need to focus on gaining additional support in this region. Need to start to communicate in other languages where pastoralists are important.

Pablo Manzano – in South America, lots of people work with rangelands but don’t identify with the term “pastoralists”; regarding West Africa, maybe they have more regional focus and are not so interested in international efforts?

Gregorio – has talked to organizations (ECOWAS) there and they do not know about the IYRP. Need to do more to fill this gap to reach out.

Maryam – thanks for raising these issues. In broadening support, not just organizations, we need more from governments; maybe NSG could discuss this and see if ambassador letters need to be sent out again. If we can have 70 countries supporting at UNGA, we have a chance to be successful; less than that could be a problem. Must raise awareness to bring in more country-level support. Also, support letters do show gaps – West Africa, First Nations in Canada, New Zealand – some is a language issue, some a definitional issue (current PKH discussion on defining pastoralists is a way to continue to draw people in). In South America, definitely need to reach out more. Regional groups will know how to reach out.

Ann – we noticed there were gaps when putting website together. But, when Pablo and others reached out specifically to West Africa and South America, the visual materials did come in. Using the website helps to bring people on board. West African groups are becoming more informed.

Barbara – the press releases are available on the website now in six languages and we are identifying key documents to translate. We now have a wonderful cohort of people helping with translations. Please let us know if there are specific documents you need in a particular language.

Maryam – need to start updating written materials; open flyer that explains the reason for the IYRP was last updated in 2018; it should be reviewed to check against FAO criteria for IYs and to link to SDGs more concretely, showing directly why SDGs are important in pastoralism and why pastoralism and rangelands are critical for meeting the SDGs. Need to strengthen and expand communications team with regional nodes to update website; continue to broaden support and to update materials.

Ann – could we also have a larger global comms team, as well?

Tungaa – congratulates the comms team; she retweeted Engin’s tweets; should also use Facebook. Need strategic plan for social media; the comms should be in languages of regions. But tweets might be from a central group that can be retweeted by others. Everyone should be telling why the IYRP is important. Is there an ISG or IYRP Twitter account?

Maryam – we should make call to expand comms team. After regional groups are set up, they can suggest who can serve on global comms team (Ann and Pedro agree).

Ann – right now, the global comms team is Barbara and her website team; Maryam writing documents; Ann; Engin with social media; Munkhnasan and Hijaba.

Maryam – after reading the minutes, invite others to join the comms team right away; then regional groups can continue with more later. Tungaa volunteered; Pablo Manzano will help as he has time.

Loupa – question about open flyer. Maryam: can circulate it and ask for comments; then, as soon as regional groups are ready, they can take over the process.

Ann – can have open flyer, but really need them to be revised by the regions, to make regional flyers (Barbara agrees; need to be in appropriate languages and adapted to regional needs).

Gabriel Oliva – really a problem with the language; he is from Argentina and everyone is pastoralist but they don’t identify with this term; they are ranchers. Have to get them on board. 70% of Argentina is pastoralists. We can get the ranchers and associations interested in IYRP. With National Institute of Agriculture and Technology that works with these groups; can work with Pablo Manzano to get the words right. Also willing to be in comms team.

Maryam – open flyer has working definitions for pastoralists and rangelands; at global level, we need basic definitions that are global. We are open to revisiting them, but maybe we don’t have to force everything into one definition; perhaps borrow from the semantics and realize that something that is similar is just as well the same. There are many similar words for rangelands and pastoralism. Underlying it all, the people share the same challenges and opportunities, and that’s what we look for right now.

Hijaba – thanks Ann and Barbara and comms team, including Munkhnasan. JASIL will always be involved in the comms team. (Maryam thanked Hijaba for this.)

David Borre – maybe the word pastoralist doesn’t work in Mexico, they think of themselves as cowboys and ranchers. In Argentina, the term gauchos is used. Can adapt to the broader themes. Doesn’t know how Mexico is involved, particularly at governmental level. His organization has connections with government people and will start talks with them to gain letters of support. They work with the American Bird Conservancy and the Rio Grande Joint Venture in the U.S. They have asked how they can be involved. Please explain to him how they can be involved and help in reaching out to these other organizations. They have many partners that could be involved in this effort.

Maryam – looking at ways to coordinate with you, David, as Mexico did make comments at COAG; we will hopefully get transcript of that, as it may help in making contact.

Elisabeth – very happy that David has joined because, as part of the Mexican efforts, they have tried to reach out to government; not sure how far the discussion has advanced to gain a letter. Need to move that forward as a group. Encourage the regional groups to focus as multiple stakeholders to support SDG 17; work as partnership now; then will be inclusive from very beginning for the IYRP. Need to make sure the pastoralists are on board from the start and reach out to them. This is a challenge, but we could set a milestone and have the pastoralists’ input.

Maryam – on the website, you will see that almost 20% of the letters of support are from NGOs that are pastoralist organizations. This is the strength of this campaign; the pastoralists are quite well organized but we do need to make sure their voices are heard. Regional groups should be as multi-stakeholder as possible, including governmental people.

Ann – in the current list of ISG members, one third are people with pastoralist organizations or with organisations that are directly working with pastoralists on the ground.

**3. Fundraising**

Maryam – Very much appreciate that partners have stepped in whenever funding needed; this has been tremendous. Questioning as we move toward UNGA in NY in 2021. Hopefully, things will be back to normal and there will be side events etc. Might need to do fundraising to meet challenges of events for meeting in NY.

David – will the money be for travel? Maybe start making list of expenses; that would help in his efforts to see about funds. If we know how much, then we can start collecting.

Maryam – ask Comms Team to think about Sept 2021 in NY; list types of things that could be done there and present at next meeting.

Engin – not easy to raise funds, as it is in less than a year. Yolda ready to give some support. Maybe better to urge organizations in ISG and regional groups to commit funding to these events, build on dedication and commitment of member organizations.

Maryam – what about countries that co-sponsor, could they contribute financial support, e.g. for a side event?

Ganbayar – agrees co-sponsors could do so; will contact HQ for more information. Since Mongolia is leading, there should be some amount of funding offered through them, but he is not in position to say. He will bring this issue up with the two Ministries.

Maryam – chat messages about communications in Spanish. Susana Feldman has been our great supporter in Spanish translations.

Gabriel – Susana will retire next year, so she will not be able to continue after that.

**4. Regional IYRP Support Groups**

Jim – glad the discussion has come back to regional groups time and time again today. Really need to ramp that up quickly…for funding reasons, getting governments involved, getting ranchers and gauchos involved etc. We have made a start in putting together these groups; core list at this point. Now working with longer list started 4 years ago of people who asked to be kept informed of IYRP progress. Also adding now those who contributed videos and other materials for the website for COAG. Plan to ask if they would like to join regional groups. Would like to have someone from each country at least and hopefully more. Need a lot of emphasis on these groups to work independently but also to report to global group. Might also need a group in each country.

Maryam – preparatory planning document has been drafted but needs to be reviewed by everyone. Have suggested four primary tasks for the groups with tentative deadlines in the short term, then need to decide whether or how the regional groups continue after we have the IYRP designation.

Barry – should update open flyer in English first and then have it quickly translated and modified for the regions. There has been a lot of exclusive discussion about terminology of pastoralism. Can be adapted to regional level.

Maryam – circulate to this group to make changes to master open flyer within two weeks; then turn it over to regional groups.

Barry – then regional groups can make changes and adapt to the regions with appropriate language.

Maryam – need to integrate SDGs into the open flyer and add in 2026 year. Ann has worked on a document for pastoralist groups and then maybe incorporate open flyer. Could be one or two documents as per needs of regional groups. But there needs to be a global flyer, too, for UNGA.

Jim – when do we start to expand the regional groups? Should we wait until after the open flyer is revised, or do we start inviting folks to join right now?

Barry – everyone agrees the more the merrier; but never going to include everyone in this effort at this stage. Just need to be careful not to exclude anyone. A certain responsibility gets transferred from global group to regional groups.

Jim – what we have seen so far in the people joining the groups is that they understand there is a commitment to doing work when they are on a committee.

Maryam – we do expect commitment from people for their time on both global and regional groups.

Ann – people on this call do well with English, but there are 75 people on ISG member list and most of those not on this call may not be comfortable communicating in English. Need to have the main points of the meeting minutes translated so everyone can know what is going on and can follow up.

Maryam – before sending updated open flyer, regional groups should have a translated version to work with. Going back to Jim’s question about expanding the regional groups: we have relied to now on ISG and IRC/IGC members. We have a list of about 30 people who would like to be on regional groups, but not every country is represented. Jim’s longer list of contacts who want to be informed now includes the 153 organizations that sent expressions of support. Jim will send a message to this longer list inviting them to join the regional groups. That might be the most democratic way to gain new members.

Elisabeth – question about regional groups in North & South America. Caribbean is missing. Should Mexico be with Latin America and Caribbean? Good for Cuba and others to see they are included.

Maryam – are there rangelands and pastoralists in the Caribbean?

Elisabeth & Pablo – there are pastures but maybe not mobility.

Maryam – politically it would be good to include the Caribbean. What about placement for Mexico?

David – so much collaborative work on grasslands between Mexico, U.S. and Canada, so they should be together. Maybe South America and the Caribbean?

Jim – Elisabeth and David bring up good points. IRC/IGC regional groups had gaps, so we have expanded names, but good idea to continue to make sure everyone is included.

Barry – maybe have the regional groups define themselves. Some organizations in Mexico might feel affiliation more with South America and others with Canada and the U.S. Activities will flow out of where they want to put their efforts.

Jim – when restructured, some people didn’t know where they fit and that is why the groups were changed.

Maryam – agrees with Barry that we need flexibility for regions to define themselves. Will make this clear in the IYRP documents.

Pablo – Jurgen feels that the work on rangelands in Mexico has been done more with the U.S. so maybe best to be in North America, but some people from Mexico may want to work with the South American group, too.

David – the southern part of Mexico is more related with tropical livestock and South America. CATIE in Costa Rica has done a lot of work and would be good with Central & South America.

Engin – also agrees we need to be flexible. Some organizations in Turkey are culturally closer to Middle East and some closer to Europe.

Maryam – when groups start to work on open flyer, they will have to be conscious of these issues.

Pedro – need to work in English with European regional group, but when working with organizations in Spain, need to communicate in Spanish. We have to coordinate how to translate main concepts. Propose a linguistic commission for translation of certain concepts, especially for different Spanish-speaking regions. This may be the case for other non-native English speakers.

Maryam – perhaps we need a lexicon that covers many languages; not sure about Russian and Chinese, but definitely others.

Dana – wondering if the Oceania group needs to reach out to Philippines and others who spoke up at COAG in their region; right now, it is just Australia.

Maryam – trying to get transcripts so we know what different countries wrote to and said at COAG.

Jim – example of International Year of Soils and how it was handled: American Society of Agronomy obtained considerable funding for exhibits and other educational materials. These were for distribution in the U.S. but were available for anyone throughout the world and can be translated.

Maryam – need to make sure there is good communication among all the IYRP regional groups so these kinds of resources can be shared and translated. Regional groups can organize however they want; elect chair etc., work on sub-topics, just need to communicate this back to the global group. Also, have one person designated for the global comms team. Pedro discussed working on a lexicon – is that something you want to start on right away?

Pedro – was discussing this with Pablo and maybe the people in Argentina would like to join them in drafting the lexicon.

Maryam – please go ahead and let us know what you need from us. We could pull out all the materials that have been translated into Spanish already and provide them to you.

Pedro – when we have the contact list organized, we will be able to find the other Spanish-speaking members to work with.

Maryam – after Jim contacts everyone on mailing list to find out if they are interested in being in a regional group, then the list will be made available to all.

Barbara – Documents are located in several locations on the new website: (1) press releases - <https://iyrp.info/un-process> ; general documents in English - <https://iyrp.info/resources/front> ; and translated documents will be located in the “Resources” link on appropriate regional pages on <https://iyrp.info>

**SUMMARY OF MEETING DISCUSSION – Maryam**

* Gregorio and Ganbayar are not so concerned about the upcoming FAO meetings, but we should continue to raise awareness and prepare seriously for UNGA.
* Ganbayar and Government of Mongolia will consider whether and how to approach co-sponsorship by other countries.
* Suggesting that focus be on FAO regional conferences; Gregorio provided link to information on FAO website.
* Ganbayar says the Rome Ambassadors might meet informally to continue to raise awareness.
* Communications team would like to expand with other members and pleased there are already volunteers (several have already volunteered in the Chat).
* Fundraising suggestion is to get ready for September UNGA meeting; create a budget and consider how to raise those funds.
* Regional Groups: preparatory process paper is agreed to, with a few modifications as to the groupings, flexibility on how to establish the groups and communicate with each other, and having a member assigned to the comms team.
* Ann will follow up on asking for the names of countries and transcripts from COAG meeting.

**Partial Chat Transcript**

Loupa Pius: I think you need to share the list of countries (Governments) that have sent in their letters and also supported.

Loupa Pius: I am thinking about taking advantage of the regional blocks such as Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD) and ECOWAS in which ministers of African governments currently discuss about pastoralist affairs. Just thinking about that.

Loupa Pius: Engin was super in twitter.

Gregorio: FAO regional Conference provisional calendar: <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/en/>

Pablo Manzano: yes, the idea of tweeting directly to the FAO reps was awesome, Engin!

Engin Yilmaz: Our list for representatives to UN is almost ready as well :)

Loupa Pius: Can regional groups provide contextual updates on the opening flyer that can later be emerged into one useful flyer for advocacy?

Pedro Herrera: One way to reinforce global comm team, once regional teams are operational, is to incorporate one person from each regional team to the global one, as both helping and bridging

Loupa Pius: Ann – the composed communication team with multiple languages. At least the languages should be taken into consideration (French, English, Spanish, etc).

Tungaa U: I can join the Comm team. I can come up with an Excel template to plan tweets share with other Comm team members.

Gabriel Oliva: I Can help with communications in Spanish also.

David Borre: Me too.

Pedro Herrera: We have some language issues within the Spanish speakers too, so maybe we should coordinate between us and try to get a common ground.

Barb Hutchinson: Thank you for your offers of translation. I think it would be a good idea to make a list of our translators. This is something the Communications Committee can do.

Ganbayar Ganbold: I need to leave the meeting for another one. I will brief ISG on matters we discussed.

Barb Hutchinson: Engin, Ann and all – should we draft a Communications Plan, too, that could then be shared with Regional Groups for translation and distribution?

Tungaa U: Regarding Central Asia and Mongolia Regional group, do we know potential country focal points from CA countries? ISG is not represented by CA countries.

Tungaa U: Barb, I would push for Comm plan.

Pedro Herrera: Pablo and I were talking about two kind of groups, geographical regional groups and linguistic groups.

Tungaa U: meeting notes/flyers in different languages can be gathered at the website so that we could only share the links.

Barb Hutchinson: Thank you, Tungaa. Yes, we are planning to upload more documents in different languages to the website. The press releases are up now in six languages.

Loupa Pius: We need to be careful while thinking about who to include in the working groups especially if they supported the designation. The pastoralists and experts should be able. Because information needed during working groups require subject matter.

Pedro Herrera: Regarding linguistics, we could have a Spanish commission in charge of building kind of a translation list to agree between Pastoramericas and people from North and South America, and the Caribbean and Spain on how to translate the main concepts and adapt them to the specifics of each region.

Tungaa U: To include Central Asian countries, we need to have materials in Russian, too.

Loupa Pius: I may need to know the Working Group for Africa, East Africa. (Ann sent him the names.)