

# A global call for a United Nations International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (UNIYRP)

*A conference on Pastoralism and Rangelands Restoration,  
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2019*

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# Purpose

1. What is the genesis of having an IYRP proclaim?
2. What is an IYRP and what it's added value for rangelands and pastoralists? Otherwise, what are the rationales of IYRP?
3. What process that should be followed to get an international year proclaimed? what is the process ongoing? How countries can support?

# History

- The UN designates specific days, weeks, years and decades as occasions to mark particular events or topics promoting, through awareness and action, the objectives of the Organization.
- Often, it is one or more Member States that propose these observances and the General Assembly establishes them with a resolution.
- On occasion, these celebrations are declared by the specialized agencies of the United Nations, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, FAO..,
- Since 1959 the UN has designated total of 79 International Years, (eg. 1950/60: World Refugee Year ([A/RES/1285 \(XIII\)](#)); 2024-International Year of Camelids ([A/RES/72/210](#)). (5themes approved in 2009 only!)

# Whose initiative?

- IYRP Steering Committee/International Support Group Members before May 2016
- Side event (UNEP, FAO, ILRI and other collaborators) in May 2016
- A new resolution on [Combating desertification, land degradation and drought and promoting sustainable pastoralism and rangelands](#) was presented and adopted at [UNEA-2](#) held 23–27 May 2016 at the UNEP, in Nairobi, Kenya.
  - contribute to raising the awareness of sustainable pastoralism and rangelands.
  - worldwide gap analysis related to rangelands issues (pub in 2019)
- International Rangeland Congress (IRC) in Saskatoon, Canada July 17-22, 2016.
- [UNEA 2](#) pushes the [SDG 15](#), *‘Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss’*, and of the need for multilateral environmental agencies to cooperate and collaborate

# Whose initiative? ....

- **Mongolian Government-open session of the October 2018 COAG meeting in Rome (supported by Ethiopia!)**
- Leading the effort to submit a formal resolution to be presented at the 2020 COAG Meeting
- a special "Ministerial Breakfast" event was held on 12 March 2019 at UNEA-4 in Nairobi.



Former Ethiopia's Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Shiferaw Teklemariam, speaks at UNEA-2 (photo credit: ILRI/Dorine Odongo).



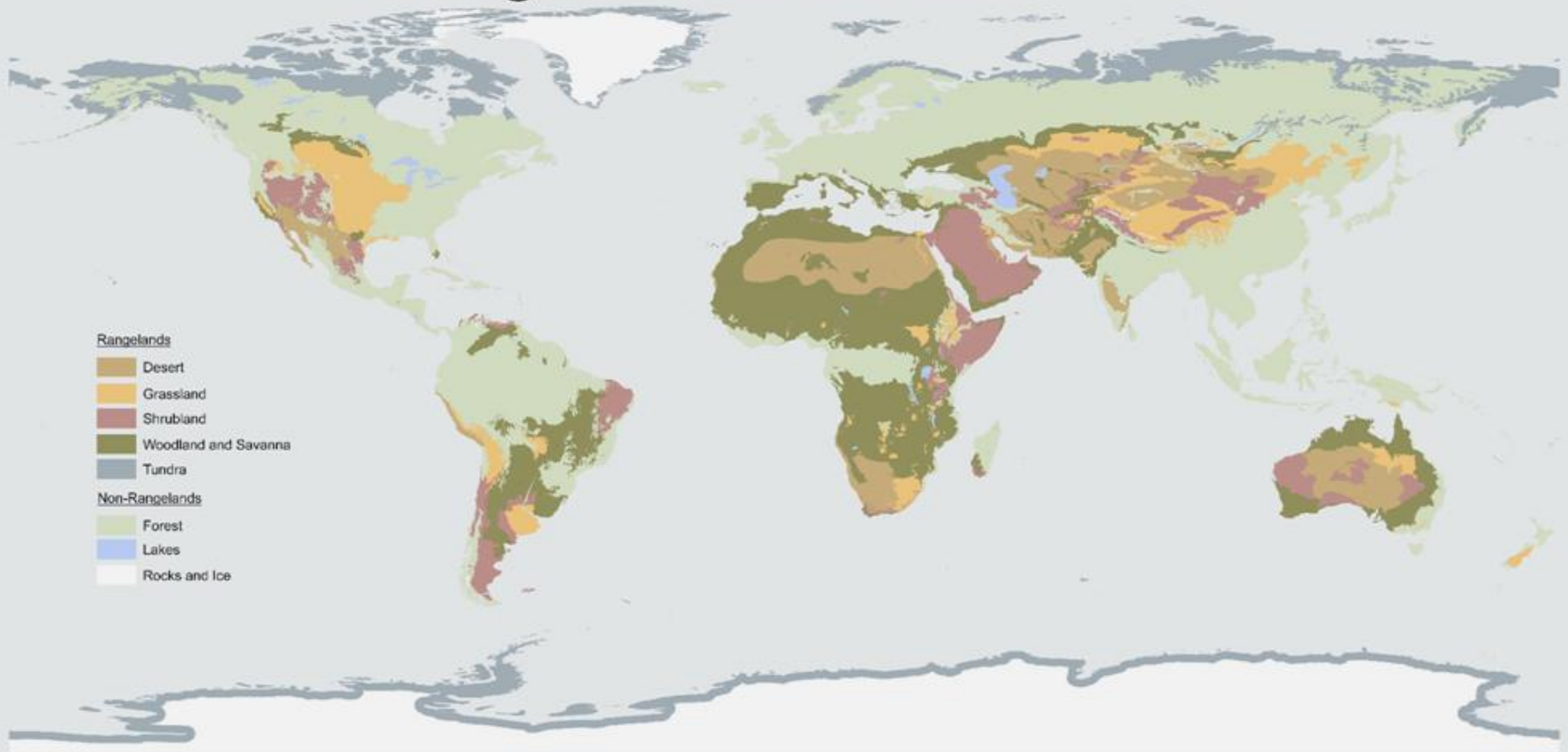
**Rangelands** include grasslands, shrublands, savannas, deserts, steppes, tundras, alpine communities and marshes, where wild and domestic animals graze wild plants and share habitat



## RANGELANDS ARE GLOBALLY IMPORTANT:

They cover **50% of global land surface** in warm and cold climates

### Rangelands of the World





# Rangelands are important for human wellbeing

- 500 million people gain their livelihoods from extensive livestock production
- 2 billion people derive animal protein, water, fibre, pharmaceuticals etc from the rangelands





# General characteristics of rangelands

- Variable, **unpredictable climate** with frequent stresses & shocks
- **Areas of “high” and “low” productivity** that demand holistic and integrated landscape-level planning, management and use
- Managed under **communal and individual tenure systems** as layers of rights and responsibilities
- Produce livestock and other goods supporting millions of local livelihoods and **contributing to national and global economies**
- **Poorly serviced and marginalised** from mainstream development processes

# Rangelands are hotspots of diversity

- High **cultural** diversity
  - Long history of human use:  
**origin of hominid evolution**
  - 24% of **languages**  
in world
  - Nomadic lifestyle is  
coupled to **strong**  
**cultural traditions**



Photo: Angelo Loy, Terra Nuova



Photo: ActionAid

# Rangelands are vital for **biological** diversity

- **High ecological diversity - taxonomic and functional:**
  - Rangelands harbour 35% of global biodiversity hotspots
  - Rangelands provide habitat for 28% of endangered species
    - Savannas: highest large mammal diversity
    - Shrublands: highest shrub endemism of all ecosystems
    - Tundra: highest diversity of non-vascular plants
  - **Wild herbivores in rangelands are drivers of ecosystem structure**
  - **Rangelands offer a wealth of ecosystem services**
    - Store 35% of terrestrial carbon
    - Fodder production
    - Ecotourism
    - Artistic inspiration



*Stafford Smith et al. 2009, Reid et al. 2014, Niamir-Fuller 2016, Cooke et al., 2017*

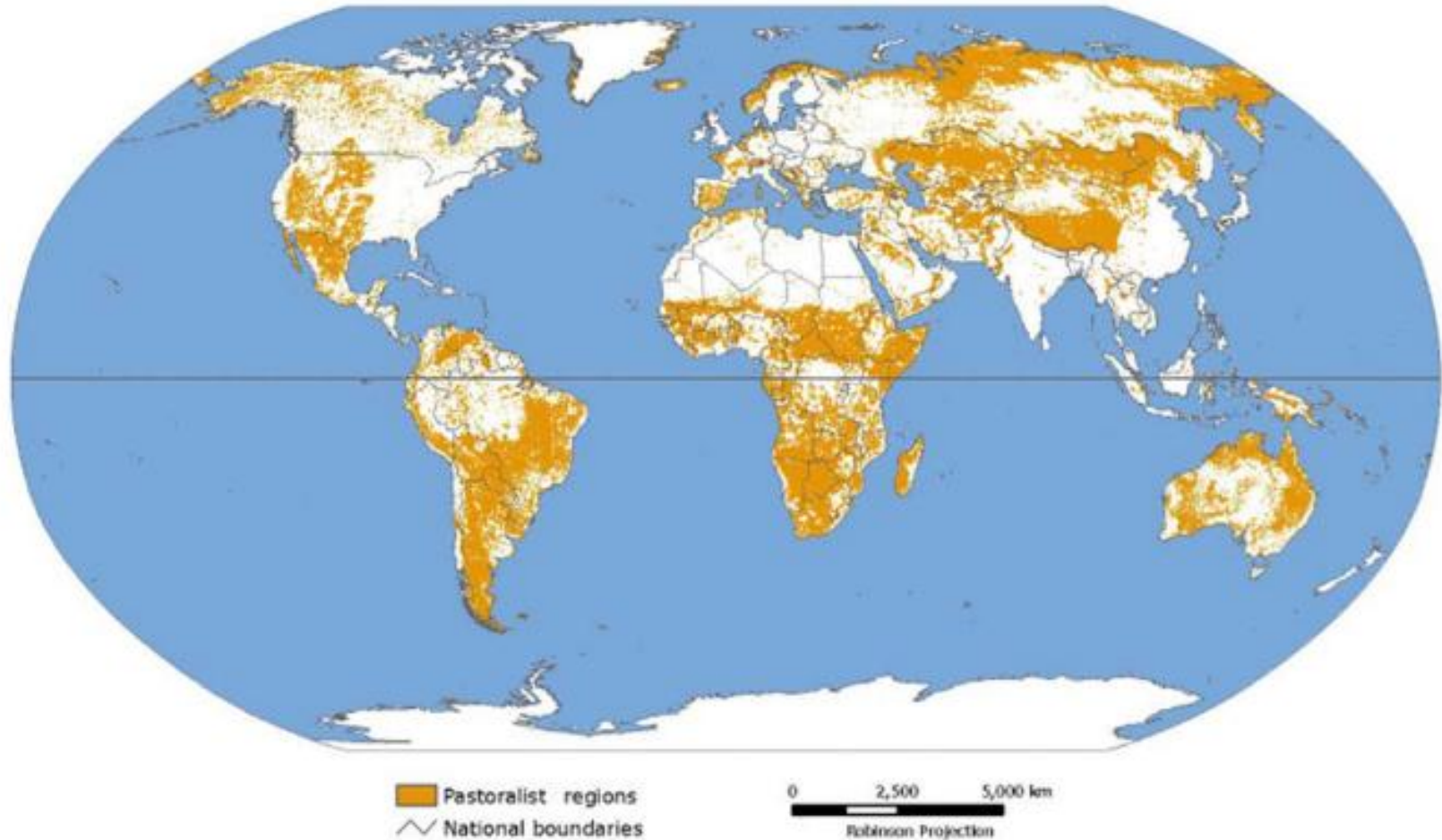


**Pastoralists** include nomadic & transhumant herders, agropastoralists, ranchers and conservationists who manage livestock and/or wildlife





# Pastoralists are the **stewards of global rangelands**



**Fig. 1**  
**Global map of pastoralism**

Source: Reproduced with permission from the World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism, United Nations Environment Programme and International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2014

# General characteristics of pastoral production systems

- **Animals grazing natural vegetation produce food (meat and milk), fibre, leather etc. in areas marginal for crop production without high levels of external inputs**
- **Knowledge- and labour-intensive production with little mechanisation and low use of external inputs**
- **Capitalise on unpredictable “patchiness” of natural resources over space and time in the rangelands**
- **Deal with risk and uncertainty thru flexibility and mobility in herd management**



Photo: Wolfgang Bayer



# Changing political, economic and climate contexts challenge rangeland integrity & pastoralist livelihoods:

- Urbanisation and expansion of infrastructure
- Conversion to cropland where this is possible
- Mining
- Extraction of minerals, oil and gas
- Production of renewable energy
- Privatisation of communal land
- Increased unpredictability of climatic conditions and frequency of extreme events



# Changes in pastoralism

- **Loss of access to grazing land and water because communal resources are generally not legally protected**
- **Fragmentation of land / fencing often obliges sedentarisation, leading to localised land degradation**
- **“Rangeland development” efforts often led to Increase in woody and invasive species**
- **Increased disparity between rich and poor pastoralists**
- **Increased diversification of livelihood sources**
- **Richer pastoralists increasingly use modern forms of technology (e.g. mobile phones, motorised vehicles, mechanised pumps)**
- **Poorer pastoralists abandoning livestock-keeping and rangelands**





# Call for International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP)

- ✚ To increase worldwide understanding of the importance of rangelands and pastoralists for global food security and environmental services
- ✚ To call attention to need for sustainable management and enlightened policy to benefit current and future generations
- ✚ To mobilise all to address today's challenges and grasp new opportunities in rangelands & pastoralism with creative energy

# Some activities leading up to and during IYRP



- Joint International Rangeland/Grassland Congress (IRC/IGC) in 2020 in Kenya
- Social media campaign and video films to raise awareness of consumers, scientists and policymakers
- Pastoralist gatherings to share & document local knowledge and strategise for equitable development
- Policy resolutions presented at national, regional and global level
- Strengthened combined efforts in equitable development of rangelands and pastoralism
- 12 possible themes for a proposed International Year on Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP)



Sultan Hadji Hassen Mohammed Gebaba, Ethiopia  
Somali Elder, giving statement during Ethiopian  
Pastoralist Day. 11<sup>th</sup> EPD, Semera. Photo by PFE

# For more information, go to:

- <http://globalrangelands.org/international-year-rangelands-and-pastoralists-initiative>

*People*

*Planet*

*ProsperityPeace*

*Partnership*



- **UN International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists**

