**International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP)**

**International Support Group Conference Call – February 7, 2019**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attending**: Jim O’Rourke (Chair), Maryam Niamir-Fuller (Vice-Chair), Barbara Hutchinson & Sheila Merrigan (Secretariat), Hijaba Ykhanbai, Abdelkader Bensada, Gregorio Velasco Gil, Elisabeth Huber-Sannwald, Jurgen Hoth, Ann Waters-Bayer, Dana Kelly, Tungalag Ulambayar, Godfrey Massay, Rikke Oliveira, Kirk Olson, Susana Feldman, Kathrine Johnsen, Mina Esteqamat, Hossein Badripour

**Welcome to the IYRP Support Group (Jim)**

* Discussion of the Name Change for the Group and Leadership Rotation
  + Purpose for name change of the Group: Need to support the country-level efforts to submit resolutions and writing support letters, therefore this group of partners is no longer “steering” but “supporting”. There was no objection to the name change to International Support Group (ISG).
  + Maryam, Jim, and Barbara all stated they want to continue to be involved in the Support Group and help in any way they can to benefit this effort. However, they are all retired and working voluntarily. The Chair of the ISG should have access to an institution/organization that can provide strong support. Barbara is happy to maintain website until it is no longer needed.
  + There was a discussion about the role of the ISG going forward and its leadership structure. Appreciation was expressed about the current leadership. Suggestion was to have a sub-group that would focus on developing the COAG resolution on IYRP and that this would be an international group but presided by Mongolia. We should learn from other International Years and how they were structured.
    - There is a document on the website created in 2017 outlining the “Terms of Reference” (TOR) for the International Steering Committee. It could be revised for the new International Support Group.
  + ***ACTION 1***: *Secretariat* *will send out the 2-page summary of other international years and their structures and post on website*
  + ***ACTION 2:*** *ISG members are requested to consider revisions to the TOR of the ISG and any other suggestions on structure and leadership rotation and submit by email.*

**Update from Mongolia on Process Towards COAG 2020 and Next Steps (Hijaba) -** (See attached PPT)

* Why we need – climate change, industry etc. are affecting rangelands. Pastoralism is a way of life; to live in harmony with nature. The Culture. Has been discussed all over and people want this. But political issues can interfere.
* After meeting in Mongolia in June, there was good progress with government. Mongolia sent request to UN in July 2018. This was followed by request at COAG meeting in November 2018.
* Mongolia is now leading group for an IYRP and they are working with various ministries.
  + Working on an official proposal
  + General discussions on the structure and timing of the proposal was agreed
  + Proposal to be finished by May-June 2019; involves Ministries (Agriculture (Livestock Dept.), Environment, Tourism, and Foreign Affairs)
  + Chair and co-chair of National Support Group has been named and will be discussed at a stakeholders meeting in March.
  + Working jointly to organize events for UNEA-4; Mongolian Environmental Minister will make a presentation about the proposal and the importance of an IYRP (12 March)
* Jurgen will try to get support from Mexico’s new Federal Administration through the Undersecretary of the Environment.
* ***ACTION 3:*** *Hijaba will discuss and confirm to hold a joint conference call between the IYRP Support Group and the Mongolian National Support Group after it is officially formed.*
* Gregorio explained that the Director General of FAO has in the past agreed to exceptions to the rule that FAO’s designation of international years will be done on a biennial basis. He will provide clarification on a possibility of having the IYRP either in 2025 or 2026. He also explained that the COAG Report of 2018 will be officially endorsed in June 2019. Once that is done, then Mongolia can submit its official proposal for an IYRP. This will involve both a formal draft resolution as well as a background documentation. Gregorio suggested that these documents should be submitted by July or August 2019 to the COAG Secretariat.
* ***ACTION 4:*** *Mongolia’s proposed resolution and background documentation to be submitted to COAG by August 2019. ISG to provide all support as needed.*

**Update on UNEA & Discussion on Nest Steps (Maryam)**

* Our efforts at UNEA are part of a larger strategy to raise awareness in many other forums. Kenyan government has requested a side event; Yolda requested a booth; a ministerial breakfast has also been requested.
* It is important to bring the environment constituency into this initiative. Fiona reported earlier that there is increasing international debate at UNEA about meat and livestock production (meat is bad for health and greenhouse gases) so UNEA is especially important.
* Resolutions: the Kenyan government has submitted a resolution to UNEA. It is broader than the resolution that was prepared by Kenya in 2017 for UN General Assembly (covers global assessment, request for establishing an international year and an international day); they are aware of efforts of Mongolia and their efforts will be very supportive of Mongolian efforts. This resolution has the backing of the Africa Group (the regional body of UNEA that includes all African countries) and will be discussed again next week in that Group. Maryam reported on another resolution (sustainable infrastructure) that is being sponsored by the Asia Group (including Mongolia) and efforts to include sustainable pastoralism into that resolution; she will share a copy with ISG.
* Official Side Event: Unfortunately, this event was not approved by the UNEA Secretariat. Out of 200+ ideas for side events, only 14 were accepted.
* Special Event Ministerial Breakfast: Dana said the breakfast event has been booked for 12 March so going ahead with plans. Mongolia’s Minister of Environment has been confirmed and is willing to chair the meeting. Ethiopia and Kenya are likely also interested. It was agreed that the concept and structure proposed for the official side event could be adapted for the Breakfast. Abdelkader confirmed that this event needs to be completely organized by ourselves. Dana will be there a week before to help organize this.
  + ***ACTION 5:*** *Maryam will report back to the smaller group working on UNEA (Fiona, Jon, Kathrine, Ernest, Hijaba, Tungaa, Dana) and request that they finalize the concept note and other preparations. The concept note will then be shared with the ISG so that members can contact country representatives to encourage them to participate at the Breakfast.*
  + Jim - Let us know if that is happening so we can help get people there. Will try to have 2 or 3 ministers.

**Discussion about translation of meeting notes into other languages (Maryam)**

There is more interest about this effort from many people throughout the world. West African and Arabic counties are interested in this group, but their language is not English. However, we have no resources to pay for translation. Proposes that the different partners translate from English to other languages. Do we have volunteers? Or suggestions on how to do this?

* Susana – (via chat) can do English to Spanish.
* ICARDA – might help with Arabic (Ann will ask Mounir).
* Hijaba – offered to assist with Russian.
* Ann will ask Ruijun from China to help.
* Kirk suggested using Google translate for English to French; Maryam will ask Razingrim to help.

**Other Business**

**Communication in the Future**

* Barbara – will be sending out and posting to website a revised list of the IYRP Support Group members (please send corrections to her); listserv subscribers have also been updated. Please let Barbara know if you have others to add.
* Ann and Barbara – please only respond to whole group on Listserv if an issue for all to discuss; confirmation of meeting participation can be sent just to Barbara.
* Ann - Meeting on Decade of Family Farming is coming up next month and they are preparing a brief on pastoralists as family farmers for that meeting. Ann will send a draft to the ISG for comment.
* Jim – hopefully we will have conference calls more regularly now.

**Summary of Next Steps (Jim):**

* Look at structures, including responsibilities for IYRP Support Group, Mongolian National Steering Committee, and any other groups or subgroups.
* Submissions to COAG are on track.
* Conference call with IYRP Support Group and Mongolia National Steering Committee.
* News on UNEA breakfast so we can get ministers to that event. (Maryam will send out message to the organizing group to hold a conference call).
* Translations – what documents actually need to be translated? Drafts of resolutions? Minutes and calls for meetings?