

Hustai Declaration

Pastoralist Organizations from, Altai Republic of Russia, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in Central Asia met in Hustai National Park, Mongolia, from the 25th to the 29th July 2015 to discuss and agree on a pastoralist and nomadic peoples coordination mechanism for Central Asia that would protect their mobile livelihoods and deciding on the following:

Central Asian Pastoralists in particular face unprecedented threats to their livelihoods. This situation results from a lack of understanding of their livelihoods that result in policies that hamper mobile livelihoods in general and pastoralists' mobility in particular.

In parallel to this lack of policy support, academics and practitioners are improving their understanding of the different socioeconomic, environmental and cultural benefits that their livelihoods provide. Pastoralists are today regarded as fundamental providers of ecosystem services and social wellbeing by International Organizations such as UNFAO, UNDP, UNEP or IUCN.

Pastoralism preserves biodiversity while providing a sustainable income to the people that practice it. In our region it is able to produce a very high portion of the agricultural goods, thereby making a key contribution to the local food security and sovereignty, especially organically produced ones. Pastoralist products are often of high quality and with particular characteristics that make them achieve high prices when efficiently marketed.

In Central Asia, Pastoralism has been fundamental in the history of its peoples, framing cultures, practices, foods and traditions. All cultures in the region are strongly influenced by a way of living that is perfectly adapted to the dry and cold landscapes making the most efficient use of the resource base and ensuring its sustainable management. In order to sustain these mobile livelihoods and its associated food production systems some conditions are to be met: pastoralist need access to land at large scales so that they can cope with climatic variability; they have to be able to make decisions on their natural resources; and they need efficient representation in policy dialogue processes to have policies and laws that take into account their needs.

We, in representation of the pastoralists of central Asia, call society for a better recognition of pastoralists, and appeal the following:

To the National, Regional and Global Institutions we appeal the following:

- We appeal the Central Asia Pastoralists mechanism to be included in any regional discussion affecting the livelihoods of our pastoralists peoples
- We appeal our respective National Governments to consult us in policies affecting our livelihoods.
- We appeal that national and international policies and laws affecting pastoralists are aligned with the Voluntary Guidelines for the Governance of the Tenure of Land, Natural Resources and Fisheries

- We appeal that pastoralist matters are taken into consideration in policy discussions in the UN, in particular those of FAO in the CFS, those in the CBD and in UNEP
- We appeal that Regional bodies consult with us when dealing with matters that affect our lives, the lives of our families and the environment where we have lived for generations

To the United Nations we appeal:

- We appeal that the United Nations supports the work of the Central Asia Pastoralists mechanism
- We appeal support in our secretariat and steering committee activities
- We appeal more informed studies and research about the environmental services our ways of live provide and the recognition of our contribution to the global wellbeing
- We appeal for the United Nations to assist us in getting the recognition of our food produced as organic and ecological.

To the civil Society organizations and mechanisms

- We appeal the recognition of the Central Asia pastoralist mechanism

We appeal the inclusion of pastoralists and nomadic peoples representatives in the different coordination structures, mechanisms, platforms, networks and constituencies of the Civil Society

At the technical level we appeal:

- We appeal mobility rights of pastoralists to be respected and preserved. Nomadism and mobile livelihoods have proven to be a fundamental element for the sustainable use of our steppes and mountains during thousands of years.
- We appeal the recognition of our customary laws, traditional ways and Governance of tenure, in particular with respect to common property of land, water and pastures
- We appeal International organizations to promote dialogue and action with national governments so to enact adequate policies for pastoralists. Pastoralist representatives should actively be involved in the discussion, formulation, approval and implementation of these policies.
- We appeal pastoralist knowledge to be widely disseminated and taken into account. Pastoralists have thrived in harsh environments during thousands of years with their adapted livelihoods but their wealth of knowledge on e.g. indigenous breeds or management of natural resources is systematically disregarded.
- We appeal assistance to promote knowledge and experience exchange. Assistance for pastoralists to meet other pastoralist groups and specific materials and approaches to build up our capacity are needed for our integration into modern society.

- We appeal veterinary services that help us better manage the genetic stock of our herds. Advanced veterinary services are usually restricted to intensive and industrial livestock producers.
- We appeal support in communications means and adapted ways of disseminating information, which are of great importance for pastoralists and nomadic peoples
- We appeal support with integrating different steps of the product chain for our dairy, fiber, and meat products. In particular we appeal support in processing, transforming and commercializing pastoralist products. We appeal support in developing a brand or a denomination of pastoralists and nomadic peoples products that would add value to all the pastoralists produced items whether handicrafts or food items.
- We appeal a better funding for pastoralist organizations and credit support to pastoralists at discounted rate, in order to better improve support to local, national, regional initiatives of Pastoralists. The pastoralist civil society is the legitimate carrier of pastoralist voice and should therefore be supported to consult pastoralists and gather their knowledge.
- We appeal pastoralist voice to be more and better listened to worldwide. Not only Central Asia but all regions in the world have much to learn from pastoralists.

This declaration is the expression of our needs and priorities that need to be urgently taken into account. We wish it to be taken as a message to policy makers and international organizations to take action in our favour. We support the constitution of the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub and wish to contribute to it through this declaration.

Hustai NP, Mongolia, 2015.07.29