

Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren  
President, United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)  
United Nations Environment Programme  
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri  
PO Box 30552, 00100  
Nairobi, Kenya

May 3, 2016

Dear Dr. Oyun:

On behalf of the organizations and societies listed below, we want to bring to your attention a collaborative, worldwide effort to increase the visibility of critical issues facing pastoralists and other people throughout the world who rely on the health and productivity of rangelands and grasslands for their livelihoods. As you will see in the attached flyer to be distributed at the upcoming UNEA-2 meeting in May, we are planning to add to the discussions during the Pastoralist Side Event a proposal to the United Nations General Assembly that would designate an *International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists* in the future. We believe this designation would raise the profile of pastoralism with international organizations and donors, providing a new opportunity to demonstrate sustainable rangelands development practices in champion states such as Mongolia.

During the first part of this year, we have engaged people representing various constituencies from around the world in a dialogue to determine the viability of an initiative to gain an International Year designation. We have been gratified with the immediate and positive response and with the many creative ideas and commitments for outreach activities and sponsorship once a designation is achieved. At this time, we are working to gain country-level support, recognizing it will take many months to complete this process of designating an International Year.

To this end, we are requesting your assistance in realizing this goal and supporting a call to action. We hope you will agree this call to action is important and that you will consider making a statement to that effect in the plenary session. Your knowledge and understanding of pastoralist and rangelands issues is well-recognized, as is your leadership in international environmental governance. Thus, we believe your support for this global effort will ensure serious consideration of the proposal during UNEA-2 and beyond. Your guidance on how to achieve this important goal, and how UNEA could contribute, will be gratefully received.

Please let us know if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Senior Advisor, Sustainability, UNEP

[mniafull2@gmail.com](mailto:mniafull2@gmail.com)

Barbara Hutchinson, Society for Range Management & The Rangelands Partnership

[barbarah@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:barbarah@cals.arizona.edu)

Fiona Flintan, ILRI/International Land Coalition

[f.flintan@landcoalition.info](mailto:f.flintan@landcoalition.info)

Gabriel Oliva and Jim O'Rourke, International Rangelands Congress

[geoliva@speedy.com.ar](mailto:geoliva@speedy.com.ar); [jorourke@csc.edu](mailto:jorourke@csc.edu)

S. Ray Smith, International Grasslands Congress

[raysmith1@uky.edu](mailto:raysmith1@uky.edu)

