**The Process for Gaining a United Nations Designation for an**

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

An International Year is designated by the United Nations General Assembly, based on several criteria. Some of these are:

* The subject should be consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations as stated in its Charter
* It should be of priority concern to all or the majority of countries and should contribute to the development of international cooperation in solving global problems, in particular those affecting developing countries

The following are some suggested steps to take for those countries wishing to lead the process of designating an IYRP (these are elaborated further below):

1. National IYRP Committees established in lead or co-sponsoring countries, bringing together stakeholders and decision makers from all relevant sectors;
2. Strategic list of activities drawn up for the country to take in sponsoring or co-sponsoring the proposal to the United Nations General Assembly, including reaching out to relevant government officials, raising awareness of all stakeholders, linking with other partners at regional or global level, participating in relevant events, etc.;
3. Lead technical ministries (e.g. Ministries of Agriculture, and Environment), including identify the rationale and benefits for an IYRP, so as to convince Ministries of Foreign Affairs (or equivalent) to table a resolution at the UN General Assembly;
4. Ambassador of the lead (or co-sponsoring) countries formally submit a proposal to the UN General Assembly in New York for designation of IYRP;
5. Once submitted, interested countries organize UN drafting committees in New York to deliberate/negotiate the proposal and finalize it for adoption at the UN General Assembly;
6. Events can be held during this 2-3 year process at relevant opportunities worldwide to raise awareness and declare support (e.g. scientific and technical conferences and workshops, congresses of pastoralists, UN assemblies and meetings, etc.).

**Explaining the process**

A country, or preferably a number of countries (the more the better), draft a resolution together to submit to the United National General Assembly (UNGA) in New York. Guidelines for drafting such a resolution can be found at: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/guidelines_submission_draft_reso.pdf>.

Experiences of other International Years should be consulted, for example, the International Year of Soils and an International Year of Pulses.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The submission of a proposed resolution to UNGA should allow at least one year of review and deliberation by countries. There should be an interval of at least two years between the adoption of the decision at UNGA and the start of the Year. Therefore, in all, a three-year process should be envisaged.

The whole process requires ample country-level support and preferably multi-sector support from relevant ministries, civil society, etc. The sectors typically engaging on the issue of rangelands and pastoralism are: agriculture, forestry, environment, economics, health, women, youth and education. To gain this level of country engagement, interested parties need to contact their Ministers and staff directly or through a letter-writing campaign to key officials. A national committee, consisting of relevant ministries, civil society, and other stakeholders also needs to be established so as to provide consistent and coordinated support at country level, in those countries wishing to take a lead on sponsoring an IYRP.

In addition, countries can build up support for such a designation through the assemblies of UN agencies, such as UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) and FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN). They can pass a resolution asking that the UN agency submit their request to the UNGA President. UNEP requires resolutions to be submitted at least three months prior to their United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) annual meetings (next UNEA meeting will be held in December 2017 so, if a resolution is to be presented at UNEA3, it is best to be submitted by May 2017). FAO’s COAG (Committee on Agriculture) will be held in 2018.

It is also important to raise awareness with the Ambassadors and delegations of other Member States to the UN General Assembly in New York. A Directory of UN delegations can be obtained at: <http://protocol.un.org/dgacm/pls/site.nsf/BlueBook.xsp>. Alerting delegations to this global effort will facilitate the process for gaining country signatures on the resolution when it comes for adoption at the UN General Assembly.

**How to Raise Awareness of the Need for an IYRP**

A number of Statements/Declarations have been made by organizations around the world concerning rangelands and pastoralists. These are useful documents to include in a UN resolution proposal and for raising awareness of prospective countries interested in submitting a resolution. These include:

1. [Dana Declaration](http://www.danadeclaration.org/pdf/publicitybooklet.pdf)
2. [Hohhot Declaration](https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/hohhot_declaration_july_9_08.pd)
3. [Kiserian Statement](https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/the_kiserian_pastoralists_statement.pdf)
4. [MERA Declaration](http://www.pastoralism.net/uploads/6/8/0/4/68048055/mera_declaration.pdf)
5. [N’Djamena Declaration](http://www.pasto-secu-ndjamena.org/classified/N_Djamena_Declaration_eng.pdf)
6. [Nouakchott Declaration](http://www.rr-africa.oie.int/docspdf/en/2013/NOUAKCHOTT.pdf)
7. [Segovia Declaration](http://www.danadeclaration.org/pdf/SegoviaDeclaration.pdf)
8. [Farmer’s Forum Statement with Pastoralists and Livestock Breeders](http://vsf-international.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/STATEMENT-SPECIAL-SESSION-EN.pdf)
9. [UNEA Resolution](http://www.unep.org/about/sgb/cpr_portal/Portals/50152/UNEA%202/24.pdf)
10. [The Cancun Statement](http://vsf-international.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/The-Cancun-Statement-Endorsed-22Dec2016.pdf)

There are a number of ways to raise the visibility of the need for an IYRP. Examples of collaborative and multi-country approaches can be viewed at The Rangelands Partnership website: <http://globalrangelands.org/international-year-rangelands-and-pastoralists-initiative>, and include:

1. Hosting Side Events at major meetings of UN organizations or conventions.
2. Organizing seminars for Ambassadors and their staffs in New York, although this strategy is usually not undertaken until a set number of countries have agreed to take forward a resolution.
3. Holding meetings at professional conferences to gain interest and contacts.
4. Distributing open flyers to key officials.
5. Distributing press releases.
6. Conducting a global online survey on ideas for activities to be done during the International Year, once it is designated, including commitments from civil society and all institutions.

An International Steering Committee for designation of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists has been established to help coordinate this global initiative. To contribute to this global effort, please contact Dr. James O’Rourke (International Rangeland Congress & Society for Range Management) – jorourke@csc.edu

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

1. These can be found at: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/231&referer=http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/years.shtml&Lang=E> At the beginning of the resolution for Pulses click on: [on the report of the Second Committee (A/68/444)] for the history of the process of adoption. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)