

25 March 2021

His Excellency Jambaldorj Tserendorj  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
Embassy of Mongolia  
Rome, Italy

Dear His Excellency Jambaldorj Tserendorj:

I am writing to express our enthusiastic support of the UN International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in 2026 proposal that has been endorsed by the FAO Council. The American Anthropological Association is the world's largest scholarly and professional organization of anthropologists. Our members work on all continents and in rangelands over the world. The Association's members are scholars and program specialists with specialized domains of knowledge including the environment, social justice, inequality, policy, indigenous issues, education, agriculture, culture, food, and nutrition among others, which are important issues in rangelands and to pastoralists. Its annual meeting draws up to 7000 social scientists and humanistic scholars to discuss these and other issues.

Global rangelands cover more of Earth's land surface than any other land type, supports millions of pastoralists, and account for half of the world's livestock. A large proportion of rangelands are not altered significantly by livestock grazing. Plant biodiversity is high, and some rangelands hold the last remaining large populations of charismatic megafauna. Climate change and socio-economic drivers are rapidly altering some of these social-ecological systems with the potential to increase vulnerability. Management of these tightly coupled systems involving food, water, and energy – are becoming increasingly sensitive to anthropogenic disturbances from direct and indirect actions, and compounded by climatic perturbations, contribute to habitat decline and fragmentation.

Further, rangeland peoples are often politically remote, economically marginalized, and have limited access to markets, information, and services, what your proposal calls 'benign neglect'. Further, formal institutions such as finances, credit and insurance are often underdeveloped, with land and water resources frequently vulnerable and unequally allocated. Our Association's members actively research, deliberate and initiate action on these issues. They also contribute to UN initiatives including the SDGs, the IPCC and IPBES.

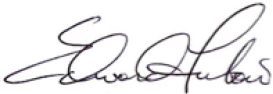
Our Association publishes 23 peer-reviewed journals and stages 10 research conferences each year, one large gathering and nine smaller, more specialized gatherings that have a sharper focus on content domains (e.g., economics) or cultural regions (e.g., Latin America and the Caribbean). In addition, the pandemic has prompted our Association to accelerate and enhance its occasional webinar series, creating opportunities for a globe-spanning dialogue on numerous topics, including rangeland and pastoralists. We are committed to a multi-year symposium series on entrepreneurialism and another on global environmental change, both of which lend themselves well to research presentations of direct relevance to rangeland management and pastoralist communities.

We can demonstrate our initial commitment to sustained research and policy exchanges on topics related to rangeland and pastoralists with our 2021 Annual Meeting, at which our specialized section on Society and the Environment can organize a high-visibility panel session focusing on 'Pastoralism, Global

Change and Transformational Adaptation’ for presentation in the context of IYRP. We can live-stream this event for interested viewers around the world, and a recording can be added to our library for viewing on demand as well.

The American Anthropological Association welcomes the IYRP initiative and supports sustainable pastoralism globally. We believe that pastoralists and rangelands deserve the global attention that other lands and land uses have. Thank you for your kind consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information about any of the foregoing.

Sincerely,  
AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



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