



12 August 2020, Ankara

**The Honourable Mendsaikhan Zagdjav**  
**The Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia**  
**Ulaanbaatar MONGOLIA**  
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**Subject: Designation of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP)**

Your Excellency,

We are very pleased to learn that the resolution proposal submitted by Government of Mongolia with other supporting countries in support of the designation of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) is included in the agenda of the 27th session of Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in September-October 2020

As we have informed the esteemed office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations with a letter, there is an urgent need to conserve mobile pastoralism with its many benefits for rangelands, which are one of the most imperilled and the least protected ecosystems on earth, vastly under-represented in the world's protected area system.

We firmly believe that this need will be acknowledged at the COAG meeting and the proposal will be approved by the Committee Member States.

Yolda Initiative as a nature conservation organization, has been working at national, regional and international levels through scientific research, advocacy, communication to conserve mobile pastoralism in its many different forms all over the world as a traditional cultural practice that benefits not only biodiversity and climate change mitigation & adaptation efforts but also multiple SDGs. Accordingly we have multiple publications (peer-reviewed papers, reports, videos) based on the findings of our ongoing project and research activities such as:

- Mobile Pastoralism in the Mediterranean: arguments and evidence for policy reform and its role in combating climate change. (Report)
- Mobile Pastoralism and Protected Areas: Conflict, Collaboration and Connectivity (peer-reviewed paper)
- Mobile Pastoralism and the World Heritage Convention (Report)
- Mobile Pastoralism in Mediterranean Landscapes (Report)
- Co-creating Knowledge for Action with Transhumant Herders in Spain (Report)
- An economic analysis of transhumance in the Central Spanish Pyrenees (Peer reviewed paper)

Our creative communication activities include but not limited to:

- On the Move Photography Exhibition: is a celebration of the transhumant shepherds and nomadic pastoralists of the Mediterranean. It has been exhibited in 9 countries
- One Square Meter: a needle-felt sculpture which creatively demonstrates, in tangible form, the link between mobile pastoralism and the surrounding natural flora. It is comprised of a knitted carpet (base) into which 20 different grazing dependent species of sculpted felt plants are woven – a visual representation of the plant diversity of rangelands maintained by mobile pastoralists. Multiple One Square Meters produced by women in different countries will be exhibited at the IUCN World Conservation Congress
- Multiple movies, communication campaigns in several countries

As a nature conservation organisation dedicated to conserve mobile pastoralism and rangelands we will keep allocating our funds for such research, advocacy and communication activities to raise the profile and support for rangelands and pastoral issues at global, regional and national levels, to improve understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by rangelands and pastoralists, and to direct increased attention and resources to them before and during the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

I have the honour, Your Excellency, to renew to you the assurances of my highest consideration.

Engin Yılmaz  
Executive Director