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To: Secretariat of the Committee of Agriculture (COAG) of the
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
Email: fao-hq@fao.org

**Subject: Supporting the request from the Government of the Mongolia for an
International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists**

Dear Madams/Sirs,

Environment and Development Association “JASIL” presents its sincere greetings to you and your esteemed office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. JASIL, as regional focal point for Central Asia Pastoral Alliance, CAPA, has the honour of writing in support of the request of the Government of Mongolia for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

We believe that the designation of an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists would provide an opportunity to raise the profile and support for rangelands and pastoral issues globally and nationally, improve understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by rangelands and pastoralists, and direct increased attention and resources to them.

Pastoral agriculture is a way of life for many communities in Central Asian region, where currently in adaptation phase of the transition from centrally planned to a market economy. In economic aspects important how pasture land can contribute for nation's wellbeing and livelihood of herder's and for integrated management of local ecosystems. The share of agriculture in the GDP of Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan ranges from approximately 7.0 to 27.2%. Pastureland covers between 45 to 72% of the total land area of these countries, and plays important role for their socio-economic development and protection of environment and natural resources. The environment linked with pasture lands has a direct impact on the standard of living and the health of the population, especially with regard to social

vulnerability of herder's communities and marginalized groups in the region. This pastoral way of life – vital to rural communities in CA – faces unique and inter-related challenges, such as: rapid transition from a state directed to a market-based economy; need for the reform on policy and legal settings; increasing number of livestock contributing to food security and livelihoods of pastoralists; sustainable use of land, water resources, plant species and biological diversity in line with global climate change; and with the impacts of degradation of pastureland and expansion of the mining industries.

In most cases, pastoral agriculture and pastoralists lie outside of government priorities, and this exacerbates issues in socio-economic development, including increasing poverty. Poverty is higher in these communities than in other places due to the fact that countries in Central Asia are still in the process of transition, and are also facing institutional and agro-ecological changes such as population growth, globalization of markets, changes in demand for animal products, decentralization of governance, as well as changes in tenure systems. All of these changes are disrupting the framework of traditional operations of pastoral societies. These changes have a large impact on the life of nomadic pastoralists.

These ongoing changes need to address the issue of cooperation between international donors and national governments, co-management of pastureland with participation of all related stakeholders at the national and local level for improving tenure security of rangelands, supporting pastoralists with greater equity and good governance. In light of that CAPA members advocating with national governments in Central Asia for policy and legal base of sustainable management of rangelands and recognize pastoralists by Declaring the IYRP and involve them to the capacity building and exchange activities in the region, which was highlighted in its Tashkent Declaration (https://cbnrm.mn/reports/CAPA_Strategy_2020-2022.pdf)

The Environment and Development Association JASIL, as focal point for CAPA will support the IYRP in at least following ways: we will continue to work for community based co-management of rangelands in Central Asia by implementing the International Land Coalition, ILC, supported “CAPA Triennial Strategy for 2010-2022” https://cbnrm.mn/reports/CAPA_Strategy_2020-2022.pdf; organizing events and other activities and support the public outreach by providing photos and video materials and publishing newspapers, bulletins and articles on rangelands and pastoralists in Mongolia and Central Asia.

The following publications may be of particular interest for recognizing importance of rangelands and pastoralism in light of the proposed International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP):

- *Hijaba Ykhanbai “Economics of Environment and Sustainable Development in Central Asia”, 2000, 198 p, in English*

- Hijaba Ykhanbai 2019, Report, "Central Asia Rangelands Initiative , Diverse Tenure Systems, CBI3 ", https://cbrnm.mn/reports/CA_RLI_2019_Oct.pdf
- Hijaba Ykhanbai .2011. " Co-management of pasture land and Natural Resources in Mongolia ", Ulaanbaatar, Mongolian
- Hijaba Ykhanbai "Economics of Environment and natural resources management in Mongolia", 2010, 223 p in Russian
- Hijaba Ykhanbai, 2011. Community-based co-management of natural resources in Mongolia: ten years of experience. ADMON Publishing house, Ulaanbaatar.
- Hijaba Ykhanbai et al. 2018, " Public Understanding the forest", 226, Ulaanbaatar
- Hijaba Ykhanbai , Co-management of Pasture Land in Mongolia: Experiences and Issues, ,The WorldBank - Washington DC, April 8-11, 2013
- Hijaba Ykhanbai , Abdumalik Egemberdiev , Kuralay Karibaeva et al. Regional innovations for diverse tenure systems of pasture land in Central Asia, The WorldBank - Washington DC, March, , 2018
- Central Asia Rangelands Initiative. Diverse Tenure Systems: Good Practice of Members. 2018, Ulaanbaatar, <https://cbrnm.mn/reports/Jasil-CA-good%20practice.pdf>

Website links:

<http://cbrnm.mn>

Videos:

- A Common Right in Mongolia: the Nomadic Custodians.. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeB08Me8Av0>
- Co-management of pastureland and natural resources in Mongolia, undistributed
- Untitled: Mobility of pasture use in Mongolia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSzYtxpZe1E&t=37s> and Pasture use policy and objectives in Uzbekistan, etc

With this in mind, please accept our support for the request of the Government of Mongolia for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Yours sincerely,



Hijaba Ykhanbai

Director of JASIL

Focal point for Central Asia Pastoral Alliance (CAPA)