

11 August 2020
Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

Support to the request from Government of the Mongolia
for an “**International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists**”

H.E. Mendsaikhan Zagdjav
Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia
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Dear H.E. Mendsaikhan Zagdjav,

Plateau Perspectives presents its sincere greetings to you at this special time, the occasion of your office proposing and supporting the establishment and wide recognition of an ***International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists***. We, Plateau Perspectives, are a non-governmental organization that was established in 1998, registered in Canada and Scotland, with a range of development and conservation partnerships and projects located in the mountain regions and rangelands of western China and Central Asia. We also are a member of Mountain Partnership, with its Secretariat hosted by UN FAO.

As we indicated last year, Plateau Perspectives is honoured to support the request of the Government of Mongolia for establishing an *International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists*. We do believe that such a designation would provide an opportunity to raise the global profile and to substantially increase support for rangelands and pastoral issues, including biodiversity conservation and community development, both in formal protected areas and through the geographically broader ‘conserved areas’ of the world that are created and maintained by local communities and indigenous peoples. Such a declaration would improve our collective understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by rangelands and pastoralists. It also would help in our collective efforts to direct increased attention as well as resources – financial and otherwise – to these critically important areas and to their resident people and communities.

Across the enormous Tibetan Plateau region and the mountains and rangelands of Central Asia, pastoral livelihoods and traditional practices have long shaped local cultures, and in many ways have ‘co-created’ the grassland/rangeland environments. Now, especially in light of climate change and loss of biodiversity, sustainable pastoral practices and community conserved areas are increasingly being recognized as truly valuable assets for the protection of the world’s biodiversity, sequestration of carbon in grasslands, and enabling a diversity of livelihoods including maintenance of livestock genetic diversity – which together provide a safeguarding for future adaptation to emerging global changes. These should be supported.

Plateau Perspectives will support the IYRP in at least the following ways: We will continue to advocate for fair and equitable community development in rangelands of the world, particularly in High Asia, through publication of relevant and supportive academic research and synthesis articles in journals, policy briefs (see, e.g., *Achieving*

sustainable development with equity in an era of globalisation; recognizing and respecting local communities and indigenous peoples for creating the future we want; <http://plateauperspectives.org/policy-briefs-2/>), and also public outreach with engaging online photo stories (e.g., *Inclusive Development, An Imperative for the Future* and *Choosing Ecotourism in Kyrgyzstan - purpose driven tourism, for people and nature*; Plateau Perspectives' collection of online 'Exposure' stories is available at <https://stories.plateauperspectives.org/>).

Currently, our main work activities in support of rangelands and pastoralists revolve around advancing recognition and support for local communities and indigenous peoples where we work through our long partnership with the Indigenous & Community Conserved Areas Consortium (ICCA Consortium), and also helping to broaden the understanding of the global conservation community of the enormous value and key roles of "community conserved areas," which extend far beyond and have deeper foundations than most formal protected areas of the world. Within the above dialogues, two particular projects stand out, one engaging with *value systems* and the other with *geopolitics* – resulting in the [Cansiglio Declaration](#), on one hand, and the publication of the results of a [Horizon Scan of the Belt and Road Initiative](#), on the other hand.

The following publications may be of particular interest in light of the proposed designation of an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP):

- Brombal, D., Foggin, M., Gao, Y., Gruber, S., Kolipaka, S., and Temple, N. 2019. The Cansiglio Declaration. Advancing a common 'Charter of Values' for the mutual benefit and well-being of living communities along the New Silk Roads. Marco Polo Centre (MaP) for Global Europe-Asia Connections, hosted by the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University Venice. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3497124
- Foggin, J.M. 2016. Conservation Issues: Mountain Ecosystems. Reference Module (online) in Earth Systems & Environmental Sciences, ScienceDirect. Elsevier Publishing Company. DOI: 10.1016/B978-0-12-409548-9.09199-5
- Foggin, J.M. 2016. Sustainable Rangelands, Sustainable Pastoralism in Yak-Herding Areas of the Greater Tibetan Plateau. Pp. 50-58 in: A. Iwaasa, H.A. Lardner, M. Schellenberg, W. Willms and K. Larson (eds), *The Future Management of Grazing and Wild Lands in a High- Tech World: Proceedings 10th International Rangeland Congress*. Saskatoon, Canada: IRC.
- Foggin, J.M. 2018. Environmental Conservation in the Tibetan Plateau Region: Lessons for China's Belt and Road Initiative in the Mountains of Central Asia. *Land*, 7, 52. DOI: 10.3390/land7020052
- Foggin, J.M. and Cabrera, L. 2020. Achieving sustainable development with equity in an era of globalisation; Recognizing and respecting local communities and indigenous peoples for creating the future we want. *Development Issues*, No. 3 (June 2020). Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic: Plateau Perspectives. URL: <http://plateauperspectives.org/policy-briefs-2/>
- Foggin, J.M., and Torrance-Foggin, M.E. 2017. Pastoralism, Development, and the Future of Tibetan Rangelands: Experiences in the Development and Provision of Social Services and Environmental Management. In A. Gruschke & I. Breuer (eds), *Tibetan Pastoralists & Development: Negotiating the Future of Grassland Livelihoods*. Wiesbaden: Reichert.
- Foggin, J.M., and Yuan, C. 2020. Promoting conservation and community development through ecotourism: Experiences from valued conservation landscapes on the Tibetan plateau. Plateau Perspectives Working Paper. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan: Plateau Perspectives. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.35292.41604
- Foggin, M., Emslie-Smith, M., and Hergarten, C. 2018. Food Systems and Agrobiodiversity in the Mountains of Central Asia. *Mountain Research and Development* 38(2): 175-79. DOI: 10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-18-0048
- Hodges, J., Foggin, J.M., Long, R.J., and Zhaxi, G. 2014. Globalisation and the sustainability of farmers, livestock-keepers, pastoralists and fragile habitats *Biodiversity* 15(2-3):109-118. DOI: 10.1080/14888386.2014.931247
- Hughes, A.C., Lechner, A.M., Chitov, A., Horstmann, A... Foggin, M., et al. 2020. Horizon Scan of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*: 35(7): 583-593. DOI: 10.1016/j.tree.2020.02.005

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,



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Cc:

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