

August 31, 2020

Ref. #: 513

H.E. Ulaan Chultem  
Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia  
13381 Zasglin gazriin IX bair  
Enkhtaivnii urgun chuluu 16a Bayanzurkh duureg.  
Ulaanbaatar MONGOLIA

**Subject:** Follow up request to the Support Letter from the Government of Mongolia for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists

Dear Madams/Sirs,

In reference to the designation of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), and as supporter of the IYRP, the Shouf Biosphere Reserve (SBR) is continuously undertaking several actions in support of rangelands and pastoralists, as it believes that the conservation of this practice is among the most pressing needs at global level, and the threats this practice is facing calls for urgent action. Improving the conservation and sustainable management of high mountain pasture ecosystems of the SBR, with a focus on species diversity and plant-herbivore balance remains one of the most important aspects of the reserve's work.

Rangelands are found throughout the world and are considered as diverse ecosystems whose importance lies in the variety of services they provide. Direct economic services include: forage for livestock, wildlife habitats, wood products, and several other direct and indirect commodities that are considered as economic goods.

The SBR is implementing several activities related to rangelands and pastoralists, including projects, publications, etc. A grazing management plan with the support of expert Dr. Munir Abi Said was produced in 2012 and updated in 2018. This site-specific conservation plan is developed to reach specific goals related to livestock, plants, land, and/or economic responses of their land. Data was collected through focal group discussions, questionnaire surveys, maps and GPS locations for movements of shepherds. In addition, the SBR guarantees its attendance of the technical trainings on the Proposed National Rangeland Management Guidelines held by UNDP, GEF and the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, which include establishing limits to the numbers of livestock, setting periods

for grazing forage plants not too early in their growth cycle, effectively distributing livestock use across rangelands. The team is also monitoring grazing sites in the Shouf according to monitoring protocols prepared by national and international experts for the quantitative and qualitative assessment of the indicator species and habitats, and the restored ecosystems.

As for future IYRP activities, SBR will continue all mapping exercises set in the management plans taking into consideration the alterations that might have occurred in number of shepherds and livestock. The recovery of ecological functionality includes the reintroduction of the Nubian Ibex, an iconic large mammal that became extinct in Lebanon in the early twentieth century. SBR will develop the zones specified for grazing to avoid interaction between ibex and other livestock. SBR will lay importance to the recovery of degraded mountain pastures for the benefit of livestock and wildlife through restoration and sustainable management. Empowering the local communities for the management of the traditional transhumant grazing systems will be ensured by the SBR as well as adapting this practice to the modern socio-economic context, applying sustainable livestock management guidelines.

Taking all the above into account, kindly accept our support for the request of the Government of Mongolia for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Sincerely yours,

