

To,

H.E. Mendsaikhan Zagdjav

Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia

13381 Zasglin gazriin IX bair

Enkhtaivnii urgun chuluu 16a Bayanzurkh duureg.

Ulaanbaatar MONGOLIA

Date: September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Subject: Urmul Trust extending support to International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists

Respected Sir,

Urmul represents a family of organisations working towards integrated socio-economic development in the harsh agro-climatic zones of Western Rajasthan, India. Urmul adopts service-delivery and advocacy tools to devise community-driven programs that empower marginalised and vulnerable groups in the region, transhumant pastoralists being one of the most marginalised amongst them. In our work with pastoralists in western Rajasthan, we have observed that a significantly large population depends on the production system for sustenance.

Pastoralists could be described as stewards of the environment. Pastoralism has been the most viable form of production and land use for most of the world's arid and semi-arid areas and one of the mainstays of livelihood in western Rajasthan. In the absence of institutionalised veterinary care, mismanaged CPRs and market structures in place, this form of livelihood secures better health for livestock, meets trading and nutritional needs and provides pastoralists with an economic safety-cushion for uncertain market shocks.

Traversing long, arduous routes during drier months help pastoralists make optimal use of pastures, ensuring grazing/fodder pressure is dispersed and areas with scarce resources are given sufficient time to regenerate. Pastoralism is intricately intertwined with multiple socio-ecological processes and therefore sensitive to the political ecology of pasture lands. Multiple factors like short-sighted developmental projects, climate change and gradual disintegration of traditional, customary laws that held together the management of pastoral routes have marginalised pastoralists and their needs. Despite being a major contender for meeting the SDGs, little has been done to bring such concerns on the national policy agenda. Global efforts to understand the contemporary issues threatening pastoralism-based economies have slowly been on the rise. However, efforts have only been operating in silos and are not consolidated. With sufficient documentation to prove the socio-ecological benefits of rangelands, it is time to rethink policies that recognise and integrate the stance pastoralism has within mainstream economy.

We, at Urmul, envision and undertake programs to systematically upgrade how pastoralism is practised in the region. We work towards enhancing the social status of pastoralists and ensure novel approaches are adopted to sustainably manage and keep alive pastoral activities in Rajasthan. Observing the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) would serve as a great opportunity to meaningfully engage and collectively address the ecosystem gaps. Within the purview of our organisational visions, we are currently implementing two related projects.

### **1. Reviving Traditional Pasture Routes in Dry and Arid Parts of the Country**

Our project with support from National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) broadly aims to improve access to basic support services and infrastructure along prominent but degrading pastoral routes, enhance capacity of pastoralists for wider adoption of improved livestock management practices and enable an environment for better policy support for pastoralists. You can check the publications and reports related to the programme on this [link](#).

### **2. The Camel Partnership**

Our project with support from Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture Network (RRAN) and Centre for Pastoralism (CfP) aims to cement the industry centered around camel-based livelihoods and products. The project is working towards mobilising camel herding community knowledge and market potential through scoping the landscape for camel milk value chain, reviving collapsed value chains of camel hair and streamlining existing camel-handicraft enterprises. Please check our site [www.tcp.urmul.org](http://www.tcp.urmul.org) to visit our reports and publications.

We extend our support to IYRP through strengthening and expanding our support interventions to pastoralists practising horizontal migration in western Rajasthan. The four pillars of this support would be- Partnerships, Knowledge, Resources and Technology.

Thanking You.

Sincerely,



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