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H.E. Mr. Mendsaikhan Zagdjav
Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia (MoFALI)
13381 Governmental building 9th, Peace Avenue 16a,
Bayanzurkh District, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
info@mofa.gov.mn

18 October 2021

Re: Expression of Support for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP)

Dear Minister Mendsaikhan Zagdjav,

The World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), hosted by the Center for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern, Switzerland, would like to express its support for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

We at WOCAT believe that our interests match, very closely, those of the IYRP. Our mandate covers sustainable land management (SLM) in all ecosystems – and the rangelands constitute one of our particular areas of interest and specialisation.

IYRP is important to WOCAT for several reasons. Rangelands in drylands and mountains account for the largest restoration opportunities for ecosystems, human and environmental health, and economic growth. They are largely occupied by communities who have rich local management knowledge. However, pastoralists have been marginalised for too long: their welfare overlooked – and their lifestyles derided. Their constraints require much closer focus, and far greater support from policies and investments that secure tenure, enable governance systems, and connect them to markets. There is ecological and human potential that remains untapped. These are all concerns of WOCAT. We can help uncover successful experience worldwide and offer guidance in terms of policy and practice.

Our key expertise includes state-of-the-art documentation. Over and above publications on farmlands and all the major terrestrial ecosystems, underpinned by WOCAT's UNCCD-approved global database of SLM practices, we already have publications and promotional materials on rangelands. **"Sustainable rangeland management in Sub-Saharan Africa, Guidelines to good practice"** (<https://www.wocat.net/library/media/174/>) and the video **"Embrace the diversity of global rangelands"** (<https://www.wocat.net/library/media/226/>) raise awareness and offer evidence driven decision-support, based on an unrivalled exercise in research and fact-finding.

Engagement in different taskforces and platforms is one of WOCAT's regular activities. We can, and will continue to lobby for rangeland and pastoralism - for example in the best practices and monitoring

taskforces of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration led by FAO, and the Grassland Dialogue platform led by WWF. WOCAT is uniquely positioned to help organise and contribute special sessions and side events that put rangelands and pastoralists at the center. One recent example of this is **the WOCAT/ IUCN session on rangelands at GLF Biodiversity 2020 'One World One Health' Digital Conference** (<https://www.wocat.net/library/media/230/>). We will seize every opportunity to take part in, or organise, events and produce materials that promote and prove the importance of rangeland and pastoralists during these increasingly challenging times.

Our contribution will be in-kind. We can be counted on to provide expertise as required. WOCAT will partner with international organizations – well known to us already - to produce evidence and materials to highlight the importance of rangelands and pastoralists. We can be called upon to continue our work in awareness raising and documentation of good rangeland and pastoralists practices.

We look forward to a constructive and fruitful relationship with IYRP.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Harari', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nicole Harari, in the name of the WOCAT Executive Management Team

cc:

Dr. Batmunkh Damdindorj, Director of Livestock Policy implementation and coordination Department, MoFALI , and Chair of the Mongolia National task force of the IYRP (batmunh@mofa.gov.mn)

Mr. Ganzorig, Director of International Cooperation Division of MoFALI (ganzorig@mofa.gov.mn)

H.E. Mr. Enkhbolt, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the United Nations (newyork1@mfa.gov.mn)

Dr. Munkhnasan Tsevegmed, Officer at MoFALI, and Secretary of Mongolia National task force of IYRP (munkhnasan@mofa.gov.mn, munkhnasan2025@gmail.com)

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