

H.E. Mendsaikhan Zagdjav
Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia
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September 21, 2020

Dear Minister Zagdjav,

WWF-International's Global Grasslands and Savannahs Initiative (GCSI) enthusiastically supports the establishment of an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP). As you know, grasslands and savannahs are facing among the fastest and largest rates of conversion and degradation of any biome, and they are critical ecosystems for climate mitigation, maintaining freshwater resources, providing habitat for some of the planet's last large wildlife herds and other endemic and threatened species, ensuring food security, supporting livelihoods, and maintaining the cultural identity of millions of rural and indigenous people. A key problem is the lack of awareness of their value, and we believe IYRP is an historic opportunity to change that at the global scale.

In 2020 WWF established the GCSI to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural expansion and other threats to grasslands and savannahs, and to improve and restore the ecosystem services provided by these biomes for nature and people. Our effort is focused on two workstreams: 1) **build a new global consensus** for grasslands and savannahs, embedding them into the global conservation and climate agendas, and 2) **deliver on-the-ground interventions** in specific landscapes to protect, better manage, and restore these biomes, establishing models for wider replication.

WWF's GCSI could potentially contribute to future IYRP activities through the following activities:

- In July 2020 we launched a Global Grasslands and Savannahs Dialog Platform to build a coalition with strategic partners, developing consensus around the human and biological importance of these biomes. The coalition will set objectives, convene influencers and experts, advocate globally, and share information and best management practices - making the case for grasslands and savannahs conservation using the best available science, as well as testimonies from grassland-dependent communities. Partners may include a mix of public sector (e.g. champion national governments), private sector (e.g. companies), and NGOs (e.g. The Nature Conservancy, IUCN, Rainforest Alliance).
- Development of a global monitoring system that analyzes the status of and threats to grasslands and savannahs. WWF has developed such a system for North America via the [Plowprint](#) Report, and has been involved in monitoring and commodity supply chain flows for forest landscapes that can be adapted/expanded to grasslands.

- A producer and consumer engagement campaign aimed at increasing the supply and demand for products that support grasslands and savannahs and value their biodiversity.

WWF has a network of offices committed to grassland and savannah conservation in 23 countries on 6 continents that can be mobilized to contribute to IYRP and would benefit from the elevation of this ecosystem through IYRP. Thus, we urge the UN to establish the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists to raise global awareness about this ecosystem that is critical to addressing the “triple challenge” of climate change, nature loss, and food insecurity.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Joao Campari
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Joao Campari
Global Lead, WWF Food Practice