**GCG meeting, 17 July 2023, 14:00–16:00 CEST**

*Participants: Gregorio Velasco Gil, Igshaan Samuels (chair), Francesca Pasetti, Perumal Vivekanandan Barry Iving, Cecilia Turin, Hasrat Arjjumend, Engin Yilmaz, Fiona Flintan, Guodong Han, Fidaa Haddad, Natasha Maru, Serena Ferrari, Prisca Mugabe, Andiswa Finca, Khalid Khawaldeh, Ann Waters-Bayer (minutes)*

*Chat messages inserted in boxes*

1. **Welcome and apologies**

*Igshaan* welcomes all participants to the second IYRP Global Coordinating Group (GCG) meeting in 2023.

Apologies were received from Maryam Niamir-Fuller and Jon Davies. Ilse hopes to join us to give feedback on the International Year of Camelids (IYC).

1. **Acceptance of minutes of previous GCG meeting**

*Igshaan* highlights the main points discussed during the GCG meeting on 13 February 2023:

* The International Rangelands Congress (IRC) 2025 is again on the agenda of today’s meeting; the IYRP has been given two 1.5-hour sessions. Some IYRP members expressed interest in joining the committee to advise on the Traditional Knowledge Forum that will take place at the time of the IRC: four Regional IYRP Support Groups (RISGs) provided names for this committee. The first meeting is still to be called.
* The FAO Committee of Forestry Working Group on dryland forest and agrosilvopastoral systems (COFO WG) summer school is again on the agenda of today’s meeting.
* Pedro received some case studies for his United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCC) Global Outlook (GLO) report on rangelands & pastoralists and will soon give us an update on this work.
* Gregorio explained the process that FAO will follow in preparing for the IYRP.
* An update on the IYRP WGs is on the agenda of today’s meeting.
* The proposed WG on funding will be the last item on today’s agenda. RISGs in North America (NA) and Central Asia & Mongolia (CAM) gave names of people to be in this WG; more volunteers are needed.
* The RISG updates made at the previous GCG meeting were posted by Ann on the website under IYRP News: <https://www.iyrp.info/sites/iyrp.org/files/Updates%20from%20RISGs%20Nov%202022%20-%20Mar%202023.pdf>

*Vivek* proposes that the minutes of the previous GCG meeting be accepted; *Serena* seconds this. There being no objections, the minutes are accepted.

1. **Report back from meeting of RISGs**

*Igshaan* reports that 10 of the 11 RISGs attended the meeting on 7 July. Only the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) group was absent; it is struggling to get going as an RISG.

1. ***RISG West & Central Africa (WCA)*** reshuffled its management structure, which is now a group of 5 persons with representation from 2 regional pastoralist organisations. It plans a scientific symposium on pastoralism, which will involve members of other RISGs and a representative from the Government of Mongolia. The RISG is liaising with a Belgian filmmaker to make a short film on pastoralism in WCA.
2. ***RISG Arctic***: Herders are fighting legal battles to maintain access rights to pastures threatened by renewable energy projects. The Association of World Reindeer Herders has started a GEF (Global Environmental Facility) project on the resilience of reindeer herders and has developed 13 courses for pastoralist youth. Other interested people can contact Anders for further information. The reindeer herders are planning a conference in 2026 in Mongolia.
3. ***RISG Australasia*** is expanding to include New Zealand; it is drawing up a regional plan, creating subgroups, and seeking ways to involve more women and indigenous people.
4. ***RISG North America (NA):*** Canada, USA & Mexico signed a letter of intent to conserve grasslands; in the USA, efforts are being made to merge IYRP with Society of Range Management (SRM) activities. The International Grassland Congress was held in May in Kentucky; a report on this is in today’s agenda.
5. ***RISG South America:*** The Government of Peru sent a letter of IYRP support to the Government of Mongolia. A curriculum on pastoralism is being developed at university level. Pablo Manzano included a session on Latin American pastoralists in the World Anthropology Congress in India in Sept 2023.
6. ***RISG South Asia*** needs more representatives from other countries besides India. It is supporting the first pastoralist census in India. An IYRP song was created; a shorter version was made for children (see <https://iyrp.info/iyrp-song>).
7. ***RISG Eastern & Southern Africa (ESA)*** is helping develop a pastoral framework for the region. RISG members attended several conferences where the IYRP was raised and discussed. In South Africa, RISG members are involved in revising policies pertaining to rangelands.
8. ***RISG East Asia*** was involved in several conferences and publications, including one about indigenous bovines being more environmentally friendly than introduced ones.
9. ***RISG Europe*** changed its leadership: now Francesca plus a male and female pastoralist; it focuses on gaining approval of transhumance as World Cultural Intangible Heritage: 3 countries were involved in the first phase (completed) and 10 more countries including France and Spain in the second phase (by end of this year). A third phase being planned but a country is needed to lead the process; this is being discussed with Mexico, thus expanding beyond only countries in Europe.   
   Addition by Francesca during meeting: In May, the Council of Europe certified transhumance routes as cultural heritage. A “Rural Areas of Europe” programme is stimulating integrated development around these transhumance routes, which cross Europe from North to South and from East to West.
10. ***RISG Central Asia & Mongolia (CAM):*** The Government of Mongolia is setting up a national IYRP committee; it is developing legislation to have herder contracts for pastures, which could threaten common property rights.

Any additions to the 7 July report on RISG activities, which is posted on the IYRP archival website (<https://rangelandsgateway.org/international-year-rangelands-and-pastoralists-initiative>), should be sent to Igshaan and Ann.

1. **Report back from IYRP Working Groups (WGs)**

Jon Davies has agreed to coordinate the WGs. *Ann* presents a PPT based on her own summary made for Jon when he joined in March; this was updated by Jon.

***What does the IYRP initiative seek to achieve through the WG?***

* Greater awareness in science & society about how rangelands & pastoralists contribute to food security, economy, environment & cultural heritage
* Resolutions taken by UN and other international entities in support of rangelands & pastoralists
* Changes in national, regional & global policies in favour of sustainable management of rangeland resources by pastoralists & other stakeholders
* Increase sustainable & ethical investment in rangelands & pastoralist livelihoods

***Possible tasks of WGs related to their respective themes:***

* Collate and analyse existing research results (science review)
* Identify knowledge & information gaps – and new opportunities
* Stimulate and engage in participatory research to fill gaps & explore opportunities
* Analyse existing international policy related to the theme
* Identify “targets” (international bodies, conventions, events etc.) for science- and experience-based advocacy
* Strategise on right messages for these targets, including identifying spokespersons or “ambassadors” to bring them across
* Engage with pastoralists and others in IYRP network (including other WGs) in disseminating these messages, also for public awareness

***WG 1: Afforestation in Rangelands***

* + Coordinators: David Briske (Texas A&M University, USA) and Susi Vetter (Rhodes University, South Africa)
  + “Rangeland afforestation is not a natural climate solution” state-of-the-science evidence-based paper submitted for publication
  + Key message: Rangelands are valuable ecosystems and afforestation efforts, driven by a climate change mitigation agenda, present a serious risk.

***WG 2: Mountain Pastoralism***

* + Coordinators: Igshaan Samuels (IYRP) and Eric Chavez (FAO)
  + Policy brief on Sustainable Mountain Pastoralism under development

***WG 3: Pastoralism & Gender***

* + Coordinator: Nitya Ghotge (ANTHRA, India)
  + Highlight the advantages of bringing a gender lens to pastoralist policy & development
  + Disseminate key information around gender & pastoralism and generate discussions on this topic with a view to raise/increase awareness
  + Identify gaps in research on gender & pastoralism
  + Support the other IYRP WGs in their efforts to incorporate a gender lens into their work
  + Make sure gender issues receive adequate attention in the IYRP 2026
  + Concept note posted on the IYRP website

***WG 4: Pastoralism & Water***

* + Launched after webinar on pastoralism & water held in June 2022 by RWSN (Rural Water Supply Network), CELEP (Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism), IWMI (International Water Management Institute), SIMVI Foundation & Skat Foundation
  + Coordinators: Michael Odhiambo & Adrian Cullis (with support from Kerstin Danert)
  + Focus on water governance as well as water-related ecosystem services and rangeland land & water management
  + Concept note posted on the IYRP website

***WG 5: Rangelands & Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)***

* + Coordinated by Bora Masumbuko (IUCN) and Mounir Louhaichi (ICARDA)
  + Focus on UN Convention to Combat Desertification with two critical issues for raising awareness within the UNCCD process:
    - Value of rangelands and pastoralism
    - Conversion of rangelands
  + The WG will undertake research & analysis, conduct case studies and disseminate knowledge products in form of policy briefs, animated videos, webinars etc.
  + Concept note posted on the IYRP website
  + Science review “Global action for sustainable rangelands and pastoralism to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality” under completion

***WG 6: Rangelands & Biodiversity***

* + Initiated in December 2022 by Igshaan Samuels (co-chairs tbd)
  + Focus on “Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services”
  + Concept note on website & shared in IYRP network to stimulate creation of a WG

***WG 7: Economics of Pastoralism*** *(being developed; concept note on website)*

* + Coordinator Serena Ferrari (CIRAD, France)
  + Initial focus:
    - Valuing pastoralism (contribution to GDP, imports and exports of pastoral products, etc.)
    - Competition at national level between pastoral products and industrial-sourced products
    - Constraints that pastoralists face in marketing their products
    - Sustainable production and consumption

***WG 8: Pastoralist Youth*** *(suggested by Fiona Flintan)*

* + High interest among others in IYRP network – waiting for progress

*Igshaan* adds about WG 6 “Rangelands & Biodiversity”: Rashmi Singh (India) & Matthew Luizza (USA) will be co-coordinators: they are seeking a time to meet with Jon and Igshaan. The scope of the WG was refined during its most recent meeting; next month will be another meeting to discuss the way forward.

Next steps with WG 8 “Pastoralist Youth”: *Ann* asks if anyone in the GCG is interested in moving forward with this WG. *Fiona* regards it as important; pastoralist youth are currently not represented well in the IYRP initiative. *Cecilia* thinks this WG is very necessary. She attended the Dana workshop, where there was a representative of pastoralist youth. ***Cecilia will contact this young woman to find out if she or others would like to join the IYRP initiative, particularly this WG, and will inform Igshaan & Ann, with cc to Jon, about the response.*** Besides *Cecilia*, also *Guodong* and *Andiswa* would like to join this WG. ***Francesca will ask her co-chair Zurine if she would also like to join the youth WG.*** When a few people are on board, we can start setting up the structure of the WG.

*Cecilia*, *Francesca* and *Hasrat* express interest on joining WG 2 “Mountain Pastoralism”. ***Igshaan will contact them directly in order to involve them.***

*Hasrat* asks for clarification of the name of WG 4: is it “Rangeland & Water Governance” or “Pastoralism & Water”? *Ann* explains that, in the process of defining their scope, the WGs may change their names. ***Ann will check with this WG to find out its current name.***

1. **Report from IYRP sessions at International Grassland Congress (IGC) 2023**

*Andiswa* reports that Jim O’Rourke (RISG NA), Dana Kelly (RISG Australasia) and herself (RISG ESA) attended the IGC 2023 held in May in Kentucky. On Day 2, a late afternoon session was dedicated to the IYRP. Very few people attended. After several short presentations, also from some regions, continent-based discussion groups were formed, the largest from NA. She joined the Africa group (4 people from Kenya, Tunisia and South Africa). The groups discussed issues faced in each continent and how to convey the importance of rangelands & pastoralism to people in other fields, how to package the message. The groups did not have chance to give feedback to each other; they were asked to send this to Igshaan. Issues from the African group included climate change, drought, gender equity, land tenure, low investment in rangelands, weak institutional arrangements, poor policies, access to market, globalisation, resource conflict and the aging population of pastoralists. We need to have different messages for different groups of people so that they can understand it.

In response to Igshaan’s question, Andiswa let us know that Rashmi did not attend the IGC.

*Igshaan* adds some information from Jim, who gave a 5-minute review of the IYRP in a plenary session; several other speakers referred to the IYRP. Dana also talked about the IYRP in her plenary address. There was a IYRP booth at the trade show, where flyers and the newsletter that Ann compiled and other materials were distributed. Thus, the IYRP was quite visible during the IGC. In the final IGC Business Meeting, a resolution in support of the IYRP was passed.

1. **COFO WG / IYRP summer school**

*Fidaa* reports that the FAO Committee of Forestry Working Group on dryland forest and agrosilvopastoral systems (COFO WG) made an open call for applications for the summer school on 12–15 September at the time of the COFO WG session in Rome; it will include a field visit (see <https://www.fao.org/dryland-forestry/working-group/cofo-wg-summer-school/en/>). The WG received over 35 applications from various dryland regions, except in Latin America, possibly because of the language barrier. Some applicants were from Europe. All applicants had to pass an online course. The WG selected 25 participants, who come from fields such as dryland/rangeland management and biodiversity and include PhD students and governmental staff. One seat is still open if someone from Latin America would like to participate.

COFO offered to sponsor 5 IYRP participants; nominations came in from several RISGs. Cecilia wanted to apply but missed the deadline. ***Cecilia will share the summer-school information with her network and help identify a person from Latin America. Fidaa will communicate directly with Cecilia about including someone from Latin America in the summer school this year.***

Igshaan will represent the IYRP as trainer. At the closure of the event, ***Igshaan will invite the participants to join the IYRP network and become “IYRP champions”***. The summer school will be an annual event with IYRP-related themes up to 2026. It will be held in a different country each time and may be in different languages to encourage people from different regions to take part.

Fidaa has also invited Igshaan as IYRP observer to some COFO WG meetings, where they are discussing how to keep the IYRP ball rolling after 2026.

***GCG members with questions about the summer school should direct them to Fidaa by email.***

1. **FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation**

*Gregorio* gives an update on the conference on 25–27 Sept 2023 in Rome. It has 4 main themes: better livestock production systems, animal-source food for better nutrition, livestock solutions for better environment, and better life (www.fao.org/events/detail/fao-global-conference-on-sustainable-livestock-transformation/en). Several people in the IYRP International Support Group will take part, including Mounir Louhaichi, Margherita Gomarasca, Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Ilse Köhler-Rollefson and Gregorio himself, who will raise awareness about the importance of rangelands & pastoralists. One session is on pastoralist livelihoods: opportunities & challenges. There is a side event on the International Year of Camelids (IYC) 2024 and an exhibition of good practices, for which there were many submissions but only 10–15 success stories will be selected. The programme has been finalised. Gregorio invited anyone coming before the event to let him know so that they can meet in FAO – also anyone coming to Rome for the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) +2 Stocktaking Moment on 24–26 July 2023.

Gregorio suggested that ***Igshaan and Ann contact the IYRP-linked speakers mentioned and ask each of them to dedicate a PPT slide to the IYRP***.

***Igshaan will contact Ilse about IYRP support to the conference activities promoting the IYC***, which is closely related to the IYRP.

1. **Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL) meeting in 2023**

*Igshaan* reports that the annual GASL multistakeholder meeting will be held this October in Thailand; Shirley Tarawali is there to finalise the programme. It was proposed that a 1-hour plenary session be dedicated to the IYRP; if approved, we need to make the best of this opportunity. Fiona, Nitya and Pablo will be there in their roles in the GASL initiative. Igshaan and Andiswa will also try to attend. Email exchange is ongoing among these people to plan IYRP-related activities and networking aligned to the GASL agenda. They hope to optimise opportunities for pastoralist voices to be heard through video or discussion. ***They will report back to the next GCG meeting***, which may be before the event in Thailand.

1. **International Rangeland Congress (IRC) 2025**

*Igshaan* reports that the 2nd IRC announcement is out ([https://irc2025.rangelandcongress.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/V2-Final-PDF-XII-IRC-Second-Announcement-Portrait-English.pdf](https://irc2025.rangelandcongress.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/V2-Final-PDF-XII-IRC-Second-Announcement-Portrait-English.pdf))). This will be an important platform for the IYRP, which is highlighted in the announcement. We will need to discuss what we want to do during the two 1.5-hour sessions for the IYRP and in the Traditional Knowledge Forum. Discussions are also underway with the IRC Continuing Committee about follow-up to the IYRP after 2026.

In the 3rd announcement for the IRC2026, more information will be given about delegate support.

1. **International Year of Camelids (IYC)**

*Cecilia* reports that FAO has set up an International Steering Committee (ISC), which includes FAO regional representatives, international research institutes, academia, the League for Pastoral People (LPP) and the private sector. In its first meeting, the lSC decided on the logo and other visuals to be used for the IYC. Cecilia joined a meeting in Chile last week organised by FAO’s Latin American office, which presented regional plans for the IYC. FAO has contacted every country in Latin America with camelids (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile & Peru), each of which has an IYC focal point and will define its national agenda for the IYC.

Cecilia observed that the big actors in the private sector are in the ISC, while camelid pastoralists are not well organised and have no regional representation in Latin America.

*Gregorio:* The ISC is not closed to members. There has been no reaction from the African group in FAO, but two people were suggested plus a representative from Pastoamericas, who will join the next meeting on Thursday. For Gregorio, the IYC preparation is training for the IYRP. It is now necessary to develop a vision and action plan for the IYC and mobilise resources.

*Cecilia:* A big challenge is that pastoralists in Latin America do not call themselves pastoralists but prefer to be called “breeders” or “livestock-keepers”. The word for pastoralists in the region has a low status. These people suffer the same marginalisation as many other pastoralists around the world.

***Francesca:*** *In Latin America, like in most countries … the main problem of the herders are two: 1) have time to spend for meetings and participating in committees, and perhaps the most important problem is the 2) language. I know several excellent herders in many parts of the world who could be excellent representatives of the sector, but speak only the language of their country or region in a country. We have to brainstorm how to make that they can be heard.*

***Khalid:*** *backward, low status... like everywhere.*

***Francesca:*** *An important lesson I learnt from Ilse is that she made it possible to have an Indian Raika woman, speaking only local language, to have always somebody translating her, so that she could participate in many international meetings worldwide. LPP has been able to fund all this for years! The main problem for me, for example, is to have funds to have excellent Deep Spain or Deep Greece or Deep Italy herders to participate actively in international meetings per video conference or in person.*

Cecilia: It might help if the IYRP logo included alpacas or llamas.

***Francesca:*** *Excellent idea Cecilia!!!! add a Latin American camelid!*

***Barry:*** *You can create a logo specific to Latin America for your own use.*

***Francesca:*** *I prefer the logo being updated and be the same for the whole world!!! Can't we make a smaller logo, being round, with just some more animals in the lower part?*

***Natasha:*** *Super important to be inclusive! We have prepared a logo for South Asia.*

***Francesca:*** *Excellent Natasha, can you send the raw logo, so that it can be adapted to the rest of the continents/ regions? and we have a similarity between the different regional logos?*

Ann, referring to Barry’s chat comment, suggests making regional logos for more regional ownership of the IYRP; in this case, the South American group could make a South American IYRP logo showing appropriate livestock, just like the IYRP logos in North America and South Asia, and the one that will be prepared for WCA as soon as they can access the original file for the logo. ***Ann will ask Barbara how to access the original IYRP logo so that it can be adapted for different regions.***

*Igshaan:* Also in South Africa, the pastoralists do not call themselves so; it is important to take account of local perspectives when translating information about the IYRP for different regions and countries.

*Igshaan* is keen to know what lessons we learn from the preparations for the IYC, especially how the ISC is formed and representation on different other committees.

*Harouna* (translated by Serena) thanks for the information about all these events being organised, such as the GASL meeting and the IRC, but wonders how to include WCA in organising these events. WCA is marginalised and it is difficult to involve colleagues because of the language barrier. Also the world map of pastoralists made by LPP has not taken sufficient account of pastoralists in WCA, although this may be our fault. The WCA RISG just subscribed for a Zoom license with simultaneous translated subtitles; for our next GCG meeting, we can use that account so that people who are not comfortable with English can attend and have subtitles in their language.

*Hasrat* agrees that each RISG could have a different logo. Also in the CAM region, it is difficult to involve pastoralists. Less than 5% of pastoralist groups in CAM are represented in the RISG; most groups are not connected with the IYRP. The RISG also does not have representation from all countries in the region: only Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan but not other countries like Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. More efforts need to be made to bring them on board. Also in the South Asia RISG, groups in northern, western and eastern India are not represented, also not Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the Europe RISG, the groups from Eastern Europe are not well represented. Involving all pastoralist groups will be a huge task. It is up to the RISGs to mobilise them and link them with the IYRP.

***Francesca:*** *This is one of the important points our new co-chair three persons will be working on, is to have a more equilibrated participation of the different countries in IYRP and RISG Europe! We have seen several countries overrepresented, and others lacking or with maximum one person...*

*Igshaan:* This is our Achilles’ heel at global, regional and national level. We will probably not manage to get everyone involved. Many will not have the time to join. Igshaan appeals to everyone to try to get more pastoralist groups involved. The film festival co-coordinated by Ann is a good starting point to disseminate pastoralist voices; this is a powerful tool we could use more. Could Khalid through WAMIP work out a strategy to get pastoralists more involved in IYRP processes?

*Khalid:* WAMIP wants to be well involved in the IYRP but faces many issues regarding communication and engagement, for example, the invitation to today’s meeting was in the spam. It is important to engage pastoralist organisations. We have members in all regions; some are active, some not. We lack the capacity to reach them. We need to map pastoralist groups; we have a database to start from. With some resources, we can encourage regional members to get more pastoralist communities involved. Most have not joined because they don’t know about the IYRP. We can meet to discuss this and how we can cooperate.

***Igshaan will set up a meeting of the RISG chairs and WAMIP representatives to devise a strategy for improving involvement of pastoralist groups in the IYRP activities.***

*Khalid* highlights the importance of addressing the topic of relations between pastoralists and conservation areas being protected by the State or NGOs. *Igshaan* confirms that this a topic being addressed by the IYRP WG on Biodiversity, looking at “Indigenous & Community-Conserved Areas” (ICCAs) and “Other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECMs) to promote pastoralism and conservation on the same land. ***Igshaan will email the description of the scope of this WG to Khalid.***

***Francesca:*** *There is a publication by the Platform of Extensive Pastoralists of Spain on pastoralism in protected areas:* [*www.ganaderiaextensiva.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CuadernosEntretantos1\_Ganader%C3%ADaExtensiva.pdf*](http://www.ganaderiaextensiva.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CuadernosEntretantos1_Ganader%C3%ADaExtensiva.pdf)

*This is in Spanish, but there is also something in English, less specific: “What EU policy framework do we need to sustain High Nature Value (HNV) farming and biodiversity?” (*[*www.hnvlink.eu/download/D4.3.HNV-Link\_Policy-Brief\_v2019-3-25.pdf*](http://www.hnvlink.eu/download/D4.3.HNV-Link_Policy-Brief_v2019-3-25.pdf)*).*

**11. Any other business**

***Fundraising:*** *Igshaan* highlights the need to form a small WG to raise funds for IYRP activities; more people are needed for this WG as soon as possible. Each RISG was asked to nominate a person to join this WG. Thus far, we have persons only from NA and CAM. ***Igshaan will convene a meeting of the fundraising WG.***

***Pastoralist awards:*** *Vivek* reports that the RISG in South Asia is collecting best practices in sustainable management of common grazing lands and pastoralists’ rich knowledge in biodiversity, such as local livestock breeds. The IYRP should give recognition to such people. This could be organised at regional level, getting the support of donors. A best practice manual could be released in 2026. ***Vivek will share the plans for this competition and document and will coordinate this with other RISGs.***

***Closure:*** *Igshaan* thanks for all for availing themselves for this meeting and for keeping the IYRP movement alive. The movement is expanding into many different activities and will need a lot of coordination. ***Anyone who has questions should email Igshaan.***