**International Year of Rangelands & Pastoralists Global Coordinating Group virtual meeting**

**13 February 2023**

1. **Welcome and apologies**

Igshaan Samuels welcomed all members and guests to the first IYRP GCG meeting for 2023.

Attendance:

Igshaan Samuels (Co-chair IYRP ISP); D K Sadana (South Asia RISG); Dana Kelly (Austr. RISG); Vivekanandan Seva (South Asia RISG); Hijaba Ykhanbai (East Asia RISG); David Borre (NA RISG); Cecile Goode (guest: IRC 2025 programme sub-committee chair); Gregorio VelascoGil (FAO); Hasrat Arjjumend (CAM); Nitya Ghotge (guest: Pastoralism & Gender WG); Fidaa Haddad (guest: COFO FAO); Ann Waters-Bayer (IYRP global coordinating team); Pedro Maria Herrera Calvo (guest: UNCCD GLO report); Maryam Niamir-Fuller (Co-chair IYRP ISP); Jonathan Davies (IYRP WG coordinator)

Apologies:

David Briske, Susi Vetter, Mounir Louhaichi

1. **Proposed pastoral gathering in Australia 2025**
* ***Background on planned but cancelled Traditional Indigenous Knowledge Forum in Kenya in 2021***

Dana Kelly and Cecile Goode informed us of the proposed pastoralist gathering that will precede the International Rangeland Congress (IRC) on 2–6 June 2025 in Adelaide, Australia. Dana and others who were in the IRC Kenya organising team and IRC Continuing Committee had planned a face-to-face Indigenous Knowledge Forum in Kenya, but it was cancelled because of Covid-19.

The Forum was to explore the benefits and challenges for traditional knowledge systems and to foster discussion between people in different knowledge systems around the world. The event was to focus on allowing indigenous peoples to be heard and to harness knowledge about traditional management of rangelands and animals. The plan was to focus on Africa and explore what indigenous/pastoralist adaptations have been successful, how current regulations impact on traditional livelihoods and what governance systems have helped bridge indigenous knowledge and modern scientific knowledge.

The people expected to attend the Forum were transhumant herders, livestock managers and traditional pastoralists from around the world. There was a lot of interest from people in the Middle East, Norway, North America and Australia who were keen to go to Kenya.

Three aspects to the Forum were planned:

1. Herders from around the world would be invited to stay with Kenyan herders near Nairobi and visit rangelands for a few days or a week; the organisers would arrange transport, food, accommodations etc;
2. Indigenous knowledge holders would gather to talk among themselves about what they had seen in Kenya and about their experiences in their home countries;
3. A formal indigenous knowledge forum would be held in association with the IRC, when traditional knowledge holders and Western scientists would come together; this would be open to all.

Major outcomes of this forum would be creation an awareness and spurring action among scientists and policymakers about the unique challenges facing indigenous or local knowledge communities in coping with rapid social, economic and ecological changes and about the opportunities for conservation and sustainable utilisation of rangeland ecosystems. It was to be an opportunity to highlight indigenous knowledge and values, very much aligned to the IYRP, and to influence science and policymakers.

* ***Plans for the Traditional Indigenous Knowledge Forum in Australia in 2025***

For the IRC in Australia, the plan is to hold the forum on the weekend before at or nearby Adelaide, where the IRC will be held. People from the IYRP could be involved in a planning committee.

There will be an opportunity to visit indigenous communities in Australia, but the distances to be travelled and the costs involved would be challenging. To have a forum in Adelaide, an open-air setting could be hosted by Australian Indigenous people for people from around the world.

In Australia, the Aboriginal people are not pastoralists traditionally, so the focus would be on traditional knowledge related to biodiversity, conservation and land management.

Igshaan: *Will this forum be equivalent to the second component of the Nairobi gathering where it is only indigenous knowledge holders coming together or will the scientists also partake in this forum?*

Dana: If it's associated with an IRC, we would need the third aspect where traditional knowledge holders and Western scientists get together, but we could also have another event bringing together only the traditional knowledge holders.

* ***IYRP-dedicated sessions at IRC 2025***

There are opportunities for IYRP to get involved in the IRC programme. There are sessions on Monday and Tuesday set aside for the IYRP. On Monday, one 1.5-hour IYRP session will be under the Sub-Theme “*Valuing rangelands and pastoral systems*”; on Tuesday, there is another 1.5-hour session under the Sub-Theme “*Co-designing partnerships and incorporating traditional knowledge for more enduring rangeland outcomes*”. The traditional knowledge forum discussions could also be hosted during this session where scientists and traditional knowledge holders can come together.

The IRC Australian Organising Committee would welcome IYRP’s input and to have people involved in planning what happens in Australia. IYRP colleagues (even if not indigenous) could get involved in an Indigenous Oversight Committee and the Traditional Knowledge Forum Committee. ***(Igshaan to gather volunteers for these committees via email responses.)***

The aim would be to have a diversity of people in the Forum Committee including indigenous people. The Oversight Committee is looking at the programme for the whole of the IRC and to see where indigenous knowledge holders may wish to be involved in any of the sessions.

IYRP members who volunteered (via email) to be part of the Forum Committee:

1. Loupa Pius daahman89@gmail.com –ESA RISG
2. Arun Dixit arunmdixit@gmail.com – South Asia RISG
3. Ms. Bulgama Densambuu bulgamaa@greengold.mn – CAM RISG

### Cecilia Turin ceciturin@gmail.com – South America RISG

### Igshaan Samuels isamuels@uwc.ac.za – IYRP ISG

Ann: *Would this meeting be instead of having a pastoralist gathering in 2026 and be focused only on indigenous peoples?*

Dana: We were thinking it probably would be a narrower focus if there is going to be a meeting in Australia, and there would still be a pastoralist gathering in 2026.

1. **IYRP & FAO COFO WG on dryland forests & agrosilvopastoral systems future collaboration**

***Feedback on IYRP–FAO COFO partnership for Drylands Summer School Sept 2023 –* Fidaa Haddad**

Fidaa made a short PPT presentation on the establishment, objectives and members of the FAO Committee on Forestry Working Group on dryland forest and agrosilvopastoral systems (COFO WG).

She highlighted that, in 2022, when the COFO WG held its second session, members recommended collaboration in support of the IYRP, taking into consideration that FAO in 2025/26 will take over the implementation of the Year. The WG members and observers had several consultations between different countries and regions and decided to contribute to the IYRP through strengthening capacities and cross-sectoral/regional exchange.

There is a need to create awareness about the importance of the rangeland ecosystem in drylands. There is a common challenge in COFO WG and IYRP related to involving pastoralist communities relying on silvopastoral systems to restore the dryland forest and provide grazing, so a common vision is to support dryland forest and silvopastoral systems.

* ***Summer school initiative on sustainable drylands***

The summer school aims to address the linkages between rangeland and drylands, focusing on how to promote restoration and management of dryland forest and agrosilvopastoral systems. The school will run annually in collaboration with different universities and organisations that are willing to train and build the capacity of practitioners, including decision-makers, on how to improve their decisions concerning dryland forest and agrosilvopastoral systems and how to assess the trade-offs and synergies between the different management decisions around dryland forest and rangelands. The school will target 20–25 champions. The first dryland summer school in partnership with the IYRP will be hosted by the Jordanian Government on 12–15 September 2023. The call for applications will be made on 29 March 2023. Participation is open to anyone, including indigenous groups.

The summer school will be held each year in a different region on specific topics that can create a cadre of experts and champions to advocate for the IYRP on the ground. Champions will need to prepare in advance and, at the end, to prepare their work plan: how they will apply the knowledge and support the IYRP. The idea is to have champions we can follow up with and gain feedback about their experiences and challenges.

The proposal for the partnership and summer school was well received by the GCG with no objections. Fidaa will share information and outreach materials about the summer school with IYRP for further distribution. All information about the summer school is on the COFO website.

1. **GLO Report on Rangelands and Pastoralists for UNCCD – Pedro Herrera**

Pedro outlined the objectives of the UNCCD Global Outlook (GLO) Thematic report on rangelands and pastoralists which will seek evidence on how pastoralism-based management systems can contribute to restoring rangelands, to reversing land degradation and to land degradation neutrality, all in pursuit of the global SDGs. He sees a need to provide guidance in supporting projects, investments and actions for pastoralism because there are many projects aiming to support pastoralism and the number will likely increase. Crucial is that the GLO report will also incorporate the voices of pastoralists when approaching donors, decision-makers and investors.

The UNCCD’s call for potential initiatives to be incorporated into the GLO report has already been disseminated through some networks. The GLO report will have a systematic approach to have key initiatives, cutting-edge projects and experiences showing success in improving the relationship between pastoralism and land management. Approaching the IYRP will ensure a balance in contributions from the different regions of the world. He asked the Regional IYRP Support Group (RISG) chairs and others in the RISGs to seek good projects, initiatives and legal tools that could be considered for incorporation into the GLO report.

Pedro planned to e-mail each RISG coordinator individually to seek contributions to the report. He will share the call again with us and Igshaan can distribute it more widely. During a pre-meeting, Pedro and Igshaan decided for each region to have at least two case studies, and Pedro would then work with these individuals or institutions to complete the template.

1. **IYRP process leading up to 2026 – Gregorio**

***How will the process unfold when the FAO formally takes over the running of the IYRP?***

FAO can start with IYRP activities and set up committees only in late 2024, as they still have other international years that need to be respected, including the International Year of Camelids (IYC) in 2024. FAO will set up an internal Technical Secretariat and an International Steering Committee (ISC) for the IYRP no later than end of 2024 after the IYC has been implemented. Starting early allows time to mobilise resources and plan well. Maybe other UN agencies such as UNESCO and UNEP could be part of the IYRP.

The Technical Secretariat will involve only FAO offices (regional, sub-regional, country) and technical divisions of FAO as is the regulation for international years. The ISC normally has 15–20 members: 50% from member countries in the regional groups of FAO (a representative from each region) and 50% representing different institutions (e.g. NGOs, civil society organisations/CSOs, research and academia) and pastoralists, e.g. one from WAMIP. One ISC chairperson may be from Mongolia with two other co-chairs, one for rangelands and one for pastoralists. The IYRP GCG needs to decide who will sit in the ISC together with the countries representing the different FAO regions.

FAO does not have a mandate to nominate national coordinators. Each government would need to nominate its national coordinator for the IYRP.

1. **Reports from Working Groups (WGs)**
* ***WG on Gender & Pastoralism – Nitya***

The group will be referred to as the Gender & Pastoralism WG because it is not just about women only, but also about men, boys and girls. One focus of the WG could be on traditional knowledge and the kind of different knowledge systems that men and women may have in pastoral systems. Also, in taking care of their animals, how this knowledge is important while trying to negotiate their livelihoods and not only knowledge for livestock marketing and production.

The WG will be having its first meeting on 23 February 2023. It is a small group; it has prepared a short concept note and is open to more ideas. The envisaged outputs include a movie on women in pastoralism, publications and an event or gathering of pastoralist women. The WG will also bring the gender aspect into the other IYRP WGs, e.g. looking at how climate change may impact pastoralist men and women differently.

Fidaa mentioned that FAO has a very strong community of practice on women called **WeCan,** focused on drylands. Among the members are pastoralist groups, CSOs, communities and mainly from women. Fidaa suggested a collaboration between the WG and **WeCan**, which is planning to have a global gathering for its members to work on their advocacy plan in May/June 2023. Nitya was open to the collaboration and invited Fidaa to the WG meeting on 23 February 2023. Fidaa invited her colleague Lucia from the **WeCan** coordination. Gregorio also suggested involving representatives from the RISGs.

* ***WG on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) / UNCCD – Maryam***

The WG has been finalising its think piece, a scientific background document which has gone through several rounds of reviews by the WG members and currently has seven different key recommendations. Three are aimed specifically at the UNCCD and its COP in particular, where IYRP would hope that, by 2026, the UNCCD would have passed certain decisions.

One recommendation would be to ban the conversion of rangelands either to forests or to crop agriculture or to anything else other than rangeland. The second is to increase funding that UNCCD provides through the LDN fund, thus to increase the share of rangelands in that fund. At the moment, it is miniscule, almost non-existent given that rangelands are 54% of the land surface of the world and 63% of drylands. The third recommendation is that the UNCCD makes a decision that each country should increase the targets it has set for restoring degraded rangelands.

The idea is that the paper would be used as a reference to extract policy notes and briefs and then start sharing with different audiences in advance of the UNCCD COP in Saudi Arabia in 2024 and in Mongolia in 2026. How the COPs will be approached is still being discussed. One idea is to work with the coalition that was established at the last UNCCD COP on grasslands, savannahs and rangelands. The avenue is to go through the normal channels of civil society. However, the WG is open to suggestions on how the COPs could be approached.

The paper will be shared with the GCG as the first peer reviewer, and then it will send it to the entire ISG for a final review and endorsement by the IYRP network.

* ***WG on Biodiversity and Rangelands – Igshaan***

Igshaan and Matthew Luizza from the USA have put together a first draft of the concept note for the WG, focused on what the WG would like to achieve. The idea is to send it to a few people and then call a meeting for this small group to discuss the finalisation of the concept note. Then an invitation will be sent to the ISG asking those who might be interested to join the WG. The group will follow the lead of the UNCCD WG and see how they can influence the CBD COP as well.

Igshaan, Matthew, Pablo Manzano and Mounir Louhaichi are organising a special issue on “Plant diversity in pastoral rangelands” in *Diversity*, an MPDI journal.

* ***WG on Water Governance – Ann***

This WG has two co-chairs, Adrian Cullis and Michael Odhiambo. They have put together a concept paper. They are planning to have a larger group inviting people from the different RISGs, but that will only be sometime in March 2023. The WG is working together with the Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN), which includes people who have not been involved in the IYRP movement.

* ***WG on Rangeland Afforestation – David Briske & Susie Vetter (report received per email 11.02.23)***

The IYRP Global Coordinating Group organized a Rangeland Afforestation WG in July 2022 to provide an evidence-based assessment of the impacts of large-scale tree planting on rangelands. A subgroup has been working diligently since that time and has completed a science-based report entitled “Rangeland Afforestation is not a Natural Climate Solution’. The report has recently been reviewed by members of the WG and will soon be submitted for publication in an academic journal to increase credibility of its conclusions. This report will provide the basis for additional IYRP communications, including both popular press releases and policy recommendations.

**Report conclusion**

The existing scientific evidence conclusively determines that rangeland afforestation is not an effective natural climate solution. Rangeland afforestation possesses only minimal potential for additional carbon storage, but it has high a potential to reduce vital rangeland ecosystem services of value to society. This conclusion is supported by the assessment of five major misconceptions used to promote large-scale tree planting: 1) conflation of reforestation and afforestation processes, 2) overestimation of carbon sequestration potential following afforestation, 3) insufficient recognition of the value of rangeland ecosystem services, including existing carbon storage, 4) potential for adverse ecological outcomes, and 5) neocolonial tendencies of afforestation as a climate mitigation strategy. Conservation of existing carbon, the majority of which exists belowground where it is less vulnerable to loss, may prove to be the most immediate natural climate solution for extensively managed rangelands. Stewardship strategies promoting diverse ecosystem services will not only contribute to climate change mitigation but also support biodiversity conservation and sustainable production of high-protein foods for marginalized populations.

**Report authors:**

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* Matthew D. Turner, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, U.S.A.
* ***Proposed WG on Funding – Igshaan***

In future, we will need to have funds for IYRP activities, particularly if we want to involve more pastoralists or to fund a person to coordinate IYRP communications. The suggestion was that each RISG identify one person in the region for this fundraising/ resource mobilisation WG. ***RISG chairs should send Igshaan names of persons who volunteer to be part of this WG.***

A suggestion was made in the Afforestation WG that we approach all 328 institutions that are part of the IYRP and ask for a one-off $US 100 payment; then we can employ a communications person for two years. Crowdfunding initiatives were also suggested. The WG can also target certain organisations, whether through regular processes of project submission and granting or a corporate decision they might take. We should start by having a shortlist of these organisations among our 328 ISG members.

1. **Any Other Business**

Sadana (South Asia RISG) had a youth meeting in India, a half-day event chaired the Minister of Agriculture; the county commissioner, youth and pastoralists were invited. They formed a group of pastoralist youth but a concern was that only participants from India attended. Several requests to participate were sent out, but to no avail. Sadana wanted to know from the other RISGs what to do to get youth in other countries in the region involved.

*Responses:*

* Hijaba: Events could be organised in cooperation with other countries including regional/global organisations. Develop a regional action plan consisting of members’ own action plans.
* David Borre: At the Society for Range Management (SRM) annual conference, the North America RISG aims to develop its action plan. This RISG is getting a lot of input from Mexico and there will be Mexican partners in person at the SRM in Boise, Idaho. The RISG is also recruiting young researchers from Mexico who are very active in grassland restoration in Mexico.
* Maryam: At the International Grassland Congress, we could try to find who are some of the rangeland scientists in other parts of the South Asia region and get access or contacts through the rangeland side, if not the pastoralist side. The South Asia RISG has a relationship with the ICCA Consortium,which has tried very hard to establish good regional networks. Sadana should discuss with Hijabi to see whether there are ICCA network people in other countries in the South Asia region and then find a way to approach them to talk about pastoralists.
1. **Updates from the RISGs**

***North America RISG***

* Starting in Nov 2022, a survey was sent out to the 21 sections of the SRM and selected IYRP network members in the USA, Canada and Mexico. The purpose was to assess expert opinions on key challenges and interventions facing North America. Results were compiled in Jan 2023 to form the basis for an action-planning workshop at SRM Boise (see below).
* The IYRP was well represented at the 76th Annual Meeting for SRM in Boise, Idaho, on 7–15 Feb 2023. Outputs included: (a) an online global scholarly symposium covering many topics, held on 7 Feb; 18 presenters attracted a virtual audience of 61; (b) an in-person presentation at the SRM opening plenary session on 13 Feb that introduced a hybrid audience of 428 to the IYRP; (c) a hybrid IYRP action-planning workshop for North America held on 13 Feb involving 73 participants; (d) a hybrid scholarly symposium on 15 Feb covering rangeland stewardship/ product certification issues; 9 presenters attracted a hybrid audience of 58; and (e) a volunteer paper at a hybrid social science session on 15 Feb covering amplification of local pastoralist voices via film—one presenter attracting a hybrid audience of 143. Other IYRP short stories with pastoralist voices from around the world were also on display at the opening plenary.
* 150 complimentary virtual registrations for the SRM meeting were granted to ISG members.

***South America RISG***

A brief update on IYRP-related activities from Nov 2022 to the end of Feb 2023:

* Fieldwork in the Peruvian Southern Andes was carried out from 26 Nov to 16 Dec 2022 by Greta Semplici (PASTRES postdoc) and Cecilia Turin as part of the research “Rangelands and pastoralists of Latin America” proposed in collaboration of Pablo Manzano. Alpaca and llama pastoralists contacted during fieldwork were informed about IYRP 2026 and short videos were recorded in Aymara and Spanish.
* The first RISG coordination meeting (virtual), held on 28 Dec 2022, allowed to identify who continues to be interested in participating and supporting IYRP 2026.
* The research proposal “Documentation of indigenous pastoralist knowledge and practices for the sustainable management of high Andean rangelands and bofedales (Andean wetlands)” was submitted on 30 Jan 2023 by Cecilia Turin to the Endangered Material Knowledge Programme, British Museum, and is now being assessed.
* A meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture of Peru was held on 31 Jan 2023 to increase awareness of the country’s rangelands and pastoralists and of the importance of IYRP 2026. As a result, the Government of Peru is preparing a support letter to the Government of Mongolia and IYRP 2026.
* A webinar “Rangelands and pastoralists of Latin America” organised by Greta Semplici and Cecilia Turin was held on 28 Feb 2023, where the cases of Mexico, Colombia and Peru were presented, and Pablo Manzano presented his latest research.
* The blog “The futures of the pastoralist systems of Southern Andean Peru”, written by Cecilia Turin and illustrated by Greta Semplici’s photos, was posted on 25 Feb 2023 at PASTRES.org: <https://pastres.org/2023/02/24/the-futures-of-the-pastoralist-systems-of-southern-andean-peru/>
* A book on “Latin American pastoralism” proposed by Pablo Manzano is making small advances.

***West & Central Africa (WCA) RISG***

From Dec 2022 to March 2023, in addition to the ongoing activities of the last report (Nov 2022), WCA RISG members have been committed mainly to the following new activities:

***CGIAR Initiative on Agroecology:*** This aims to develop and scale agroecological innovations with small-scale farmers and other agricultural and food system actors across different socio-ecological contexts in seven low- and middle-income countries. In territories called “Agroecological Living Landscapes,” the Initiative will engage with diverse stakeholders, including farmer associations or communities, researchers from multiple disciplines, private companies, international and national NGOs and local, regional and national policymakers. This initiative will work in Senegal and Burkina Faso from the WCA region and in India, Kenya, Laos, Peru, Tunisia and Zimbabwe from other regions of the world.

The objective will be achieved through food actors: 1) Co-creating agroecological innovations (practices, business models and institutional arrangements) and assessing which work best, where, why and for whom; 2) Identifying business opportunities and financial mechanisms for local enterprises to deal with agroecological innovations; 3) Determining the most suitable policies and mechanisms of policy integration for promoting effective and sustainable agroecological transitions; 4) Developing strategies and action plans that encourage and support sustainable behaviour change oriented to agroecological principles and transitions.

***“Milk from the Walo” Fair (1st edition), Richard-Toll, Senegal, 27–28 Jan 2023.*** Based on the dynamics around the dairy sector in the Dagana dairy basin (Northern Senegal), the Dagana Milk Innovation Platform (PIL), in partnership with the PPZS, GRET and other actors, has initiated activities aimed at promoting the milk sector in the Department of Dagana, mainly based on pastoralist livelihoods. After several exchanges and consultation with the various players in the sector and the concerned administrative authorities, PIL and its partners organised a first edition of the “Milk from the Walo” fair. This event, part of the roadmap of this platform, saw the participation of various development actors, research institutions (ISRA, CIRAD), private companies (Laiterie du Berger, Compagnie Sucrière Sénégalaise) and NGOs (GRET). More information can be found here: <https://www.ppzs.org/actualites/foire-lait-du-walo-richard-toll>

***Promoting local milk in West Africa and the Sahel.*** Stakeholders in the livestock sector from several African countries met in Thiès (Senegal) on 24–26 Jan 2023 in a workshop to review the 3-year action plan and the advocacy and communication plan of the regional innovation platform for promoting local milk in West Africa and the Sahel, organised by the [Association for the Promotion of Livestock in the Sahel and Savannah (APESS)](https://www.apess.org/) in collaboration with its partners. More information can be found here: <https://www.seneweb.com/news/Afrique/promotion-du-lait-local-en-afrique-de-l-_n_399847.html>

***9th session of Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD).*** The RISG was represented by its chair Harouna Abarchi at the 9th session of the [Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development](https://www.uneca.org/eca-events/arfsd2023) (28 Feb to 3 Mar 2023) organised by the UN Economic Commission for Africa in Niamey (Niger). This gave an opportunity to speak about the IYRP and raise awareness on the importance of rangelands and pastoralism.

***Improving governance of the RISG.*** The two main regional pastoralist organisations ([Réseau Billital Maroobé – RBM](https://www.maroobe.com/) and [Association pour la Promotion de l'Élevage au Sahel et en Savane – APESS](https://www.apess.org/)), as well as the regional research stakeholder [Pole Pastoralisme et Zones Sèches (PPZS)](https://www.ppzs.org/) have been involved in overseeing the RISG. They are now part of the RISG Steering Committee, jointly with two co-chairs. The Steering Committee is defining an action plan to reach pastoralists and raise field-level awareness on the upcoming IYRP.

**Central Asia & Mongolia (CAM) RISG**

Regional action plan:

* Regional priority issues and activities finally defined and discussed with members
* Regional proposal for involving remote herders discussed with relevant stakeholders
* Organisations’ action plans developed by members of CAM RISG

Events

* IYRP session for Envisioning a Global Initiative for Pastoralists’ Territories of Life, with ICCA Consortium was organised on14, 15 and 18 Nov 2022. The key outcome of this workshop was to ensure that advocacy toward the recognition, safeguarding and enhancement of Pastoralists’ Territories of Life is taken up in the lead-up to the IYRP.
* "Camel Heritage Festival 2023" on 26 Jan 2023 in Khuld soum of Dundgobi aimag, Mongolia

Regional and national cooperation

* Initial ideas for cooperation with specific donors and international organisations being discussed
* Cooperation with government organisations of Central Asia is initiating
* Draft cooperation plan of RISG CAM being discussed with MoFALI and MNET of Mongolia

Translation

* “Rangeland Afforestation is not a Viable Climate Change Mitigation Strategy” by Igshaan Samuels and Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Co-chairs of the ISG, translated into Russian
* Regional priority issues (12 themes) for IYRP translated and distributed in Russian and Mongolian

Plans for next 3 months

* Finalise Regional Action Plan, involving all members (Mar–Apr)
* Membership drive to attract more members in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan (Feb–Apr)
* Investigate possibility for organising regional event in CAM (Jun–Aug)
* Organising some events for pastoralists in Mongolia (Feb–Jun: RISG CAM with MoFALI and MNET)

**South Asia RISG**

**Pastoral Youth Conclave and IYRP Round Table Discussion.** We organised roundtable discussion on IYRP during the Pastoral Youth Conclave Festival held on 19–21 Jan 2023 at Bhuj, Gujarat. Totally, 25 members participated in the discussion representing CSOs, pastoralists, officials from Government Departments. The Pastoral Youth Conclave was organised by Sahjeevan / CFP in association with Living Lightly Exhibition. Members agreed to take up campaigns on Access to resources, Water, Youth, Role of women, Mobility. Preparation of a map on pastoralists and pasture land in India and also later for South Asia, a support mechanism for pastoralists under National Livestock Mission and collaboration with IGFRI for regenerating pastureland in association with CSOs were discussed during the meeting.

**Pastoralists Cell in The Ministry.** The Government has formed Pastoralists Cell in the Ministry of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry and Dairying. Members of RISG South Asia including pastoralists and CSOs took part in the “Pastoralists Meeting” organised by the Ministry of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry and Dairying on 27 Jan in New Delhi. During this meeting, we circulated some points to be taken up at policy level:

1. Formal recognition of pastoralist communities’ identity and their enormous economic contribution: documentation of pastoralist numbers (census) and their livestock and economic contribution across the country by 2026, and creation of the pastoral cell with an inter-ministry collaboration relevant for the livestock sector.
2. Drafting a National Pastoralists and Rangeland Policy by 2026 with a participatory approach: ensure continued access to traditional and critical grazing areas in forests areas, grasslands and village commons, and smooth inter-state movement of pastoralists.
3. Access to veterinary care system to pastoralists with special attention to design and connectivity issues in the remote and inaccessible regions.
4. Enacting participation and allocating funds for the activities under UN-recognised IYRP 2026.
5. Easing the access to the CSO Funds for organisations working on pastoralist issues and concerns.

**IYRP awareness material in different languages** We prepared 2-page information on the significance of IYRP 2026 in English, Kannada, Hindi and Marathi for circulation to pastoralists and officials of government departments at both central and state level.