**Minutes of IYRP Global Coordinating Group (GCG) meeting on 4 October 2024**

*Participants: Ann Waters-Bayer (notes), Ariuntuya Dorjsuren, Batkhuu Nyamosor, Dana Kelly, Engin Yilmaz, Fiona Flintan, Hannah Longole, Hasrat Arjjumend, Hijaba Ykhanbai, Igshaan Samuels (chair), Jon Davies, Maryam Niamir-Füller, Natasha Maru, Pedro Herrera, Prisca Mugabe (AI only), Ruijun Long*

*Apologies: Burmaa Dashbal*

***Note:*** *Additional information from Fiona, Hannah and Igshaan is added in green italics.*

**1. Report from Working Group (WG) coordinator**

*Jon* intends to do a WG update every 6 months; will make proper update by end of October 2024. Some highlights:

* WG Gender is very active; published policy brief; organising global gathering of pastoralist women (Mera+15) in India; draft concept note (CN) available; found some possibilities of core funding; partners could fund participants.
* WG Water: developing briefing note; holds sessions with interesting content presentations; overlaps with other WGs; wants to arrange joint meetings, e.g. water and land governance with Land Rights WG.
* WG LDN: quiet, submitted paper to *Frontiers in Ecology* (Afforestation WG also published there).
* WG Pastoralist Youth: changed leadership, held webinar to connect with other WGs but not well attended by other WGs, but several Youth WG members attended.
* WG Land: 3 subgroups a) position paper, b) developing case study archive, c) communications; need update from Wahid about comms.
* WG Climate Change: wants to get moving again.

Need better connections between thematic and regional groups. Condensed compilation of thematic information from WGs could be useful for Regional IYRP Support Groups (RISGs). Need to find out if RISGs are using outputs from WGs. Jon is encouraging WGs to include people from different regions.

*Ann:* Wahid is working in field in Pakistan; will be available again for IYRP social-media activities only in January 2025.

*Dana:* Can people still join WGs? *Jon:* New people joining all the time. Drop a line and he will introduce them to the WG coordinators.

*Maryam:* Have come long way with WGs but need more cross-fertilisation between WGs and with RISGs. Original idea was to create key message for 12 monthly themes during 2026. Need to map key messaging coming out of WGs against original 12 themes and identify gaps.

*Igshaan:* Need to put report together for UNGA after 2026. What do these key message mean for the people on the rangelands?

***To do:***

* *Maryam* to draft matrix of 12 themes and key messages from WGs
* *Jon* to ask WG chairs to fill it in and, before end of 2024, talk with WGs about their plans to finish key messages and other outputs by Dec 2025.
* *Jon* to send updates on WGs to put into 6-monthly IYRP report to appear in November.

*Igshaan* to complete 6-monthly global IYRP report by end of October to circulate in November; still expecting reports from some RISGs.

**2. Feedback on RISG meeting**

*Igshaan:* Meeting of RISG co-chairs held on 19 Sept; only half of RISGs represented. Attempt made to revive RISG MENA but no progress. RISG South Asia reported pastoralist census in India. RISG East Asia reported regional festival and regional gatherings around specific livestock species, e.g. camels, reindeer, including also other RISGs. RISG Eastern & Southern Africa working on customary law in Eastern Africa; various IYRP-related activities being planned in Southern Africa, e.g. by Grassland Society of Southern Africa. RISG Arctic involved in courses in partnership with Harvard University for young herders, including training in negotiation skills. This would allow pastoralists to negotiate with other land users and not make agreements they will regret in future. RISGs suggested global gathering centred around World Reindeer Congress in 2026 in Mongolia. In mid-October, Arctic RISG will attend World Food Forum in Rome with their mobile food lab; FAO DG very receptive, specific messages of GCG to FAO DG can be sent through Anders, e.g. Maryam suggested we need to ask what COAG Livestock Subcommittee plans for IYRP2026.

**3. IYRP and COPs**

*Ariuntuya* (Ministry of Environment, Mongolia) invited by Batkhuu to join GCG; interested in how IYRP2026 can be linked with UNCCD COP17 in 2026 in Mongolia. Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Food & Agriculture will soon have policy integration meeting. Propose to combine 2026 events hosted by Mongolia; coalition to be announced at COP16. COP17 to focus on rangelands & pastoralists (R&P). Preparing policy document about R&P to submit for 2026. If GCG interested, she could share document. Mongolia and several other countries collaborating to bring rangelands into COP16, preparing draft resolution on R&P that should help for both COP17 and IYRP. Government proposes to have big umbrella of IYRP for 2026; COP16 would be one of the top events. Things will be clearer by end of next week. If IYRP plans side events at Climate COP29 in November, joint efforts with Government of Mongolia would be possible. Contact: ariuntuya@mecc.gov.mn / +976-99044642 (whatsapp).

***To do:***

* *Ariuntuya* to share draft policy document on R&P with GCG members.

*Maryam:* Something focused on R&P should continue post-2026, like Mountain Secretariat in FAO. This needs to be discussed within COAG and Subcommittee on Livestock to convince FAO DG to set up something lasting after 2026. Collaboration of Ministries of Environment and Agriculture should be happening in all countries. IYRP not just about agriculture but also about environment, health, climate etc. Mongolia provides good example.

*Pedro:* Discussions underway in FAO about building long-term partnership on R&P within FAO. On COP16: UNCCD contacted Pedro and others to prepare high-level event on R&P on 6 Dec in Action Dome on Governance Day. Botswana has promoted consideration of R&P in this COP and may want to announce some advances, and UNCCD wants to highlight its global report on R&P. This high-level event is co-organised by ILRI, ILC, UNDP etc and coordinated by IYRP co-chair Enrique Michaud, Leonie Meyer (WWF) and Pedro. CN designed with UNCCD and Saudi Government will soon be approved. Plans to link COPs 16 and 17 and IYRP around rangeland governance. The role of the Government of Mongolia in this event could also contribute to the IYRP2026 momentum.

*Natasha:* Several other side events proposed for COP16: e.g. one on Land Day, another on mobility on People’s Day; not yet sure which ones will be approved. Pastoralist representatives could also be included in different panels. Attempts made earlier to mainstream pastoralism in FAO led to *Making variability work* publication on what the position of FAO should be. Discussions also in GASL and Committee on Livestock. How could those threads be picked up for current consultations?

*Jon:* Saudis will hold COP presidency event with strong emphasis on rangelands. As COP is coalition of governments, we should try to persuade some of our countries to be involved. UNCCD developing rangeland flagship initiative, to be launched in 2026 as part of IYRP, with ambitious portfolio on rangeland restoration. UNCCD already adopted LDN principles; these should be applied to rangeland restoration projects, using this tool to monitor projects and rangeland health. Major projects to restore degraded rangelands being made on basis of very poor evidence.

*Fiona:* At COP16, GIZ (Germany) is organising rangelands dinner with UNCCD Secretariat.

*Maryam:* In first half of December, IYRP should share key messages via social media, targeting UNCCD focal points. She has a list of them, but many addresses bounced during previous contact with them to circulate LN WG policy brief.

***To do:***

* *Jon* to ask WGs about key messages for COP16.
* *Maryam* to provide list of UNCCD focal points.
* *Engin/Yolda* to create and circulate social-media messages targeting focal points.

*Igshaan:* Important not only to coordinate IYRP inputs during COP but also to report back to IYRP alliance about how R&P were promoted, so members can see there is momentum. How can we stay informed about what is happening related to IYRP at COP16?

*Maryam:* Needs to be IYRP focal person at COP, perhaps Jon or Pedro, who also meets with Mongolian delegation.

*Jon:* Mongolia is planning an event at COP16 and could publicise IYRP in connection with COP17.

*Ariuntuya:* Governments of Mongolia and Saudi have agreed to link COPs 16 and 17. IYRP is more than welcome to use Mongolian pavilion.

*Fiona:* CGIAR will also have pavilion; making call for side events; besides Mongolian pavilion, should also be event in CG pavilion, proposal would have good chance to be approved. ILRI will have some comms support and can include publicity for IYRP. Volunteered to be IYRP focal point at COP.

*Hannah* also attending COP16; suggests WhatsApp group to help participants contact each other.

***To do:***

* *Ariuntuya* to consult within her Ministry and let IYRP know what can be done and when during UNCCD COP16.
* *Ann* to ask International Support Group who will be at COP16, what they plan to do there and if they want to be in IYRP WhatsApp group for IYRP-related communication during event.
* *Fiona* to prepare proposal for IYRP side event to be held in CGIAR pavilion at COP16.
* *Fiona* to organise comms support for IYRP during COP16 from comms expert working for ILRI
* *All participants in IYRP alliance* involved in different COP16 events to write briefly what transpired during event related to R&P; event update to be coordinated by IYRP focal person.
* Fiona *to be IYRP focal person for COP16, e.g. make spreadsheet for overview of IYRP-related delegates, make WhatsApp group, coordinate work to amplify IYRP and news updates, support comms expert and be contact person for GIZ dinner.*

**4. FAO Drylands School**

*Pedro:* Second Drylands Summer School (now called Drylands School) held last month in Nairobi, organised by Committee on Forestry (COFO) WG on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems. Planning 3rd course before International Rangeland Congress (IRC) 2025 in Adelaide, Australia. Focus on improving how drylands are managed and forging partnership of different organisations on this. School in 2024 was on participatory monitoring, next year on traditional/indigenous knowledge.

***To do:***

* *Pedro* to write short report for GCG on drylands summer school in Nairobi.

**5. IYRP & IRC2025**

*Ann:* Two concurrent sessions organised by IYRP2026 alliance, one focused more on topics and outputs of WGs, other bringing different regional perspectives on the value of R&P. Each session has 5 speakers, selected by Igshaan & Ann from abstracts submitted to IRC. Plenary session of IRC and IYRP also planned with 2 panels: one with practitioners/pastoralists, other with scientists. Panellists to be selected when clear who will be in Adelaide; no virtual inputs possible. Film festival on pastoralists also in a concurrent session.

*Igshaan:* Selection of speakers made for regional spread; short papers to be submitted by 4 December, to be reviewed by Igshaan and Ann, who are now sending mails to speakers to seek some consistency in each session. Hoping that Jon will be there to moderate Session 1 (WGs). Traditional indigenous knowledge forum to run concurrently with FAO dryland school.

Igshaan: *IRC2025 committee gave IYRP2025 free booth; early 2025, we will ask who will attend and could maybe draw up schedule for everyone to spend some time at booth. We should try, through our own institutions, to print a few things for the booth. There will also be space for the Australasia IYRP.*

***To do:***

* *Igshaan* to respond to Ann on draft mail to send to IRC2025 speakers in IYRP sessions.
* Igshaan *and* Ann *to update list of IYRP2026 alliance members attending IRC2025.*

*Dana:* One concurrent session for women pastoralists, another for pastoralist youth, co-organised with IYRP. Tradition/Indigenous Knowledge (T/IK) Forum to focus on indigenous peoples; themes:

- Re-imagining conservation through Indigenous perspectives

- Cultural knowledge and values, and the role of medicinal plants

- Indigenous science principles and collaborative partnerships

- Ecosystem restoration and maintenance and the need for both

- Lessons from country and moving forward

Workshop on Saturday is internal; workshop on Sunday is open to all IRC2025 participants.

*Ann:* At conference in Vienna last week, Maasai speaker presented Maasai perspective on pastoralism and nature conservation; could be interesting for I/TK Forum. *Dana:* Need name of speaker by next week; should be possible to arrange funding for him to travel to Adelaide.

*Maryam:* Can help review papers for IRC2025. Does Dana have any tips for funding participation in pastoralist gathering in 2026? *Dana:* ACIAR (Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research) is supporting African participants in T/IK Forum and IRC2025; not sure about funding for events elsewhere and in 2026.

*Hannah* has been active on issues of IK under IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services) and would be interested in joining the T/IK Forum.

Fiona: *GEF-funded STELARR (Sustainable Investments for Large-Scale Rangeland Restoration) project through IUCN that ILRI executes is sponsoring IRC2025 (US$30,000), which gives it space for 2-day workshop before IRC; will hold session on global rangelands standard led by Sustainable Fibre Alliance and session on global rangelands monitoring. STELARR supporting woman pastoralist to join “Women in rangelands” session; may be able to support more pastoralists; will know more early next year.*

***To do:***

* *Ann* to send name of Maasai representative to Dana
* *Dana* to contact Hannah about T/IK Forum.

**6. IYRP plans of Government of Mongolia**

Already partly covered under Point 3.

*Igshaan:* Has Government of Mongolia already communicated with FAO about IYRP-related plans?

*Ariuntuya*: First wants to have one integrated proposal by Ministries of Environment and Agriculture; will start official communication with FAO later this month.

*Maryam:* Will declaration come out of IRC2025 to feed into communication stream about IYRP that is also coming through the COPs?

*Dana:* T/IK Forum will make recommendations; IRC resolutions being prepared; seeking resolutions from other groups around the world.

Fiona: *ILRI working with World Bank Mongolia and Government of Mongolia on green investment plan; will see if there are leverage points for funding etc. May also be possible to build on STELARR and development of rangelands standard by Sustainable Fibre Alliance and Rangelands Stewardship Council they are establishing, which UNCCD also supports.*

**7. GEF (Global Environmental Facility) funding modality**

*Maryam:* Looking at how to get R&P on GEF agenda; has billions of dollars to fund environmental work. GEF governance structure is led by governments, who control 60–70% of funds. When gap analysis report made, less than 1% of GEF funds went to R&P, though rangelands cover over half the Earth’s land mass; now 2% go to R&P. GEF is decentralised structure that needs to be approached from country level. Need to get pastoralist groups more aware about possibility of accessing GEF funds. IYRP could recommend standard principles that GEF would apply for R&P projects; the 19 LDN Principles make a good place to start because governments have adopted these during previous UNCCD COPs. We have ears of some people in governments and could also involve people we know in Scientific & Technical Advisory Panel. Jürgen drafted letter to GEF CEO, to be signed by Igshaan; would have more impact if it included list of names and affiliations of GCG members so CEO has better idea who is behind IYRP.

*Jon:* UNCCD important for GEF, which listens carefully to what happens at COP. Rangeland coalition of parties at COP would be important to influence GEF funding. GEF has also integrated programmes and incentive funding; UNCCD could seek integrated programme on rangelands.

*Ariuntuya*: Was formerly GEF Council member for Mongolia; we need GEF to keep engine moving; Ministry of Environment seeks to build rangeland coalition of parties to be more substantive and remain active in coming years; 30x30 high-level coalition of parties could also bring more attention to rangelands. Rangeland countries in the world need to be more united and acknowledged.

*Maryam:* At previous COP, Coalition of Rangelands, Savannahs & Rangelands was formed. Does the proposed coalition build on this?

*Ariuntuya*: It is not the same. Ours is a global coalition but focused more on Eurasia, where it will be operationalised. Central Asian colleagues are happy for coalition to be open to everyone interested. It should be strong and independent from other mechanism from representatives of member states.

Fiona: *STELARR is funded by GEF; leaflet prepared; will have webpage on IUCN website and can also feature IYRP. UNCCD COP16 would be good place to leverage on STELARR for IYRP; can be followed up now that project has full-time person. Fiona applied to COP for side event on STELARR to be held on Finance Day (coordinated by GEF); asked Ulrich Apel/GEF to look for opportunities to amplify STELARR; IYRP can be part of this.*

***To do:***

* *Maryam* to make some quick final edits on letter to GEF CEO.
* *Igshaan* to circulate letter to GCG, inviting members to respond whether they want their names and affiliations listed under his signature; then send letter with all names to CEO.

**8. Funding for IYRP2026**

*Hannah:* IFAD recently visited rangelands in Uganda; has funds not only for governments; work with ILC (International Land Coalition) to fund civil society; support for IYRP possible. GIZ supports projects in Eastern Africa, may also be able to provide support.

*Igshaan:* Natasha at ILC is good partner to discuss funding possibilities that IFAD is offering.

Hannah: *Propose mapping of potential donors in the thematic areas critical to IYRP, using existing RISGs at regional level and GCG at global level. Also proposes setting up committee to mobilise resources for IYRP. Letters requesting support could be sent to the identified donors and responsible persons could follow up with these donors.*

Fiona: *Implementation of STELARR delayed because of delay in finding full-time person, who joined on 1 Oct 2024; advantage is that project has enough funds to extend into 2026 and can support different IYRP-related activities, including launch of rangelands standard, rangelands data platform and rangeland monitoring scheme to support standard and rangelands investments.*

***To do:***

* *Hannah* to contact Natasha to explore possibilities of IFAD funding for IYRP.

**9. Other matters**

***CBD COP16:***

*Engin:* Attending Biodiversity Convention (CBD) COP16 later this month. Who else from IYRP will be there?

*Ariuntuya*: Can check who has slots as side events at CBD COP and give feedback.

*Maryam:* WWF Global Grasslands & Savannahs Group plans something at CBD.

*Engin:* Is anyone in the IYRP engaged in Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) process adopted by CBD, about direct funding for local communities?

Fiona *will not attend but is contributing to session on Peace for Nature led by Alliance Bioversity and CIAT with case study on Participatory Rangeland Management and pastoralism to build peace. ILRI colleague will attend session; Fiona will ask him/her to raise IYRP. ILRI will have at least one comms person at CBD COP16; hopefully same person can attend UNCCD COP16; Fiona will make link with Engin. ILRI preparing position paper on livestock & biodiversity. CGIAR Environment & Biodiversity Platform will hold session in Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) Investment Forum prior to CBD COP16; Latin American colleague will present on STELARR and can also flag IYRP. Inform Fiona about other links to IYRP and she will see how she can mobilise support from ILRI/CGIAR colleagues.*

***To do:***

* *Ariuntuya* to check in Mongolia about side events at CBD COP16 and give feedback.
* *Jon* to ask if others in IYRP planning to attend CBD COP16 and whether Biodiversity WG is engaging in GBF process.

***Post-IYRP2026:***

*Igshaan:* What happens after 2026? Could obtain more information from person who helped set up Mountain Partnership secretariat. ICIMOD model (set up by UNESCO) may be another option outside FAO for institutionalising support to R&P.

*Maryam:* Independent model would be better (International Centre for R&P) but very challenging to establish from scratch. Would be fantastic if, through UNCCD process, we could get momentum for this; need to convince governments to finance it.

***To do:***

* *Igshaan* to organise special GCG meeting on beyond-2026 before end of 2024.

***Global communications:***

*Engin:* With Wahid in field for several months, no-one to continue social media communications. Engin will organise meeting about global IYRP communications. Some funding will be needed for person to coordinate communications.

*Maryam:* What are terms of reference for communications expert mentioned by Fiona – do they go beyond ILRI? Is the person available for IYRP?

Fiona: *Comms consultant’s contract goes to 31 Jan 2025; ideally, will attend all three COPs. In a few days, after her on-boarding, Fiona to link her with Engin who, at CBD COP16, could discuss possibility of stronger comms support from ILRI to IYRP. Money for CGIAR comms work comes from projects; may also be possible via CARDA to get some funds for IYRP from new CGIAR science programme in which ILRI also involved. Fiona will discuss this with Mounir.*

***To do:***

* *Engin* to organise meeting about global IYRP communications.
* *Fiona,* *Engin & Mounir to discuss possibilities that CG comms person supports IYRP comms.*

***Closing:***

*Igshaan:* UNCCD COP is perfect opportunity to keep IYRP momentum going. Will ask Pedro for short report on drylands summer school for IYRP update. Will soon meet Burmaa and Enrique in person.

*Maryam* is back! ☺