



Postal address: 03 BP 303 Parakou, Benin Republic

Phone: (+229) 6545 6660 / +229 6104 1010

Email: gdjohy@gmail.com / ursapha@gmail.com

Parakou, 05.12.2022

To

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

and

To the Secretariat of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) of the

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO),

On behalf of the *Unité de Recherche sur les Systèmes Agro-Pastoraux, Humanitaires et Alimentaires* / Research Unit on Agro-Pastoral, Humanitarian and Food Systems (UR-SAPHA), I am writing to express our support of the Government of Mongolia's initiative for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP).

Over the past fourteen years, UR-SAPHA scientists have extensively studied pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods from disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary perspectives. Our research projects include:

- The project "Transhumance and Climate Change in Benin" / of the Interdisciplinary and Participatory Research on Interactions between Ecosystems, Climate and Societies in West Africa (RIPIECSA) program, funded by the European Union (EU).
- The project: "Agent-Based Modeling of herders' vulnerability and adaptation strategies regarding water resources in climate change context in Alibori/Benin", funded by the International System for Analysis, Research and Training (START, Washington, USA), through the African Climate Fellowship Program (ACCFP)
- The project: "Pastoralism and Socio-technological Transformations in Northern Benin: Implications for Environmental Change Policies", funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
- The Project: "Women's Associations in a Pastoralist Society in Transformation: Implications for Gender-Based Livelihood Improvement Policies in Benin", funded by the Volkswagen Foundation (Germany)
- The project PASTUNAT: "Navigating Uncertainties: New livelihood trajectories by Fulani Pastoralist Youth in Northern Benin", funded by the Volkswagen Foundation (Germany)
- The project PASTCOV: "COVID-19 and pastoralism in a context of rupture and structural reforms in Benin: Learning from uncertainty management from below", funded by the German Research

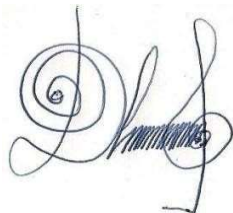
Foundation (DFG)

- The project COVID19-AFS: “Effects of COVID-19 in the livestock sector in West and Central Africa”, funded by the International Development Research Center (IDRC)
- The project NaviNut: “Enhancing Women’s Agency in Navigating Changing Food Environments to Improve Child Nutrition in African Drylands”, funded by German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL)
- The project DecLaRe: “Decision Support for Strengthening Land Resilience in the Face of Global Challenges”, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

All these completed or ongoing research works have allowed us to acquire a deep knowledge of pastoral and agro-pastoral systems in West Africa and the Sahel, as well as their contributions to food security and sustainable development. We have particularly understood that climate change, rapid demographic growth, agricultural extensification, land grabbing and insecurity of land tenure and rights are major challenges for pastoralism. However, in the face of all these challenges, pastoralists remain innovative and develop various relevant strategies to sustainably manage rangelands and keep their livelihoods viable. We believe they need more support to preserve their indigenous land management practices, protect the environment, and participate more sustainably in secure food production and development. Facilitating cross-border mobility remains a critical issue in the West Africa and Sahel space and support to pastoralists will help safeguard pastoral livelihoods and sustainable land management.

UR-SAPHA therefore fully supports the Government of Mongolia’s IYRP request in order to actively contribute to promoting the values and strengths of pastoralist production patterns on secure rangelands for food security, peaceful co-existence between livelihoods and communities and sustainable livestock production. We look forward to participating in all awareness, advocacy and lobbying initiatives to promote pastoralism and sustainable rangeland management. Our young and dynamic team is available to carry out activities at local, national and regional levels in West and Central Africa to achieve the objectives of the IYRP.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'G. Djohy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Georges Djohy,
UR-SAPHA Director
gdjohy@gmail.com