

Global Coordinating Group (GCG) Meeting – 1 December 2021 at 8:00–10:00 EST

Chair: Jim O'Rourke

Participants: *Jim O'Rourke, Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Ann Waters-Bayer, Gregorio Velasco Gil, Véronique Ancey, DK Sadana, Khalid Khawaldeh, Mounir Louhaichi, Fiona Flintan, Hijaba Ykhanbai, Ruijun Long, Layne Coppock, Barry Irving, Jürgen Hoth, Pablo Manzano Baena, Serena Ferrari, Barbara Hutchinson*

SUMMARY OF ACTION AND DECISION POINTS

- The Government of Mongolia leads the process for the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and will start informal negotiations in January 2022, culminating in an UNGA decision in March or April.
- IYRP International Support Groups (ISG) should continue to reach out to governments that have not yet signed on and to more organizations to send letters of support to Mongolia.
- GCG to discuss in future meetings to develop strategic messaging towards future climate-change COPs about the issues of methane, carbon sinks, afforestation in rangelands and indigenous/local knowledge. Similar messaging to be developed for other Conventions such as CBD (Convention of Biological Diversity) and UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification).
- WAMIP to decide if and how it will be involved in rangeland user forum at IRC (International Rangeland Congress) in 2025 after discussions with Dana and others involved in organizing this.
- The proposal for the Society for Range Management (SRM) workshop (end Jan–early Feb 2022) was modified and adopted including a focus on 12 themes. RISGs (Regional IYRP Support Groups) have some preparatory work to do before then. Layne and the workshop organizing committee will send details to the RISGs by end of the week. All 300 organizations in the ISG will be invited to attend the workshop (fees will be waived through a generous grant from SRM).

1. Update from New York

Gregorio – It is important for the Mongolian Government to be taking the lead.

Véronique – Early November, Mongolian Government asked FAO for technical support in drafting proposal and concept note. Both drafts were sent on 12 November for transmission to Government of Mongolia. These will be further amended in Mongolia based on negotiation process, e.g. Mongolia will try to involve co-sponsors and suggest which UN organization will support IYRP implementation. Mongolia will do final editing and compliance. Each Member Country submitting a resolution decides the timeline based on consultation with UNGA. Informal negotiation on the draft resolution will start early January and go through February. More sponsors will be invited up to March. The resolution can then be presented to UNGA; according to FAO office in NY, this could happen in March or May.

Maryam – I fully agree with Gregorio and Véronique that the ball is now with the Mongolian Government, who are in the lead. We can continue to work in the support network to contact other networks to work with them to try to convince other governments that have not yet sent letters of support to do so. They would benefit from seeing the strong societal support for IYRP that already exists.

Gregorio – We need to continue trying to get the support of different countries, but I assume that the official negotiation with other countries should happen in a New York. So we come back to the same point that Mongolia needs to lead that process now.

Jim – Hopes that the Society for Range Management (SRM) IYRP sessions next February will gain a letter of support from the US State Department or at least make them aware of the fact this is a world movement with a lot of support within the US, so that at least they don't vote against it.

Jürgen – Can only governments be co-sponsors, or could a large NGO co-sponsor with Mongolia?

Maryam – There is a formal term, “co-sponsoring of a resolution” at UNGA that only governments can do, but there's no reason why a large organization cannot offer financial support. They can do so in writing to the Mongolian Government.

Jürgen – Could an organization such as the Wildlife Fund have a close relationship with the Mongolian Government to lend their support and their weight as a global organization?

Véronique – The official UN process relies entirely on UN Member Country governments. We had discussed exactly that point to mention in the draft resolution or implementation concept note but it was amended more narrowly. It is up to Mongolia to propose to include it in the draft resolution and to negotiate with UNGA how to mention any organization in the international body that will be involved in the implementation. This relies on the negotiation process, which is very strictly defined by the UN.

Gregorio – They are looking at other resolutions to see how others have handled this. They want to make it as broad as possible for the Mongolian proposal.

Hijaba – Currently the Mongolian Ministry of Food & Agriculture is in the Support Group. There has been a position change in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They need to try to work with these others on how to integrate the issues in a timely manner.

Maryam – About support from UN agencies; 2 days ago, we received a video testimony from the UNEP Director of the Division for Ecosystems. We will put it up on the website in addition to the great statement from FAO's Deputy Director General.

2. Lessons from International Grassland & Rangeland Congress (IGC/IRC2021) & follow-up

Ann's email: These pages are on the IYRP website under “Conventions & Events” (<https://www.iyrp.info/conventions-events>). The summary report by Tungaa and Rashmi on the IYRP sessions at the IGC/IRC2021 is not posted yet, as we are waiting for panelists' feedback by 3 Dec.

- the contributions to the IYRP sessions during the IGC/IRC2021 last month can be found here: <https://www.iyrp.info/joint-international-grassland-rangeland-congress-igc>
- some initial information about the upcoming IYRP symposium during the USA Society for Range Management (SRM) annual meeting in February 2022 can be found here: <https://www.iyrp.info/srm-international-affairs-committee-symposium-global-rangelands-iyrp>

Jim – Two IYRP concurrent sessions were held during the Congress: an introduction, a panel on land tenure & governance (Ann moderator), a panel on social economic services & demography (Igshaan moderator) and a panel on climate change (Layne moderator). Fiona introduced three resolutions that were passed by the delegates and gave the closing statement. One more resolution came from Kenya to create a Kenya IYRP group; they are now deciding how to operate and what they will do. An award ceremony for pastoralists from South Asia and Central Asia & Mongolia was held. It was very encouraging that many other papers and presenters during the Congress mentioned the IYRP.

Maryam – As follow-up, IYRP will be featured at the next IRC2025 in Adelaide, Australia. I agreed to be on the Program Committee; Ann agreed to co-chair the International Liaison Committee.

Ann – We are in the midst of planning meetings this week; Jim is also involved. The IYRP features prominently in events proposed for the IRC2025, and there will be a forum for rangeland users.

Jim – The IRC2025 planning committee participants are very excited about the IYRP and look forward to holding a grand opening for the IYRP 2026, should it be passed by UNGA.

Maryam – We have a good three years to plan this, but it would be great if WAMIP could be directly involved, especially for the rangeland users forum, a big pastoralist gathering.

Ann – I already mentioned WAMIP to the organizers. It is absolutely necessary that pastoralist organizations are involved. Moreover, there will be pastoralist award ceremonies again. I think that pastoralist organizations, not only in the two regions that were involved this year but also in other regions should become involved, also in developing criteria for awards and selecting the winners.

Jim – IRC2025 has a person on its planning committee in charge of indigenous efforts but he is primarily interested in Australian indigenous people; he was not aware of what's going on in the rest of the world. Ann let them know there's much information out there, particularly in the IYRP group.

Ann – Throughout the world, not all pastoralist groups regard themselves as indigenous. That is why WAMIP changed its name to the World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples and Pastoralists.

Khalid – We in WAMIP are trying to catch up with the process. We would like to join any activities and events concerning the 2025 Congress, especially meeting of pastoralists. Most pastoralists are in remote areas so not easy to reach. With the help of other organizations, friends and partners, we can reach most pastoralists in the world. We are open to any cooperation with committee members and we look forward to your help to connect.

3. Lessons from UNFCCC COP26 and follow-up

Hijaba – Shared a PPT summarizing points from United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 26th Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COP26), a multistakeholder, multidisciplinary and timely event. WAMIP co-organized a photo exhibit on pastoralists. IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) helped bring pastoralist issues to COP 26. Main messages: World transition from Covid to sustainable, green and inclusive economic growth. The transition is not just replacing one with another, but diversifying toward a more resilient economy; transition through social dialogue. Proposed ideas in line with IYRP were to recognize pastoralists as stewards of range ecosystems that can offer many solutions for climate change: on methane issues and on the Covid transition to secure tenure rights of land users. Mobility is very important to reduce environmental externality costs for economy and ecology, and it supports natural regeneration and restoration of rangeland ecosystems and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Because the pledge to cut 30% of methane emissions is ambitious, we propose mobile pastoralism as climate-change resilient and eco-friendly food production system; mobility is most effective strategy in pastoral agriculture. In many ways, pastoralists are stewards of climate change over local ecosystems. Just by selecting the grazing, we can reduce some gas emissions, so 30% reduction can be achieved. Another issue was deforestation. Some countries, e.g. Mongolia, promised to increase planting trees in line with trends into a green economy. Leaders of over 100 countries representing about 85% of the world's forests decided to stop deforestation by 2030. Leaders of many countries also promised to increase tree planting to combat desertification and restore ecosystems. We had several positive comments on the IYRP and expect more support by many governments after COP26. Thanks to WAMIP, IFAD and International Land Coalition for their help.

Khalid – He couldn't join COP26 because of visa issues; also many other WAMIP delegates had visa issues. Our colleague, Fernando Garcia, coordinated our team there.

Ann – Asked if Khalid or someone else in WAMIP would join the IRC2025 committee working on the rangelands users forum, to be coordinated with Dana Kelly. **Khalid** suggests having a short meeting to discuss how WAMIP could participate.

Hijaba – The Global Rangelands Initiative is now coordinated by WAMIP.

Maryam – COP26 was very important and helped us pull together many key messages that resonate with climate change crowd, e.g. about methane, rangeland degradation, carbon sequestration, planting trees on grasslands and indigenous knowledge – all are hot topics. I ask everyone to think about this more in the longer term. There will be at least 3 more climate change COPs before IYRP

2026. Can we work together as GCG to come up with some strategic messaging, perhaps at a future meeting or during the SRM meeting? Let's make it even more successful next year. One thing I have been slowly nurturing is to reach to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scientists, specifically those who instrumental in calculating methane from livestock and livestock footprints in general. There seems to be some willingness on their part to listen to us, so I hope we could have a webinar with them. That is a stepping stone but let's look at this more widely and see what ideas we can come up with to build up momentum. The CBD and UNCCD are also important; we should have a strategic discussion about these conventions.

Jürgen – There's some urgency: Mongolia, Mexico and other countries are already willing to meet the 1 billion tree quota. Could we form an emergency working group; maybe FAO, CBD or UNEP can help us give some directives: yes, reforestation, but under which circumstances, not planting trees in grasslands. It would be very helpful from that high level to make clear how that quota is met.

Khalid – I agree with Jürgen about the deforestation issue, it is also here in Jordan, where it's a problem since the '40s or '50s. We have replaced the pastures with forests and this affected the livelihoods of pastoralists and caused them to leave their customary land and pastoralism. What is important is what Pablo mentioned about the different contribution of pastures and forests to carbon mitigation, which favors pastures more than trees. We need scientific evidence to talk to the government. Unfortunately, we're talking to people who are defending nature. It is easy to convince people against industry but we need more evidence to convince conservationists or the public concerned with conservation.

4. UNEA 5.2 side event (3 or 4 March 2022)

Fiona – ILRI submitted a request for a side event on behalf of IYRP. Maryam, Fiona & Cynthia from ILRI and Martina from WWF (Worldwide Fund for Nature) prepared the proposal but haven't heard back yet. It will be co-hosted by the Kenyan Government. According to Cynthia, a high-level person from the Government said they would like to be involved. The event is about advancing global action for grassland and rangeland protection and restoration for biodiversity, climate and livelihoods. We will try to make it an event with different people, including youth and the private sector. In many events this year, we've had basically the same group of presenters, often preaching to ourselves. Strategically, we need to go beyond that. We put a lot of effort into these events. Particularly now in virtual events, we get quite low turnout and mainly ourselves. With this UNEA event, we try to target people who are strategic or bring new perspectives. We have a head from WWF who leads Action Track 3 of the UN Food System Summit. After Cynthia sends me the final copy that she submitted, I'll share it with everyone. We had a couple of conversations with Cynthia: in ILRI, both GLAD (Global Livestock Advocacy for Development) and the new One-CGIAR program I'm involved in – focused on livestock, climate and systems resilience – includes IYRP and global rangelands advocacy work, so this is a way we can probably mobilize some funds for different events in the future.

Maryam – Timing could be crucial because of when the vote will be held by UNGA, so also need to have flexibility in mind for the event depending on what happens at UNGA.

5. SRM Feb 2022 conference and IAC Symposium/workshop (Layne)

SRM allotted US\$50,000 to facilitate holding a symposium on behalf of IYRP at and around its conference (6–10 Feb 2022 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA, in person and virtual). This includes 300 free registrations. SRM sees this as an opportunity to globalize its organization. Since the IYRP will not be designated by February, we may want to re-envision elements of the symposium. The idea is to have 3 components: an in-person event at conference in the week 6–10 February plus 2 virtual workshops, one before and one after. The in-person event will be on the afternoon of 8 February and include a dozen or so talks that are largely confirmed. The thread that connects the

presentations is the role of rangelands and pastoralism in climate change mitigation and adaptation. SRM's International Affairs Committee (IAC) agreed on these themes.

Tentative plan: hold pre- and post-conference workshops of 2 hours each, including Spanish and French simultaneous translation. One idea was to focus on priorities for raising awareness across the 11 IYRP regions. If regional representatives polled their members and discussed what the priorities would be in terms of awareness raising, in terms of both impact and ease of implementation, having a discussion about this across the 11 regions could be very fruitful. Besides raising awareness, other outcomes could be debated in the same format. This could be in a 2nd workshop.

There has been legitimate concern that, because UNGA has not yet approved the IYRP, engaging in anything resembling planning would be inappropriate. The challenge now is to come up with some alternative models. We have very high degree of flexibility. We don't have to do two workshops, but I'd be concerned about abandoning the workshop idea because SRM has been generous in giving us some support this time, and will they be generous the next time if we fail to deliver an outcome?

Jim – Agrees with Layne on importance of taking advantage of this opportunity.

Layne – Suggested possibly also involving Australian Rangeland Society in their meeting next fall with a similar model.

Ann – When we did the gap analysis, it was clear that much more awareness raising and filling research gaps related to rangelands and pastoralism are needed. Whether or not the UN proclaims an IYRP, we need to work together across countries and try to coordinate with what other people in other countries are doing in order to raise awareness and fill the gaps.

Pablo – I previously took part in an SRM meeting and think it's a good opportunity to raise awareness, particularly if the meeting is virtual.

Jürgen – Like idea of having all chairs of the different regions together to come up with priorities and main issues. That in itself and the way you propose to systematize the information may help feed the potential agenda of IYRP globally but also kickstart thinking on main concepts that may be useful for each region's action plan. I think it's very timely with or without UN designation. If we can start thinking of alternate frameworks to promote the cooperation that we hope will happen through IYRP and the UN, we could start developing the scaffolding towards it. This could be a tremendous step in that direction.

Layne – Anything we agree on in the first couple of workshops is just on a provisional basis; things might change later. It is not set in stone.

Hijaba – A good idea. Our RISG will probably think it is very interesting and can share a lot on prioritizing issues.

Maryam – The Australasia chairs, Dana Kelly and Sarah McDonald, and Engin and his co-chair from Europe couldn't join us today. Those two groups responded that they think it's premature to do regional action planning and they would have difficulty mobilizing their membership to engage in such a process until the IYRP is actually designated. How do we use this meeting not only to fill knowledge gaps but also to fill some of the shaky parts of the whole IYRP movement? The least active groups are North Africa & Middle East, West & Central Africa and South America. In the other regions, we don't have all the countries but we have far more support officially stated. From the less active regions, we have far fewer support letters from pastoralist associations or NGOs or whatever, and from far fewer governments. Part of the problem is probably language – Spanish and French translation – but also North America is an issue. Maybe we could focus more to help these constituencies get engaged. When it comes to prioritizing and ranking of actions, I still think there is a lot of value in organizing it according to the 12 monthly themes: in January we're going to focus on

perceptions of pastoralism & rangelands and so on. What are the key messages for each of those large themes? This would be one way to help have a cross-regional dialogue.

Serena – I would be very interested in participating in this kind of homework assignments, speaking as a representative of the West & Central Africa group. I have just a concern with the timeline because, if the event is at the end of January, we should start now, as my group is not very reactive.

Khalid – I come from one region that is behind the others. There is an issue with language. I hope we can consider having Arabic in the meeting. In the pastoralist organizations in the region, you can't find people speaking English or other languages. We are not from academia in WAMIP. We need a brief history in Arabic about the IYRP, its structure, situation, what is missing and how organizations or countries can support the IYRP, some brief things we can take to an organization or government to let them know. We need a manual of how to raise awareness of others and get support for IYRP.

Barry – We need to diversify our themes and messaging. IYRP has become very focused on mobility in land use, but there are countries in the world where mobility is not an issue or not even a factor. We're not going to gather the interest of those countries unless we move past just mobility. I'm going to promote integration with greater agriculture. We are being counterproductive when we don't include this. We need to advance, not ignore mobility but develop things other than mobility.

Jim – Maybe we need to define mobility. Ranchers in Canada & the US do a lot of mobility; we have rotational systems and we move from pasture to pasture from corn stalks to rangelands, so we need to define what we mean by mobility.

Maryam – There is a group working on defining mobility; I'm part of it. Give us a little bit more time until we get that sorted out. We had hoped to have it ready by the IGC/IRC. Please look at the 12 monthly themes paper and our flyers. Mobility has become our rallying cry right now is because it's making sense to a large part of the world.

Layne – Six alternative models for the workshops have been mentioned. Should we have a vote after we close today? We could put together a half page with some bullets with each one option and then designate the leadership group to make a choice.

Jim – Let's go ahead with the agenda you've proposed for the two types of workshops and some homework for regions that haven't been very active and then let those regions that feel they don't want to do anything until the Year is designated still join in to help those other regions catch up.

Layne – We could have two 2-hour workshops: one devoted to fleshing out priorities regarding the 12 themes, another devoted to fleshing out priorities regarding awareness raising or knowledge generation by region in line with my memo – 2 workshops with a similar modality but a bit different way of organization. All regions would be invited; if some feel disinclined to join one or the other workshop, that's up to them. Are there other ideas about, e.g. strengthening the groups in South America, North America, Middle East, etc. Is that a 3rd workshop option? Maryam, could you clarify what you're thinking about for strengthening the weaker regions?

Maryam – There's only one other plausible option on the table: we don't focus only on what can be implemented at regional level; we gather regional priorities from Workshop 1 and consolidate them at global level: what it means in terms of global-level activities, conference or gathering or whatever we could do at global level that could involve all regions. That could be our 2nd workshop.

Barry – Keep the 2nd workshop open. If the Year is proclaimed, move ahead with global planning. If it is not, move ahead with using the information gathered in the 1st workshop, gather key problems throughout the globe and use that to advocate that governments get on board with IYRP.

Serena – We need to concentrate our efforts and resources in one big event; if there are more events, we may lose the focus and the interest of potential participants. Already we need to translate into French, Spanish and Arabic. Then we can deliver global messages; creating the

simplest most efficient messages will be our work, from a marketing point of view. I'm interested in this exercise, so let me know if I can proceed with my West & Central Africa group.

Layne – We have to make a decision this week. We will have one workshop for sure with the 12 themes as foundation, their priorities by region, then a 2nd workshop as follow-up, if needed. We have enough funding to extend the simultaneous translation to include Arabic. We're not going to solve all problems in one workshop, but we will have some enjoyment and gain some perspective.

Sadana – We in South Asia had some idea about what to do about the themes, assigning them to a particular month because the seasons differ in different regions. According to our seasons, we have our cultural events, and we'd like to match those cultural events with the themes. We have specific events for each month, so we take the global themes and adjust them for our specific region.

Barb – To reiterate points made earlier, we talk well among ourselves, but trying to get this out more broadly is an issue. Marketing is something we never talk about because we all come from other perspectives. How can we reach out to people beyond our usual subjects? We need to put a huge emphasis on getting some very big name who will take our message out to the public in a really major way. We have some resources with SRM, which we haven't had before; maybe there's a way to leverage them.

Ruijun – I would like to share news: this month, the Chinese and Mongolian Governments signed an agreement to release about 18 million Chinese yen to cooperation with Mongolia. I would like to discuss with Hijaba how we can organize on both sides. Maybe we can use this opportunity for several projects to support pastoralism for the next 3–5 years. This would be good support to IYRP.

Maryam – Each member of the ISG (about 300 organizations) should be invited to attend the SRM events. These are our supporters; we don't reach out to them often enough. In 2026, we expect them to raise the flag somehow. With the offer of free registration, perhaps we get 100 participants from the ISG. That will give us the mass of people to have an excellent workshop. In those 300, we have some very big organizations. We need to get them engaged, the whole group. I have the contact list for the 300 on the ISG list.

Jim – Once we redefine the workshop, then we should immediately send out the invitation.

Layne – SRM must finish the complimentary portal; that should happen in the next couple of weeks.

Ann – We should at least send a Save-the-date message as quickly as possible, although we wouldn't mention the complimentary registration because that's not set up yet on the website.

Layne – I suggest that the core leadership group discuss this week what the dates will be and the best time to hold the workshops – maybe at different times so we can capture the biggest global audience. I will take my memo and the ranking table and massage it so that it looks at a region by theme and send that to the core leadership group for editing and finalization.

Jim – Sounds like a good suggestion. Do we want Barb and Maryam to do a Doodle poll on what would be the best date for the workshop?

Layne – The reason I focused on 31 January as the date is because people indicated that earlier in the week was better than later. There also are going to be two weeks after the conference when virtual engagement can occur. So, if we want to save a date in the two weeks following the main conference as an opportunity to go over details, we are free to do that. As long as these sessions are virtual, they're almost without cost.

Maryam – It depends on how well the homework part has been successfully carried out (a lot needs to happen between now and the end of January) and the type of feedback we get from our RISG chairs. I really encourage the chairs to keep us updated so we can finalize the overall plan.

Layne – We will have a 1st workshop on Monday 31 January and a 2nd one provisionally on Tuesday 1 February and possibly after the in-person meeting a 3rd workshop we can cancel if we don't need it.

Maryam – Revised write-up should be translated into French, Spanish and Arabic. I'm asking our RISG chairs to be available to help translate very quickly: the Save-the-date message and the longer message with the content of the workshops. We rely very much on the regional chairs to make sure this is a very successful meeting.

Layne – I will send out a half page on the basis of what we discussed, for review.

Hijaba – Some news: in March 2022, the International Land Coalition will organize sessions for the Global Land Forum in Jordan: one on land use & gender and one on climate change & pastoralism. We are inviting Maryam or Jim or others who can give the welcome or closing part of this session. There will be 6 or 7 presentations.

Jim then closed the meeting.