



iyrp2026@gmail.com

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Dr. Carlos Manuel Rodríguez
CEO and Chairperson
Global Environmental Facility
Washington, D.C., District of Columbia, 20433, USA

Dear Dr. Rodríguez

I am writing to seek your support and explore potential synergies for financing projects related to the upcoming United Nations International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) in 2026. As you are aware, rangelands—encompassing grasslands, savannas, shrublands, tundra, and deserts—cover over 54% of the Earth's surface and play a vital role in biodiversity conservation, climate regulation, and the livelihoods of millions, especially pastoralist communities. However, they remain significantly underrepresented in global environmental agendas.

In anticipation of IYRP 2026, the IYRP International Support Group has worked diligently to raise awareness and coordinate global efforts to safeguard these critical ecosystems. With the support of over 102 countries and more than 360 organizations, we believe this global momentum provides a unique opportunity to integrate rangeland conservation into landscape management initiatives.

Given the Global Environmental Facility's track record of promoting sustainability, your institutional support will be crucial in addressing the gaps in rangeland financing and policy frameworks. Specifically, we encourage GEF to consider rangelands as a strategic topic for the GEF-9 funding cycle. This would align with global biodiversity goals including the GBFF's focus on indigenous and local communities, contribute to climate change mitigation, achieve Land Degradation Neutrality. Additionally, GEF's participation would enhance the well-being of communities dependent on these ecosystems and accelerate the development of sustainable rangeland/grassland management practices and foster innovative partnerships and co-financing opportunities.

We look forward to the possibility of working together to ensure that rangelands and pastoralists receive the attention and resources they deserve. I am confident that GEF's leadership in this regard will leave a lasting impact on global environmental outcomes in both GEF8 and GEF9.

Thank you for your consideration. We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss how we can collaborate on these important initiatives.

Warm regards,
Igshaan Samuels

Global Co-chair of the IYRP 2026 alliance
Agricultural Research Council
South Africa