

Introduction by H.E. Mr. Enkhbold Vorshilov, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations of the draft resolution on “International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, 2026”

Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

I am happy today to introduce Mongolia’s initiative to observe the year of 2026 as “International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists”.

Currently, pastureland accounts for more than half of the world's land and plays an important role in pastoralism. Rangelands and pastoralism support the livelihoods and food security of millions of people while delivering nature-based services benefitting all. In many countries, pastoralism generates significant employment and economic contributions to the national gross product (GDP). The number of people raising livestock in pastoral and agro-pastoral systems is estimated to be over 200 million¹ across all regions globally and their practices vary according to the diversity of ecosystems.

Pastoral systems rely on seasonal mobility of animals and people within and across borders. Having been impacted by “benign neglect”² for generations, pastoralists and rangelands are facing challenges and threats, increasing climate variability, land degradation, insecure tenure rights and land use change as well as limited access to markets, education and health services. These are starting to result in conflicts, disruption of mobility and of access to land and water, and reduction in workforce to manage the herds and landscapes.

Given the importance of rangelands and pastoralists for nutrition, healthy ecosystems, income and employment generation and other relevant dimensions of sustainable development, for the pastoral populations and for humanity, the Government of Mongolia proposes to observe the IYRP in 2026 to raise awareness on the perceived natural and cultural values of rangelands and pastoral livelihood systems.

Distinguished delegates,

Now, I would like mention briefly about my country’s situation regarding this matter.

In spite of Mongolia’s rapid modernization and industrialization, the traditional agriculture and livestock industry still plays an important role in the national economy. Currently, almost 20 percent of Mongolia’s households live in rural areas, agriculture occupies 12.8 percent of GDP and 26.3 of workforce works in the agriculture sector with the agricultural land occupying 73.6 percent of the total land.

Therefore, we pursue a policy of combining traditional and modern ways of life and have set the goal of “preserving traditional nomadic heritage, ecologically friendly,

¹ <https://www.cbd.int/development/doc/cbd-good-practice-guide-pastoralism-booklet-web-en.pdf>

² <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/case-benign-neglect-knowledge-gaps-about-sustainability-pastoralism-and-rangelands>

sustainable and organic animal husbandry, and promoting nomadic animal heritage to the world” in the “Vision 2050” long-term development policy adopted in 2020.

However, the country’s key socioeconomic sectors including agriculture and animal husbandry in addition to the natural ecosystem are adversely affected by the changing climate conditions, requiring urgent and timely actions. Moreover, some 76.9 percent of the country’s land is facing desertification and overgrazing to some extent, and it is continuing to expand.

And we see that this is a problem not only for us, but also for other pastoral and nomadic countries; thus, since 2018, we have been working to realize this initiative on the “International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists”.

We consider that pastoralists are not just victims, but also a strong ally who may play a vital role regarding global challenges, including Covid-19 pandemic and climate change.

Distinguished delegates,

In this regard, my delegation wishes to underscore the important support by the FAO, on the Mongolia’s proposal of Observance of an International Year on Rangelands and Pastoralists in 2026.

The 42nd session of the FAO Conference held on 14-18 June 2021 endorsed the proposal of an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) in 2026 by the Government of Mongolia and adopted the Resolution 5/2021. The UNFSS Food Producer’s Declaration endorsed the IYRP 2026³. As of today, 58 countries and 300 organizations are supporting⁴ the IYRP.

In addition, an International Support Group (ISG) is taking proactive actions to raise awareness and identify supporting governments and organizations and as well as their commitment to indirect, re-directed and re-branded resources. The potential activities being suggested by these multiple stakeholders to support the implementation of the IYRP 2026 have been tabulated at a total value of \$2 millions of in-kind resources.

Distinguished delegates,

We are confident that its proclamation will further encourage more countries to enhance awareness and knowledge on sustainability of rangelands and pastoralists, during and well beyond the designated year.

My delegation is looking forward to an extended support of the Member States when our delegation will table a draft resolution on Observance of an International Year on Rangelands and Pastoralists in 2026 to the General Assembly.

³ <https://foodsystems.community/food-producers-declaration-for-the-united-nations-2021-food-systems-summit/>

⁴ <https://iyrp.info/supporting-countries-and-organisations>