

008 Conservation and sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism

AWARE that rangelands, covering more than half of the global terrestrial surface, are among the most imperilled, least protected ecosystems;

RECOGNISING that sustainable pastoralism plays a key role in conserving and restoring rangelands;

RECOGNISING ALSO that rangelands and sustainable pastoralism provide critical benefits for biodiversity conservation, climate action and the socio-economic well-being of hundreds of millions of people;

CONCERNED that rangelands and pastoralism are under significant threat from multiple pressures and that, when pastoralist systems cannot adapt to externally imposed conditions, this often leads to abandonment or diversification of livelihoods, which may result in loss of biodiversity;

NOTING that certain historical approaches to protected areas based on exclusion of people have in some contexts restricted pastoralist access and mobility with adverse impacts on their rights and the potential for sustainable pastoralism and local stewardship of rangelands;

ACKNOWLEDGING the multifaceted importance of rangelands for Indigenous peoples and Local communities, women, girls and youth, emphasising the need for sustainable land and water management-practices to support their livelihoods, cultures and resilience;

RECALLING the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Resolution 76/253 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, proclaiming 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), calling upon Member States and stakeholders to observe the year by raising awareness of the importance of rangelands and pastoralism for achieving sustainable development;

RECALLING ALSO IUCN Resolution 7.009 *Protecting and restoring endangered grassland and savannah ecosystems* (Marseille, 2020), which requests IUCN to support the process “to designate a ‘United Nations International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists’”;

APPRECIATING the IYRP Global Alliance’s key role in mobilising global support to secure the proclamation and fostering collaboration between pastoralists and conservation organisations worldwide; and

WELCOMING Decision 14.179 *Pastoralism and Migratory Species* adopted at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and Decision 29/COP.16 *Rangelands and pastoralists* adopted at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), which recognises the socio-ecological benefits of rangelands and sustainable pastoralism;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:

1. DECLARES its support and commitment for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), recognising the essential contributions of pastoralist communities and their rights, as appropriate;

2. REQUESTS the Director General to observe the IYRP by:

a. raising awareness of the importance of the conservation and sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism for achieving sustainable development, and for conserving biodiversity, food sovereignty, rural communities and economic sustainability; and

b. developing collaboration between the IYRP Global Alliance, pastoralist communities, and the IUCN Secretariat;

3. FURTHER REQUESTS the Director General:

- a. to integrate conservation and sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism into the IUCN Programme, including formal and informal cooperation, enabling policies and mechanisms, and public and private sector engagement; and
- b. to ensure that IUCN policies and projects respect and protect pastoralists' rights, including customary rights, over pastoral lands and natural resources, and promote their access and contributions to sustainable land management;

4. CALLS UPON all State Members and all other Government Agency Members to:

- a. observe IYRP2026 and raise awareness of the importance of the conservation and sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism for achieving sustainable development, through communications, marketing, events/activities, collaboration, and educational materials and programmes aimed at connecting people of all ages with grasslands locally, regionally, nationally and globally, highlighting the contributions of pastoralists and youth;
- b. include the conservation and restoration of rangelands as a priority objective in their national strategies and plans;
- c. respect and protect, as appropriate in accordance with national legislation, the rights of pastoralists, including customary rights, over their lands and natural resources; and
- d. adopt gender-responsive and culturally appropriate policies and legal measures contributing to socio-ecological and economic resilience of pastoralists.