GLOBAL PASTORALIST & INDIGENOUS PASTORALISTS' CALL FOR ACTION

Our Lands, Our Territories, Our Heritage, Our Future

ULAANBAATAR DECLARATION 2026

On the Occasion of the Global Pastoralist Gathering

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

August 2026

PREAMBLE

We, the Pastoralist Peoples of the World, including the Indigenous Pastoralist Peoples, declare that we are the true guardians, knowledge and rights-holders of our ancestral lands, territories and resources. For generations, we have sustainably governed and managed Pastoral rangelands through our customary institutions, traditional knowledge, mobility and collective stewardship, sustaining biodiversity, ecosystems, food systems, cultures and livelihoods. Pastoralism is not a relic of the past, it is a living, dynamic and resilient system that contributes to the well-being of present and future generations,

Appreciating the Government of Mongolia for initiating and championing the first ever International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, and for hosting the Global Pastoralist Gathering,

Acknowledging that pastoralism globally constitutes hundreds of millions of people, that occupy and manage more than half of the global landmass, across crucial human-coupled ecosystems of drylands, savannas, mountains, forests, deserts, and snowlands, among others, and across over a hundred countries worldwide,

Underlining that our Pastoralist food systems provide food security and sovereignty on a global scale, providing food even beyond Pastoralist communities themselves to the broader society, that according to UNCCD figures is counting over five hundred million people totally,

Concluding that we are rights-holders in our homelands and territories, including in relation to the biodiversity, lands, waters and natural resources that sustain our communities, cultures and livelihoods, and underline that the key question is not whether we have rights, but whether our rights are recognized and respected.

Recognizing the crucial role of women as leaders in protecting land, livestock, biodiversity, culture, food system and nurturing Pastoralists' knowledge systems essential for healthy families, healthy landscapes and pastoral futures.

Affirming that Pastoralist youth are key actors not only in shaping the future of pastoralism systems, but also in their present, as knowledge makers, innovators, and leaders driving their resilience and transformation.

Concluding that as Pastoralists, we are not merely beneficiaries or stakeholders; we are rights-holders, knowledge holders and solution providers, with the right to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting our lands, territories, cultures and futures.

Noting with concern that there are still many myths and misconceptions concerning pastoralism and Pastoralists, and underlining that these myths must be replaced with facts,

Underlining that our sustainable Pastoralist systems is the core foundation for healthy rangelands, nature-positive land use, biodiversity preservation, carbon sequestration, climate resilience, food security and sovereignty, value creation, economy and employment, cultural preservation and values, living intangible heritage, Pastoralist knowledge systems, and nature protection,

Asserting that pastoralism is not causing desertification, but on the contrary represents a viable land use in support of arid, semi-arid and cold arid areas, and that this is also backed by the latest science,

Recognizing that pastoralism and nomadic pastoralism are neither inefficient, backwards, or a problem to be solved, nor forced by poverty, driven by randomness or placelessness, but are a rational choice, and a resource and strength

for the adaptation and resilience of Pastoralist peoples, and for the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity, and **underline** that mobility represents a systematic adaptation strategy for climate change and sustainable nature use in often marginal, variable and unpredictable environments,

Emphasizing that our customary systems, including pastoral mobility and transboundary livestock corridors, enable us to follow the seasonal distribution of water and grazing resources, adapt to climate change, regenerate pastoral land and sustain livelihoods across borders.

Noting that there is no unified global definition of pastoralism from Pastoralist peoples ourselves, nor in State systems, while taking notice of the definition of the IYRP International Steering Committee,

Noting with concern the range of ongoing, profound and global changes occurring in rangelands and Pastoralist areas, including land degradation, climate change, and globalization,

Asserting that with the combined effects of the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, pollution, insecurity, and globalization, the world is increasingly raising questions that Pastoralists have for long been answering, as we have been sustainably living with variability, complexity and change for generations, concluding that we are not part of the problem but the solution,

Underlining that while Pastoralists have been contributing least to climate emissions, we are the most affected, carrying a disproportionate double burden of climate adaptation and climate mitigation efforts degrading our ancestral pasturelands,

Highlighting the need for higher awareness and recognition of the importance of rangelands in all its diversity, and on the Pastoralist systems that maintain them,

Recognising the importance to advance the voices of Pastoralists on the global stage, and **call for** empowering support for Pastoralist organizations, Pastoralist movements, Pastoralist institutions, for active and meaningful participation in UN processes, regional and national arenas, and **insisting** that Pastoralists must have seats in these decision making processes,

Underlining the key importance of the human rights-based approach of the United Nations and its bodies, and in the legislation of all nations, in line with the rights of Pastoralists globally,

Affirming that funding must reach Pastoralist and Indigenous Pastoralist Peoples and our communities directly, recognizing our vital role in protecting and restoring Pastoralist lands and enabling them to lead our own solutions and shape our own futures,

Supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the aim to leave no one behind,

Noting with concern the recent reports and findings of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the UN Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES),

Welcoming and supporting the Kathmandu Global Pastoralist Women Declaration of 2026, and the Madrid Global Pastoralist Youth Declaration of 2026, and welcoming other regional and national Pastoralist gatherings,

HEREBY:

I RECOGNIZE, RESPECT & PROTECT PASTORALIST PEOPLES' RIGHTS

Acknowledge that when Pastoralist peoples' rights are recognized, respected and secured, the biodiversity, livelihoods and Pastoralist territories thrive, and underline that our rights and sovereignty are rooted in our customary rights, governance systems, and collective institutions that define our identities and social organization,

Call upon states, policy makers, the private sector, academia, the UN, multilateral institutions, and civil society to respect, recognize, preserve, promote and protect the rights of Pastoralist peoples, including the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) implemented and monitored, and the fundamental right to self-determination and to enjoy our own cultures,

Reiterate that the rights of Pastoralist Peoples include freedom of movement, security, cross-border mobility, culture, heritage, identity, intellectual property rights, food systems, and economic freedom,

Assert that Pastoralists' access to their pasturelands fundamentally represents a material foundation for the core human right to enjoy one's own culture.

Note with concern the challenges related to protection of Pastoralists' intellectual property rights (IPR) to their culturally-based products, methods and services, so that they are not appropriated or misused by non-Pastoralist and corporate actors, and also underline the shortcomings of existing IPR mechanisms' limited-term protection for their ancestral culture and collective rights.

Reaffirm that Indigenous Pastoralist peoples have specific rights as per international conventions and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants, Pastoralists and People Working in Rural Areas,

Call for protection of Pastoralist Peoples' rights defenders from criminalization, violence and intimidation, and support strong, connected and adequately resourced global Pastoralist movements.

II MOBILITY & NOMADIC PASTORALISM

Affirm that mobility is a part of Pastoralist peoples' fundamental rights, cultures, identities, our sustainable stewardship and nature-preservation strategies.

Demand respect for mobility and nomadic pastoralism, not only as a livelihood practice, but as a systematic adaptation strategy for climate change and sustainable nature use in often marginal, variable and unpredictable environments, and call for policies that effectively respect and reflect this.

Underline that the spatial-temporal distribution of pastures and resources across Pastoralist land demands free movement of people and livestock within and across borders, and that these livestock corridors also secure access to markets, and call upon Governments to recognize and protect Pastoralist mobility by ensuring the free movement and security of people and livestock, securing transboundary livestock biocultural corridors and access to markets, economic freedom, and preventing and removing barriers that restrict seasonal access to pastures, water resources, and sacred and spiritual sites.

Call upon Governments to respect, recognize and protect Pastoralist systems, mobility and mobile ways of life, including their food, cultural, economic and livelihood systems, and to ensure that Pastoralist communities can continue to sustain and transmit these ways of life across generations.

Call for inclusive, culturally sensitive mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflicts between Pastoralist Peoples and other communities, respecting customary governance, supporting dialogue over land and grazing resources, strengthening local conflict-resolution capacities, and promoting cooperative management of herds to ensure the safety, resilience, and sustainable livelihoods of all pastoral peoples and communities.

Call upon academia, Governments and society at large to fully recognize, respect and include Pastoralist Peoples' knowledge systems, at the same level as scientific knowledge, and call for meaningful participation of Pastoralists in research, in setting research priorities and agendas, and respectful collaboration between knowledge systems,

upholding FAIR & CARE principles, supported by sustainable funding, and inclusion of Pastoralist, Indigenous and early-career scientists.

Underline that pastoralism is founded on holistic systems and cycles, with different pastures according to seasons, and call for inclusive systemic perspectives and policies for maintaining and protecting the chain of mobility.

Call for an improved knowledge foundation and systematic understanding of pastoralism and mobility in national governance and management systems, that go beyond that of classical agricultural science perspectives.

III LAND DEGRADATION & LAND TENURE

Note with concern that the situation concerning loss of grazing lands has become worse the last decade, affecting land rights, where the fragmentation of grazing lands from both small and larger developments is continuing and increasing, including growing impacts from non-sustainable extractive industries such as mining, and energy development, road and transport infrastructure, leisure cabins and tourism, agriculture expansion, urbanization and other large scale projects.

Demand that Land Degradation Neutrality be reframed in the management of Pastoralists' areas and territories, with reference to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Note with concern the overall lack of responsible land management plans for the Pastoralist pasturelands, and call for the establishment of comprehensive monitoring systems for degradation and encroachment of Pastoralist pasturelands.

Recognize land and water grabbing, including so-called green solutions, green-washing, extractive industries and conservation, as major threats to Pastoralist livelihoods, mobility, and the integrity of our homelands, and call for effective measures to illuminate, address, prevent, and halt such practices.

Underline that access to pastures and resources will be even more important under climate change, and reiterate that grasslands must be protected and subject to reframed area-neutrality.

Recognize our land rights both as a fundamental human right and a collective right, and warn that privatisation or individualisation of rangeland tenure may increase the risk of dispossessions and may undermine customary and collective rights.

Note with concern the increasing use of post-pandemic economic recovery and security as straw-men arguments to lower standards of environmental protection and to disregard Pastoralists' rights in industrial development projects.

Conclude that climate change mitigation through alternative energy development and mining projects on Pastoralist land cannot be sustainable, green, or responsible insofar as they are not also sustainable, green, and responsible for the affected Pastoralists.

Assert that nature conservation and protected areas insensitive to pastoralism represent a form of land degradation, and oppose exclusionary conservation practices, premised on separating humans from nature, which push out Pastoralists whose livelihoods, practices, identities and cultures are inseparable from nature.

IV CLIMATE JUSTICE & BIODIVERSITY

Call for recognition of the disproportionate burden of Pastoralists from the climate crisis and climate mitigation efforts degrading our ancestral pasturelands.

Call upon the Governments and development actors to recognise and respect Pastoralist knowledge on land use and land management practices to enhance biodiversity, and the need for documentation in Nationally Determined Contributions reports and National Biodiversity Action Plans.

Recognize the important role of protected areas in safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystems, but underline that conservation can only be successful and equitable where it involves us and recognizes our rights, knowledge systems, governance customs and livelihoods of affected Pastoralist peoples.

Recognize that Pastoralists are holders of traditional knowledge about their homelands and urge the need to properly integrate Pastoralists in the process of monitoring and protecting the environment.

Recognize and respect Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs) as legitimate systems of territorial governance and ecological stewardship, and, where our communities so choose, support formal recognition, legal protection and management of ICCAs and other community-based conservation areas within our territories in accordance with our customary laws, governance systems and rights to self-determination and FPIC.

Assert that conservation measures should not undermine Pastoralist cultures, livelihoods and traditional governance systems, urge that Pastoralists must be properly and meaningfully included as real partners in the protection of nature, including their traditional Indigenous knowledge systems, and call upon Governments and conservation institutions to ensure that protected areas are established, governed and managed in real partnership with affected Pastoralists,

Affirming that Pastoralists are conservationists and custodians of ecosystems by our customary use of our homelands, note that we are not in principle against conservation by protected areas but only as long as it is not in conflict with Pastoralists' utilization of our homelands and herding areas, and based on this notion, we call upon Governments at the national and regional level to implement conservation policies in accordance with international commitments on sustainable development, biodiversity and nature, in partnership with Pastoralist peoples.

Call upon Governments, UN agencies and conservation organizations to recognize pastoralism and mobility as legitimate and effective forms of conservation, halt the unjustified expansion of protected areas onto Pastoralist territories, and fully recognize and secure Pastoralist land rights as a foundation for sustainable land management, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem resilience.

Note with concern the findings of recent reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and call for a clear distinction between methane emissions from industrial livestock production and those from mobile Pastoralist systems, and recognize that well-managed pastoral livestock systems contribute to healthy rangelands, biodiversity, soil health and carbon sequestration, and climate mitigation and adaptation.

Support Pastoralist-led responses to climate change, drought, disasters and environmental variability, based on mobility, traditional knowledge and resilient Pastoralist systems, and strengthen the adaptive capacity of Pastoralists to respond to climate change and increasing environmental variability.

Call upon Governments and UN agencies that Pastoralists have direct and equitable access to climate finance, adaptation resources and drought preparedness programmes, including resources and mechanisms that are accessible to mobile, remote and otherwise underserved Pastoralist communities.

Recognise nomadic pastoralism as an inherently climate-resilient livelihood system, while ensuring that nomadic Pastoralists have direct access to climate finance, climate change adaptation resources, and drought preparedness programmes, and that accessible financing and resources are made available to mobile and remote Pastoralist communities.

Conclude that Pastoralists' adaptation to climate change is best decided by Pastoralists ourselves.

Underline that to maintain pastoralism, it is not enough that Pastoralists adapt to climate change, but that also pastures must be maintained, that our rights must be respected, and that we must be part of public management decisions that affect us.

Note that climate change is also about what we are going to eat in the future, reiterate the need to maintain food sovereignty, and underline the need to respect the key function of pastoralism for food security locally, regionally and globally.

V PASTORALIST INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, LAND STEWARDSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Note that Pastoralists are custodians of nature, biodiversity and ecosystems, with an experience-based and systematic knowledge base, and call for recognition of and support to Pastoralists' contributions to maintaining and restoring pastoral landscapes, biodiversity, ecosystem health, and sustainable resource management.

Underline that responsible governance of rangelands is central to the co-existence of people and biodiversity.

Call for full and effective inclusion of Pastoralists' knowledge in public management, impact assessments, and decisions that regard us, to ensure the best possible knowledge base for decisions.

Request appropriate mechanisms for political representation of Pastoralists in decision making structures on the supranational, national and local levels, in order to secure the best possible knowledge foundations for decisions affecting Pastoralist peoples.

Call for a decision to establish a Pastoralist Caucus in the COP17 of the UNCCD.

Call for respecting human rights and free, prior and informed consent in all decisions affecting Pastoralists and our futures, leaving no one behind, both by public management, industrial actors and business.

Acknowledge the importance of Pastoralists' family-based traditional management systems, and demand respect for our internal governance systems by recognition, protection, integrity and rights of such structures in national legislation and regulation.

Recognize that Pastoralists' knowledge systems have been disregarded in the formation and implementation of national and regional educational institutions, programs and contents, and underline that Pastoralists are thus left behind in terms of fair and equal educational opportunities.

Note that the educational systems of Pastoralists cannot exist outside a mobile way of life, and call for establishment of relevant educational offerings that are adapted to pastoralism culturally, in terms of knowledge and contents, and technically, and the support for education.

Call for conservation, development and protection of Indigenous and heritage livestock breeds.

Note that loss of animals to growing predator populations is a severe challenge for Pastoralists in many regions, and underline the need to integrate Pastoralists' understanding and traditional knowledge into the national and international systems for regulation of predator populations.

Call upon Governments, regional institutions, UN agencies and partners to invest in resilient pastoral livestock systems by strengthening cross-border animal health and disease surveillance, coordinated vaccination, veterinary services, livestock insurance and compensation mechanisms.

Call upon Governments to respect and promote inclusive, culturally appropriate and community-led livestock breeding and genetic resource programmes that protect local breeds, respect pastoral mobility and traditional livestock governance systems.

VI YOUTH, WOMEN & FAMILY-BASED PASTORALISM

Call upon Governments, international institutions, development partners, and all decision-makers to act now to secure a just and resilient future for young Pastoralists.

Call for guarantees and support for meaningful youth participation by ensuring young Pastoralists, with gender balance, have permanent representation and decision-making power at all relevant levels.

Urge investments in Pastoralist youth by introducing relevant, culturally appropriate life skills and education for economic empowerment, alongside targeted capacity-building, access to land and finance, appropriate infrastructure, technology, innovation, and decent economic opportunities to sustain their livelihoods and futures.

Call upon Governments, international institutions, development partners, and all decision-makers to recognize Pastoralist women and girls as rights-holders, knowledge holders, leaders, and equal partners in shaping a just, resilient, and sustainable future.

Call for guarantees of Pastoralist women and girls' rights by securing their equal access to land ownership, use, inheritance, finance, markets, education, technology and innovation, social protection, and decent livelihood opportunities.

Protect Pastoralist women and girls from gender-based violence, discrimination, insecurity, and all forms of exploitation.

Urge investments in Pastoralist women's leadership, economic empowerment, climate resilience, pastoral land restoration, and culturally appropriate education and capacity-building.

Ensure the meaningful and equal participation of Pastoralist women and girls in governance, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, policy processes, and decision-making at local, national, regional, and international levels.

Call upon the UNCCD Gender Caucus to secure a permanent seat for Pastoralist women within their bodies.

Call upon the UNCCD Youth Caucus and Gender Caucus to create global communication platforms for Pastoralist youth and for women, and to secure a permanent seat for Pastoralist youth and Pastoralist women within their bodies.

Support Pastoralist-led women and Pastoralist-led youth organisations and initiatives.

VII MARKETS, LOCAL VALUE ADDED & FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Support the development of our societies on our own terms, by using our own knowledge, our own resources, and our own peoples and youth.

Strengthen the economic foundation of pastoralism by securing Pastoralists' equitable access to and ownership of the most profitable segments of livestock value chains, promoting local products, value addition, fair markets and community-led traceability systems.

Call upon Governments, regional institutions and partners to strengthen Pastoralist access to local, regional and international markets by investing in market infrastructure, livestock aggregation, cross-border trade and fair market systems, while removing barriers that disadvantage Indigenous and customary Pastoralist communities and recognizing their vital contribution to the livestock economy.

Support economic development that is beneficial to the Pastoralists themselves, focusing on Pastoralist food systems, fair trade systems, Pastoralists' design and traditional technology, as well as new technology for processing, distribution and marketing of Pastoralists' food, handicrafts, and trade products.

Support securing the intellectual property rights of Pastoralists to our own products, culture and traditions, that could provide protection from illegitimate imitation disadvantageous to Pastoralists as knowledge holders and right holders, also in combination with Pastoralist branding systems.

Reiterate that pastoralism delivers food security and sovereignty on a global scale, welcome that the UN Committee of Food Security is to address Indigenous peoples' food systems in 2027, and call for the involvement of Pastoralists and Pastoralist food systems in this process.

VIII PEOPLE, HEALTH & WELLBEING

Underline the rights of Pastoralists to equitable public services adapted to mobile societies, including culturally adapted physical and mental health services, social security, insurance, education, and veterinary services.

Call upon States to support culturally and practically adapted health services for Pastoralists. We embody the One Health perspective, keeping a holistic animals, ecosystem and peoples' health integrated.

Acknowledge the importance of people-to-people and socio-cultural connections between world Pastoralist peoples, underline its value for healing and wellbeing, social protection, youth, and awareness, and call for States and the UN to support and fund such measures.

IX INFORMATION & DATA, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Call upon Governments, companies & private sectors, international institutions and development partners for accurate, inclusive and Pastoralist Peoples-controlled data systems that reflect the mobile, diverse and adaptive realities of Pastoralist and Indigenous Pastoralist Peoples, while recognizing Pastoralist data sovereignty and FPIC in the collection, use and sharing of data and knowledge.

Call for equitable access to digital infrastructure, technology, AI, digital literacy and innovation, for Pastoralist Peoples-led solutions that strengthen livelihoods, rangeland management, biodiversity, land and climate resilience.

Demand that AI and emerging technologies respect Pastoralists including Indigenous Pastoralist Peoples' rights, protect traditional knowledge, address bias and prevent data and knowledge extraction, and ensure that we are meaningfully and ethically involved in their design, governance and implementation with respect to FPIC.

Affirm that digitalization and data centralization must remain voluntary tools at the service of Pastoralists and their organizations, maintaining data sovereignty, supporting our rights and priorities without becoming mandatory requirements or enabling surveillance, violations of privacy, or restrictions on our fundamental freedoms.

Support using technology to raise awareness of Pastoralists on veterinary systems and technologies.

Call for support to fund a Pastoralist-led global initiative to generate, consolidate and regularly update reliable data and statistics on Pastoralist Peoples, their populations, territories and economic contributions, ensuring that data collection is disaggregated and respectful of Pastoralists' rights and data sovereignty.

X DIRECT ACCESS TO FINANCE & FINANCIAL JUSTICE

Call for direct, equitable, flexible, unrestrictive and non-discriminatory access to finance for Pastoralist, Indigenous Pastoralist Peoples, and Pastoralist-led organizations, without intermediaries unless requested by communities, and with their meaningful participation in financial decision-making at national, regional and global levels.

Call for strengthened existing funding mechanisms and dedicated financing, including philanthropic and Indigenous-led financing, and the creation of dedicated trust funds to support Pastoralist and Indigenous Pastoralist-led initiatives.

Recognize and finance Indigenous-led solutions for rangeland and Pastoralist land restoration, drought and climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and sustainable food and livelihoods, education, health and wellbeing, ensuring direct and equitable access to resources and decision-making.

Urge funding institutions, including GEF, GCF, Adaptation Fund, Riyadh Action Agenda, Cali Fund and other relevant funding mechanisms, Governments and the UNCCD Parties to establish and support dedicated funding mechanisms for

Pastoralist and Indigenous Pastoralist Peoples, while ensuring their representation in relevant financial governance and investment mechanisms.

XI GLOBAL RECOGNITION, SOLIDARITY & CONTINUITY

Welcome and applaud the Mongolian Government's initiative for a Pastoralist Decade.

Call for the establishment of a United Nations Day of Pastoralists to strengthen recognition of the global contributions of Pastoralist Peoples.

Recognize that, while this Global Pastoralist Gathering brings together a rich diversity of Pastoralist Peoples, many others could not be represented due to geographical, financial, political and other circumstances. Their voices, knowledge and rights remain an integral part of our collective movement.

Call for the establishment of an Independent and Autonomous Global Pastoralist-led Commission, led by Indigenous Pastoralist Peoples, to monitor progress, follow up on the implementation of these Calls to Action, and strengthen coordination and accountability among Pastoralist Peoples and relevant institutions.

Affirm that this Gathering marks a beginning, not an end; Global Pastoralist Peoples, including Indigenous Pastoralist Peoples, will lead and convene another Global Pastoralist Gathering in 2030 to review progress, assess implementation, and renew these Calls to Action, and invite Governments, other Indigenous Peoples, institutions and partners, and other stakeholders to support this process and the work of the Commission.

Call upon the Parties to the UNCCD to include this document as an integral part of the official outcomes and conclusions of COP17.

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Adopted by the Pastoralist Peoples of the World at the Global Pastoralist Gathering, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, August 2026