



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
**RANGELANDS AND
PASTORALISTS**
2026



ASSOCIATION DES FEMMES PEULES &
PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES DU TCHAD



AFRICAN INDIGENOUS PASTORALISTS GATHERING: BUILDING A COMMON AFRICAN PASTORALIST AGENDA IN PREPARATION FOR IYRP.

📅 25 - 29 January 2026.

📍 CBK, Kenya School of Monetary Studies, in Nairobi, Kenya.

UNCCD
COP17
ULAANBAATAR 2026



Background:

In recognition of the vital role that healthy rangelands and pastoralism play in ensuring sustainable environments, resilient livelihoods, and economic growth, the United Nations (UN) has declared 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP). The IYRP aims to raise awareness and advocate for the value of healthy rangelands and sustainable pastoralism. It also seeks to strengthen capacity and promote responsible investment in the pastoral livestock sector — through sustainable land management practices, ecosystem restoration, improved livestock health and breeding, and equitable access to markets.

Nomadic and transhumance pastoralism represents one of the most dynamic and widespread sustainable livelihoods globally, practiced by an estimated 100 to 200 million people, of whom 50 to 100 million live across 43% of Africa. Pastoralism contributes significantly to environmental stewardship, economic stability, and peace-building across savannas, grasslands, and semi-arid ecosystems. Through traditional land stewardship, grazing practices, and indigenous knowledge systems, pastoralists maintain many biodiversity hot spots and safeguard over 80% of Africa's livestock genetic resources. Wildlife densities on pastoral lands often rival those found in formally protected areas.

Pastoralists' sustainable land management helps maintain soil health and enhance carbon storage. African rangelands are estimated to sequester 20-30 tonnes of carbon per hectare, depending on vegetation type and management practices. Pastoralist communities also play a key role in climate resilience and food sovereignty through their indigenous livestock breeds, such as the Mbororo cattle and Red Maasai sheep, and through traditional seed conservation.

Despite these contributions, pastoralism faces increasing threats from climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, and water scarcity. These challenges are compounded by the escalating climate emergency, manifested through more frequent and severe droughts, which devastate livestock, degrade rangelands, and deepen food and water insecurity, land-use conflicts and undermining traditional governance systems that have long sustained peaceful coexistence between pastoralists and neighboring communities.

Importantly, while effects are broadly experienced by the pastoral communities, the impacts are disproportionately gendered where; these crises, together with the neutrality in assumptions reflected in policy, investments and programs models are often not designed to cater for patterns and realities of the pastoral communities, such as; limited or no pastoral-centered social protection and flexible services, long-standing and persistence undervaluation of economic contribution of these systems that are sustained and protected by diverse pastoral groups, exclusion, limited representation and participation in decision making processes and spaces of women, youth, PWDs and other groups as well as gender-insensitivity in mobility and corridor plannings that fails to account for accessibility of rangeland resources and opportunities, losses, damages and safety of (for) pastoral groups. These and other interconnected barriers, not only compromise livelihoods, resilience, cultural identities and broader development, but also widens the already existing inequalities and vulnerabilities among the pastoral communities.

Therefore, strengthening collaboration between pastoralist communities, governments, and financing partners is critical to address these challenges, promote climate justice, and ensure that pastoralists among the least contributors to the climate crisis can access financial resources to sustain their stewardship of the environment

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Despite significant contributions to climate resilience, food sovereignty, and peace-building, pastoralism faces growing threats from climate change, biodiversity loss, and desertification.

Objective(s):

In light of the upcoming International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP 2026), this initiative seeks to:

- Highlight the contributions and challenges of pastoralism in Africa.
- Amplify pastoralist voices in shaping and implementing IYRP activities.
- Foster long-term partnerships that ensure the continued contribution of rangelands and pastoralism to sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Build a common African agenda to be presented at the UNCCD COP17 in Mongolia, showcasing locally grounded strategies and innovations by pastoralists.



Expected Outcomes:

- a) **Harmonized Voices:** Consolidated and unified messages from African pastoralists on the value and challenges of rangeland management.
- b) **Knowledge Documentation:** Collection of compelling stories and case studies on pastoralist resilience, environmental stewardship, and contributions to local and national economies.
- c) **Policy Advocacy:** Development of common policy positions for national, regional, and international platforms, including IYRP 2026 and UNCCD COP17, with a focus on climate adaptation, drought resilience, and biodiversity conservation.
- d) **Visibility and Recognition:** Showcasing pastoralism as a cultural identity, livelihood system, and biodiversity conservation model rooted in indigenous knowledge.
- e) **Inclusive Representation:** Highlighting the specific roles of women, youth, elders, and PWDs in sustaining pastoral livelihoods and shaping future strategies.
- f) **Strengthened Networks:** Enhanced collaboration among pastoralist organizations, governments, and development partners towards shared advocacy and action, particularly to address the climate emergency and its impacts, such as drought.

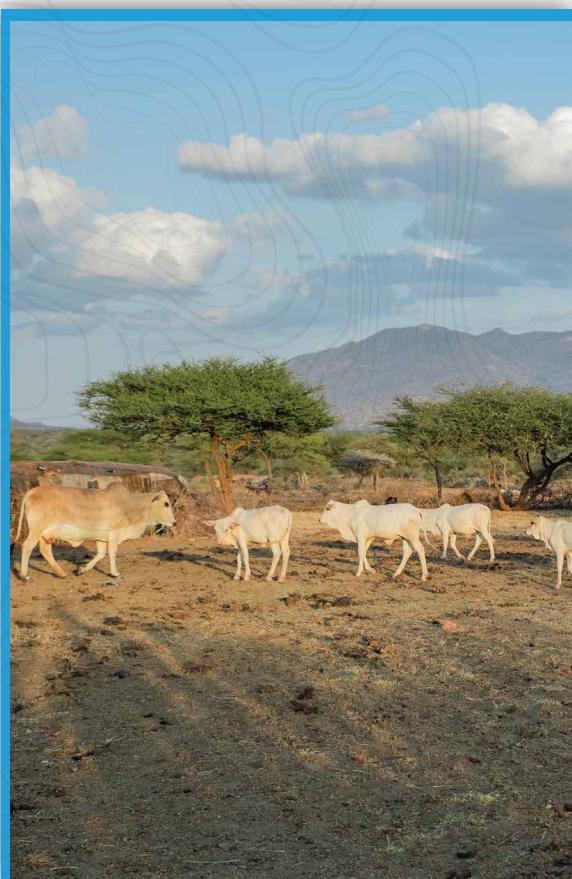
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Pastoralists are severely threatened by land grabs, insecure tenure, extractive industries, and expansion for critical minerals, which undermine their livelihoods.

Event Delivery Approach:

As an initial step to organize and strengthen pastoralist participation and contribution to IYRP 2026 and COP17, the Association des Femmes Peules Autochtones du Tchad (AFPAT), IMPACT, NDMA and the State Department for ASALS and Regional Development will convene a regional meeting of key pastoralist organizations and stakeholders from across Africa.

- The meeting will be held in Nairobi, Kenya 25th Arrival (conference setting-Dates between 26 and 27th January 2026).
- The field visit will be one day - 28th January 2026 - of field visits to Indigenous pastoral communities in Suswa, Narok County, fostering peer learning and community grounded dialogue.
- 2 days of meetings and 1 days of field visits, excluding travel days (total 5 days).
- Departures will be on 29th January 2026.

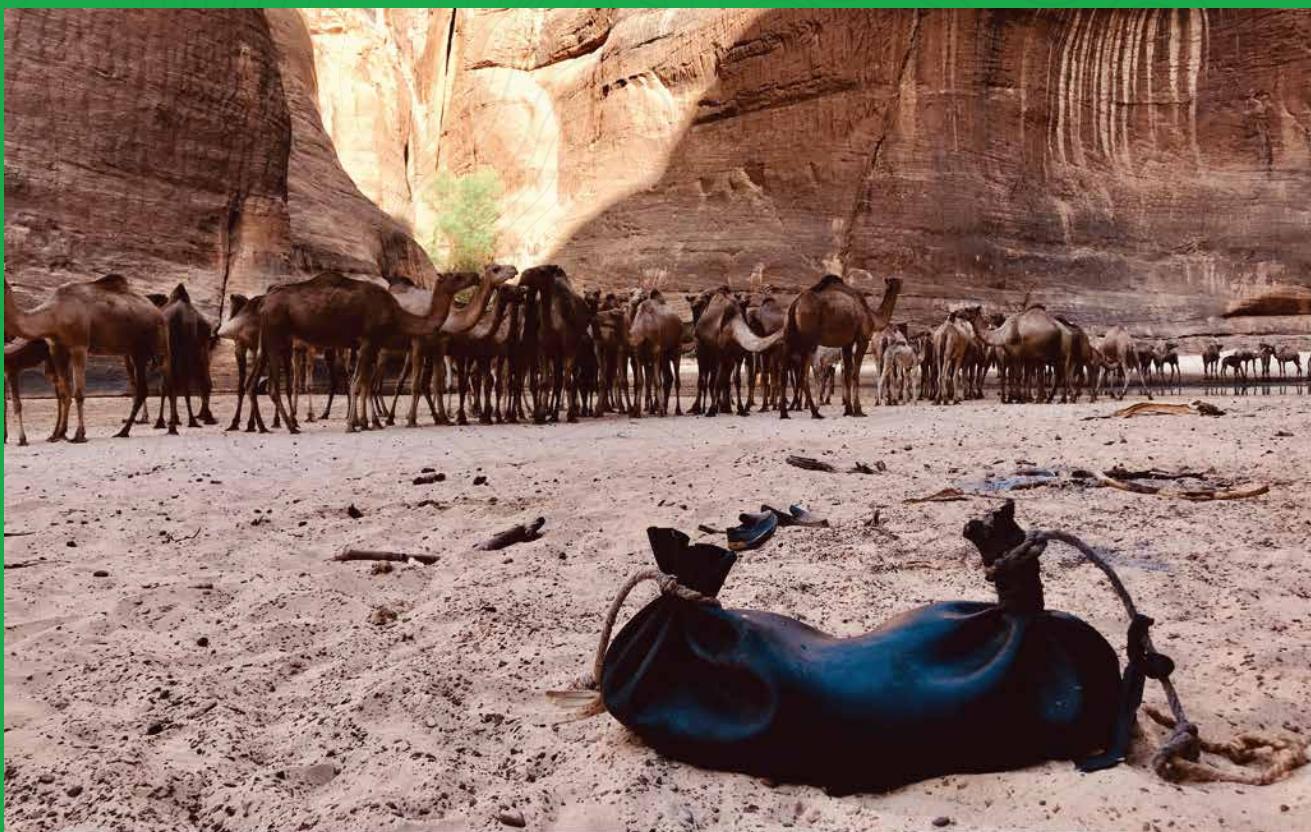


Participants:

Approximately 100 participants representing all African regions:



- 30 women and youth representatives, 30 male leaders, 30 youth delegates, and 10 representatives from government and partner agencies;
- Inclusive participation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs);
- Pastoralist-led NGOs and CSOs advocating for rights, livelihoods, and rangeland management.





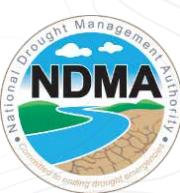


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