



WORLD ALLIANCE
OF NOMADIC PEOPLES



editorial

introducing the message of pastoralist communities, a voice from the land

More than half of the Earth's surface is made up of grasslands and rangelands. For thousands of years pastoralist communities have domesticated animals and managed ecosystems in a sustainable way, producing a diversity of cultures and food systems that are adapted and resilient. Associated biodiversity has always co-existed with pastoralism.

Pastoralism is based on the extensive use of territory, sometimes grasslands but also forests or cropland after harvests, marginal lands and other spaces that very often are not suitable for agriculture. Pastoralism is practised by between 200 and 500 million people worldwide in highly variable environments in nearly every country of the world from the drylands of sub-Saharan Africa to the Arctic Circle.

Our way of life has existed since time immemorial, evolving together with the landscape. But today pastoralism is threatened as never before by the forced industrialization of livestock farming. We have to stop the loss of grazing land, "land grabbing" and the restrictions on mobility that make it impossible to maintain a viable pastoralist system. Currently we are defining a possible campaign on Pastoralists Rights. Our identity and culture is being eroded as policies fail to sufficiently include, understand or even recognize the existence of pastoralism. Low economic returns and a lack of recognition mean that young pastoralists in some areas feel forced to leave our way of life or switch to more intensive forms of farming. We are promoting a Youth Section of WAMIP, as for young people it is often difficult to gain access to land.

Policy decisions are made with little or no consultation with local communities. We are the traditional land users but we are systematically excluded from decisions on land management, including the reintroduction or management

of wild predators or the designation of Nature Conservation areas. Bureaucratic requirements, biased towards intensive livestock production, impose a huge and unrealistic burden of paperwork on pastoralists.

But all across Europe and the world, we are getting organized into federations, building regional networks and gaining international recognition from leading institutions. We strive to defend the interests of local producers and to increase our political representation. We are creating research centres, teaming up with scientific institutions, training our young people and building our capacity.

WAMIP is an alliance of pastoralist communities and mobile indigenous peoples throughout the world and our common space to preserve our forms of life in pursuit of our livelihoods and cultural identity, to sustainably manage common property resources, and to obtain full respect of our rights. As an independent grassroot movement we work together with other civil society organisations to influence policy makers at national, regional and international level, and supranational bodies such as the UN and subsidiary organisations like FAO, CBD etc.

We fight these trends and maintain our way of life by continuously innovating and improving. We use local breeds to adapt to a changing environment. We try to raise awareness among consumers and to sell directly to them. We are using new media to promote our cultural traditions and organize festive events. Some of us have negotiated contracts to prevent fires, maintain heritage landscapes and provide other environmental services. We are ambassadors of local cultural heritage, sustainable productions and for Food Sovereignty.

European Shepherds Network

in the spotlight 1

Digitization, agribusiness and the pastoralist movement

One of the main effects of globalization is the loss of local, regional and national control over economic and political decision-making, a power that has shifted into the hands of globalized actors. At the same time, we are witnessing how global financial capital is becoming increasingly hidden and clandestine. Within this same globalization dynamic, factors affecting food systems, such as land management, price regulation or phytosanitary regulations, are increasingly being determined by international actors. This process of the displacement of sovereign power has many effects on large-scale livestock farming and pastoralism.

Extractivist projects, land privatization, or the demarcation of protected natural areas to the exclusion of local communities, are some of the main problems for small-scale food producers as they dispossess them of their lands.

At the same time, there is a push on the part of the markets to generate economies of scale: macro-farms with thousands of individual animals, and a high concentration in the food chain of pig and poultry farming. This model of livestock farming exploits people, animals and the environment, transforming the work of caring for livestock on a small scale, under industrial logic. Robotization is advancing by leaps and bounds: milking machines, feeding machines, barn cleaning machines..., all to increase the volume of production, while the prices of products such as milk or lamb are increasingly lower and inputs such as feed are rising. This imposition of "growth or die" capitalism is destroying the dairy sector and family livestock farming, and only a few can survive. Organizations such as the World Economic Forum (WEF) or the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, which represent corporate interests, are increasingly strong in the UN. This means that we are facing a scenario where global public governance is being privatized. Proof of this is how the WEF has

influenced the UN as the official sponsor of the UN Food Systems Summit, or UNFSS, which has been rejected and boycotted by the food sovereignty movement.

In addition, this excessive power that financial capital exercises over the real economy is deepening with digitization. In the food sector, digitization is having an impact on land management and natural resource management. Geo-stationary satellites are playing an increasingly important role in decision making. The new CAP Eco-Schemes will require each herd to have GPS tracking on 30% of the animals. Previously, the EU also wanted to impose identification chips for each animal. These processes have a whole series of negative consequences for organizations linked to sovereignty, as they exclude them from decision-making. Territorial management issues are digitized while, in rural areas, connectivity is very precarious. The implications of this change in the technological matrix are compounded by the digital divide and financing problems.

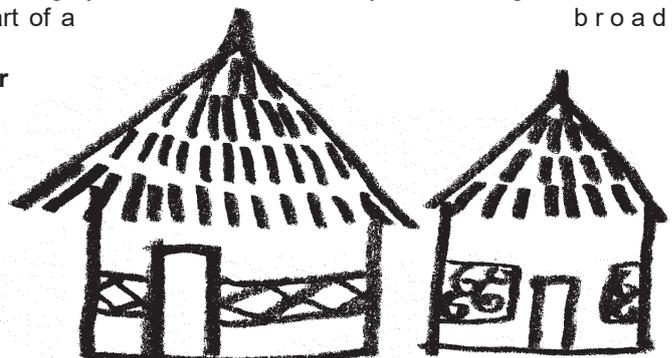
The very governance of digitization is private, there is no body dedicated to regulate this new field of dispute. The food sovereignty movement is creating alliances with movements working on the technological issue, since in the present and near future, this is one of the fields where we have to assert our rights and our sovereignty. Undoubtedly, many mechanisms and structures of democratization are still missing. We are fighting for an international public technological structure.

It is not enough to exercise sovereignty at the local or national level - we must organize ourselves to act globally as well, with a political strategy that seeks participation in international public institutions in order to democratize these spaces and be able to influence them. This process would make it possible to confront the challenges of globalization and the unbridled accumulation of wealth.

who we are

In the last years hundreds of organisations and movements have been engaged in struggles, activities, and various kinds of work to defend and promote the right of people to Food Sovereignty around the world. Many of these organisations were present in the *International Nyéléni Forum 2007* and feel part of a **Food Sovereignty Movement**, that considers the Nyéléni 2007 declaration as its political platform. **The Nyéléni Newsletter is the voice of this international movement.**

Organisations involved: AFSA, FIAN, Focus on the Global South, Food First, Friends of the Earth International, GRAIN, Grassroots International, IPC for Food Sovereignty, La Via Campesina, Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres, Real World Radio, The World Forum Of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers, TNI, VSF Justicia Alimentaria Global, WAMIP, WhyHunger, World Forum of Fisher People.



Environmentalism and pastoralism, an apparent opposition

In September of this year, the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Congress, a powerful organization that brings together the main environmental conservation NGOs, was held in Marseilles. That same month, indigenous people and producers from different parts of the world met under the slogan "Our land, our nature, for the decolonization of nature conservation", representing an alternative reinterpretation of how and by whom the stewardship of the environment is carried out. IUCN has not been free from scrutiny. As have organizations central to it, such as WWF or the Sierra Club, which have been accused of abusive practices towards indigenous peoples, and of racism.

A few years ago, WAMIP denounced how a report by the IUCN itself on measures to "protect nature" in the Ngorongoro region (Tanzania), advised "to remove pastoralist communities from the area". In a few days the army violently evicted thousands of people from the environment they have grazed for millennia, to make way for new hotels and tourist safaris. The conservation model with the most economic power that dominates the collective imagination is fortress conservation. This model is based on the erroneous and racist belief that the best way to protect biodiversity is through the creation of protected areas where human influence is suppressed. Its philosophy is that indigenous populations worsen biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, despite the lack of scientific and historical evidence and ample evidence to the contrary¹.

This model is defended by some international and transnational NGOs such as WWF, WCS or African Parks, is spreading worldwide, and underpins the argument for the creation of natural parks without taking into account the knowledge and experience of pastoralists and rural citizens.

The origins of the fortress conservation model are colonial and racist. Since 1970, more than 1900 parks or protected areas have been created, most of which are in the global south. Currently, summits such as the IUCN Congress are promoting the so-called 30x30 - a plan to convert 30% of the planet into Protected Areas.

From a critical position within environmentalism, we denounce and actively fight against these false measures that, far from presenting solutions to the current situation of climate and social urgency, reproduce the interests of the prevailing economic system, based on the exploitation of finite resources of a planet that has long since collapsed, which, as scientific evidence and human experience show, is not only unsustainable but also directly responsible for climate chaos and the resulting social injustice.

The only sustainable, just and real solutions do not give in to capitalist, colonial and racist interests. The real solutions to climate chaos depend on humanity, on our characteristic diversity and particularly on indigenous peoples and other local communities and their right to land; given that it is diverse indigenous peoples who protect 80% of the most biodiverse areas of the planet in their lands.

We need a model of nature conservation that puts care, diversity and human rights at the center, and confronts the real causes of climate chaos: overconsumption and exploitation of resources led by the global north and its industry.

1 - <https://www.survival.es/conservacion>

box 1

Shepherds for climate: Is animal husbandry always harmful to the planet?

The annual report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Livestock, oil and gas drilling, fracking, landfills, etc. are major sources of methane emissions according to the IPCC. But in the public/media/political debate, we must differentiate between the various sources to achieve a more informed and fairer debate on the necessary climate action. That is why WAMIP has conducted a scientific study together with the international team of PASTRES researchers and published the report "*Is livestock farming always harmful to the planet?*"

Not all greenhouse gases are the same. While methane has a short-lived warming effect, CO₂ remains forever. In addition, emissions from livestock systems are widely varied and we must differentiate between intensive and extensive systems. Mobile pastoral and extensive livestock systems can be in CO₂ emissions balance, and their methane emissions are not additional as they have levels similar to those of the wildlife systems they replace. However, intensive livestock farming is a polluter of CO₂ and methane and therefore, we from the pastoralist movement are in favor of its dismantling and penalization.

It is essential to reduce greenhouse gases, but not all sources are equal: grazing, industrial livestock farming or fracking are not the same. Extensive livestock systems support large numbers of people, provide high quality animal products, and can be beneficial to the climate (improving soil fertility or preventing fires).

Therefore, we support emission reductions while addressing Climate Justice issues and recognize pastoralism and extensive livestock farming not as part of the problem of climate change, but as part of the solution².

1 - The report is available at: <https://wamipglobal.com/2021/09/26/pastoralist-movements-takes-part-in-the-report-are-livestock-bad-for-the-planet/>

2 - WAMIP brought an international delegation of nomads to Glasgow to participate in the official COP26 negotiations as well as the protests, including a sheep demonstration, and issuing a press release.

box 2

Reinventing an ancestral way of life: Shepherd schools

Faced with the threat of the disappearance of shepherding in the mountain areas of Spain, the non-profit organization Campo Adentro-INLAND initiated a system of theoretical and practical training in 2004, aimed at both young people interested in shepherding and active shepherds, enabling the integration of new shepherds and ensuring generational replacement. Hundreds of people have been trained with about 70 applicants each year.

On the one hand, the school trains people to start their own livestock project with agroecological orientation, and to develop their activity with new approaches to economic viability and added value to the product.

Likewise, people who have followed this training will be equipped with the necessary knowledge to work as salaried workers in those livestock farms that require workers, or for the execution of environmental services such as firebreak maintenance.

On the other hand, courses have been offered to active shepherds to improve their cheese making skills or other things that are in demand, as well as training and exchange trips.

The theoretical module is followed by a practical portion of work with the herd-school of Campo Adentro INLAND, which has a branch in the mountains of Madrid and one in the north of the peninsula. Recently, a Junior Shepherd School for children has been established, and also a system of free training scholarships for undocumented migrants interested in this way of life.

Once the students finish the theory and practice, they have to deliver an operational project, which has been tutored throughout the course.

At this point, the School provides the graduate student with support and guidance in the procedures and possible access to land. It is important to take an active role in the incorporation of the student, promoting land stewardship schemes among the different producers with whom they have been in contact, formulas for the transfer of ownership under leases, etc. in cases of early retirement, transfer, social economy formulas, cooperativism, etc.

voices from the field

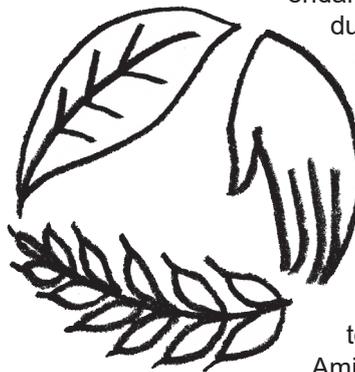
1 Life of pastoralist in India during the COVID19 lockdown

Anu Verma, South Asia Pastoralist Alliance & MARAG, India - WAMIP South Asia

India has 34 million pastoralists managing a livestock population of more than 50 million. Livestock rearing is the second largest occupation in India after agriculture, making a significant contribution of about 8.5 to 9 per cent to the country's GDP.

Its contribution is vital, as pastoralism is the most important means of support for landless pastoralists as well as marginal and small farmers, especially those living in drought-prone, hilly areas where crop production is not assured. It contributes significantly to the livelihood and wealth of communities in terms of milk, wool and meat with no market-based inputs.

Traditional pastoral institutions today are increasingly endangered by mass displacement due to intense competition from agriculture, population growth, herd dispossession and drought. While lockdowns (due to Covid-19) have impacted people from all walks of life, the impact has also been differential.



Pastoralists around the country have a hostile policing system to brave, including forest guards. Amidst the outbreak, the regulation and control over their movement has escalated during the most crucial time, i.e., their move towards the summer pastures.

While some state governments exempted their movement, like the transport of essential commodities, the shepherds who had gone to their farms were stuck and unable to join their flocks back. "We are unable to freely move with our herds for grazing since villagers are afraid that we are carriers of coronavirus," said Sumer Singh Bhatti, who owns about 200 camels that feed in dry and desert areas of Rajasthan. "We were sometimes even prevented from going to the village shops to buy food rations. This coronavirus scare has broken the back of camel herders. With summer heat pastoralists will miss opportunities to get green grass as fodder." said Mool Singh, a pastoralist from Nakarsar village in Rajasthan's Bikaner district, who migrates in March every year to Punjab for his herd to graze on wheat waste.

**one does not sell
the earth upon which
the people walk**

Tashunka Witko, 1840 –1877

voices from the field

2 Towards a network of shepherds in North America

A vision from the Sierra Tarahumara Project "De la Oveja a la Cobija" and Red del Desierto, Campo Adentro, F. Marso

Life in the Raramuri (Tarahumara) communities, in Sierra Madre Occidental, Chihuahua, Mexico, is based on subsistence farming and ranching. The Rarámuri people, some 50,000 strong, survived colonialism in part because they are located in remote areas of the Sierra. The practice is closely linked to ceremonies and festivities and is developed under a work organization scheme based on natural cycles called Mawechi. Due to the irregular orography, with large ravines and very poor soils, goat and sheep ranching predominates in the area. The processes of social fragmentation caused by extractive and tourist exploitation projects, as well as the generalized insecurity due to the presence of drug trafficking mafias, have caused this practice to diminish in the area.

Recently, there has been renewed attention and enthusiasm among young Rarámuri, mostly women, to continue caring for goats and sheep, based on extensive management that makes use of scarce and scattered pastures, where cattle cannot sustain themselves, and in rotation with the cornfield, taking advantage of its stubble field and manure as fertilizer. In exchange, they obtain meat, milk, leather and wool, and the adult animals are a kind of "piggy bank" that can be capitalized for emergencies.

An association of shepherds and weavers has been formed in this area, grouping 30 Rarámuri women, led by shepherdess Agripina Viniegra, who are responsible for the care of sheep and their productive exploitation, mainly for the creation of wool textiles. Likewise, the young Association of Raramuri Sheep Breeders is approaching shepherds from communities in the states of Nuevo León, Coahuila and San Luis Potosí, proposing the idea of Red del Desierto. They are also making contact with the Navajo people of the Southwest USA to reactivate the North American Region of WAMIP.

3 Climate change and mining industry threatening Mongolia's nomadic herders with extinction

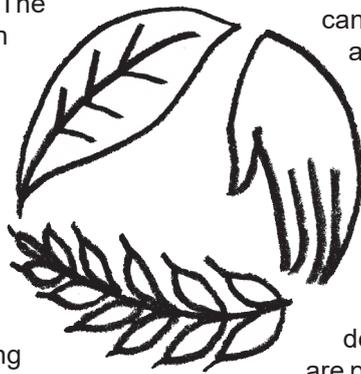
Maamankhuu Sodnom, Mongolian Pastoralist Association, Mongolia

Mongolia covers an area of 1.564.116 km² with a population of 3.4 million people, of which 30% practice pastoralism. Mongolian pastoralists keep mostly sheep, camels, goats, cattle (including yaks) and horses. Seventy percent of Mongolian land is used for pastoralist purposes, most of this territory being barren, semi-arid steppes and deserts. Nowadays, many of these nomadic people are moving to cities as a result of a combination of factors, climate change amongst them.

The climate in Mongolia can be extremely harsh even under normal conditions. There are 4 seasons; Winter is extremely cold and the temperature often goes down to -45oC and summer can be as hot as 45oC. Our spring is always windy and dust storms are the norm. In the last thirty years the Gobi Desert in Southern Mongolia hasn't seen much precipitation during the summertime, which considerably exacerbated the aridity and adversely affected the activity of animal husbandry.

Previously unseen levels of snow in the winter and sandstorms in the spring helped aggravate the pre-existing predicament, leading to the acceleration of desertification in the entirety of the region. Mongolians are proud of their pastoral culture and their ability to subsist on their livestock even under extremely difficult environmental conditions, however, these days nomadic herders are being threatened by extinction.

The second major factor that threatens the survival of their lifestyle is the mining industry, which has grown substantially in the last 20 years. There are fourteen licensed mining companies in my province alone, Tavan Tolgoi and Oyu Tolgoi being the largest. Oyu Tolgoi is a copper and gold mining company which has been using huge amounts of water from already depleted underground sources. There are no rivers or lakes in the Gobi Desert, forcing pastoralists to dig wells in order to tap into the underground water supply. Many of these wells have already completely dried up, mainly because Oyu Tolgoi uses 950 liters of water per second. The once semiarid region is being turned into a desert at an alarming pace. The Tavan Tolgoi coal mining company exploits and exports coal to China on unpaved dirt roads, further bringing wanton destruction to pastoralists' lands. Mongolian pastoralists have begun protests, but they lack the resources, organization, and power to effect any meaningful changes as the bulk of the Mongolian economy is dependent on the export of copper and coal to China. Nowadays, we are fighting an uphill battle to save our rangeland.



Gender and pastoralism

In 2010, WAMIP called for a Global Gathering of Women Pastoralists, in Mera (Gujarat), India bringing together over 100 women from herding communities scattered across 32 different countries to discuss the myriad of problems faced by nomadic and semi-nomadic women pastoralists worldwide, and how, united, they can strive to solve them. Participants at the Gathering identified key issues, including markets, rules and rights, environment, social movement, education, and health, as well as a number of priorities for action, such as representation, communication and networking, education and capacity building, and advocacy. They also selected representatives to draft the Mera Declaration to inform and support the development of pastoralist policies, and also to demonstrate commitment to environmental sustainability and protection of biodiversity and common resources for future generations.

Since then, progress has been made in linking the struggles of pastoralist women within the framework of the demands of the feminist movement. The extensive livestock and pastoralist women claim our value both within the sector and in society, fighting to exercise our way of life without inequalities, and constitute a network of mutual support as a space for resistance and awareness-raising. The health and social crisis caused by the pandemic brought ongoing reflections on care and essential work. Now it is even more necessary to recognize the activity of shepherdesses and livestock breeders who, from their territories, maintain life and highlight the great potential and enormous capacity of women's networks to face adversities. We need to show the work of these women in caring for and reproducing the basis of life, from the countryside and for society.

Female livestock breeders and pastoralists are defending sorority, demanding the abolition of all inequalities suffered by those who feel themselves to be women in a patriarchal and capitalist context. They defend the right not to be violated, assaulted, raped, murdered; to equal pay, in decision-making, in access to land, in the distribution of care; to decide on their way of life, sexuality and reproduction, whatever their age, origin or citizenship; and to exercise and be considered valid as farmers and herders, and not mere "companions" or "helpers" of the men with whom they work.

We demand a liveable rural environment, with basic services guaranteed for all: health, education, public transportation, culture, care for dependent persons, access to land, decent housing and accessible services for the prevention of gender-based violence.

As pastoralist women, we demand an environmentalism

that considers us as active elements in the region, allies of biodiversity and guarantors of natural environments. Extensive livestock farming is essential for the maintenance of ecosystems, forest maintenance, fire prevention and improvement of pastures, as well as for the struggle for food sovereignty. All this from a feminist way of working, putting the welfare of our herds and the territory we inhabit ahead of economic results, focusing the way we treat them from the care and respect for their needs, a relationship of care that extends to the people we feed with the meat, milk or dairy products we produce.

In a capitalist and ultraliberal framework, we are led to believe that it is no longer necessary to claim our rights, that the rural world is a consumer good, and that work in the rural environment and how it is approached, such as extensive livestock and pastoralism, is not productive and has no future. Rural women are the present, and they will be the future. They will become stronger and stronger. We women are and will be the front line.

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voices from the field

4 The future of peaceful transhumance in West Africa

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, coordinator of the Peul Indigenous Women and Peoples Association of Chad and a member of the executive committee of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC) - WAMIP Central Africa

As nomads are difficult to control, it doesn't help governments. Several states have made the decision to focus more on agriculture at the expense of nomadic livestock. Yet in the Sahel, livestock accounts for more than 40% of the GDP of all Sahelian countries and in Chad, more than 20%.

Firstly, communities such as the Fulani, Arabs or Tuaregs, were not fully taken into consideration after colonisation, as they have a lifestyle far from the development imaginary that the state had thought to implement. This is why most nomads have no access to education, health care or drinking water,....

Nevertheless, in Sahelian ecosystems, the uncertainty over fodder resources requires herders to use special breeding techniques to preserve their production capital: livestock and ecosystems. Indeed, pastoralism relies on the great ability of herders to make the most of spontaneous fodder resources scattered in heterogeneous environments.

Governments need to change the way they view nomads and their environmental value. Most livestock species provide multiple services such as protein-rich food, manure and energy. Without livestock we could not alleviate food insecurity. In all our homes, we eat meat and milk acts as a food supplement, herders exchange livestock for millet with farmers, and all of this drives the circular economy in the communities. Herders are not a problem, they are a solution, and they are the past, present and future.

box 4

WAMIP on the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP)

A few years ago, some entities working on grassland ecology (such as the University of Arizona, ILRI, etc.) launched the idea of campaigning for a declaration of a UN Year on Rangelands. More organisations adhered and it was proposed the year should also include the recognition of pastoralists as custodians of rangelands. This year, 38 countries and 300 organisations are supporting the IYRP. The Mongolian Government presented the request for an IYRP designation at an open session of the October 2018 COAG meeting of FAO in Rome and the proposal was approved without reservations. The proposal has since also been approved by the FAO Council and FAO Conference. A final vote will be held at the UN General Assembly in Fall 2021.

As grassroot organisations composing the global alliance of WAMIP, we express our support to the initiative calling for an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), as stated in the letter addressed to the Government of Mongolia.

Since its inception within various networks, mainly composed by grassland and rangelands researchers and environmental entities, we welcomed the incorporation of the crucial element of the pastoralist peoples as the most affected by the policies governing rangelands and effective caretakers of them for millennia.

We have witnessed how this call has gathered enormous support from a wide range of organisations, as we can see in the growing number of members joining the RISG globally and in the defined regions. For a good progression of this endeavour, it would be important to make sure that an open definition of what is considered as rangelands is included in all materials and declarations: not only grasslands, but also forests, and crop lands after harvesting. As important as the rangelands definition so is the connectivity amongst them: sheep trails and cattle droves and effective mobility rights are crucial to ensure rangelands' sustainable use.

On the governance of the IYRP process, we would like to open a process and specific working group to look at how the RISG are being constituted and operate in each region, in consideration of existing pastoralist networks and their recognition and centrality in the process. It is important to ensure pastoralists positions chairing and co-chairing each regional RISG, to be determined in agreement with WAMIP. For example, a process of previous consultation and agreement with pastoralist representatives in any decision or step regarding the IYRP.

When the IYRP is approved, there will be a need to implement actions surrounding it from now until 2026, actions that should be agreed and based on the pastoralist movement's concerns and priorities, as, at this moment, the empowerment of the management capacities of pastoralist coordination at regional level is crucial.