GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR RANGELANDS & PASTORALISTS

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS 2026



Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women Summary Report

The Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women

26–29 May 2026, Kathmandu, Nepal

Kathmandu

May 26-29, 2026

Contents

Dedication to Honour and Remember Lina Alejandra Rodríguez Castillo 4

Acknowledgements 5

Executive Summary 9

1. Introduction 15

1.1 Goals and Objectives of the Global Gathering 15

1.2 Participants and Host 16

2. Process Leading up to the Gathering 17

2.1 Lessons for Future Gatherings 18

3. Summary of Activities During the Global Gathering 19

3.1 Community-Building and Sharing 19

3.1.1 Cultural Exchange 20

3.2 Building on the MERA Declaration and Highlights from Regional and National Gatherings 22

3.3 Thematic Discussions 24

3.3.1 Political Representation & Participation of Pastoralist Women 24

3.3.2 Visibility, Recognition and Rights of Pastoralist Women 25

3.3.3 Health, Education and Social Support 26

3.3.4 Environment, natural resources and climate change 27

3.3.5 Traditional knowledge and cultural continuity, including youth engagement 27

3.3.6 Access to infrastructure and new technologies 28

3.3.7 Economy, livelihoods and working conditions 29

3.4 Parallel sessions 30

3.4.1 Traditional Knowledge and Food Culture: Insights from Reindeer Herding and Pastoralist Food Systems 30

3.4.2 Land and Mobility Rights 32

3.4.3 Pastoralist Women's Networks-Lessons on Forming & Sustaining Networks 33

3.4.4 FAO-led Panel: Youth, Women and the Future of Pastoralism 35

3.4.5 Climate Change 37

3.4.6 Roles & Recognition of Pastoralist Women 38

3.4.7 Pastoralist Women as Land Stewards 40

3.4.8 Pastoralist Women Entrepreneurs 42

3.4.9 Pastoralist Women as Researchers 44

3.5 Concurrent Working Groups 46

3.5.1 Drafting a Global Declaration for Pastoralist Women 46

3.5.2 Outlining a Strategy for getting key messages to global decision-makers 48

3.5.3 Designing a Global Network of Pastoralist Women 49

4. Outcomes and Final Products: Declaration, Strategy & Global Network 54

4.1 Kathmandu Declaration of Pastoralist Women 55

4.2 Strategy Plan 66

4.2.1 Strategy Framework, Communication Plan and Implementation Strategy 66

4.2.2 Comprehensive Communication Strategy 68

4.2.3 Rapid Communications Action Plan 68

4.2.4 Rapid Communications — Specific Tasks 69

4.2.5 Next Steps Identified 69

4.2.6 Summary and Conclusions 70

4.2.7 Next Steps 71

4.3 Plan for the Global Network of Pastoralist Women 72

4.3.1 Initial Agreements on a Global Network of Pastoralist Women 72

4.3.2 Potential Activities 73

4.3.3 Membership 74

4.3.4 Structure and Governance 74

4.3.5 Next Steps 75

5. Recommendations for Policy, Practice and Knowledge Creation 75

Closing Poem 78

Me, a yak herder - by Ang Furba Sherpa (Nepal)

6. Appendices 79

6.1 Agenda: Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women Programme 79

6.2 List of Pastoral Women Participants to the Global Gathering 82

6.3 List of Support People to the Global Gathering 84

Suggested citation: *Bunce, B., Baral, N., Chaudhary, T., Dhungel, U., Dorji, T., Fernández-Giménez, M., Gerasimova, A., Ghotge, N., Huber-Sannwald, E., Jimale, B., Joshi, S., Noor, F., Ongesa, L., Quiroga Mendiola, M., Semeyan Lenantoiye, H., Timilsina, R., Turiño, M. and Ulambayar, T. (2026). Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women: Summary Report. Pastoralism and Gender Working Group, Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists.*

Photo Credits: *Jitendra Raj Bajracharya/ICIMOD, Brittany Bunce*

Layout: *Anuja Walimbe*

Dedication

to Honour and Remember Lina Alejandra Rodríguez Castillo

- By María Guadalupe Molina Siller- Mujeres Ganaderas de México (MUGAM)



“Today I would like to ask us to pause from the heart. Because before being producers, leaders, pastoralists, mothers, daughters, or women of the countryside... we are human beings. And as women, we all know, in some way, the fear, the silence, the injustice, or the wound that violence leaves behind.

Today we raise our voices for those women who have suffered any form of gender-based violence. For those who have been hurt physically, emotionally, or psychologically. For those who have lived in silence. For those who are still seeking justice. And also... for those who are no longer with us.

Every woman who lost her life because of violence leaves an emptiness that is impossible to fill. She leaves unfinished dreams. Broken families. Children, mothers, and communities marked forever. And we cannot allow their stories to become only numbers.

We must remember them with dignity. With respect. And with the deep commitment to building a society where no woman has to live in fear.

As pastoralists, rural, livestock-keeping, and working women, we know what it means to resist. But we also know that resisting is not enough. We need to accompany one another. To listen to one another. To care for one another. Because when one woman is subjected to violence, it hurts us all. And when one woman rises, we all move forward too.

Today we honour the memory of those who left too soon. And we embrace, from the heart, those who are still fighting to heal.

I ask everyone present to please stand. Let us observe one minute of silence in memory of all the women who have lost their lives because of gender-based violence. May their memory compel us not to be indifferent. May their remembrance unite us. And may we never stop working for a safer, fairer, and more humane world for all women”.

Acknowledgements

The Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women was made possible through the commitment, care and collective efforts of many people and organisations. Those acknowledged here represent only part of the wider community who worked tirelessly to make the Gathering possible.

Pastoralist Women Delegates

Firstly, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to all the pastoralist women who travelled long distances to take part in the Gathering and who brought such remarkable energy, courage, solidarity, wisdom and spirit to the event. Making the journey to Kathmandu meant leaving behind homes, herds, children, families and vital responsibilities within their communities, and required considerable personal sacrifice and the overcoming of many practical and personal challenges. We also recognise and thank the families, community members and wider support systems who stepped in to take on these responsibilities in their absence and helped make their participation possible. Moreover, we thank all the delegates for the time, care and dedication they have contributed to documenting the Gathering and shaping its outcomes. Their continued engagement has been essential to ensuring that the resulting reports, videos, Kathmandu Declaration, strategy, global network design, and other materials reflect pastoralist women’s voices, experiences and priorities, and remain accountable to the women whose knowledge and contributions made the Gathering possible.

Sponsors and Supporters: We are grateful to our sponsors and supporters who generously contributed both staff time and financial donations that made it possible for 81 pastoralist women from 38 countries to gather in Kathmandu. Thank you to the following organisations (see image with logos).



Individual Donors: We sincerely thank the individuals who donated through the ActionAid campaigns: Susan Marshall, John Calderazzo, Jill Baron, Nicholas Ourusoff, Schwab Charitable (Anonymous Donor), Maria del Mar Lopez Cabrales, Amy Ganguli, Cliff Montagne, Linda Joyce and Michael Ryan, Ryan Chaney, Marcie Cleaver, Connie Voisine, Mark Easter and

Leslie Brown, Brian Jones, Harkins Household, Nancy Stephens, Chris and Oyuna Finch, Louise Jennings, Richard Alper, Scott and Judy McNary, William and Elizabeth Patterson, Marla Painter, Henrietta Howe, Lloyd and Heather Miller, Joyce Ball, Annette Roberts-Gray, Eren K., Amy Bunce, Shaoliang Yi., Margareta L., Jinniu Wang., Zhu Ping., Marilyn F., Quimby Bunce, Vesselina and Rivak Bunce, Justin van Rooyen and Mitzi Bunce, Bella Bunce, Malani van Huyssteen, Shannon McKay, Gemma J., Karen Marie Oseland., Siyona Rijal., Milla Bunce, Ann Waters-Bayer, Nim D., and Tashi Dorji.

Programme Committee of Pastoralist Women & Gender Working Group: We are grateful to the Programme Committee, which worked for more than eight months to shape the agenda, participation and selection processes. Bringing together pastoralist women from across IYRP regions and members of the Gender and Pastoralism Working Group, the Committee helped ensure that the Gathering was developed by and for pastoralist women. We are also grateful to several members of the IYRP Pastoralism and Gender Working group- as well as other IYRP working groups- who supported the gathering in numerous ways.

The Programme Committee included: Djoudé Issa Demo (Bénin), Fozia Noor (Kenya), Laureen Ongesa (Kenya), Dintle Maphala (South Africa), Saoudata Aboubacrine (Burkina Faso), Imane Ghasala Mohamed (Burkina Faso), Hazidatou (Burkina Faso), Fadimata Wallet Abdallah (Burkina Faso), Daillo Kadiatou (Burkina Faso), Alena Gerasimova (Russia/Norway), Inger Anita Smuk (Sámi/Norway), Ariuntuya Damba (Mongolia), Tungalag Ulambayar (Mongolia), Ibolya Sáfiánné (Hungary), Ainhoa Lopez (Spain), Maria Turiño (Spain), Nisreen Lahham (Egypt), María Fernández-Giménez (USA), Kristen Kipp (USA, Blackfoot Nation), Amber Smith (USA), Maria Guadalupe Molina Siller (Mexico), Elisabeth Huber-Sannwald (Mexico), , Debbie Dowden (Australia), , Violeta Morales (Argentina), Mariana Quiroga Mendiola (Argentina), Lucía Ruiz (Argentina), Yulisa Espinosa (Peru), Dina Farfan Flores (Peru), Luisa Quispe Masa (Peru), Cecilia Turin (Peru), Reem Alzorquan (Jordan), Bhavana Desai (India), Nitya Ghotge (India), Ang Furwa Sherpa (Nepal), Sangmo Lama (Nepal), and Srijana Joshi (Nepal).

Planning Committee: Our sincere thanks to the Planning Committee — Srijana Joshi (Nepal), Tashi Dorji (Nepal), Nitya Ghotge (India), María Fernández-Giménez (USA), and Brittany Bunce (South Africa) — who coordinated the planning



and delivery of the Gathering, including fundraising, informative webinars, communications and visibility, oversaw delegate applications and communications, translation and interpretation arrangements, and many other practical and strategic aspects of the event. We are also grateful to Poonam Bista, from FAO (Nepal), for her support of the committee's activities. Working closely with the Programme Committee, the Planning Committee helped keep the process grounded in pastoralist women's voices and priorities and continue to support follow-up processes.

ICIMOD, Host Organisation: We are especially grateful to ICIMOD for hosting the Gathering with such warmth, care and professionalism. Srijana Joshi, as Project Manager, and Tashi Dorji worked closely with the Planning Committee, with dedicated support from colleagues in the Resilient Landscapes and Rangelands Team: Srijana Joshi, Tashi Dorji, Bandana Shakya, Ramesh Timilsina, Indu Chitrakar, Shaoliang Yi, Upama Koju, and Rekha Rasaily. We also gratefully acknowledge Jitendra Bajracharya, Neraz Tuladhar, Samuel Thomas, Shiba Satyal Banskota, Anshu Pandey, Saisab Pradhan, Ujjwal Bajracharya, Raman Shrestha, Anu Joshi Shrestha, Sarala Khaling, Shekhar Ghimire, Izabella Koziell, Pema Gyamtsho, Carron Bassuray, and the many other ICIMOD colleagues whose work and generous hospitality helped make the Gathering possible.

Facilitation and Documentation Team: We thank the Facilitation and Documentation Team for supporting a participatory, pastoralist-led process of dialogue, reflection and documentation. The Facilitation Team included Maria Turiño (Spain), Lead; Mariana Quiroga Mendiola (Argentina); Tungalag Ulambayar (Mongolia); and Bilach Jimale (Kenya). The Documentation Team included Brittany Bunce (South Africa), Lead; Nitya Ghotge (India); Laureen Ongesa (Kenya); María Fernández-Giménez (USA); and Elisabeth Huber-Sannwald (Mexico).

Interpretation and Language Support: We are grateful to the Eco Interpreters team, led by Renzo Lara Pérez, for providing simultaneous interpretation into English, French, Spanish and Mongolian; to the Acai Berry team for additional AI-supported interpretation; and to the translators and support people who travelled with delegates and helped women participate fully in the discussions.

Volunteer Team: We warmly thank the volunteers who welcomed delegates, supported documentation and coordination, and brought such caring and joyful energy to the Gathering: Uma Dhungel, Tulasa Chaudhary, and Nishan Baral from the Global Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies, Clara Luxardo from the Institute for Environmental Studies, Prajwal Koirala from FAO, Pragya Poudel and Manavi Neupane from Tribhuvan University, Nepal and Purnima Joshi from Institute of Forestry.

Video, Photography and Communications: We thank Asmita Shrish and her team for video documentation- in her documentary 'Women of the Pastures'- and ICIMOD's Communications Team for photography and communications support.





Photographs in this report were provided by Brittany Bunce, Jitendra Raj Bajracharya/ICIMOD and Mariana Quiroga Mendiola. The **video series** capturing pastoralist women's perspectives on the themes of the Gathering was edited by Brittany Bunce and collaboratively created with the women featured. Thank you to Samina Batool (Pakistan), Salamatu Umar Ardo (Nigeria), Arenda Saal (South Africa), Djoudé Issa Demo (Bénin), Maya Sherpa (Nepal), Byambagerel Baatar (Mongolia), Khandaa Byambaa (Mongolia), Fadimatou Balla (Cameroon), Judith Singibala (Tanzania), Fozia Noor (Kenya), Ibolya Sáfiánné (Hungary), Ainhoa Lopez (Spain), Debbie Dowden (Australia), Lucía Ruiz (Argentina), Blanca Patricia Trejo Ortega (Mexico), Maira Alejandra Quintero Brito (Colombia), Sara Esposito (Italy), Anna Sperling (Italy), Bilach Jimale (Kenya), Silvia Gobile (South Africa), Vasamalli Kurtaz (India), Hillary Semeyan Lenantoiye (Kenya), Karla Hicks (Canada), Martina Choquehuayta Cabana (Peru) and Paulina Ngurumwa (Tanzania). IYRP videos filmed at the Gathering in Nepal were produced by Brittany Bunce and Hillary Semeyan Lenantoiye. Graphic summaries for the Gathering and this report were created by Hillary Semeyan Lenantoiye.

Executive Summary

> *" I feel over the moon that I met pastoralists from around the world. I also saw their handicraft and intelligence. I feel that women pastoralists are not only caring for their animals, they also have different creativity. Global networks play vital roles to create good relationships between all the pastoralist women. It makes the whole world as one country, where we can easily talk to each other".*
> *(Maya Sherpa, Nepal)*

The Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women, held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 26–29 May 2026, brought together pastoralist women from diverse regions and pastoral systems around the world. Co-organised by the Working Group on Pastoralism and Gender (WGPG of the Global Alliance for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP)) and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the Gathering included 94 listed participants, of whom 81 were pastoralist women (37% of whom were youth) from 38 different countries, alongside facilitators, documenters, translators, volunteers and support people. It created a dedicated global space to recognize, celebrate and strengthen the role of pastoralist women as stewards of rangelands; to exchange experiences, knowledge, and solutions; foster solidarity and lasting connections; and to ensure that pastoralist women's voices and perspectives shape decision-making from the local to the global level.

> *"The Global Gathering transformed my voice into a collective force: the Kathmandu Declaration and the Global Network will lift pastoralist women from silence into the light, consecrating our role as builders of peace, guardians of resilience and bearers of a future that no one will now be able to ignore".*
> *(Djoudé Issa Demo, Benin)*

The Gathering was designed as a women pastoralist-led process. Some 30 pastoralist women- representing all regions- served on the Programme Committee and played a leading role in defining participation criteria, selecting delegates, identifying priorities and developing the programme. Nearly 400 applications were received through an application process available in nine languages. National and regional gatherings organized by leading women pastoralists, regional declarations and charters, discussions within the Programme Committee and consultations with delegates served to prioritize the themes addressed in Kathmandu.

“The Global Gathering of Women Pastoralists is vital for reindeer-herding women of Arctic and Sub-Arctic- It gives them space to share experiences, challenges and knowledge with others who also rely on animals and the land... reindeer herding women hold deep knowledge about nature, climate, culture but their voices are often overlooked”.
(Alena Gerasimova, Eastern Siberia)

During the Gathering, participants shared experiences, interests and needs and built strong connections, through cultural exchange and community-building exercises, thematic group discussions, presentations from pastoralist women on regional pastoralist women gatherings and their charters, and parallel sessions organized by women pastoralists on different topics of interest, before working collectively on three major outcomes: the Kathmandu Declaration, a Strategy Plan to disseminate the Declaration and the co-design of a Global Network of Pastoralist Women.

“The past four days have been really incredible, as well as unforgettable and I have learned a lot. Solidarity with the other pastoralist women from around the world was really great to experience. What I really loved was the push for the declaration to include women’s inheritance across the globe, and that was one of the key messages that echoed!”
(Fozia Noor, Kenya)

Across the discussions, women from diverse contrasting pastoral contexts identified shared interests and concerns. They agreed that pastoralist women’s labour, care work, knowledge, economic contributions, leadership and land stewardship remain poorly recognised and widely undervalued. Women continue to face exclusion from decision-making; unequal access to land rights, high quality grazing areas, finance, education, services, markets and technology; heavy care burdens; and risks of violence and backlash. Participants repeatedly stressed that pastoralist women should not be treated only as vulnerable groups or beneficiaries of projects, but recognised as rights-holders, decision-makers, economic actors, innovators, knowledge holders, researchers, stewards and leaders.

“This recognition- It has been very important for us as women ... I will have to work with the women of my area, of my reserve, so that they too know about this important meeting regarding the recognition of pastoralist women.”
(Martina Choquehuayta Cabana, Peru)

Secure rights to land, grazing and mobility emerged as a fundamental priority. Participants emphasised the need to ensure equal access and hereditary rights to land for women, protect communal tenure systems, customary rights, collective access to rangelands, grazing corridors and pastoral mobility,

while ensuring that women have meaningful and equitable rights and decision-making power within these systems. They also called for stronger protection against displacement and the loss or fragmentation of rangelands through competing land uses, extractive industries and investments, and for pastoralist communities- and particularly women- to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their territories and resources.

“This gathering not only shows our struggle but also our power. All over the world pastoralist women come together, share their stories, they heal... This is a rare event, where pastoralist women talk about their demands- this is very important! Instead of someone else talking on our behalf- it is good that we talk for us!”
(Bhavana Desai, India)

Climate change, drought, extreme weather, water insecurity, rangeland degradation, pollution, mining,some green energy investments and carbon offset projects in rangelands, and other forms of land-use change are placing growing pressure on pastoralist livelihoods. At the same time, the Gathering highlighted pastoralist women as central actors in climate adaptation, rangeland management, restoration and biodiversity conservation. Women hold detailed ecological knowledge of animals, plants, water, weather and landscapes and continually develop and implement locally grounded responses through sustainable grazing, rangeland restoration, environmental monitoring, livelihood diversification and collective organisation. Supporting women’s leadership, securing access to land and natural resources, protecting mobility, and directing responsible and inclusive climate and restoration funding towards pastoralist communities were therefore identified as high priority and essential to resilient rangelands.

“I consider this a truly historic and significant event for us women herders. I would also like to acknowledge the organizing team and express my gratitude for the invitation to participate and speak. We have experienced a truly inspiring and heartening moment where people from all walks of life, and others, have commended us, the women herders. They have recognized and valued our multifaceted contributions to society, such as producing healthy food, preserving biodiversity, and standing up against climate change, thereby instilling us with great hope”.
(Khandaa Byambaa, Mongolia)

Ensuring a prosperous future for women pastoralists was also closely connected to improving access to health, education, infrastructure, economic opportunities and cultural continuity. Participants called for services designed around the realities of remote and mobile communities, including mobile health services, veterinary and educational services, as well as improved water, roads, energy and digital connectivity. They stressed the need to improve

women's access to finance, markets, processing technologies and opportunities for value addition, while recognising the economic contribution of work often dismissed as care work or family help, and reducing the disproportionate burden of this work on women so that they can participate more fully in economic, political and community life.

> *"First of all, heartfelt love. I knew that I was not alone in these mountains — the trees, the wolves, the birds — but when I saw you, my dear shepherd companions in Nepal, I became a little stronger. I hope that from time to time we come together and share our troubles and our joys. There is so much to say, but what is important is the reality of our essence. I embrace everyone. You are in my love."*
> *(Pervin Savran, Turkey)*

Concern was expressed about the loss of traditional ecological knowledge, languages, food cultures and pastoral practices as young people leave pastoral areas. Stronger intergenerational knowledge-sharing, culturally appropriate education, opportunities for young women and greater economic viability for pastoral livelihoods were identified as critical to generational continuity.

> *" I am grateful for the opportunity to attend the gathering in Nepal with other pastoralist women from all over the world. Connecting and hearing from others made me appreciate my own work. I found sisterhood in that there was no judgement of status. I am thankful for connecting with other women and knowing in my heart they are out there doing much of the same with life and animals. Of course, the big outcome was working on the declaration, interesting how it all came together. I learned a bit from that experience. And of course, visiting Nepal was an experience in itself".*
> *(Marie Gladue, United States, Navajo Nation)*

Three major collective outcomes emerged from the Gathering. First, participants initiated the Kathmandu Declaration, building on the 2010 MERA Declaration, regional declarations, and the priorities identified during the Gathering. A pastoralist-led review and drafting group continued this process after the gathering, sharing the draft with pastoralist women and their organisations more widely before it was finalised. The Declaration was presented by pastoralist women at the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP 17 in Mongolia at a side event "From Mera 2010 to Kathmandu 2026: Pastoralist Women Unite for Land, Climate Change, Justice, Peace and Solidarity" organized by the WGPG, and at the UNCCD Gender Caucus session in an invited panel dedicated to the Declaration. The final UNCCD COP 17 decision on Rangelands and Pastoralists specifically references the Kathmandu Declaration. Pastoralist women's participation in

these key events and the inclusion of the Declaration in a UNCCD decision mark an important step towards the goal of ensuring that pastoralist women's voices and perspectives are included in global environmental decisions.

> *"Within just four days, it was remarkable to see the common ground shared by more than 100 women representing 40 countries from around the world. Attending the Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women left me optimistic about what we can achieve together, and the strength of a declaration that recognises our collective voice in shaping the future of global agricultural and environmental policy".*
> *(Nikki Gilder, Australia)*

Second, a Strategy Plan was developed to ensure that the Declaration is widely communicated and used to influence policy and decision-making. Priorities include launching the Declaration once finalised, strengthening its visibility in international forums, establishing a Strategy and Advocacy Working Group, and monitoring its dissemination and policy uptake. Third, participants developed initial agreements for a Global Network of Pastoralist Women, conceived as a platform owned and led by pastoralist women to strengthen collective voice, solidarity, knowledge exchange, advocacy, leadership, recognition and economic empowerment. A group of "Founding Mothers" was established to carry this process forward and further develop the network's priorities, membership and governance.

> *"The most beautiful trip of my life! I was so happy to meet everyone, my friends and loved ones. It's a wonderful memory that will leave a big mark on my heart. We hope to see you soon for gatherings that bring us together, share our ideas, and find solutions to all our challenges".*
> *(Jameelah Al Jazi, Jordan)*

The Global Gathering demonstrated both the diversity of pastoralist women's lives and the strength of their shared experiences and aspirations. Its significance lies not only in the Declaration, Strategy and Network that emerged from it, but also in the relationships, solidarity, commitment, care reciprocity and collective voice built among women across regions.

> *"It was incredible to be able to attend the women pastoralist gathering and be part of the declaration. I felt honoured to be at that historic moment the second ever women pastoralist gathering"-*
> *(Suyal Qiqig, Inner Mongolia China)*

The Gathering marked a pivotal shift from sharing experiences to coordinated action, laying the foundation for pastoralist women to continue shaping the policies, research, programmes, and decisions that affect their lives, livelihoods, communities and rangelands at local, national and global levels.

“Although we come from different countries, cultures, and landscapes, we share a common commitment to our communities, our lands, our animals, and our families. This gathering reminded me that we are stronger when we stand together, learn from one another, and support each other. Thank you for your friendship, your stories, your wisdom, and your generosity. I will carry the memories of our conversations, our laughter, and our shared dreams with me. This is not goodbye—it is the beginning of a stronger network of women pastoralists connected across borders. I hope we will continue to learn from each other, collaborate, and amplify our voices together.”
(Maria Guadalupe Molina Siller, Mexico)

1. Introduction

Paulina Ngurumwa, (Tanzania).



“Although we come from different backgrounds and cultures, we share a common commitment to improving the lives of indigenous women. One of the most inspiring things I have learned is that the challenges facing indigenous women are remarkably similar, whether in Tanzania, the United States, Mexico, or elsewhere.
This reminds us that our struggles are connected and that we can achieve more by working together... When women unite, our voices become stronger and can be heard at every level— from our local communities to national platforms and even on the global stage.
That collective voice is essential for creating meaningful change”.

Paulina Ngurumwa (Tanzania): Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women

1.1 Goals and Objectives of the Global Gathering

The Global Gathering aimed to celebrate pastoralist women and their contributions, knowledge, skills and cultures. It created a space for women to share experiences, challenges, innovations, successes and solutions; build lasting global connections and solidarity; and strengthen their collective voice in decisions that affect them, from local to global levels.

Expected Outcomes:

- Build collectively a global network of pastoralist women, to support ongoing knowledge sharing, mutual support and advocacy, and to ensure their voices are represented in decision-making at local, regional and global scales.
- Shape global agendas for rangeland and pastoralist policies, practices, and research that reflect pastoralist women’s priorities.
- Amplify pastoralist women’s voices by developing a strategy to deliver this agenda in global venues such as the UNCCD COP 17 and others.
- Exchange knowledge, learn skills and establish connections that will advance gender equality, sustainable pastoralism, and resilient rangelands.

"Participating in the Global Gathering alongside my sister was a truly meaningful experience. As a participant, I gained new knowledge about the challenges and strengths of pastoralist communities from different regions, learned from the inspiring experiences of women leaders, and built valuable global connections. The Gathering strengthened my understanding of the importance of working together to empower pastoralist women and promote their voices at local and international levels"
(Hamda Al Jabri, Oman)

Why this matters:

Pastoralist women and girls make up half of all pastoralists, who collectively steward rangelands covering nearly half of the Earth's land surface, including two-thirds of global biodiversity hotspots, while pastoral systems contribute an estimated 16% of the world's food supply. Pastoralist women's contributions are therefore critical to the future of pastoralist communities and food systems, as well as to biodiversity, food security and climate resilience. Strengthening their networks and voices helps safeguard the cultural and biological diversity of pastoral landscapes worldwide.

1.2 Participants and Host

The Global Gathering was co-organised by the IYRP Working Group on Pastoralism and Gender (WGPG) and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), with support from partner organisations.

The WGPG is part of the IYRP Global Alliance, a volunteer, grassroots global network of pastoralists, practitioners, scholars and advocates organised into thematic working groups. ICIMOD, established in 1983, is a multilateral organisation serving the countries and peoples of the Hindu Kush Himalaya, working to build and share knowledge that supports greener, more inclusive and climate-resilient development. Its experience in convening international gatherings and its programme areas aligned closely with the objectives of the Gathering.

The Gathering prioritised the participation of women from pastoralist organisations and networks worldwide. Recognising that some participants required support with international travel or language interpretation, women could attend with a support person where needed.

The 94 participants listed in Annex 2 included 81 pastoralist women, four facilitators, five documenters and four translators or local support people, alongside ICIMOD staff and volunteers who provided logistical, organisational, documentation and communications support.

The Gathering was open to all who self-identify as pastoralist women, including ranchers, and sought participants committed to issues including

land rights, economic autonomy, violence prevention, traditional knowledge, education and well-being, rangeland restoration, biodiversity conservation and climate justice.

Participation was guided by the following principles:

- **Inclusion:** We encouraged applications from women pastoralists of all ages and from all countries, including those from Indigenous and traditional communities, especially those with limited access to previous opportunities.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** We honor the traditions and leadership structures of each community while promoting women's voices.
- **Community Legitimacy:** Participants should be recognized and trusted by their communities.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Participants committed to sharing what they learn at the Gathering with their communities afterward.

2. Process Leading up to the Gathering

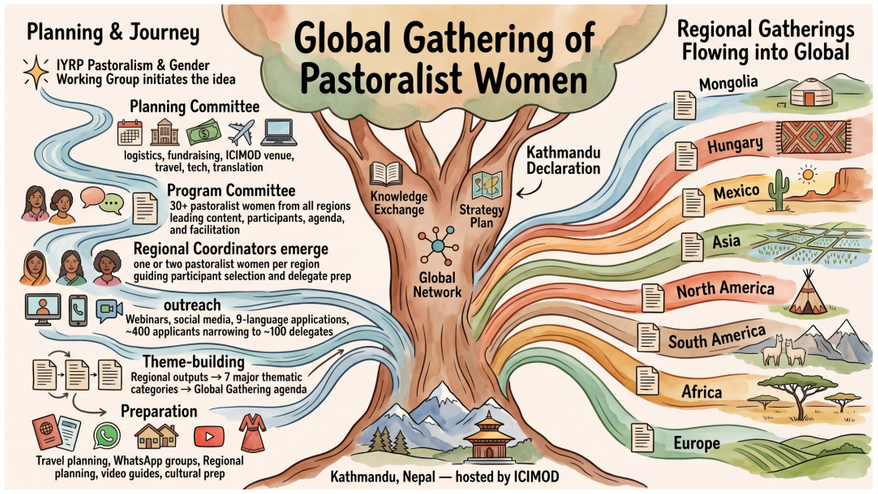
Preparation for the Global Gathering was a collaborative and participatory process involving the IYRP WGPG, ICIMOD, and pastoralist women from across the regions. Two committees guided the process. The Planning Committee coordinated logistics, fundraising, travel, interpretation and other practical arrangements, while the Programme Committee ensured that pastoralist women led key decisions about participation, content and format. Pastoralist women from each region helped select delegates, identify priorities, shape the programme and prepare participants for the Gathering.

Regional gatherings held in advance of the event provided an important foundation- generating discussions, and producing regional declarations and priorities that informed the global gathering agenda. The final agenda (see annex 1) was developed collectively- led by pastoralist women- determining the major themes, contributing to session design, proposing cultural activities and identifying opportunities for knowledge exchange and community building.

The delegate selection process was similarly designed to center pastoralist women. Applications were available in nine languages, and pastoralist members of the Programme Committee reviewed applications from their respective regions and recommended participants from nearly 400 applicants. Once delegates were selected, regional coordinators supported preparations through online meetings and regional WhatsApp groups, while multilingual guidance and a global WhatsApp group helped participants prepare for international travel and connect to other participants before arriving in Kathmandu.

The documentation process for the Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women was designed to be participatory, respectful and accountable to the women

attending the Global Gathering. Before the event, a survey was circulated to participants to understand their priorities regarding what should be documented, how information and materials should be collected and shared, and how consent, dignity and collective ownership could be protected throughout the process. Fifty-seven responses, together with further Programme Committee discussion, shaped both the documentation process and the development of this report.



Graphic depiction of participatory planning process for the Global Gathering, created by participant Hillary Semeyan Lenantoiye (Kenya).

The planning process also highlighted the complexity of organising a large, multilingual international gathering. Key challenges included securing sufficient funding, responding to geopolitical uncertainty, navigating visa and vaccination requirements, reaching practising pastoralist women across diverse and remote regions, and providing interpretation across many languages. Despite these challenges, the Gathering demonstrated the value- and necessity- of investing in the processes and structures required for meaningful participation. To facilitate planning of a future Global Gathering the Planning Committee has compiled **this folder.**

2.1 Lessons for Future Gatherings

Several important lessons emerged from the planning process:

- **Begin early:** Major international gatherings require long-term planning, realistic timelines and early fundraising from diverse sources. Start planning at least 18-24 months in advance.
- **Ensure pastoralist women lead the process:** Pastoralist women should hold primary decision-making power over participant selection, programme content, facilitation and other key aspects of the process.

- **Build strong regional coordination:** Regional coordinators and existing pastoralist networks are essential for reaching diverse participants, supporting applications and preparing delegates.
- **Plan for meaningful multilingual participation:** High-quality interpretation, translated communications and accessible technologies should be built into the budget and process from the outset.
- **Prepare carefully for travel:** Visa, identification and vaccination requirements should be checked early, communicated clearly and supported where necessary.
- **Create spaces for participation before the event:** Regional meetings, webinars, surveys and communication platforms can help participants shape the programme and build relationships before gathering in person.
- **Plan for uncertainty:** International gatherings require risk assessment, contingency planning and clear organisational responsibilities.
- **Center participation throughout:** Delegates should have opportunities to shape not only the programme, but also how the Gathering is documented and how its outcomes are shared.
- **Ensure effective coordination:** Create a repository with meeting recordings of different committees, synthesis reports of meetings and events, participant lists, fundraising information, Agenda, and other essential planning information.

3. Summary of Activities During the Global Gathering

3.1 Community-Building and Sharing

Community building was a central objective of the Global Gathering. Significant time was set aside to strengthen solidarity among pastoralist women and to create supportive spaces for sharing, reflection and collective healing. Participants were able to build relationships through facilitated exercises, informal conversations and evening cultural exchanges. Activities on the first day were designed to begin weaving this sense of community. In one exercise, the pastoralist women, facilitators, rapporteurs and group leaders formed a large circle. A ball of yarn (made of precious sheep wool brought from Spain) was passed from one participant to another, with each woman holding onto a strand before passing it on. As they received the yarn, participants introduced themselves by sharing their name, country and the sound made by the animals they herd.





By the end of the exercise, the strands of yarn formed a web connecting everyone in the circle. This provided a powerful visual and physical representation of the emerging global network of pastoralist women—linking their experiences, strengths, energy, shared concerns and opportunities for collective action throughout the Gathering and beyond.

> *"I loved the feeling of unity amongst all of us pastoralist women. And when we shared the sounds that our animals make, it united us across all our differences!*
> *(Vasamalli Kurtaz, India)*



Participants also brought small printed photos of their home landscape, animals and livelihoods. These were placed on printed regional maps attached to the wall; women pastoralists from each region worked together to give a presentation to share details about the regional context and system(s) of pastoralism, the specificities of their rangeland landscapes and livelihood systems, and the challenges and benefits of practicing pastoralism in their regions.

3.1.1 Cultural Exchange

Cultural exchange was an important part of the Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women, creating space for participants to share, celebrate, and learn from each other's cultural practices, knowledge, stories, songs, dress, food traditions, crafts, and forms of artistic expression. The aim was to facilitate communication in many languages, going beyond spoken language. These activities helped build connection and solidarity among pastoralist women from different regions.





A multicolor tapestry was created, with multiple symbols and images brought and made in situ by the pastoralist women during the Global Gathering. It represents the world of cultures and dreams that women in the livestock sector build and preserve every day. The tapestry will travel to the UNCCD COP 17 in Mongolia, and any other fora and spaces where pastoralist women´s voices must be heard.



On the opening day, participants were encouraged to wear their traditional attire. The opening session included a ***"Calling Directions" ceremony,*** in which representatives from different regions joined the Nepali team in song and prayer, symbolically bringing together the many peoples, lands, and directions represented at the Gathering.

In the evening, the reception included ***cultural performances by Nepali participants,*** followed by an invitation for others to join in the dancing and celebration. Some of the festivities can be watched here: **Nepali Cultural Performances: Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women**



> *"I really enjoyed the dancing under the tent;, it was lovely to see the diversity in the women dancing. Everyone was united and willing to learn each other's dance cultures"*
> *(Nolufefe Mdingi, South Africa)*

On the second and third days, participants continued to share cultural traditions informally during evening gatherings, including by creating the ***joint tapestry.*** These moments created space for songs, storytelling, knowledge exchange, crafts, and informal conversations across regions.



Cultural booths were set up where participants could display products, handicrafts, cultural items, and materials from their communities. These booths provided an additional space for exchange, allowing participants to share aspects of their livelihoods, creativity, and cultural heritage with one another.

The final day also included ***participatory cultural performances,*** where participants shared songs, dances, poetry, and other forms of expression. The Gathering concluded with a Closing Circle and Gratitude Reflection, in which participants came together to give thanks for the time shared, exchange gifts, and say goodbye until the next meeting. These cultural exchange activities were central to the spirit of the Gathering, helping to strengthen relationships, honour pastoralist women's cultural identities, and celebrate the diversity and resilience of pastoralist communities.

3.2 Building on the MERA Declaration and Highlights from Regional and National Gatherings

The idea of a declaration was born during one of the meetings of the Pastoralism and Gender Working Group of the Global Alliance of Rangelands and Pastoralists of the IYRP. The Working Group felt that it would be good to review the **Mera Declaration of 2010,** which was the result of the first ever global gathering of pastoralist women. While discussing the content of the declaration the pastoralist women argued that different regions faced distinct concerns; thus it might be better to start with regional declarations, which could then be integrated into a global declaration. Regional gatherings and declarations also allowed more women to participate from each region

Regional meetings were therefore planned by Working Group members in the different regions and fresh regional declarations were drafted in the lead up to IYRP2026 and the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF). Gatherings took place in Mongolia (24 September 2025), Hungary (17 September 2025 and 24 April 2026), Mexico (25 September 2025), Asia (10-12 December 2025), North America (February 7 and March 13 - 14), Africa (15 -21 March 2026), and Europe (27-29 March 2025), and resulted in a number of

regional declarations and discussions. However, logistic and financial constraints made it difficult for all the regions to meet physically. Nonetheless, in an effort to reach a wide number of pastoralist women from different regions and groups the process of reviewing the Mera declaration was undertaken.





"Promote recognition of rural insecurity as a problem experienced by pastoralist women. In Mexico, violence and organised crime affect our mobility, marketing, the safety of our families, and our ability to remain in our territory. We propose that territorial security be explicitly incorporated into local, national and international pastoral agendas"
(Presentation Mexico Mera +16)

"This is our way of life, and we want to continue living like this. While carrying all these roles and responsibilities, we claim to be recognised and respected as "Pastoralist Women". After doing all this for generations, we now raise our voices to claim our rights and our vision for the future".
(Asia Pastoralist Women Declaration: Mera +16)

"We affirm, as our sisters in Mera did in 2010, that it is by remaining pastoralists – in forms that adapt to changing conditions while honouring culture and place – that we can be of greatest service to the human community and to the lands we love"
(Draft Australian Pastoral Women's Statement for Kathmandu (Mera +16)

Prior to the Global Gathering the Planning Committee requested delegates in each region to comment on where their declaration was already in tune with the earlier Mera Declaration, and where the Mera Declaration should be updated to address important regional contexts or provide a better articulation of an important point. Each of the regions made a presentation in Kathmandu on Day 1 on the similarities and differences between their regional declarations and the Mera Declaration.

"I was very inspired to hear that pastoralist women want to lead from their various regions- I loved hearing the regional declarations."
(Bhavana Desai, India)

Over the following days, the Global Gathering addressed the main issues, concerns, and proposals that pastoralist women have across different dimensions (environment, education, health, economy, women's rights, participation, etc.). The results of those discussions were prioritized by the pastoralist women and then incorporated into an early draft of the Kathmandu Declaration (see sections 2.6.1 and 3.1) by a smaller working group (see sections 2.6.1 and 3.1).



"We, women pastoralists of the world, declare that pastoralism is not in the past but a solution for the future and pastoralist women are the heart of the solution. The voices, struggles, knowledge and stories of thousands of women form the living foundation of this declaration and we pledge to work together in solidarity. We speak in one voice to claim our space, shape our future, and transform our planet".
(Manifesto of the Universities of Women in Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral Areas in West and Central Africa)



"The desired future is one in which women livestock farmers live and work in real equality, with social recognition, economic autonomy, and full presence in the spaces where decisions are made. Work–life balance, visibility, and representation are the three pillars that sustain this horizon".
(Manifesto of European Women Livestock Farmers and Shepherdesses 2026)

3.3 Thematic Discussions

3.3.1 Political Representation & Participation of Pastoralist Women

Pastoralist women face overlapping barriers to political participation, including patriarchy and discriminatory gender norms, lack of recognition, care burdens, limited access to services and political education, language and digital barriers, and safety risks. Participants stressed that formal representation alone is not enough: women must be listened to, respected, and able to influence decisions, while laws supporting their participation must be implemented in practice. At the same time, pastoralist women already hold significant knowledge, leadership capacity and organising experience, and existing examples of women's networks demonstrate the power of collective action. Stronger regional and global networks, political education, shared and horizontal leadership, reduced care burdens, legal protections, gender-equitable institutions, and accessible decision-making spaces were identified as key to strengthening pastoralist women's political voice from local to global levels.

Ainhoa López (Spain).

"We demand and call on the governments of each region to ensure equal representation at the negotiating tables where decisions are made. To achieve this, we believe it is essential to put in place a range of support measures to help women achieve a better work-life balance – particularly in terms of family life – as women bear the brunt of caring for the elderly and children. This invisible work makes it extremely difficult for us to be properly represented in the sector... So, as our manifesto says, "Let's shepherd common sense".



Ainhoa Lopez, Ganaderas en Red (Spain): Political Representation of Pastoralist Women

3.3.2 Visibility, Recognition and Rights of Pastoralist Women

"I have attended prior international meetings, and at that time the pastoralists were considered roughly as people obsolete and primitive. However, I see now that we are well respected and our voices are being heard and treated with dignity. I am very thankful to participate in this opportunity for influencing global action".
(Maamankhuu Sodnom, Mongolia)

Pastoralist women stressed that their work, knowledge and rights remain widely invisible, undervalued and poorly protected. Across regions, laws and policies may exist on paper but often fail to translate into meaningful recognition, enforcement or accountability. Participants emphasised that women's rights to land and grazing- including within communal tenure systems- mobility, finance, information, safety, services, leadership and political representation must be recognised in practice. They also highlighted the lack of data capturing the full value of women's contributions to environmental stewardship, livelihood, household and care work. Pastoralist women should not be treated only as "beneficiaries" of projects, but recognised as decision-makers, knowledge holders, innovators and leaders at the centre of policy, financing and programme design.

Maira Alejandra Quintero Brito (Colombia).

"When women pastoralists have rights, resources, and recognition, they not only participate more, but also improve decisions regarding sustainability, land management, and community well-being. One crucial change needed is the current lack of recognition. In Colombia, pastoral activity is not widely recognized, and even less so the women who practice it. If we changed this- if from the mayoral offices, the local and national government, this work were recognized, women would also benefit."



Maira (Colombia):
Political Representation of Pastoralist Women, Care and Labour

3.3.3 Health, Education and Social Support

Pastoralist women emphasised that health, education and social wellbeing are deeply connected to the future of pastoralism. Across regions, including in so-called "developed" countries, remote and mobile pastoralist communities often lack accessible health services, appropriate education, internet access, and basic infrastructure. These gaps contribute to social isolation, weaken intergenerational knowledge transmission, and push young people away from pastoralist livelihoods. Participants stressed that services and support systems must be designed around pastoralist realities, including mobility and migration routes, native languages, preserving traditional foods and cultures, and responding to the needs of women, children, youth and elders. Strengthening accessible health care, culturally appropriate education, infrastructure and opportunities for young people was therefore seen as essential to sustaining pastoralist communities across generations.

Blanca Patricia Trejo Ortega (Mexico).

"Regarding education, there are few opportunities for study in my community. It's difficult to study here because of distance and the economy.There isn't enough money to travel and pay for things like lodging so that young women can be in the city and pay for their studies ... It would be very helpful for us young adults to have courses, training, and workshops here in the ejido. That way, we could start businesses and support each other as a group- we women, girls, and young people".



Blanca:
Pastoralist Women, Health, Education, and Social Support

3.3.4 Environment, natural resources and climate change

Pastoralist women and their communities are facing growing environmental pressures from climate change, rangeland degradation, water insecurity, mining and other extractive industries, land abandonment and fragmentation, loss of mobility, and policies that do not reflect diverse pastoralist realities. These pressures affect livestock, pasture quality, water, dairy production and storage, medicinal plants, human and animal health, traditional knowledge, and the ability of pastoralists to remain on and sustainably manage their lands. Participants emphasised that pastoralist women are not only affected by environmental change, but also hold important knowledge and practices for responding to it, including sustainable pasture management, rangeland monitoring, pastoralist-led restoration, climate-risk awareness and livelihood diversification. Protecting mobility was identified as particularly important for adapting to changing ecological conditions and sustaining pastoralist livelihoods. Pastoralist women must be recognised as central actors in climate adaptation, rangeland and water management, restoration, biodiversity protection and environmental decision-making. This requires involving pastoralist women as decision-makers, meaningful and equal representation in climate and environmental forums, stronger government support, better data, direct funding, protection of water and land rights, access to appropriate technologies - while building on pastoralist ecological and traditional knowledge.

Judith Singibala (Tanzania).

"In Northern Tanzania, women are the center of agricultural activities and pastoralism, at the same time taking care of the family. Climate change has become a great barrier and challenge for the women to tackle as they have to go long distances in search of water, to search for food to feed their families and animals- that has a negative impact on their social life. Despite that, women have been seeking knowledge and seeking how to tackle the climate change disaster".



Judith Singibala (Tanzania):
Pastoralist Women on the Frontlines, Climate Change & Natural Resources

3.3.5 Traditional knowledge and cultural continuity, including youth engagement

Participants expressed concern that traditional ecological knowledge is rapidly eroding and may be lost to future generations if urgent action is not taken. Knowledge related to herding, medicinal plants, local breeds, crafts, food practices, seasonal cycles, language and cultural identity is being weakened by youth migration, modernisation, climate change, declining economic viability

and limited institutional support. At the same time, participants emphasised that traditional ecological knowledge remains central to pastoralist identity, livelihoods, natural resource stewardship and adaptation to changing conditions. Women and elders play a particularly important role in maintaining and transmitting this knowledge, while young people need meaningful opportunities, including access to land and viable pastoral livelihoods, to remain connected to pastoralism. Preserving traditional knowledge requires stronger intergenerational transmission, recognition in policy and education, support for pastoralist livelihoods and cultural practices, and spaces that connect elders and youth. Participants also highlighted the potential of storytelling, cultural festivals, documentation, digital tools, value addition and knowledge exchange to strengthen cultural continuity while adapting to contemporary realities.

Fadimatou Balla (Cameroon).

"Here, they say livestock farming is for men, but I'm here, and I'm committed because I learned it from my mother, and today I'm passing it on to my daughter, and she's proud! Through livestock farming, we educate our children... my mother - she taught me how to distinguish between grasses, those that are beneficial and those that kill. She also taught me how to manage scarcity during the dry season by cultivating Brachiaria... We are calling for the involvement of women in the livestock sector. It is thanks to the women pastoralists that things are now evolving in livestock farming, and that it does not disappear".

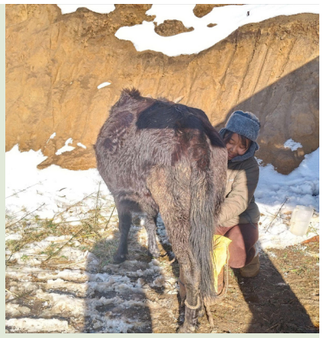


Fadimatou Balla (Cameroon): Pastoralist Women, Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Continuity

3.3.6 Access to infrastructure and new technologies

Maya Sherpa (Nepal).

"There are no happy and comfortable facilities for women to keep children healthy or suitable spaces for menstruating women. The herders are abandoning their businesses because the schools are too far away for children's education. It is apparent that despite the availability of amenities in some places the lack of electricity in the bhedi goth/kharka — the seasonal shepherds camps- has forced the herders to live without contact with their family and friends even in the age of the internet".



Maya Sherpa (Nepal): Uniting Under the Kathmandu Declaration

Pastoralist women face significant barriers in accessing infrastructure and new technologies. Poor roads and connectivity, limited internet access, weak digital and market platforms, lack of processing technologies, and insufficient training restrict women's access to markets, education, health services, information and decision-making tools. Participants emphasised that technology can strengthen pastoralist livelihoods when it is accessible, relevant to pastoralist realities and accompanied by appropriate training and support. Mobile phones, weather applications, GPS and remote monitoring, telehealth, social media networks and digital marketing platforms were among the examples identified. However, access remains highly unequal, particularly in remote and mobile pastoralist areas. Improving access therefore requires investment in basic infrastructure, connectivity, mobile services that respond to seasonal mobility, processing and marketing technologies, and capacity-building for pastoralist women. Participants also highlighted the importance of supporting women and young people not only as users of technology, but as knowledge brokers and service providers who can help communities adapt and share relevant technologies across regions.

3.3.7 Economy, livelihoods and working conditions

Silvia Gobile (South Africa).



"What makes it difficult for us as women livestock farmers is that we are often taken for granted and receive little to no support or assistance. Another thing that is affecting and hurting us is the issue of stock theft, which is so rampant in South Africa. But with all that, owning livestock is very important to us because from sheep and cows we get milk, which we use to make a variety of milk products, like cheese. We also get hides and skins that are used to make products such as shoes, bags, and we also get wool from sheep that makes many other items... With all these things, if we as women were properly assisted and supported, livestock farming could help grow the South African economy and create more jobs for our children".

Silvia Gobile (South Africa)

Across regions, pastoralist women described economic, structural and environmental barriers that undermine their livelihoods and working conditions. Rising costs, limited income opportunities, weak access to finance and markets, lack of processing technologies, gaps in education and digital skills, climate pressures and political exclusion all restrict women's ability to benefit fairly from pastoral economies. Women often have limited control over pricing and market access, while economic dependency and unpaid care responsibilities further constrain their autonomy and opportunities.

Djoudé Issa Demo (Benin).



"Pastoral women are often seen as vulnerable, but that's not the case. They are courageous women who, in reality, sustain the pastoral economy, standing tall and strong. It is the women who create jobs where none exist- they invent. They transform a cow into capital, or an entire herd into a school for their children. What's unfortunate is that this effort goes unrecognized. Pastoral women are those who, despite their unacknowledged efforts, demonstrate unwavering courage every day to continue feeding their families and contributing to the development of their communities ... They follow the animals in transhumance with children on their backs, while pregnant, and they do all this despite the fact that the products they have at hand are not easily sold, simply because the markets are so far away".

Djoudé Issa Demo (Benin):
Pastoralist Women, Economy, Livelihoods and Working Conditions

At the same time, pastoralist women are already contributing as producers, entrepreneurs, innovators and stewards of rangeland landscapes, although their work remains poorly recognised, documented and supported. Improving their economic conditions therefore requires both practical support - including access to finance, fair markets, processing technologies, training and digital tools - and structural change to improve women's participation in economic decision-making, strengthen policy support, recognise their contributions and build more equitable pastoral value chains.

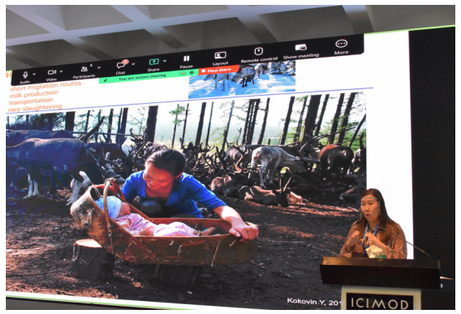
3.4 Parallel sessions

3.4.1 Traditional Knowledge and Food Culture: Insights from Reindeer Herding and Pastoralist Food Systems

- *Prepared by panel convener Alena Gerasimova, (International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry)*

Session Overview:

This session brought together representatives of the Evenki, Sámi, Dukha (Tsataan), Diné (Navajo) and Toda peoples, together with the Cairngorm Reindeer Herd in Scotland, to explore the connections between traditional knowledge, food culture, pastoralist livelihoods and rangeland stewardship. Across diverse contexts,



speakers emphasised that relationships between land, animals, food, language and cultural identity are central to pastoralist and Indigenous resilience. Traditional knowledge was presented not as a legacy of the past, but as a living knowledge system essential for adapting to rapid environmental and social change. Women, elders and youth all play important roles in maintaining and transmitting this knowledge across generations.



The session highlighted traditional food cultures as particularly important expressions of identity, sustainability and relationships with landscapes and animals. At the same time, environmental change, globalization and changing food systems are placing these knowledge systems and livelihoods under increasing pressure. Participants stressed the need to support communities to use their own knowledge to shape their futures, strengthen intergenerational transmission, and ensure that traditional knowledge is recognised in education, policy and sustainable development.

Presentations:

- Alena Gerasimova — Indigenous Youth, Traditional Knowledge and Food Culture
- Dalaibayar Gombo — Traditional Foods of the Dukha People
- Inger Anita Smuk — Sámi Reindeer Herding and Food Systems
- Charlotte Brooks — Ecological Change and Reindeer Herding in Scotland
- Vasamalli Kurtaz — Toda Cultural Heritage and Sacred Buffaloes
- Marie Gladue — Traditional Knowledge and Rangeland Stewardship

> *"As indigenous American pastoralists- as Dene people- we understand our relation with the land as a god-given convention rather than a man-given law, which is the Western way of thinking... People see nature in the western world as inanimate but in some indigenous cultures it is not like that".*
> *(Marie Gladue)*

Recommendations:

- Strengthen recognition of traditional knowledge in policy, education and sustainable development.
- Support intergenerational knowledge transmission through community-led education and youth engagement.

- Support community-led documentation and revitalisation of Indigenous languages, food cultures and pastoralist knowledge.
- Promote development based on local living resources and culturally grounded knowledge systems.
- Strengthen exchanges and collaboration among Indigenous and pastoralist communities, particularly for women and youth.
- Support the revitalisation of traditional food cultures and their contribution to more sustainable food systems.

3.4.2 Land and Mobility Rights

- *Panel convener Laureen Ongesa, (RECONCILE, Kenya)*

Session Overview:

This session brought together pastoralist women from diverse regions to share experiences of land tenure and mobility. Participants described mobility as fundamental to pastoralism, enabling access to pasture and water, sustaining livestock and rangelands, maintaining traditional knowledge, and responding to environmental change and insecurity. Across regions, mobility is increasingly constrained by insecure tenure, privatisation and fencing of communal lands, blocked grazing corridors, border restrictions, conflict, and the expansion of agriculture, mining, infrastructure, conservation and other investments. Participants stressed that pastoral lands are often treated as empty or available for appropriation, while mobility remains poorly recognised as a productive and sustainable land-use system. These pressures particularly affect women, who often have weaker land and inheritance rights and less influence over land governance despite their central roles in pastoral livelihoods. Loss of land and mobility can increase women's workloads, reduce livestock productivity and food security, and heighten vulnerability to climate change, conflict and displacement. Participants therefore emphasised the need to secure communal land and mobility rights while strengthening pastoralist women's rights, recognition and participation in decision-making.

> *"Mobility is a dynamic movement lifestyle shared by livestock and humans".*
> *(Participant - Nepal)*

> *"Mobility is being able to take your animals for pasture- camp to camp- to sustain and not overgraze the land, so you protect it for future generations".*
> *(Participant - South Africa)*

Presentations:

- Laureen Ongesa — Securing Land and Mobility Rights for Pastoralist Women
- Rigzin Yangdol — Challenges of Army Camp Deployment and Its Impacts on Mobility
- Jamila Aljazi — Mobility and Land Tenure in Jordan: The Reality of Pastoralist Women

Recommendations:

- Strengthen pastoralist women's land and resource rights and their participation in land governance.
- Protect mobility, grazing routes, water points and transhumance corridors.
- Recognise communal pastoral lands and mobility as legitimate and sustainable land-use systems.
- Ensure investments in rangelands follow meaningful consultation, respect pastoralist's rights and access to land and its resources, fair compensation and equitable benefit-sharing.
- Strengthen inclusive land-use planning and decision-making, with meaningful participation of pastoralist women and youth.

3.4.3 Pastoralist Women's Networks-Lessons on Forming & Sustaining Networks

> *"Networks of women livestock farmers—organized around a shared language, shared needs, and shared problems—are essential, especially for fostering a sense of community, companionship, and support, where we're all equal. This is because in our line of work—extensive livestock farming—it can often be very lonely, and we women livestock farmers tend to be isolated from one another... Sharing helps us grow together, find solutions together, and stand together in the face of any unexpected challenge."*
> *(Ainhoa Lopez, GeR Spain, convener of panel session)*

Session Overview:

The presentations reflected highly diverse ecological, cultural, and political realities—from the Mediterranean rangelands of Spain and the communities of Mexico and the United States to the pastoral landscapes of South Asia and the conflict-affected Sahel—they coincided in that strong women's networks play an important role for the future of pastoralism. Across the different regions, women are organizing themselves to strengthen leadership, preserve Indigenous and local knowledge, influence policy, expand economic opportunities, and safeguard the landscapes on which pastoral societies

depend. Their organizations represent dynamic platforms for learning, advocacy, communication, innovation, and stewardship. The regional experiences highlighted complementary pathways toward this shared vision.

In Spain, Ganaderas en Red illustrated how storytelling, digital communication, and collective learning can reshape public narratives, strengthen identity, and make women livestock keepers more visible. In Mexico and the United States, MUGAM and Women in Ranching, respectively, demonstrated how networking, mentorship, technical training, and leadership development create opportunities for women to participate actively in producer organizations, strengthen rural economies, and influence institutions. In South Asia, the Pastoralist Women Alliance (PWA) and the South Asia Pastoralist Alliance (SAPA) showed how regional cooperation across six countries can advance women's leadership, strengthen pastoral value chains, secure land rights, preserve Indigenous knowledge, and connect grassroots movements with international policy processes. The experiences from the Sahel, presented through the Tin Hinan Platform and the Pastoral Women of the Sahel in Motion, showcased the situation under which women's leadership often unfolds under extremely challenging conditions. Despite insecurity, armed conflict, displacement, weak recognition of Indigenous rights, and increasing climate pressures, pastoralist women continue to sustain households, strengthen social cohesion, preserve biodiversity, diversify livelihoods, and contribute to peacebuilding. Their platforms demonstrate remarkable resilience while advocating for greater recognition of nomadic and Indigenous women's rights. Overall, the challenges differ across regions, however pastoralist women share similar needs: recognition, equitable access to resources, stronger leadership, secure rights, meaningful participation in decision-making, and opportunities to pass their knowledge to future generations.

Ibolya László Sáfián, (Hungary).

"This group was created for us with the help of Ganadéras en Red (Spain) in 2021... we formed the 'Women in Pastoralism Group', now in 2026 we have 87 members. We have all ages, which is very good, from young people to middle-aged, to old pensioners, really... this group is good because we solve a lot of problems. Like for example, for us shepherdesses, what rubber boots to wear that don't break quickly, what stroller to push on the pasture, or how to carry the child, how is it easier to raise a child with grazing animals, or even what kind of food to cook that is quick and filling so that by the time our husband gets home we can also feed the family, the child, the economy. And here I would mention the bureaucracy, which is a huge burden on us, because we also have to do it- the women".



Lászlóné Sáfián Ibolya: Leader of the Women in Pastoralism group (Hungary)

Presentations:

- Ainhoa López & Paula Jarque — Contando GeR (Ganaderas en Red)
- Nancy Hernández Rodríguez — Women in Ranching: Creating Networking Spaces for Women in Ranching and Agriculture
- Saoudata Aboubacrine — Successes and Challenges of the Tin Hinan Platform and the Pastoral Women of the Sahel in Motion
- Bhavana Desai — Pastoralist Women Alliance and the South Asia Pastoralist Alliance
- Mónica Yescenia Islava Corella, María Guadalupe Molina Siller & Blanca Patricia Trejo Ortega — Empowering Women Pastoralists: Land, Security, and Dignity (Mexico)

Recommendations:

- Sustain long-term financial and institutional support for women-led pastoralist networks and alliances.
- Strengthen women's leadership and meaningful participation in governance and decision-making from local to global levels.
- Improve equitable access to land, finance, markets, education, digital technologies and public services.
- Invest in communication, storytelling, mentoring and intergenerational exchange to strengthen visibility, knowledge-sharing and collective advocacy.
- Strengthen collaboration among pastoralist women's networks, governments, civil society, research institutions and international organisations.
- Support resilient pastoral livelihoods, value chains and locally led responses to climate change, conflict and economic pressures.

3.4.4 FAO-led Panel: Youth, Women and the Future of Pastoralism

- ***Panel Convener: Poonam Bista, FAO Nepal***

Session Overview:

This FAO-led panel explored the role of young pastoralist women in the future of pastoralism and how their priorities can be translated into action through the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists and the International Year of Women Farmers. FAO reaffirmed its commitment to supporting follow-up from the Global Gathering and helping carry its outcomes forward. Across regions, participants emphasised that women and youth are central to pastoralist food systems, traditional ecological knowledge and community resilience, yet face major barriers to remaining in pastoralism. In Nepal and Uganda, young pastoralists highlighted low incomes, difficult market access,

climate vulnerability, lack of land ownership and the hardships of mobile herding. Subita Rai, a young yak and chauri herder from Nepal, also described how pastoralism had strengthened her independence and confidence, while highlighting livestock predation, difficult weather, limited markets and the combined burden of household and herding work.

Participants from Canada and Australia highlighted additional barriers linked to macho culture, limited recognition of women's skills, patriarchal inheritance systems, lack of role models and difficulties accessing land. Across regions, high-interest loans, lack of collateral, limited finance and climate pressures were also identified as major obstacles contributing to young people leaving pastoralism and weakening intergenerational knowledge transmission.The session emphasised the need to invest in young pastoralist women through land access, finance, training, leadership opportunities, appropriate technologies and stronger markets. FAO also introduced gender-transformative and social inclusion approaches, including Dimitra Clubs, as examples of how collective action can strengthen women's agency and challenge discriminatory norms.

Presentations:

- Kae Mihara — Role of Women and Youth in Pastoralist Food Systems
- Subita Rai — Weaving Stories of Young Women Pastoralists

Recommendations:

- Improve young pastoralist women's access to land, finance, training and leadership opportunities.
- Invest in women-led cooperatives, value-added enterprises, market access, microgrants and financial services suited to pastoralist livelihoods.
- Support climate-smart and labour-saving technologies that reduce workloads and make pastoralism more viable for young people.
- Apply gender-transformative approaches that strengthen women's agency and challenge discriminatory norms and institutions.
- Create platforms for young pastoralist women to share experiences, influence decisions and maintain connections with pastoralist knowledge and livelihoods.

3.4.5 Climate Change

- Prepared by panel convener Fozia Noor, Organization for Pastoral Peace and Development (OPPD), and Founder of the Somali Pastoralist Women's Network

Fozia Noor, (Kenya/Somalia).

"To learn their traditional knowledge and culture to understand how their ancestors used to take care of the land. And also welcoming that knowledge into the system... to allow transhumance - pastoralists moving from one place to another. To have that kind of system, to enable them to also have water points from across the corridor that pastoralists move along."



Fozia Noor (Kenya):
Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women

Session Overview:

This session brought together pastoralist women from Kenya, Somalia, Canada and Mongolia to examine how climate change is affecting pastoral livelihoods and how women are responding. Across regions, rising temperatures, declining or unpredictable rainfall, drought and extreme events are contributing to livestock losses, reduced productivity, water insecurity and growing livelihood pressures. Experiences differed across contexts. In northern Kenya and Somalia, participants highlighted worsening drought, conflict, financial exclusion and the importance of women's Indigenous knowledge and grassroots leadership in building resilience. In southern Saskatchewan, Canada, changing drought patterns are affecting water, grazing and ranch livelihoods, with responses including water development, rotational grazing, native grassland protection and long-term drought planning. In Mongolia, rising temperatures, declining rainfall, drought and increasingly severe dzud events (a severe climatic disaster, usually involving an extremely harsh winter—often following summer drought—in which snow, ice or extreme cold prevent livestock from accessing pasture) are contributing to major livestock losses and economic insecurity, increasing the importance of women's roles in sustaining herding households.

Across these contexts, a shared message emerged: pastoralist women are not only vulnerable to climate change but are already leading adaptation through Indigenous and local knowledge, sustainable rangeland management, diversified livelihood strategies, and community leadership. Participants stressed the importance of combining this knowledge with appropriate scientific approaches, protecting pastoral mobility and rangelands, improving access to climate information and preparedness, and recognising women as co-designers of climate solutions and decision-makers in climate governance.

Presentations:

- Hillary Semeyan Lenantoiye — Living on the Frontlines: Pastoralist Women Navigating Climate Change and Drought in Northern Kenya
- Asma Adow — Amplifying the Voices of Pastoral Women: Somali Women Pastoralists Network's Role in Building Climate Resilience in Somalia
- Karla Hicks — Shifting Patterns: Climate Cycles and Drought Impacts on Southern Saskatchewan Agriculture
- Od Monkhdelger — Climate Change Effects on Health and Economy in Mongolia

Recommendations:

- Invest in locally led, long-term climate adaptation and resilience-building for pastoral communities.
- Recognise pastoralist women's Indigenous and local knowledge and ensure their meaningful participation in climate governance, rangeland management and policy.
- Protect pastoral mobility, grazing corridors, water resources and rangelands as essential foundations of climate adaptation.
- Improve access to climate information, early warning systems and drought and flood preparedness.
- Invest in women's education, skills, economic opportunities and leadership, while mainstreaming gender equality across climate, pastoral development and humanitarian interventions.
- Strengthen partnerships among pastoral communities, women's organisations, governments and development partners.

3.4.6 Roles & Recognition of Pastoralist Women

- Panel Convener: Djoudé Issa Demo, RBM (Réseau Billital Maroobé)

Vasamalli Kurtaz, Toda Community, Nilgiri Plateau, Tamil Nadu (India).

"My village name is Eskithi. Semi-wild water buffaloes are very important to us. My parents gave three buffaloes for my marriage. We give sacred buffaloes different names. We have a naming ceremony for them once a year. We give them salt water nearby our holy riverside. That is an important ceremony. Our landscape is Shola Forest and grassland. Recently Eucalyptus trees were planted in our Grazing Patta Lands, And we lost our traditional grazing lands. Supporting women pastoralists is important because women have more traditional knowledge about pastoral life and customs".



Vasamalli Kurtaz (India): Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Continuity of Pastoralist Communities

Session Overview:

This session explored the diverse but often under-recognised roles of pastoralist women as livestock keepers, carers, producers, knowledge holders, students, researchers and community representatives. Experiences from France, India, Colombia and Bolivia, alongside the work of Réseau Billital Maroobé across West and Central Africa, showed how women sustain pastoral livelihoods, families, cultural traditions and knowledge while often receiving limited recognition, resources and political representation. Regional experiences highlighted different dimensions of this challenge. In France, women's participation in associations and national working groups was presented as an important pathway to political representation. In the Toda community of India, women's ecological, medicinal and cultural knowledge is closely tied to buffalo herding and pastoral landscapes increasingly threatened by land-use change and restrictions on grazing. In West and Central Africa, participatory processes demonstrated the importance of women defining their own priorities and demands. Experiences from the Andes highlighted the multiple demands faced by women combining pastoralism, care, education and professional life, particularly in remote areas with limited institutional support. Across the session, participants stressed that recognising pastoralist women also requires recognising the wider value of pastoralism and the interconnected nature of women's productive, care, cultural and knowledge work. Stronger representation, access to resources, culturally appropriate education and women-led processes are therefore essential.

Presentations:

- Maira Quintero — Recognition of the Role of Women Livestock Farmers and Carers
- Claire Guyat — Trade Union and Association Representation
- Vasamalli Kurtaz — Changes in Women's Involvement in the Traditions of the Toda Community
- Djoudé Issa Demo — From Knowledge Rooted in Reality to Co-writing: The Birth of the Manifesto of Women Pastoralists
- Sonia Flores — Being a University Student, a Shepherd, a Mum and a Dad All at Once: Opportunities and Challenges

> ***"This requires time management, great courage, self-esteem, family support, and recognition of work in rural areas. "***
> *(Sonia Flores, Bolivia)*

Recommendations:

- Recognise pastoralist women's productive, care, cultural and ecological contributions as central to pastoral economies and communities.

- Ensure that policies, programmes, manifestos and charters concerning pastoralist women are co-designed with women and reflect their own priorities.
- Strengthen women's representation in pastoral organisations, trade unions and decision-making institutions.
- Develop culturally appropriate, gender-sensitive education and support for pastoralist women and mother-students, including rural scholarships.
- Support the documentation and intergenerational transmission of pastoralist languages, medicinal and ecological knowledge, and cultural traditions.

3.4.7 Pastoralist Women as Land Stewards

- Panel Convener: Bhavana Desai (Pastoralist Women Alliance)

Session Overview:

This session highlighted pastoralist women's roles in restoring degraded landscapes, conserving biodiversity, managing water and grazing resources, and sustaining pastoral livelihoods. Experiences from Inner Mongolia, Mongolia, Italy, Australia, Peru, Bhutan and Turkey showed how women combine traditional and local ecological knowledge with experimentation, community organisation and adaptive land management to respond to desertification, fire, water scarcity, climate change and changing land use. Regional experiences demonstrated different pathways of stewardship. In Inner Mongolia, long-term experimentation and collaboration with pastoralists helped improve approaches to desertification control after early restoration efforts proved unsuccessful. In Mongolia, community organisation following a major fire strengthened both restoration and livelihoods through collective savings, value addition and diversification. In Italy, multifunctional farming combined livestock production, land management, education and social inclusion, while experiences from Western Australia showed how grazing management, water placement and soil and water conservation can support both livestock production and biodiversity.

In Peru, women's environmental leadership was closely connected to overcoming violence, building collective organisation and strengthening livelihoods. In Bhutan, women's detailed knowledge of plants, water and seasonal mobility guides herd movements and supports coexistence between livestock and wildlife. In Turkey, women's mobilisation to defend grazing access demonstrated that environmental stewardship also depends on secure rights to land and mobility. Across these contexts, participants stressed that pastoralist women hold detailed knowledge of livestock, plants, water, mobility and changing environmental conditions. Their stewardship is strengthened by secure access to land and resources, collective organisation and meaningful participation in environmental decision-making. Community-led restoration, sustainable grazing and multifunctional land management in Italy, were identified as important approaches for sustaining healthy landscapes, biodiversity and pastoral livelihoods.

Presentations:

- Ta Na — Desertification-Combating Practices and Lessons from 20 Years of Work
- Ariuntuya Damba — Community Organisation, Restoration and Livelihoods in Mongolia
- Robyn Adams, with contributions from Debbie Dowden — Re-hydrating the Landscape of Western Australia
- Martina Josefa Choquehuayta Cabana — The Role of Women as Guardians of the Earth and Protectors of Animals
- Chimi Wangmo and Chey Chey — How Highland Women Protect, Restore and Conserve Biodiversity
- Pervin Savran — Grazing Rights and Pastoral Mobility in Turkey
- Sara Esposito — Multi-functional Agriculture

Sara Esposito, (Italy).

"The project also in the whole region is to increasingly reduce these pine forests and create clearings and obviously replace them with Mediterranean scrub shrubs and oaks. This is a beautiful project that could be implemented by those who graze, especially with sheep, which have a lesser effect on the grazing above in the woods".



Sara Esposito (Italy): Pastoralist Women, Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change

Recommendations:

- Recognise pastoralist women's traditional and ecological knowledge in environmental policy, restoration and conservation.
- Strengthen women's participation in decisions concerning land, water, grazing and natural resource management.
- Secure pastoral communities' access to grazing lands, mobility routes and natural resources.
- Invest in community-led restoration, sustainable grazing, soil and water conservation, and climate adaptation.
- Support women's associations, collective savings, value addition and livelihood diversification alongside environmental stewardship.

- Promote exchanges among pastoralist communities to share successful land-management and restoration practices.
- Address violence and institutional barriers that restrict women's environmental leadership.
- Support multifunctional approaches that integrate pastoral production, biodiversity conservation, local livelihoods and community wellbeing.

3.4.8 Pastoralist Women Entrepreneurs

- Prepared with contributions from the Panel Convener: Shiba Banskota, ICIMOD

Session Overview:

This session highlighted pastoralist women as economic actors, innovators and custodians of Indigenous and local knowledge, rather than simply beneficiaries of development. Across different contexts, women are sustaining pastoral economies through livestock production, food processing, crafts, value addition, ecological management and livelihood diversification, although much of this work remains invisible or poorly recognised. Regional experiences illustrated different pathways and constraints. In Nigeria, women's knowledge of animal husbandry, food conservation and environmental change is being combined with training and value addition to strengthen livelihoods. In Oman, women contribute across livestock and dairy value chains but continue to face limited recognition, finance, market access and policy support. In Italy, targeted support for young women enabled access to training and start-up finance, supporting a diversified farm based on extensive livestock production, direct sales and low-input practices, although care responsibilities remain a major constraint.

In Australia, a pastoral enterprise linked handcrafted clothing, local identity and storytelling with plans to add value to wool produced on the property. In Mexico, women's entrepreneurship in goat pastoralism was constrained by unequal recognition of land and livestock ownership, as communal land and productive assets are often registered in men's names, limiting women's access to finance and formal support. Across the session, participants stressed that entrepreneurship and innovation should be understood broadly to include women's everyday knowledge, processing, care work, ecological management and adaptation. Strengthening pastoralist women's economic autonomy requires better recognition of their contributions, secure access to land and assets, finance, markets, processing technologies and training, as well as support for value addition, direct sales, networks and women's participation in economic decision-making.

Bilach Jimale (Kenya).

"Being from the community, I know that the community is very patriarchal in nature. Men are the ones who make the most decisions in the economics of the community. The biggest problem that women face is domestic unpaid work. This takes up all their time, and it has also been a problem in terms of looking at the timing of markets, and also meeting for women's capacity building".



Bilach Jimale (Kenya):
Economy, Livelihoods and Working conditions of Pastoralist Women

Presentations:

- Salamatu Ardo — From Survival to Sustainability: Empowering Pastoralist Women through Value Addition and Livelihood Diversification
- Anna Sperling — About Autonomy
- Fatma Al Jabri — Women's Empowerment Through Entrepreneurship: Strengthening the Role of Omani Pastoralist Women
- Julia Foulkes-Taylor — Flax and Fleece: Sustainable Handcrafted Clothing
- Mariana Romana Moreno Reyna — Pastoralist Dedicated to Caprino Cultura in Charcas, San Luis Potosí, Mexico

Recommendations:

- Broaden definitions of entrepreneurship and innovation to recognise pastoralist women's productive labour, care, knowledge and ecological contributions.
- Improve women's access to land, assets, finance, grants, training, markets and processing technologies.
- Support local value chains, direct sales, cooperatives, product diversification and infrastructure for processing, storage and transport.
- Document and quantify pastoralist women's economic contributions to strengthen policy recognition and advocacy.
- Invest in women's and youth leadership and ensure their participation in economic and policy decision-making.
- Address structural barriers including unequal asset ownership, mobility constraints, water access, limited technology and time poverty linked to care responsibilities.

Anna Sperling, (Italy).

"I think that the first step of empowering pastoralist women in their communities is to recognize their precious work and the valuable service they donate silently every day to the society, whether it's producing healthy food or preserving biodiversity or simply beautifying the landscape... "



Anna Sperling (Italy):
Political Representation and Participation of Pastoralist Women

3.4.9 Pastoralist Women as Researchers

- Panel Convener: Bandana Shakya, ICIMOD

Session Overview:

This session highlighted pastoralist women as researchers, knowledge holders and innovators whose expertise is generated through everyday observation, experimentation, monitoring and problem-solving. Across diverse pastoral contexts, women demonstrated detailed knowledge of livestock, rangelands, water, weather, plants and changing environmental conditions. Regional experiences showed different ways this knowledge is produced and used. Research with pastoralist women in Somalia and other African countries highlighted women's roles in climate adaptation, household survival and peacebuilding, while also showing their continued exclusion from land and resource governance. In Namibia, participatory and community-based research illustrated the importance of treating pastoralist women as co-researchers rather than simply as sources of information. In India, Toda ecological knowledge embedded in songs, stories and everyday practices showed how oral traditions can help interpret seasonal and environmental change. In Peru, women's participatory monitoring of water, weather, vegetation and livestock demonstrated how local knowledge and new tools can be combined to support drought preparedness and improve resource management. Across the session, participants stressed that research is most relevant when pastoralist women take the lead in defining questions, generating and interpreting knowledge, and shaping the actions that follow. Indigenous and local knowledge should be brought into dialogue with scientific knowledge and appropriate technologies, while ensuring different ways of knowing are respected and that research remains accessible, accountable and useful to communities.

Presentations:

- Fozia Noor — Voices from the Rangelands: Pastoralist Women Rising for Land Rights, Climate Justice, Equity, and Peace
- Dolly Tuaandi — Pastoralist Women as Researchers in Namibia: Experiences from Participatory and Community-Based Research in Semi-Arid Regions
- Vasamalli Kurtaz — Traditional Folk Stories and Songs of the Native Toda Buffaloes
- Filomena Rojo Quispe — Guardians of the Water and Land: Participatory Science and Pastoralist Women's Leadership in the Face of Climate Change

Recommendations:

- Recognise pastoralist women as researchers and knowledge holders, and support their leadership throughout research processes.
- Expand participatory and community-based research in which pastoralist communities help define priorities, generate and interpret knowledge, and shape responses.
- Strengthen community-led environmental monitoring through appropriate tools, training and access to new technologies.
- Bring Indigenous and scientific knowledge into dialogue without displacing or undermining pastoralist knowledge systems.
- Ensure research findings are returned to communities in accessible and practically useful forms.
- Strengthen women's representation in research, policy and resource governance, while supporting intergenerational transmission of pastoralist knowledge, languages and practices.

Salamatu Umar Ardo, (Nigeria).

"I believe pastoralist women are not only cultural or traditional-keepers, they are also innovators and they should be involved in sustainable development across other nations. And I feel this gathering will bring more global collaboration where we would be able to learn more, explore more, help each other more".

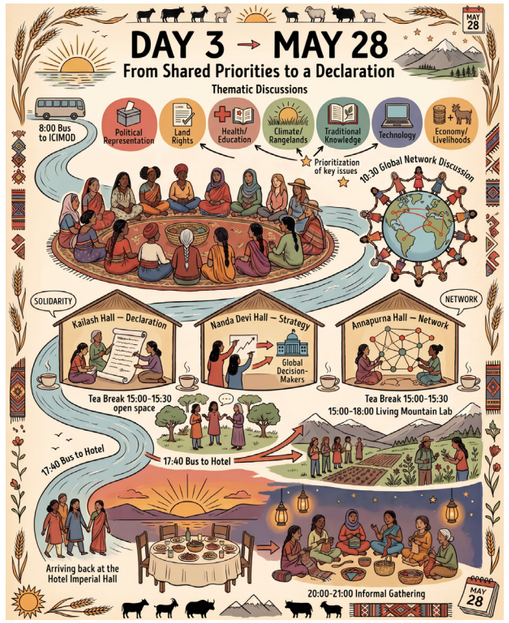


Salamatu Umar Ardo (Nigeria):
Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women

3.5 Concurrent Working Groups

3.5.1 Drafting a Global Declaration for Pastoralist Women

On Day 3, a smaller working group met to analyze the regional presentations, the inputs from thematic discussions and panel presentations, and to draft a declaration that was more in tune with the present but built on the initial Mera Declaration and the regional charters. During a plenary session of the Global Gathering, the women voted to call the final Declaration the "Kathmandu Declaration".



Graphic summary of Day 3 of the Gathering, created by participant Hillary Semeyan Lenantoiye (Kenya)

Writing a joint declaration which weaves together the hopes and dreams of women from the Steppes to the Savannas, the Puna to the Tibetan Plateau, the Prairies to the Sahel is no easy feat. A review and drafting group comprising of pastoralist women was selected by the regions to continue this work after Kathmandu, giving the declaration its final form. The regional representatives of this drafting committee are included in the table below:

Region	Representatives
Arctic	Alena Gerasimova, Inger Smuk
Australasia	Debbie Dowden
Europe	Ainhoa Lopez, Paula Jarque, Ibolya Sáfiánné, Pervin Savran, Sara Esposito, Anna Sperling, Claire Guyat
North America (Canada & USA)	Marie Gladue, Karla Hicks
North America (Mexico)	Mónica Yescenia Islava Corella, Nancy Hernandez Rodriguez, Maria Guadalupe Molina Siller
South America	Filomena Quispe Rojo, Mayra Quintero Brito, Martina Choquehuayta Cabana, Nora Lucia Ruiz, Norma Corahua Condori, Sonia Flores Mamani
North Africa & Middle East	Jamila Aljazi
Southern & East Africa	Bilach Jimale, Dolly Tuaandi
West and Central Africa	Djoude Issa, Habiba Gambo, Saoudata Walet Aboucrine
East Asia (China)	Sargai Sha, [pastoralist women will participate anonymously]
Mongolia & Central Asia	Khandaa Byamba, Salamat Dzhumabaeva, Eliza Ismailova, Bayarsaikhan Namsra
South Asia	Bhavana Rabari, Megha Sheth, Ang Furba Sherpa, Srijana Joshi

Next steps:

The pastoralist women present in Kathmandu agreed to share a draft Declaration with other pastoralist women and their organisations worldwide, and to be open to receiving suggestions before writing the final Declaration, which should begin to travel around the world through various meetings, events, and decision-making fora. After the Gathering in Kathmandu, a writing committee- made up of pastoralist women representatives from all regions - continued to work on the declaration through several online participatory meetings to refine the wording. A final version of the Kathmandu Declaration was ratified during an online meeting on August 7 2026, to which all delegates were invited to participate. The document remains a living document that will continue to evolve with the ongoing participation of pastoralist women worldwide.

At the time of publication of this report a number of steps had already been undertaken to disseminate the Kathmandu Declaration. These include:

1. At the UNCCD COP 17 in Mongolia, the final Kathmandu Declaration was handed over to the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD (Yasmine Fouad).
2. Pastoralist women delegates and members of the Gender Working Group and Program Committee spoke about the Declaration during the Gender Caucus session of the UNCCD's Main Committee and at a side event "From Mera 2010 to Kathmandu 2026: Pastoralist Women Unite for Land, Climate Change, Justice, Peace and Solidarity" organized by the WGPG.
3. The Kathmandu Declaration is referenced in the final UNCCD Rangelands and Pastoralists decision, and other key requests regarding women's rights to land are addressed in the Land Tenure decision.
4. The Declaration is available on the website of the Global Alliance for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) and there are plans to host it on the website of The Commission on Nomadic People.

Samina Batool, (Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan).

"Being here is a privilege to me, to represent my community. Also I am learning here that a lot of problems which we see in our region are common in every part of the world- like the climate change, the education... So we are learning a lot of things and hope the declaration goes well and there should be some policies for the women for the communities who do the nature work, who do the pastoralism, who have lots of animals with them. "



Samina Batool (Pakistan): Reflections on Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women

3.5.2 Outlining a Strategy for getting key messages to global decision-makers

The working group met in two dedicated sessions (May 28 and 29) to develop a comprehensive strategy for disseminating and advocating for the Kathmandu Declaration of Women Pastoralists.

The Kathmandu Declaration represents a landmark statement by women pastoralists from around the world, calling for the recognition of their rights, knowledge, and roles in sustainable land management, food systems, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience. This strategy plan aims to ensure the Declaration reaches and influences international, regional, national, and local decision-making processes.

During the two working sessions, the group accomplished the following:

- Determined that the need for developing strategy plans expands beyond just a Communications strategy; what is also needed is a Policy strategy and Resources Strategy.
- Documented the perspectives and priorities expressed by women pastoralists to begin outlining the strategy.
- Developed a Rapid Communications Action Plan for getting the Declaration spread far and wide.





Working Group Members

The Strategy Plan Working Group comprised women pastoralists from across the globe. The following individuals participated in the group's discussion on May 28 and 29:

Name	Country
Tungalag Ulambayar, Facilitator	Mongolia
Bilach Jimale, Facilitator	V Kenya
Elisabeth Huber-Sannwald, Documenter	Mexico
Mónica Yescenia Istava Corella	Mexico
Fati Walet Attaher	Mali
Rubina Cohen	United States
Reem Alzorquan	Jordan
Claire Guyat	France
Sara Esposito	Italy
Nicola (Nikki Gilder)	Australia
Charlotte Papastavran Brooks	Scotland
Sylvia Gobile	South Africa
Fozia Noor	Kenya
Bhavana Rabari	India
Nolufefe Mdingi	South Africa
Vasamalli Kurtaz	South India
Ariuntuya Damba	Mongolia
Byambagerel Baatar	Mongolia
Otgonchimeg Choimbol	Mongolia
Khandaa Byambaa	Mongolia

3.5.3 Designing a Global Network of Pastoralist Women

Discussions about forming a global network were iterative, weaving back and forth between discussions of the whole group in the plenary session, and discussions of the network working group. We began discussions of the network in the Day 3 Plenary, when we asked participants to consider three questions. 1) Why create a global network of pastoralist women—what is the objective? 2) Who should be part of the network (women only? pastoralists only?) and 3) How can we communicate and connect across geographies, cultures and languages? Participants broke into groups by language, discussed each question and then reported back to the whole group. The main points in response to each question are summarized below.

Why create a global network of pastoralist women?

- To empower and uplift one another. Our voices are louder together. Strength in unity.
- To share lessons learned and successes, identify common goals, and draw on the diversity of perspectives and experiences to find solutions globally.
- So we can become eligible as women to participate in global UN forums.
- Collective searches for global support (and funding). Create an emergency solidarity system in the face of global social crises and violence.
- Mutual help marketing products through a larger network.
- Recover and exchange traditional knowledge.

Who should be part of the network?

- Individuals as well as organizations.
- Include all herders engaged in pasture-based animal husbandry.
- The network will be composed entirely of women
- Some felt strongly that women pastoralists need to be the exclusive members of the network. Others felt that the network could be pastoralist-led but remain inclusive (mixed-membership) e.g., membership could be offered by invitation to researchers and NGO as resource providers and observers without voting rights. While some felt that the network needed the support of NGOs, technical and financial partners but that membership quotas should be provided e.g., no more than 20%.
- Questions remain about how to involve donor organizations, the United Nations, 'experts', and public and non-governmental organizations responsible for pastures and rangelands.

How can we communicate and stay in touch?

- WhatsApp and Telegram groups. Telegram has the advantage that the messages do not disappear.
- We need a website that allows people to request registration to the network and to share information.
- We need to hold periodic in-person events like this gathering.
- We need both in-person events and digital communities to keep connected.
- Form local networks and regional alliances that feed into the global network.

The plenary session closed with a **discussion of the advantages and disadvantages** of or challenges to forming a global network of pastoralist women. Participants wrote advantages and disadvantages on post-it notes. Advantages were largely discussed under why form a global network.

Challenges and Disadvantages:

- Challenging and time-consuming to organize and manage (needs capacity and resources). Resources needed to organize and sustain (costs).
- Diversity of contexts and interests. Difficulty in agreeing on priorities.
- Potential for internal conflicts and leadership struggles, including racial/ethnic tensions.
- Governance challenges, especially if a horizontal structure is adopted.
- Potential for misuse of personal information.
- Potential to be corrupted or coopted by people threatened by pastoralist women's empowerment.
- Communication challenges due to many languages, different time zones, remoteness and poor internet and cell phone connectivity.
- Need for strong regional networks in order to form a strong global network.
- Potential opposition or lack of support from decision-makers.

Day 3 Network Working Group Members of the Working Group:

Name	Country	Region	Founding Mothers
Julia Foulkes-Taylor	Australia	Australasia	yes
Anna Sperling	Italy (Germany)	Europe	yes
Hillary Semeyan Lenatoiye	Kenya	East & Southern Africa	yes
Maria Guadalupe	Mexico	North America (MX)	yes
Dalaibayar Gombo	Mongolia	Arctic & Reindeer Herders	yes
Munkhdelger Od	Mongolia	Mongolia & Central Asia	yes
Samina Batool	Pakistan	South Asia	yes
Dintle Maphala	South Africa	East & Southern Africa	yes
Chimi Wangmo	Bhutan	South Asia	
Cheychey Cheychey	Bhutan	South Asia	
Singay Wangmo	Bhutan	South Asia	
Sonia Flores Mamani	Bolivia	South America	
Saoudata Walet	Burkina Faso	West & Central Africa	
Fadimatou Balla	Cameroon	West & Central Africa	
Tess Ryder	Canada	North America (CA & US)	
Aimin	China	East Asia	
Rigzin Yangdol	India	South Asia	
Bhavana Desai	India	South Asia	

Name	Country	Region	Founding Mothers
Vasamilli Kurtaz	India	South Asia	
Nancy Hernandez	Mexico	North America (MX)	
Tserendolgor Jargalbold	Mongolia	Mongolia & Central Asia	
Oyunbileg Jigmid	Mongolia	Mongolia & Central Asia	
Mina Abdaoui	Morocco	North Africa & Middle East	
Ang Furba Sherpa	Nepal	South Asia	
Urgen Sangmo	Nepal	South Asia	
Salamatu Ardo Umar	Nigeria	West & Central Africa	
Alena Gerasimova	Norway (Russia)	Arctic & Reindeer Herders	
Adama Ka	Senegal	West & Central Africa	
Paula Jarque Azañedo	Spain	Europe	
Marie Gladue	United States (US) (Navajo Nation)	North America (CA & US)	
Brittany Bunce (Docu-menter(	South Africa	East & Southern Africa	
Maria Fernandez-Gimenez (Facilitator)	United States (US)	North America (CA & US)	
Maria Turiño (Facilitator)	Spain	Europe	

We began the working group meeting with reflections on the morning network session and goals for the working group over the next 2 days.

> *"I really like that we want to create an international network of women, but I think the first thing is to begin by regions. To succeed in creating an association by regions, we must have very clear objectives for each network. My objective for this day is that we are committed [to forming a global network]. That we have our minds clear. We may have conflicts over leadership or ideologies, but in the end we will find common ground to focus on and move ahead."*
> *(Maria Guadalupe Molina Siller)*

Goals for the network working group included: 1) establish a steering committee with regional representation, 2) regions get together before we leave Kathmandu, 3) agree on next steps and timeline for network building, 4) make a list of digital tools that could help keep us connected, 5) discuss/ decide on membership issues, 6) discuss governance, 7) discuss the possible role for an administrative organization.

We then divided into smaller groups by language to discuss:
1) purpose and activities of a network, 2) membership, and 3) governance.



Each group discussed, then reported back to the whole working group, which discussed the recommendations further. In the second session of the afternoon, we continued these discussions and three WG members agreed to present the preliminary discussion and framework at the Day 4 Plenary. We also devised a short "menti-meter" survey to ask the full plenary group for targeted feedback on key questions where members of the working group held diverse opinions, or where they wanted to know if other delegates agreed with or supported their preliminary decisions. The following table includes the questions and responses.

Summary of menti-meter poll during the plenary session:

Question	Answer Options	Total Votes (Count)	Percentage
1. Pastoralist women will be the voting and decision-making members with non-pastoralists as affiliate members who do not participate in decision-making.	Agree	54	90
	Do not agree	6	10
2. There will be 2 representatives from each region who serve 2 year terms with a maximum of two terms (4 years).	Agree	46	94
	Do not agree	3	6
3. Should decision-making be by consensus (discuss, debate and agree) or by voting?	Consensus	4	7.4
	Voting	3	5.6
	Consensus with voting as a back-up	47	87
4. Should the network be a formal organization or informal network?	Formal	46	76.7
	Informal	14	23.3
5. Should the network seek an external organization to assist with administration, at least initially?	Yes	44	78.6
	No	12	21.4

> *"Despite cultural differences, the common denominator brought us together and we spoke the same language: the language of pastoralism. The objective of the Global Network and the Kathmandu Declaration are close to my heart. It was an unforgettable moment, and I hope we will see each other again for the continuation. I thank ICIMOD, which organised and successfully carried out this Global Gathering without fail".*
> *(Fadimatou Balla, Cameroon)*





In the last Working Group session before the closing plenary, the group focused on refining their initial framework and identifying a group of "founding mothers", representatives from most (though not all) regions who will meet over the next 3 months to further develop the proposed framework for membership, governance, communication and administration.

4. Outcomes and Final Products: Declaration, Strategy & Global Network

"For me and my community, the Kathmandu Declaration is an important outcome because it reflects our common priorities and strengthens our call for greater recognition, inclusion, and support for pastoralist women, men, and youth".
(Judith Singibala, Tanzania)

Khandaa Byambaa (Mongolia).



"I consider this a truly historic and significant event for us women herders... We have experienced a truly inspiring and heartening moment, where people from all walks of life have commended us, the women herders. They have recognized and valued our multifaceted contributions to society, such as producing healthy food, preserving biodiversity, and standing up against climate change, thereby instilling us with great hope... We also had productive discussions about future cooperation, ultimately leading to the adoption of the updated Kathmandu Declaration. I would like to take this opportunity to call upon women engaged in nomadic pastoralism around the world to unite under the Kathmandu Declaration".

Byambaa Khandaa, (Mongolia): Uniting Under the Kathmandu Declaration

4.1 Kathmandu Declaration of Pastoralist Women

8 August 2026

Our Planet, Our Land, Our Livestock

We, the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist women gathered here in Kathmandu from 26 – 29th May 2026, united across the world and the different continents, declare that pastoralism is not of the past but a solution for the future and that pastoralist women are at the heart of the solution. We stand up and speak out in one voice to claim our space, shape our future, and transform our planet.

Although reliable data are lacking, it is estimated that pastoralism is practised by between 200 and 500 million people worldwide, encompassing nomadic communities, transhumant herders, and agro-pastoralists (UNEP, 2015), managing around 1 billion animals, and is central to sustainable food systems, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, cultural heritage, identity and continuity. Pastoralism is the most widespread land use on Earth, and the rangelands we live on and steward cover over half of the Earth's land surface. We therefore call upon international, national, local, and customary leaders and institutions; civil society organizations; and women's groups to acknowledge the essential role of pastoralist women in caring for the planet and the environment, and contributing to national and regional economies, social well-being, peace-making, and climate resilience by nurturing land, livestock, and communities.

Recognising the diversity and continuum of pastoral systems across regions, shaped by ecological conditions, cultural traditions, governance systems, and regional economies, we call for extensive, land-based pastoral practices to be properly valued and supported for their unique contributions through legislation, climate and livestock policies, and through public investment. While our production systems may differ across regions, we share the same commitment to caring for the land, our animals, our communities and the territories and ecosystems that sustain us and recognize that our diversity strengthens the concept of pastoralism by making it more representative of the women it seeks to serve. Grounded in local and Indigenous pastoralist knowledge, these practices use herd mobility to make sustainable and productive use of natural vegetation over time (seasons) and across landscapes, including in areas where crop cultivation is limited. They support animal and human wellbeing, diverse locally adapted breeds (resilient to local conditions and disease), food sovereignty and local food cultures.

We pastoralist women will proudly mentor, inspire and empower the next generation to build a resilient future in pastoralism, ensuring the enduring legacy of family, culture and sustainable stewardship of the world's rangelands.

We build on the following key themes:

1. Recognition, Rights and Self-Determination
2. Mobility and Land Rights
3. Economy, Food Sovereignty, Livelihoods, and Working Conditions
4. Environment and Climate Justice
5. Pastoralist Women's Knowledge, Research, Learning and Intergenerational Continuity
6. Health, Education, Social Support, Infrastructure and Technology
7. Safety, Security and Dignity
8. Representation and Decision-Making
9. Peace-Building and Conflict Resolution
10. Monitoring and Accountability

1. Recognition, Rights and Self-Determination

1.1 **Recognize** the invaluable contributions of pastoralist women as herders, as livestock keepers, as stewards of land, environment, ecological services, and climate, as caregivers, as strategists, as innovators, as peace-builders, and as human rights and environmental defenders.

1.2 **Ensure** that pastoralist women's inherent rights are respected and that we are afforded equal access to land, livestock, financial services, education, and information and equal opportunities to participate in decisions that affect us and our families and communities. Review and, where necessary, revoke laws that discriminate against pastoralism and pastoralist women.

1.3 **Respect, recognise, promote, and protect** pastoralist communities' rights, based on the fundamental right to self-determination provided for in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

1.4 **Extend the principle of equal rights and self-determination** not only to Indigenous pastoralist communities but also to other groups who may have entered pastoralism more recently.

1.5 **Promote and protect** the rights of pastoralist women in a manner that respects and safeguards the rights of all people.

1.6 **Implement** legal instruments, mechanisms and processes that promote the rights of pastoralist women and girls across all UN conventions and commissions (UNCCD, UNFCCC, UNCBD, CSW).

1.7 **Implement and enforce** existing laws and policies that support pastoralist women and establish our legal rights.

2. Mobility and Land Rights

2.1 **Uphold** pastoralist women's rights to inherit and own land and implement supportive laws, policies, and customary reforms to guarantee these rights.

2.2 **Officially recognize** the rights of pastoralist communities to access and sustainably manage rangelands, water and other natural resources.

2.3 **Prevent, prohibit and halt** laws, policies, land speculation and irresponsible and unjust development projects that dispossess pastoralist communities, degrade pastoral lands, restrict mobility, undermine important sacred and cultural sites, threaten pastoralist livelihoods or damage the natural resources on which they depend. These include, among others, mining, energy, carbon offset projects and large-scale renewable energy developments such as wind and solar installations, transmission infrastructure, polluting factories and industries, the expansion of crop agriculture into pastoral lands, and the imposition of wildlife reserves and other protected areas that restrict pastoralists' access to and sustainable use of land and natural resources.

2.4 **Pastoralist women must have the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)** and meaningful participation in all decisions affecting our lands, waters, territories, mobility routes, livelihoods and cultural heritage.

2.5 **Recognize pastoralist mobility (transhumant, nomadic, and micro mobility), including seasonal grazing systems and traditional migration routes, as a fundamental right,** which should be protected and not criminalized. When designing regional and international policies, treaties and investment projects, respect and recognise traditional grazing territories and migration patterns. Do not build walls or barriers- physical or artificial- that deny access to grazing, water, sacred sites or markets and that negatively affect pastoralist livelihoods and wellbeing.

2.6 **Account** for the transborder movement of pastoralists, especially in conflict zones, and provide help in coordinating safe movement across difficult borders.

2.7 **Recognize, respect, and protect** customary land tenure systems and the mobility rights of pastoralist communities as essential components of sustainable pastoralism. Where appropriate, identify, safeguard, and

maintain pastoralist migration routes and livestock corridors, including those traversing urban and peri-urban areas, in close partnership with pastoralist communities and their representative organizations. Such measures should facilitate safe and equitable seasonal mobility while ensuring continued access to grazing lands, water resources, and other essential natural resources, in accordance with national legislation and applicable international human rights standards.

3. Economy, Food Sovereignty, Livelihoods, and Working Conditions

3.1 **Recognise and support** pastoralist women's care work, which takes place within challenging contexts - in remote areas, often on the frontlines of climate change, with limited access to social services. Our private life, social life and working life are intertwined and determine how deeply we are capable of being involved in everything.

3.2 **Recognise and support** the community-based social economy of many pastoralist communities, which draws on our own internal ways of doing things, such as caring for the local area, mutual support and collective work, which helps to strengthen our communities.

3.3 **Design and implement** proactive policies that support generational succession and young women's involvement in pastoralist systems.

3.4 **Support** us in defending and achieving food sovereignty and ensuring food security, (especially during times of crisis). As pastoralist women, we need control over our livestock, production systems and products, and to make decisions about the nutrition of our families and animals. For this we need secure access to resources, including traditional grazing lands and watering points.

3.5 **Include** pastoralist women in decision-making at all economic levels, from production systems and ownership to benefitting from the profits of our production.

3.6 **Recognize and support** the multiple contributions of pastoralist systems, including adding value through nature and climate positive practices, increasing biodiversity, and conserving the genetic diversity of domesticated species.

3.7 **Support** the development of pastoralist value chains and the promotion of pastoralists' products and conducive local and global markets. This includes processing, storage, certification, product branding, marketing, and improved market access. Strengthening value chains will

enhance women's economic opportunities, increase household incomes, and improve the long-term sustainability of pastoral livelihoods.

3.8 **Ensure** that raw materials can remain in the hands of women, to permit local value addition if desired.

3.9 **Facilitate and encourage** local processing, direct and on-farm sales, and provide supporting infrastructure such as local and mobile dairy and meat processing facilities.

3.10 **Encourage responsible and fair use** of mechanisms such as nature repair markets and payment for ecosystem services for the benefits provided by extensive livestock farming (fire prevention, seed dispersal, soil fertilisation, rural population retention, promotion of biodiversity, etc.).

3.11 **Design and implement** financial systems, credit facilities, insurance schemes and investment opportunities that are dynamic and flexible to cater to pastoralist women's needs and youth-led pastoral initiatives.

4. Environment and Climate Justice

4.1 **Recognise** pastoralism as a biodiversity- and climate-compatible and climate-adaptive production system and ensure the meaningful participation of pastoralist women in national climate and biodiversity action planning (NAPs, NDCs) and climate governance.

4.2 **Acknowledge and strengthen** the leadership and contributions of pastoralist women across diverse pastoral and grazing systems in the sustainable management, restoration, monitoring, and governance of rangelands, ensuring that our knowledge, experience, and leadership are reflected in policies and decision-making.

4.3 **Protect and restore** degraded rangelands in partnership with pastoralist communities by protecting native vegetation and encouraging community-led rehabilitation initiatives. This can be done **by supporting** community-led rangeland restoration programs that include pastoralist women in their design and governance.

4.4 **Promote** sustainable grazing practices, ecosystem restoration and the **prevention** of land degradation, desertification and the spread of invasive species.

4.5 **Promote** integrated and participatory rangeland management approaches that combine scientific knowledge with Indigenous and local knowledge systems to improve ecosystem health and pastoral livelihoods.

4.6 **Increase** investments in water management, rainwater harvesting, and rangeland restoration.

4.7 **Acknowledge** that climate change impacts pastoralists, Indigenous communities and pastoralist women disproportionately and recognize that those who are historically least responsible for climate change often bear its worst impacts.

4.8 **Ensure** that climate, conservation and development policies do not undermine pastoralists' access to critical pastoral resources and our customary systems of sustainable land stewardship. **Establish safeguards** to identify and prevent irreversible impacts on pastoralist lands, mobility systems and livelihoods.

4.9 **Implement** climate risk assessment as a basis for planning and implementing climate adaptation measures. Such assessments should take into account the specific characteristics of different rangeland ecosystems, including mountain pastures, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts, to ensure evidence-based and locally adapted/developed adaptation planning.

4.10 **Design and implement** climate adaptation and mitigation strategies that account for how climate change affects men and women differently and help strengthen the resilience of pastoralist communities.

4.11 **Ensure** climate justice for Indigenous groups and pastoralist communities disproportionately affected by climate change, including glacier melt and loss of rangelands and grazing land, while recognizing their contributions to the stewardship and resilience of these ecosystems.

4.12 **Make provisions for** compensation and support after climate extreme events and climate disasters especially for communities and groups who are disproportionately affected.

4.13 **Make** climate early warning systems accessible to mobile communities by making them available in local languages and broadcasting them on local channels.

5. Pastoralist Women's Knowledge, Research, Learning and Intergenerational Continuity

5.1 **Appreciate** and value pastoralist women's unique knowledge. As producers and caregivers, we manage, solve problems, strategize, and network to improve livelihoods in many different ways. We call for inclusion of pastoralist women's knowledge and research in policy-making processes and programs through pastoralist women's active participation in those processes.

5.2 **Facilitate** the preservation, documentation, and transmission of traditional knowledge systems and cultural practices across generations, assuring that Indigenous and pastoral communities retain control over our knowledge. **Develop** policies to safeguard local cultures and identities, and to promote women's wisdom and dignity.

5.3 **Enable** the participation of pastoralist women in capacity building in different spheres with the focus on adapting to pastoralist women's needs, not the other way around.

5.4 **Provide** capacity development for pastoralist women through education and training in climate risk assessment, climate adaptation planning, and sustainable natural resource management to enable women to actively participate in decision-making processes, identify and respond proactively to climate-related risks, support climate adaptation planning, reduce risks to lives and livelihoods, and to strengthen the resilience of our families and pastoral communities.

5.5 **Encourage pastoralist women-led and-designed** research, and respect our data sovereignty by ensuring data is returned to and controlled by the community.

5.6 **Recognize and promote** pastoralist women as equal partners and co-researchers in the generation, documentation, and application of knowledge by ensuring our meaningful participation in defining research priorities, designing methodologies, collecting and interpreting data, and determining how research findings are used to advance the priorities, rights, and well-being of our communities.

5.7 **Support** participatory and community-led research that values Indigenous and local knowledge systems and strengthens the intergenerational transmission of pastoralist women's knowledge, skills, innovations, and cultural practices to younger generations so that women and girls can value their heritage, strengthen their skills, and see a future in pastoralism.

5.8 **Promote** technologies and innovations that meet the needs of pastoralist women and ensure they are easily accessible and equitable.

5.9 **Strengthen** inter-institutional community-based collaborations between universities, research institutes, CSOs, pastoralist networks, and others, that strengthen pastoralist communities' identity and agency, and enhance respectful and equitable dialogue among different knowledge types and knowledge holders.

6. Health, Education, Social Support, Infrastructure and Technology

6.1 **Design** services and infrastructure for pastoralists and pastoralist women that are adapted to our realities and treat them with respect and dignity. Women pastoralists should have the same access as men to information about services we have a right to, delivered in our languages and with an understanding of our cultures.

6.2 **Ensure that mobile services,** such as healthcare, veterinary services, social protection, and education, are made available to pastoralist women-especially to **mobile** communities along **migratory** routes.

6.3 **Ensure** the provision of care services for women, children, young people and older people. Promote programs on comprehensive sexual health education, including sexually transmitted infections, and on violence and addiction prevention.

6.4 **Create and enforce laws** that prevent and prohibit child marriage, female genital mutilation and child prostitution.

6.5 **Facilitate processes and policies** tailored to the specific needs of pastoralist women, including important life and reproductive stages.

6.6 **Provide necessary hard and soft** infrastructure, including road networks, watering points, financing, and digital connectivity to enable access to services and markets.

6.7 **Invest** in building the resilience and capacity of pastoralist communities, particularly women and youth, by improving access to education, training, climate information, digital technologies, financial services, markets, community-based monitoring, and early warning systems.

6.8 **Reduce unnecessary administrative and bureaucratic barriers** that prevent pastoralist communities, and especially pastoralist women, from accessing public services, markets, financial systems and legal rights.

7. Safety, Security and Dignity

7.1 **Ensure the protection** of pastoralist women from threats, harassment, criminalization, judicial persecution and reprisals arising from our legitimate advocacy to protect lands, water, biodiversity, cultural heritage and pastoralist livelihoods.

7.2 **Guarantee** pastoralist women safe and meaningful participation in public decision-making processes without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

7.3 **Enact and enforce** laws, policies, and programs that prevent and punish gender-based violence towards and discrimination against pastoralist women and girls, while engaging pastoralist men and boys to transform harmful gender norms and practices.

7.4 **Support** the mental health and psychosocial well-being of pastoralist women through culturally appropriate, mobile, and community-based services to restore our dignity in society.

7.5 **Provide safety and security to pastoralists,** especially in isolated and remote areas and on transhumant routes. Because violence affects men and women differently, design strategies that account for this and strengthen the resilience of women and girl pastoralists. Enforce laws that guarantee the safety of women, especially along migratory routes, border areas and conflict zones.

7.6 **Ensure** pastoralist women's access to justice and remedy through legal aid, mobile courts, reporting mechanisms that reach mobile communities, and full standing in customary forums handling cases of violence against women.

8. Representation and Decision-Making

8.1 **Ensure** that pastoralist women have equal opportunities to participate meaningfully and be fairly represented in leadership and decision-making at all levels (traditional, local, regional, national and international). Our voices, knowledge, and priorities should be recognized and reflected in decisions that affect our lives, livelihoods, and communities, including those related to peacebuilding, land and resource rights, agriculture, biodiversity conservation, land degradation, climate action, and sustainable rangeland management.

8.2 **Ensure** full membership and leadership of pastoralist women in the customary and community institutions that govern pastoral life, including grazing and rangeland committees, water user associations, cooperatives,

livestock market committees and traditional councils. Similarly, ensure full participation and leadership of pastoralist women in organizations such as national herder, breed, cattle-grower and wool-grower associations.

8.3 **Promote mechanisms,** including quotas or reserved seats where appropriate, to ensure the representation of pastoralists, including pastoralist women, in national and local legislative and decision-making bodies.

8.4 Recognize pastoralist women's multiple care responsibilities for livestock, family and community and **develop approaches that make it easier for pastoralist women to attend meetings,** take part in leadership, and participate in political processes without carrying the burden alone.

8.5 **Provide dedicated funds** to enable pastoralist women's direct participation in decision-making processes that require travel and time away from home.

8.6 **Provide leadership training** tailored to pastoralist women to enhance our capacity to participate effectively in all levels of governance. At the same time, work to change cultural paradigms that silence women's voices.

9. Peace-Building and Conflict Resolution

9.1 **Ensure** the meaningful participation of pastoralist women in processes of peace-building and negotiations, conflict resolution and peace caravans, as well as post-conflict reconciliation and healing.

9.2 **Recognize and strengthen** the role and capacities of pastoralist women in conflict prevention, including our role in local and cross-border committees and customary dispute forums, to resolve conflicts over land, livestock and natural resources.

9.3 **Recognize** existing traditional ways of solving conflicts and the strategies that women use in conflict resolutions within our communities.

9.4 **Prevent** the criminalization of pastoralist mobility under counter-terrorism and security frameworks, especially at checkpoints and border zones in conflict-affected areas.

9.5 **Facilitate** visa access and accreditation for pastoralist women and youth from conflict-affected states, and support the return and reintegration of women and youth displaced by violence.

9.6 **Provide** restocking or compensation for herds lost to raids and violence.

10. Monitoring and Accountability

10.1 **Support** the development of a mechanism to monitor the development and implementation of policies affecting and protecting pastoralists and specifically pastoralist women. The mechanism must include a process for considering complaints about violations of pastoralist rights, mechanisms to hold countries accountable, and pastoralist women as members.

10.2 **Establish** a participatory monitoring and evaluation process to track the implementation of commitments, measure progress on pastoralist women's rights, ensure accountability, and strengthen women's participation in decision-making processes.

Specifically for the Declaration

10.3 **Develop** a mechanism for review and update the Declaration that includes participation of pastoralist women from all regions.

10.4 **Ensure** regular monitoring of the implementation of the Declaration through measurable indicators, periodic progress reviews, and knowledge exchange among countries and pastoralist organizations.

10.5 **Identify** an institutional host for the mechanism and agree on a timeline, with states and institutions reporting on implementation at regular intervals and a first review no later than three years from adoption.

10.6 **Ensure** the mechanism is adequately and sustainably resourced, including funding for pastoralist women's participation in its work.

In Conclusion

We draw upon the foundation laid by The Mera Declaration of 2010, an outcome of the first global gathering of pastoralist women, organized by WAMIP[1], and the regional pastoralist women's declarations and charters developed by the different regions of the world in 2025 and 2026 leading up to IYRP and IYWF and the Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women in 2026.

We respect and support pastoralist women's voices and concerns in all parts of the world.

We commit to harnessing our knowledge and passing on our skills and traditions to future generations, ensuring that our children and their children continue to benefit from this wisdom.

1 World Alliance of Mobile and Indigenous Peoples and Pastoralists

We also commit to sharing our knowledge with new women who enter pastoralism.

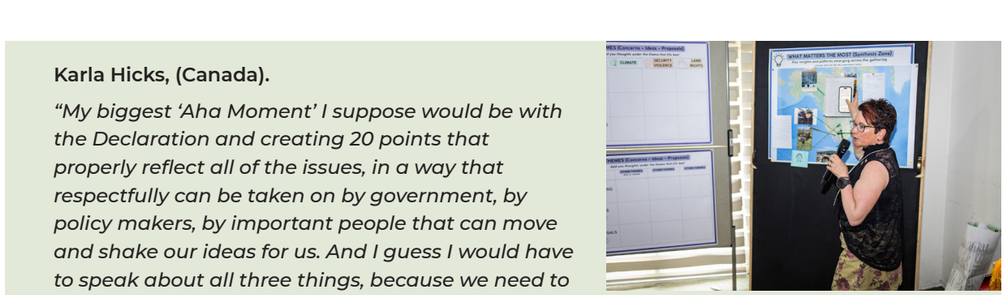
We promise to encourage and support pastoralist women and youth networks and leadership platforms to foster knowledge sharing and exchange.

The voices, struggles, knowledge and stories of thousands of women form the living foundation of this declaration and we pledge to work together in solidarity and ensure no pastoralist woman is left behind.

THIS VERSION HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED/ENDORSED BY PASTORALIST WOMEN OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES FROM EVERY IYRP REGION ON AUGUST 8, 2026. IT MAY BE SHARED AND SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS A LIVING DOCUMENT THAT WILL CONTINUE TO EVOLVE WITH ONGOING PARTICIPATION BY PASTORALIST WOMEN FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

Minor revisions to correct numbering and slightly modify wording were made on August 15, 2026.

A pdf version of the declaration can be downloaded here:
https://www.anthra.org/publications/seminar-proceedings/kathamandu-declaration/



Karla Hicks, (Canada).

"My biggest 'Aha Moment' I suppose would be with the Declaration and creating 20 points that properly reflect all of the issues, in a way that respectfully can be taken on by government, by policy makers, by important people that can move and shake our ideas for us. And I guess I would have to speak about all three things, because we need to get the strategy right for getting the message out, but then the networking- we can't lose this group of women, we can't lose this idea or thought train, we have to keep this rolling down the roads. So, whatever I can do to help with that, I would love to do, but I am just amazed and mesmerized by who I have met and the things I have learned, and the things I have heard".

Karla Hicks, (Canada):
Uniting Under the Kathmandu Declaration

4.2 Strategy Plan

4.2.1 Strategy Framework, Communication Plan and Implementation Strategy

During the working sessions, the group established the foundational framework for how the Kathmandu Declaration would be disseminated and advocated. The group began by identifying key target audiences and then developed both long-term and short-term strategic approaches and actions.

Target Audiences:

The working group identified four primary audiences for the Declaration:

- UN bodies and Global Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- Research and Scientific Institutions
- Governments at all levels (national, regional, and local)
- Pastoral Communities and their Organizations

Long-Term Strategy Outline:

The group developed a high-level outline for long-term strategic engagement, focused on achieving systemic change and lasting policy influence:

Leadership and Institutional Engagement

- Who Leads?: National governments, multinational organizations, intergovernmental bodies, strengthen engagement with WAMIP, Women's Pastoral Networks, and international organizations (ICIMOD, League of Pastoral Peoples, European Shepherd Network, Campesina, International organizations, Women's Associations, Organic Farms).
- Pursue formal recognition and approval of the Declaration at the UN level.

Key Tools and Mechanisms:

- The Declaration itself as the central advocacy instrument
- UN Conferences and Parliament of Pastoral Communities
- Establishment of a United Nations International Day of Pastoral Women.
- Studies and assessments
- Social media, press, presentations, and world events

Identified Challenges:

- Lack of direct contacts with decision-makers and officials
- Contacts and officials not prioritizing our agenda
- Corruption
- Lack of knowledge on access to global funding
- Difficulty to engage people to get involved
- Securing adequate funding for campaigns and advocacy
- Building partnerships and agreements to sustain the work

Actions:

- Commission studies and assessments to strengthen the evidence base for the Declaration.
- Engage media and press for maximum visibility at world events.

- Women pastoralists want to make sure their businesses have sufficient income to afford the campaigns for communications, receive skills training, advocate for trade agreements, access funding for network membership and more.

4.2.2 Comprehensive Communication Strategy

The Strategy Working Group developed a comprehensive communication strategy building on existing networks and past experiences:

- Continue building on what has been developed out of the Mera Convention (2010), have briefs and assessments with the team that drafted the Mera declaration (what can we learn from how Mera was implemented and from other experiences, review what worked and what was missing).
- Obtain a brief from the Pastoralist Women Network Group outlining roles, responsibilities, goals, and needs; explore how the two working groups can work together.
- Establish a more formal working group for Strategy, including people with (professional) experience in: Strategy, Communications, Community Building, and Research.
- Identify the actions required to strengthen, refine, and advance the Declaration.

4.2.3 Rapid Communications Action Plan

The short-term goal was identified as the widespread distribution of the Declaration and its key messages. The following actions were prioritized:

- Utilize current networks of known contacts: WAMIP, Women Pastoralists Network, ICIMOD, League of Pastoral Peoples, International Land Coalition (ILC), and the Gender Working Group of GAIYRP.
- Utilize the > 90 women pastoralists present at the gathering to help with distribution of the Kathmandu Declaration.
- Create a detailed Communications Toolkit to facilitate rapid distribution including: Social media graphics, Hashtags, Key Messages document, Flyer (for email or text distribution), Press Release template (customizable for local and international media), Links to the Declaration website and resources, Events Calendar.
- Conduct media relations — recruit media experts to help share the Declaration with wider audiences.
- Identify international events, conferences, etc. that we can have a presence, presentations, workshops, displays.
- Deliver presentations to governmental organizations and regional bodies
- Organize workshops and displays to raise awareness at the community level.

4.2.4 Rapid Communications — Specific Tasks

- Build a spreadsheet of communications activities and deadlines.
- Determine the campaign launch day once the Declaration is finalized.
- Ensure all communications materials are organized and ready for use.
- Develop a communications contact list.
- Develop a communications calendar — to be shared with partner organizations, networks, and the >90 pastoralist women.
- Make all materials (Communications Toolkit) accessible via Google Drive (and/or other platform to assure access).
- Support women pastoralists in presenting the Declaration to government officials, communities, and other stakeholders.

4.2.5 Next Steps Identified

The Gender Working Group of GAIYRP was called upon to take a leadership role:

- Coordinate and help establish the Strategy Working Group.
- Communicate progress to the full network of women pastoralist present at the gathering.
- Communicate what is needed from the broader community to make this a success.
- Activate other organizations to help build on this momentum.
- Key message: The success of the Declaration depends on the active engagement of all of us—stay engaged and help spread the word.

Indicative 12-Month Action Plan:

Timeframe	Priority Action	Expected Output
0–3 months	Finalize the Declaration, communication toolkit, and implementation coordination structure.	Final Declaration, toolkit, focal points, and coordination mechanism in place.
3–6 months	Launch global and regional advocacy, translate the Declaration, and present it at priority forums.	Campaign launched, translated versions available, and policy visibility achieved.
6–9 months	Develop policy briefs, country action plans, case studies, and donor engagement materials.	Policy products, country plans, evidence products, and donor briefs completed.
9–12 months	Review implementation progress and update the strategy based on learning and emerging opportunities.	First implementation review completed and next-year priorities agreed.

4.2.6 Summary and Conclusions

The following summary was prepared by the working group rapporteurs:

Short-Term Strategy Focus:

The short-term strategy plan focuses on ensuring that the Kathmandu Declaration is widely disseminated and strategically positioned to influence international, regional, national, and local decision-making processes. It should also serve as the first phase of a broader implementation strategy that translates the Declaration into advocacy, policy engagement, women-led mobilization, resource mobilization, and measurable institutional uptake.

Priority 1 – Launch the Declaration

The first priority is to finalize and "launch" the Declaration prior to COP17 in Mongolia, accompanied by communication materials such as policy briefs, key messages, presentation slides, and social media resources. Participants of the GGWP and partner organizations will actively distribute these materials through their existing networks and communication channels.

Priority 2 – Secure Visibility at International Forums

A second priority is to secure visibility for the Declaration within major international policy and scientific forums. This includes identifying opportunities to present the Declaration at global conferences, policy dialogues, and institutional meetings, particularly those related to pastoralism, rangelands, land governance, climate change, biodiversity, food systems, and women's rights. Engagement with international organizations, governments, research institutions, and development agencies will be pursued through targeted outreach and tailored communication materials.

Priority 3 – Establish a Strategy and Advocacy Working Group

The strategy calls for the establishment of a dedicated Strategy and Advocacy Working Group to coordinate implementation, identify emerging opportunities for advocacy, partnerships, and resource mobilization, support communication efforts, and facilitate engagement with key stakeholders. An international calendar of conferences, policy events, and advocacy opportunities will be developed to guide coordinated participation and outreach efforts.

Priority 4 – Monitor and Track Impact

Finally, the strategy emphasizes the need to monitor (short-, mid-, and long-term) dissemination and policy uptake by tracking presentations, media coverage, organizational endorsements, policy references, and other indicators of influence.

Through coordinated communication, strategic engagement, sustained advocacy, and a clear implementation framework, the Declaration can become an effective instrument for elevating pastoralist women's voices and ensuring their priorities are reflected in future policies, programs, funding decisions, and international agendas.

4.2.7 Next Steps

Based on the deliberations across both sessions, the following next steps were agreed upon:

Immediate (Pre-COP17)

- Finalize the text of the Kathmandu Declaration.
- Develop and distribute the Communications Toolkit (social media graphics, key messages, flyer, press release template, website links).
- Build the communications contact list and spreadsheet of activities.
- Set up a shared Google Drive for all materials.
- Formally launch the Declaration with a coordinated communications campaign.

Short-Term (0–6 months)

- Present the Declaration at COP17 in Mongolia and other international forums.
- Identify and submit proposals to present at global conferences on pastoralism, climate change, biodiversity, food systems, and women's rights.
- Establish the Strategy and Advocacy Working Group with clear roles and responsibilities.
- Develop an international calendar of advocacy opportunities.
- Begin targeted outreach to international organizations, governments, and research institutions.

Medium-Term (6–18 months)

- Track and monitor dissemination: presentations delivered, media coverage, endorsements received.
- Build coalitions with WAMIP, ILC, League of Pastoral Peoples, European Shepherd Network, and others.
- Commission studies and assessments to strengthen the Declaration's evidence base.
- Pursue formal recognition of the Declaration at the UN level.
- Expand the global network of women pastoralist ambassadors beyond the initial 100.

Long-Term (18+ months)

- Achieve formal policy references to the Declaration in international agreements.
- Establish the World Day for Pastoral Women as a recognized international day.
- Pursue formal recognition of the Declaration within relevant United Nations processes.
- Build a sustainable, self-funded advocacy infrastructure for women pastoralists globally.

This is a report compiled by the working group documenter based on the group discussions and plenary presentations. It is intended for review, revision and feedback by all working group members and facilitators so that all ideas are adequately represented in this document.

Global Gathering of Women Pastoralists (GGWP)
| Kathmandu, Nepal | May 2026

Arenda Saal, Namaqualand, (South Africa).

"The Strategy supports the creation of women, recognition of the rights of pastoralist women, the role of women in the governance of land resources, and in the planning and implementation of the future of their families. The most important lesson is that the voices of pastoralist women were clear and loud, and that I'm a part of the Kathmandu Declaration!"



Arenda Saal, Namaqualand, (South Africa): Uniting Under the Kathmandu Declaration

4.3 Plan for the Global Network of Pastoralist Women

4.3.1 Initial Agreements on a Global Network of Pastoralist Women

Purpose:

A platform to empower women pastoralists and recognise their work globally.

- Strengthen collective voice of pastoralist women
- Advocate for pastoralist women's rights. Improve the social status and decision-making power of pastoralist women in pastoralist communities
- Represent pastoralist women at a global level
- A channel for women to share knowledge, experiences, mutual support and resources

- Be a global voice for policy, while still representing regional diversity and different contexts and issues
- Unite organisations of herder women from different countries
- Strengthen economic empowerment of pastoralist women
- Support pastoralist women's leadership development
- Ensure local, national, regional and eventually global representation
- Recognize pastoralist women's roles in food security and sovereignty and responding to climate change
- Support pastoralist women experiencing humanitarian crises, displacement and in peace-building
- Value pastoralist women' s voices on matters of land protection and inheritance of livestock, land and natural resources from one generation to the next.

Hillary Semeyan Lenantoiye, Samburu County (Kenya).

"I can say that one of the things that has stood out for me is recognition. Most of the pastoralists in this gathering have spoken about recognition and the importance of ensuring that pastoralist women even from the grassroots level are recognised, not only in these sectors of the common policies, but also in climate spaces as ecological stewards. And Pastoralists have the most indigenous knowledge that they can be able to transfer and merge in with technology".



Hillary Semeyan Lenantoiye (Kenya): Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women, Nepal 2026

4.3.2 Potential Activities

- Value chain addition and market linkages (e.g., e-commerce)
- Organise communication, meetings and training
- Promote and protect traditional knowledge and pastoralist and indigenous practices
- Advocate for recognition of pastoralist women and their work
- Create capacity building opportunities
- Awareness-building about how to use the network and technology
- Fundraising/ resource mobilization
- Raise awareness about and work to prevent gender-based violence

4.3.3 Membership

- Membership is for pastoralist women only, who will make all decisions
- Other people such as researchers, NGO and CSO staff, and allied practitioners and professionals may have affiliate status. Their roles must be clearly defined.
- Proposed small membership fee ($20 per year) to demonstrate member commitment and help fund network activities (Bhavana Desai)
- To be decided:
  - Definition of pastoralist women (self identification? Owns or manages any number or type of livestock?)

4.3.4 Structure and Governance

- Steering committee composed of 2 representatives from each region, and one at large representative
- Representatives serve 2-year terms with a maximum of 2 terms (4 years)
- Steering committee should include both youth and elders
- Decision-making by consensus with voting as a back-up (Decided in a poll held in plenary)
- An initial “founding mothers” working group was formed to guide the formation of the network between the Kathmandu gathering and the August pan-pastoralist gathering in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- This group includes:
  - Hillary Semeyan Lenantoiye (East Africa)
  - Samina Batool (South Asia)
  - Maria Guadalupe Monina Siller (North America)
  - Julia Foulkes- Taylor (Australia)
  - Anna Sperling (Europe)
  - Dintle Maphala (Southern Africa)
  - Munkhdelger Od (Mongolia & Central Asia)
  - Dalaibayar Gombo (Arctic)

To be decided & other considerations:

- Will the network be a formal organization (registered legal entity) like MUGAM or an informal but organized network like GER? (poll favored formal organization but discussion in the working group had mixed views.)
- Explore option for initial external support from Women Earth Alliance or other appropriate organization
- How will regions be defined? (IYRP regions or a different approach)

- Ensure representation by Indigenous pastoralist women (it may be important to have representation not only from countries but also different Indigenous communities within countries) (comment from Paulina Ngurumwa)

4.3.5 Next Steps

- Set up a meeting schedule. Meet as a group to define priorities.
- Leave participation open in case others want to join the Founding Mothers so that we don’t lose the contributions of other countries that make up the regions.
- Consult with the wider group.
- Meet with Earth Alliance (and decide upon terms of partnership beforehand).
- Define membership criteria and roles of supporters.

> *“The gathering in Kathmandu was a profoundly meaningful experience. There, I discovered an extraordinary sense of solidarity among pastoralist women from all over the world. Many arrived carrying the voice of an already organised collective, built over years through dialogue, trust, and working together. That collective strength was inspiring... I realised what it means not to be able to rely on a national network of women who share the same realities, the same struggles, and the same ambitions. Since returning, I have been working to create this kind of momentum in France. It is demanding work”.*
> *(Claire Guyat, France)*

5. Recommendations for Policy, Practice and Knowledge Creation

Byambagerel Baatar (Mongolia).

“I consider it necessary: First, to officially recognise pastoralist women’s labour. Second, to guarantee land ownership and property. Third, to create a safe environment. Fourth, to include them at the decision-making level. Fifth, to provide equal access to finance and technology. Sixth, to include them in climate policy. At the level of Mongolia, issues are being discussed, such as valuing pastoralist women’s labour in a gender-sensitive way, improving education and knowledge, and raising awareness, and equal participation in political participation”.



Byambagerel Baatar (Mongolia): Visibility, Recognition and Rights of Pastoralist Women

The discussions and presentations across the Global Gathering point to a number of cross-cutting priorities for policy, research and practice:

Policy:

- Recognise pastoralist women as rights-holders, decision-makers, innovators and leaders. Ensure their meaningful representation in institutions and decision-making processes concerning pastoralism, land, climate, biodiversity, food systems and rural development, while addressing the care burdens, discrimination and violence that restrict women's participation. Implement gender-sensitive education -that involves men- at all levels, to address gender-based violence and transform gender norms.
- Secure land, grazing and mobility rights within a diversity of tenure systems. Protect communal and customary tenure systems, and champion women's rights to own and inherent land. Ensure access to grazing areas, water points and mobility corridors, while ensuring women have equitable rights and decision-making power within the social and political systems that govern them. Pastoralist women must have meaningful voice and opportunities to take the lead in shaping decisions concerning investments, conservation and development affecting their territories.
- Invest directly in pastoralist women and communities. Improve access to finance, veterinary services, markets, climate funding, training, processing technologies and infrastructure. Ensure social services, health, and education are designed around the realities of remote and mobile pastoralist communities.

> *"This conference will effectively boost their (women pastoralists) participation. They are best placed to speak about what they themselves want, what they want to make known in different forums and to take advantage of this International Year of Pastoralism, but also other spaces, such as ... UNCCD, UNFCCC, and many others where they are conspicuously absent"*
> *(Saudata Abubacrine, Burkina Faso)*

Practice:

- Support women-led and locally grounded responses. Invest in pastoralist women's organisations and networks in ways that ensure women pastoralists remain in the lead. Support pastoralist-led climate adaptation, restoration and environmental monitoring, and initiatives that strengthen economic autonomy, collective action and women's leadership.
- Support the future of pastoralism across generations. Strengthen opportunities for young pastoralist women, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and the documentation and continuation of Indigenous and traditional knowledge, languages, food cultures and pastoral practices.

Martina Choquehuayta Cabana (Peru).

"This is what I take away from all the colleagues from all the countries who have come to convey that being a pastoralist is not insignificant- but rather, it is important for the entire population, for all places in every corner of the world where pastoralists have been discussed. It has been very important and will be recognized. So I believe that this is not by chance, but that this work will continue in the future. And I believe that we must do this in all parts of the world- practice recognizing women pastoralists!"



Martina Choquehuayta Cabana (Peru): Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women

Knowledge Creation:

- Conduct research with pastoralist women, not simply about them. Recognise pastoralist women as researchers and knowledge holders and ensure they are the ones defining research questions, priorities, generating and interpreting knowledge, and determining how data is managed and findings are used. Research should respect and uphold pastoralist women's ways of knowing the world and traditional knowledge, be accessible, accountable and returned to communities in useful forms.
- Make pastoralist women's contributions visible in evidence and data. Improve gender-disaggregated and community-generated evidence on women's labour and care work, economic contributions, land and resource rights, and experiences of environmental and climate change, while bringing Indigenous and scientific knowledge into respectful dialogue, to find meaningful, practical, and just solutions to a rapidly changing world.

Across all three areas, policies, research and programmes should be developed with pastoralist women themselves and adapted to the diversity of pastoral systems and regional contexts. Commitments must be accompanied by implementation, resources and accountability so that recognition of pastoralist women leads to meaningful change in practice.

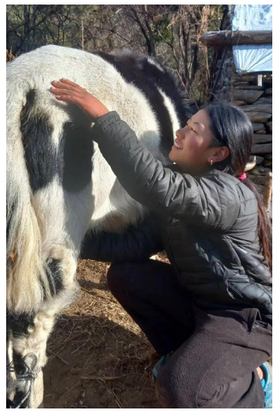
Dintle Maphala, Eastern Cape, (South Africa).



Address in Final Plenary: "The Global Gathering taught me a lot of things. As a collective there is a lot we can achieve, we need to stand together and fight for equality in the male dominated industry of pastoralism… Pastoralist women carry an incredible double responsibility. They are the traditional custodians of indigenous knowledge, managing livestock, breeding, and natural resources with profound wisdom. At the same time, they are the pillars of households and communities, ensuring food security and passing down heritage across generations. In a changing world—where climate shifts and economic pressures test our traditional systems—your adaptability, strength, and resourcefulness are more critical than ever. Let this event be a platform to elevate your voices, share your invaluable experiences, and ensure that your contributions to sustainable agriculture. Thank you for your unwavering strength, your wisdom, and your vital role in shaping a sustainable future for all pastoralist women".

Closing Poem

Me, a yak herder - by Ang Furba Sherpa (Nepal)



In the past when I ventured into *Madhes, Totaalo* was blooming,

In *Kemje* pastures, I am a yak herder

In the cold weather, staying in the forests would be bliss,

Life is short, sun and rain, will we meet again or not?

Many troubles in yak sheds including the monsoon rain,

Human life, happiness and pain, but never be greedy,

Those who seek luxury, went to cities,

Yak/*Chauri* herders find peace in their villages.

Leaving traditional occupation of our ancestors-
Hey friend, why did you go to the Middle East leaving your parents behind?

People talk about why I am still a herder after gaining a degree,

While the wind blows, I stare at Rhododendron from a hilltop,

I will be satisfied with *Gundruk-Dhindo* till I am alive.

I don't need city's hustle, wanna spend my life with *Chauris,*

Youth are lining in the airports with their passports-

I fear the traditional yak-herding will vanish at this rate.

6. Appendices

6.1 Agenda: Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women Programme

Arrival Day: 25th May

18:30	Welcome and orientation
19:00	Dinner

Day 1: 26th May

Opening and Community Building

09:00–10:15	Official opening.
10:15–10:45	Group photo, tea break, and booth visits.
10:45–12:00	Community-building session.
12:00–13:00	Lunch.
13:00–15:00	Presentations from pastoralist women around the world.
15:00–15:30	Tea break and booth visits.
15:30–15:45	MERA Declaration and themes: setting the context.
15:45–16:30	Highlights and key messages from regional and national gatherings.
16:30–17:00	Review and agreement on themes for Day 2 discussions.
17:00	Moment of silence to honour women whose lives have been lost to violence.
17:30–19:00	Reception and Nepali cultural performances.
19:00–20:00	Dinner.

Day 2: 27thMay

Pastoralist Women's Shared Priorities

09:00–09:15	Review of Day 1: highlights and issues to address.
09:15–10:30	World Café Round 1, focusing on political representation and participation; visibility, recognition and rights; and health, education and social support.
10:30–10:40	Report back from thematic discussions.

10:40–10:55	Tea break.
10:55–12:35	World Café Round 2, focusing on environment, natural resources and climate change; traditional knowledge and cultural continuity, including youth engagement; access to infrastructure and new technologies; and economy, livelihoods and working conditions.
12:35–12:45	Report back from thematic discussions.
12:45–13:30	Lunch.
13:30–14:45	Parallel sessions, Round 1: traditional knowledge and food culture, with insights from reindeer herding and pastoralist food systems; land and mobility rights; and pastoralist women's networks.
14:45–15:00	Tea break.
15:00–16:15	Parallel sessions, Round 2: youth; climate change; and roles and recognition of pastoralist women.
16:15–17:30	Parallel sessions, Round 3: pastoralist women as land stewards, including restoration and conservation; pastoralist women entrepreneurs; and pastoralist women as researchers.
18:30–19:30	Dinner.
19:30–21:00	Informal gathering time for crafting, sharing stories, and exchange.

Day 3: 28th May

From Shared Priorities to a Declaration

09:00–09:15	Review of Day 2.
09:15–10:15	Continued thematic discussions and prioritisation of key issues under each theme.
10:15–10:30	Tea break.
10:30–11:30	Plenary discussion on a Global Network of Pastoralist Women.
11:30–12:00	Booth visits.
12:00–13:00	Lunch.
13:00–15:00	Concurrent working groups on the Declaration, Strategy and Network, focusing on drafting the declaration from the thematic discussions, outlining a strategy for bringing key messages to global decision-makers, and designing a global network of pastoralist women.

15:00–15:30	Tea break.
15:30–17:30	Continued concurrent working groups on the Declaration, Strategy and Network.
15:00–18:00	Optional field trip to the ICIMOD Living Mountain Lab.
19:00–20:00	Dinner.
20:00–21:00	Informal gathering time for crafting, sharing stories, and exchange.

Day 4: 29th May

Draft Declaration, Strategy, Network and Closing

09:00–09:15	Review of Day 3.
09:15–10:15	Presentation and discussion of the draft Declaration.
10:15–10:30	Tea break.
10:30–12:30	Presentation and discussion of the Strategy and Network plans.
12:30–13:30	Lunch.
13:30–15:00	Concurrent groups to finalise the Declaration, Strategy and Network Plan.
15:00–15:15	Tea break.
15:15–16:30	Closing plenary, including the presentation of the Declaration, Strategy and Network Plan by pastoralist women, followed by closing remarks and a vote of thanks.
16:30–17:30	Cultural exchange stations and bazaar.
17:30–18:30	Participatory cultural performances.
18:30–19:00	Closing circle and gratitude reflection.

6.2 List of Pastoral Women Participants to the Global Gathering

	Name	Nationality
1	Julia Foulkes-Taylor	Australia
2	Nikki Gilder	Australia
3	Robyn Mary Adams	Australia
4	Deborah Louise Alison Dowden (online)	Australia
5	Djoudé Issa Demo	Benin
6	Chimi Wangmo	Bhutan
7	Cheychey Cheychey	Bhutan
8	Singay Wangmo	Bhutan
9	Sonia Flores Mamani	Bolivia
10	Ouagadougou Amadou Nugteren Hindatou	Burkina Faso
11	Saoudata Walet Aboubacrine	Burkina Faso
12	Habiba Gambo	Cameroon
13	Fadimatou Balla	Cameroon
14	Tessa Ryder	Canada
15	Karla Lee Hicks	Canada
16	Aimin	China
17	Siqinqimuge	China
18	Tana	China
19	Suyalqiqig	China
20	Maira Alejandra Quintero Brito	Colombia
21	Claire Celine Guyat	France
22	Margot Clavier	France/ Nepal
23	Anna Sperling	Germany/ Italy
24	Iboya Safianne	Hungary
25	Rigzin Yangdol	India
26	Ashwini Machindra Labde	India
27	Bhavana Rabari Desai	India
28	Vasamalli Kurtaz	India
29	Sara Esposito	Italy
30	Reem Salah Salah	Jordan
31	Jamileh M. Dare Aljazi	Jordan
32	Hillary Semeyan Lenantoiye	Kenya
33	Asma Adow Mohamed	Kenya
34	Fozia Noor Mohamed	Kenya
35	Eliza Shailoevna Ismailova	Kyrgyzstan
36	Salamatkhan Abdyrahimovna Dzhumabaeva	Kyrgyzstan
37	Fati Walet Attaher	Mali
38	Fatty Walet Ibrahim	Mali
39	Nancy Hernandez Rodriguez	Mexico
40	Maria Guadalupe Molina Siller	Mexico
41	Blanca Patricia Trejo Ortega	Mexico
42	Mariana Romana Moreno Reyna	Mexico
43	Byambagerel Baatar	Mongolia
44	Khand Byambaa	Mongolia
45	Od Munkhdelger	Mongolia
46	Battsolmon Dovdon	Mongolia
47	Dalaibayar Gombo	Mongolia (Reindeer Herder Delegation)
48	Ariuntuya Damba	Mongolia
49	Oyunbileg Jigmid Oyunbileg	Mongolia
50	Otgonchimeg Choimbol	Mongolia
51	Maamankhuu Sodnom	Mongolia
52	Mina Abdaoui	Morocco
53	Dolly Tuaandi	Namibia
54	Ang Furba Sherpa	Nepal
55	Maya Sherpa	Nepal
56	Urken Sangma Lama	Nepal
57	Mamoudou Hamani Rachida	Niger
58	Salamatu Ardo Umar	Nigeria
59	Inger Anita Smuk	Norway
60	Hamda Khadayam Al Jabri	Oman
61	Fatma Khadayam Al Jabri	Oman
62	Samina Batool	Pakistan
63	Filomena Rojo Quispe	Peru
64	Martina Josefa Choquehuayta Cabana	Peru
65	Alena Gerasimova	Russia
66	Adama Ka	Senegal
67	Dintle Maphala	South Africa
68	Nolufefe Mdingi	South Africa
69	Arenda Saal	South Africa

70	Sylvia Sekiwe Gobile	South Africa
71	Paula Jarque Azañedo	Spain
72	Ainhoa López Larrauri	Spain
73	Judith Patrick Singibala	Tanzania
74	Paulina Peter Ngurumwa	Tanzania
75	Pervin Savran	Türkiye
76	Immaculate Nakong	Uganda
77	Charlotte Elinor Papastavrou Brooks	United Kingdom (Reindeer Herder Delegation)
78	Monica Yescenia Islava Corella	United States (US)
79	Rubina Cohen	United States (US)
80	Marie Tillie Gladue	United States (US) / Navajo Nation

6.3 List of Support People to the Global Gathering

Note: See the Acknowledgements for a full list of ICIMOD staff and other support people

	Name	Nationality
1	Mariana Quiroga Mendiola (Facilitator)	Argentina
2	Elisabeth Huber-Sannwald (Documenter)	Austria
3	Tashi Dorji (Translator, ICIMOD)	Bhutan
4	Sargai Sha (Translator)	China
5	Shaoliang Yi (Organiser, ICIMOD)	China
6	Zsolt Molnar (Translator)	Hungary
7	Nitya Sambamurti Ghotge (Documenter)	India
8	Laureen Ongesa (Documenter)	Kenya
9	Bilach Jimale (Facilitator)	Kenya
10	Tungalag Ulambayar (Facilitator)	Mongolia
11	Tserendolgor Jargalbold (Translator)	Mongolia
12	Srijana Joshi (Project Manager, ICIMOD)	Nepal
13	Ramesh Timilsina (Cultural Exchange, ICIMOD)	Nepal
14	Indu Chitrakar (Event Coordinator, ICIMOD)	Nepal
15	Bandana Shakya (ICIMOD, Organiser)	Nepal
16	Shiba Banskota (ICIMOD, Organiser)	Nepal
17	Uma Dhungel (Rapporteur/ Volunteer)	Nepal
18	Tulasa Chaudhary (Rapporteur/ Volunteer)	Nepal
19	Nishan Baral (Rapporteur/ Volunteer)	Nepal
20	Asmita Shrish (Videographer)	Nepal
21	Jitendra Bajracharya (Photographer)	Nepal
22	Samuel Thomas (ICIMOD, Communications)	Nepal
23	Neraz Tuladhar (ICIMOD, Media)	Nepal
24	Clara Luxardo (Videographer/ Volunteer)	Netherlands
25	Khululiwe Primrose Ntombela (Translator)	South Africa
26	Brittany Bunce (Lead Documenter)	South Africa
27	Maria Turiño (Lead Facilitator)	Spain
28	Onur Fidangul (Translator)	Türkiye
29	Maria Fernandez-Gimenez (Documenter)	United States (US)

