

Global rangelands coalition an 'essential step forward' for sustainable land management, says ILRI

International Livestock Research Institute backs Mongolian delegation's call at UN desertification COP for formation of a "Coalition of Rangeland States"

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, December 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Mongolian delegation at the UN Convention to Combat Desertification Conference of the Parties (UNCCD COP16) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, has called for the formation of a world-first "Coalition of Rangeland States". The new coalition would protect and promote the interests of rangelands and rangelands people and has been welcomed as "an essential step forward" for sustainable land management by the [International Livestock Research Institute](#) (ILRI).

Rangelands – diverse ecosystems covering up to 54 percent of the world's land surface, supporting grazing livestock and wildlife – play critical roles in producing food from otherwise low-productivity areas, livelihoods, biodiversity, carbon storage, water conservation and preventing dust storms.

The formation of a "Coalition of Rangeland States" would mark a pivotal advancement for rangelands as we move towards the [International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026](#). Despite being crucial to livestock, global food supply, and the wellbeing of billions of people, rangelands have historically lacked appropriate policies and international institutional support afforded to other biomes at risk from climate change.

With as much as 50 percent of rangelands already degraded from invasive species and increasing land and resource pressure, the call for the formation of the coalition is timely and essential. Rangelands are a vital tool for mitigating climate change and preserving ecosystems, as they represent one third of Earth's carbon reservoir, and are home to approximately half of all ecologically intact landscapes available to mitigate biodiversity loss.

The coalition can be a vital mechanism to empower pastoralist communities, which make up approximately 200 million households worldwide and provide one-tenth of world meat supply. Supported by sustainable, evidence-based livestock practices, these communities can restore and protect rangelands from degradation, meanwhile improving local long-term food security and economic stability.

Fiona Flintan, Senior Scientist, Rangelands and Pastoralism, at ILRI, said: "The Mongolian delegation's call highlights a crucial, long-overlooked reality: rangelands are indispensable to global food security and the livelihoods of millions, yet they have historically received insufficient attention and investment. Initiatives like our GEF-funded Sustainable Investments for Large-Scale Rangeland Restoration ([STELARR](#)) project demonstrate the transformative potential of targeted research, development, and international collaboration.

"Greater investment and collaboration among rangeland states could unlock significant opportunities to restore these ecosystems, strengthen pastoralist livelihoods, and ensure sustainable land management in the face of mounting climate challenges. This call to action is an essential step forward in addressing an urgent global need and an important step on the road to the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026."

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