

LPP Statement for the UNCCD COP 17 in Ulaanbaatar, 17–28 August 2026

Pastoralists are taking centre stage during the 2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralism (IYRP). Declarations by various pastoralist groups highlight their role in ensuring food security, as custodians of biodiversity, and as guardians of grasslands that store large quantities of carbon. These statements include the “Global Declaration of Young Pastoralists” and the Kathmandu and Mera declarations, which were drafted by women pastoralists. They represent very important steps, made possible by an unprecedented global movement – the “Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists”. Together with the Government of Mongolia, the Global Alliance played a key role in ensuring that the UN General Assembly declared 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Despite their significant contributions to the conservation of rangeland ecosystems and climate protection, as well as their increasingly important role in preventing forest fires, pastoralists worldwide are facing the loss of their traditional grazing lands.

Mining projects, the expansion of arable farming and irrigation systems, nature conservation measures, green energy projects, urban expansion and infrastructure projects threaten herders’ livelihoods. In most cases, powerful investors are behind the takeover of land originally used by herders. In some regions, herders are being displaced from their traditional grazing lands by the construction of solar and wind farms. Ironically, it is precisely those people who consume the least fossil fuel who are having their livelihoods taken away by such green energy projects.

The core problem is that, whilst herders do have customary rights, they hold no formal title deeds or binding usage guarantees for the land they have been managing for centuries. For the sake of climate justice and nature conservation, it is urgently necessary to launch a large-scale campaign and a corresponding programme to secure land-use rights and access to grazing land for herders. In this way, not only can livelihoods be protected, but vast areas can also be preserved for nature conservation. We therefore call on the delegates at the UNCCD Conference in Ulaanbaatar to address not only desertification and land degradation but also the rampant loss of grazing land, which threatens millions of people.