Decision 20/COP.17

Rangelands and pastoralists

The Conference of the Parties,

Noting decision 29/COP.16,

Also noting the multifaceted importance of rangelands for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, youth, pastoralists and other groups in vulnerable situations, and *emphasizing* the need to promote sustainable land and water management practices in rangelands to support their livelihoods, cultures and resilience,

Welcoming emerging scientific evidence on the critical importance of sustainable rangeland management, including rotational grazing for preserving rangeland soil, land, water and biological diversity, and the value of pastoral commons collectively managed by a local community, local governments or a higher public entity as supplementary resources in times of droughts or wildfires, available for seasonal rotation and as biological reserves, and acting as an insurance policy in times of stress and adaptation to the seasonality and variability of rangeland productivity,

Recognizing the critical role of pastoralists as stewards of rangeland ecosystems and the importance of pastoral mobility, including transboundary mobility, where appropriate, as a key adaptation and resilience strategy that can contribute to sustainable rangeland management, ecosystem recovery and resilience,

Appreciating the efforts of the secretariat, the Global Mechanism, donors, Parties, partners and civil society stakeholders, in the context of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, to advance knowledge and raise awareness of the value of healthy rangelands and their sustainable management, and the critical stewardship role of pastoralists and rangeland communities in sustaining local livelihoods, food security and nutrition, biodiversity and ecosystem services, and national economies, while also delivering regional and global benefits that depend on the health and productivity of these vast landscapes,

Welcoming national measures being taken to restore, conserve and sustainably manage rangelands, while preserving rights of use and traditional pastoral mobility, and to enhance climate resilience,

Noting the Ulaanbaatar Declaration 2026, the Kathmandu Declaration of Pastoralist Women, and the Global Declaration of Young Pastoralists, and *inviting* Parties to draw upon them, as appropriate, in accordance with national circumstances,

1. *Invites* all United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification stakeholders to contribute to the momentum generated by the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, including by committing to implement sustainable rangeland management, conservation and restoration activities, secure tenure and inclusive rangeland governance, including projects and programmes that foster multi-stakeholder partnerships and empower pastoralist and rangeland communities, including mobile pastoralists, to continue their stewardship of these vast landscapes;

2. *Recognizes* the Coalition of Rangeland States as a strategic implementation partner for decision 29/COP.16, and *encourages* strengthened collaboration between the Coalition, the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Global Mechanism, the Science-Policy Interface, regional organizations, research institutions, development partners and civil society, subject to the availability of resources, to conserve, sustainably manage and restore rangelands, while at the same time enhancing food security and nutrition, water availability, livelihood and drought resilience, and economic opportunities;

3. *Encourages* Parties to develop and implement policies and legal frameworks for the sustainable management, conservation and restoration of rangelands, as a way to halt its degradation and accelerate the restoration of degraded rangelands, while ensuring

consistency and coherence with national strategies and plans to combat desertification, land degradation and drought, and biodiversity loss;

4. *Invites* Parties, donors, partners, civil society and other stakeholders to support the Rangelands Flagship Initiative;

5. *Also invites* Parties to improve tenure security in rangelands in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security;

6. *Requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, within their mandated activities under the Convention, and subject to the availability of resources, to continue:

(a) Raising awareness and demonstrating the value of healthy rangelands, and their sustainable management, for people, especially for women and youth, nature, climate and economies through, inter alia, the development of strategic communication products and outreach campaigns, including exploring with country Parties the possibility of establishing an International Day of Rangelands and Pastoralists;

(b) Building the evidence base to address knowledge and data gaps, including those related to steppe and mountain rangelands through, inter alia, the development of good practice guidance, tools and other capacity-building measures, and to inform the design of projects and programmes that conserve, sustainably manage, and restore rangelands, taking into account the knowledge accumulated by pastoralists;

(c) Developing a pipeline of rangeland projects and programmes that improve food security and nutrition, drought resilience, local livelihoods, the engagement of women and youth, education and the stewardship of rangeland resources, including the sustainable use and conservation of locally adapted livestock breeds through, inter alia, public–private partnerships, sustainable supply chains and community-based projects and programmes;

(d) Raising awareness and demonstrating the importance of pastoralists and other stakeholder practices for combatting desertification, land degradation and drought, and promoting ecosystem conservation, water and soil conservation, fire prevention and the conservation of genetic resources and climate resilience in areas affected by desertification, land degradation and drought;

(e) Continue engaging the private sector in the sustainable management, conservation and restoration of rangelands and the empowerment of pastoralists, including through the Business4Land Initiative, thereby fostering long-term responsible investment; and

(f) Provide support to Member States, upon request, for the formation of a country-led Coalition of Rangeland States, utilizing funds already committed under the Global Environment Facility–United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Mongolia COP17 Legacy Project;

7. *Also requests* the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, within their mandated activities under the Convention, to report on the progress made in implementing this decision to the Conference of Parties at its eighteenth session.

14th plenary meeting
28 August 2026