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Mainstreaming FAO's work on rangelands and pastoralism – progress 2022–2023

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I. Introduction

1. By working with nature, pastoralism presents a promising avenue for innovation on a multitude of global challenges, including combating climate change, food insecurity and poverty. Healthy and productive rangelands managed by pastoral communities have great potential to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. Supporting healthy and productive rangelands and sustainable pastoralism contributes to the *four betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life*, and thus the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31.¹
3. At its 27th Session in 2020, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) “recognized the numerous challenges faced by pastoralists and rangelands, such as land degradation and climate change impact, and

¹ FAO. 2021. *Strategic Framework 2022-31*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb7099en>

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

requested FAO to mainstream its work on rangelands and pastoralism to ensure their systematic consideration in its technical and policy programmes.”²

4. Mainstreaming FAO's work on rangelands and pastoralism aims to build a corporate vision of pastoralism and rangelands, to fill the data gap and assess the impact of FAO's interventions on pastoral livelihoods and rangelands, allowing for better coordination between FAO's technical units and offices, including Decentralized Offices, thus better supporting Members.³

III. Progress towards mainstreaming FAO's work on rangelands and pastoralism

5. FAO is progressing on mainstreaming rangelands and pastoralism in its work and is supporting the development and implementation of tools, guidelines and generating knowledge on pastoralism and rangelands. Collaborative efforts among technical units and offices include:
- The maintenance and further development of the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub⁴ continues to offer a forum for over 1 500 members, enabling pastoralists to share knowledge and experiences. It also provides an updated knowledge repository of more than 650 records⁵ of scientific evidence on pastoralism and rangelands.
 - Publications on pastoral mobility,⁶ agrosilvopastoral systems⁷ and women in pastoralism (forthcoming) have been developed and disseminated to inform policymaking and participatory governance frameworks and to safeguard and facilitate pastoralism's economic, social and environmental benefits.
 - Data and knowledge are being generated on pastoral agrifood systems and their contribution to the national gross domestic products of Argentina, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia and Niger.^{8,9}
 - Based on the technical guide on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security for Pastoral Lands,¹⁰ three local guides were developed inclusively with pastoral organizations in Mali,¹¹ Mauritania¹² and Niger¹³ to organize more secure and peaceful transhumance.

² C/2021/21, para 103 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/nc021en>

³ COAG:LI/2022/INF/7, para 3 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ni078en>

⁴ <https://www.fao.org/pastoralist-knowledge-hub/en/>

⁵ Reports, videos, journal articles, infographics and policy briefs

⁶ FAO. 2022. *Making way: developing national legal and policy frameworks for pastoral mobility*. FAO Animal Production and Health Guidelines, No. 28. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb8461en>

⁷ FAO. 2022. *Grazing with trees - A silvopastoral approach to managing and restoring drylands*. FAO Forestry Paper No. 187. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc2280en>

⁸ Wane, A., Cesaro, J.D., Duteurtre, G., Touré, I., Ndiaye, A., Alary, V., Juanès, X., Ickowicz, A., Ferrari, S. & Velasco, G. 2020. *The economics of pastoralism in Argentina, Chad and Mongolia: Market participation and multiple livelihood strategies in a shock-prone environment*. FAO Animal Production and Health Papers, No. 182. Rome, FAO and CIRAD. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb1271en>

⁹ Ndiaye, A., Mardesic, I. & Velasco, G. 2024. *L'économie pastorale au Sahel: Evaluation économique et stratégies de réponses face aux chocs multiples*. Document in preparation.

¹⁰ FAO. 2016. *Improving governance of pastoral lands: Implementing the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*. Governance of Tenure Technical Guide No. 6. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/i5771e>

¹¹ FAO. 2021. *Guide pour l'amélioration de la gouvernance des régimes fonciers pastoraux au Mali*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/CB5295FR>

¹² FAO. 2021. *Guide pour l'amélioration de la gouvernance des régimes fonciers pastoraux en Mauritanie*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/CB5334FR>

¹³ FAO. 2019. *Guide pour l'amélioration de la gouvernance des régimes fonciers pastoraux au Niger*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/CA7290FR>

- The Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE)¹⁴ was adapted to pastoral production systems and piloted in Bhutan, Burkina Faso and Mali and data collection is ongoing in Argentina, Kenya, Spain and Switzerland.
- A mobile application on transhumance is being developed in Burkina Faso and Mali to assess fodder availability using remote sensing data, and evidence on the biodiversity, climate change, and nutrition nexus is being produced through a participatory approach with camelid-keeping communities.
- The Committee on Forestry Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems (COFO Working Group) launched in September 2023 a new Dryland Summer School to promote silvopastoralism as a means to restore drylands. The COFO Working Group, at its Third Session in 2023 "emphasized the need to strengthen the cross-sectorial work between the forestry and livestock sectors in restoring dryland and strengthening the resilience of communities that depend on them" and was encouraged to continue strengthening its collaboration with the COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock.¹⁵
- FAO has been tasked to lead two international years related to pastoralism: the International Year of Camelids in 2024¹⁶ and the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in 2026.¹⁷

6. FAO is actively integrating pastoralism and rangelands into its work as seen above. However, there are further opportunities to strengthen these efforts:

- FAO initiated a stocktaking exercise to review project portfolios of 12 countries¹⁸ relevant to pastoralism and rangelands. The review revealed that many projects relevant to pastoralism do not comprehensively incorporate pastoralists' perspectives and needs into their project design and execution. Furthermore, the exercise underscored the ongoing need to mainstream pastoralism and rangelands into FAO's project cycle, emphasizing the importance of engaging with pastoralist communities early in the project cycle and developing innovative or adapting existing methods that are inclusive of pastoralism specificities.
- FAO conducted a review of its work relevant to pastoralism and rangelands for the biennium 2022-2023 under two betters: a better environment and a better life. The review highlighted that while there is a gap in specific activities directly addressing pastoralism and rangelands, FAO's holistic approach is evident through peacebuilding interventions, gender equality promotion, inclusive land governance, resilience building and adaptation to climate change. These indirect linkages highlight FAO's commitment to addressing pastoralism's multifaceted issues and recognizing that pastoralism extends beyond livestock production to encompass broader social and environmental dimensions.

III. Next steps

7. The following activities are proposed to accelerate the efforts of mainstreaming FAO's work on rangelands and pastoralism:

- Generate reliable, participatory data and knowledge on pastoralism and biodiversity and the climate change, biodiversity and nutrition nexus to develop evidence-based policies.

¹⁴ <https://www.fao.org/agroecology/tools-tape/en/>

¹⁵ COFO/WG-DF/2023/REP, paras 11-13 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc8197en>

¹⁶ COAG:LI/2024/INF/8, <https://www.fao.org/coag/sub-committee-on-livestock/second-session/information-documents/en/>

¹⁷ <https://iyrp.info/>

¹⁸ Afghanistan, Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cote d'Ivoire, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan

- Develop an overview of FAO's tools and methodologies impacting rangelands and pastoralism, identify gaps, and adapt them to pastoralism specificities.
- Collaborate with the FAO Legal Office and the FAO Land Tenure team to develop a tool for assessment of national legal and policy frameworks governing pastoralism in the Sahel region, aligned with international instruments.
- Enhance collaboration across FAO technical divisions, centres and offices, in particular with the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, the Office of Emergencies and Resilience, the Land and Water Division, the Global Soil Partnership, the Indigenous Peoples Unit, the Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division, the Forestry Division and the Regional Offices to mainstream pastoralism and rangelands and improve the corporate vision of pastoralism, and ensure sustainable management of natural resources.