

CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS 2026 MADRID INTERNATIONAL MEETING *"Young Pastoralists & New Technologies"*

Conclusions of the event

Madrid 11 April 2026

Young pastoralists are indispensable partners in shaping the future of pastoralism.

The "Young Pastoralists & New Technologies" Global Gathering celebrated in Madrid last 9-11 April 2026 began with young pastoralists speaking with one strong, collective voice, making it clear that pastoralism has a future only if youth are fully involved.

Pastoral systems cannot be renewed *for* young people or just *by* young people. Future but must be built *with* young pastoralists, recognizing them as leaders, innovators, and decision-makers whose perspectives are essential for long-term viability.

Besides this statement, the event delivered a set of closing statements that synthesize three days of hard work, experience sharing, meaningful presentations and contributions and enriching debates focused on the role, responsibilities and perspectives of young pastoralists. Here are the main conclusions:

1. Youth are key innovators who connect Indigenous knowledge, tradition, science, and technology.

Young pastoralists actively transfer, adapt, and co-create knowledge across generations. By combining ancestral practices with scientific research and digital tools, they are developing solutions for climate adaptation, wildfire prevention, improved land management, and conflict mediation. Technology is valued as an extension of pastoral knowledge—not as a substitute for human skills, experience, and judgment.

2. Young women and girls are critical actors in pastoral futures.

Women and girls are central to livestock management, knowledge transmission, cultural continuity, and community leadership. Ensuring a viable future for pastoralism requires gender-responsive policies, meaningful inclusion in decision-making, equitable rights and access to resources, and recognition of women's economic and social contributions.

3. **Mobility remains the foundation of resilient pastoral systems and youth livelihoods.**

Pastoral mobility is not only a production strategy but also a social, ecological, and cultural system that sustains biodiversity, land stewardship, and resilience. Young people are vital to maintaining this mobility, and they clearly stated that **no young pastoralist should be forced to choose between a mobile pastoral way of life or education and access to services.**

4. **Secure rights, services, and infrastructure are essential for young pastoralists to stay and invest in the sector.**

Young pastoralists consistently highlighted the need for secure land tenure, protected mobility corridors, access to water points, markets, healthcare, education, connectivity, and streamlined administrative procedures. Public services must adapt to the specifics of mobile lifestyles to ensure dignity, safety, and long-term engagement in pastoralism.

5. **Pastoralism must be recognized as a modern socio-ecological system, key for future sustainability, never as a relic of the past.**

Well-managed extensive livestock systems maintain living territories and rural economies, restore rangelands, conserve biodiversity, and support climate adaptation. Local breeds, adapted over generations, represent both ecological resilience and cultural heritage—assets that young pastoralists are committed to safeguarding and enhancing.

6. **Economic viability, dignity, and social recognition determine generational renewal and positive selection by skilled young people.**

The main threat to pastoralism is social neglect rather than lack of youth interest. Young people need fair economic opportunities, recognition of their products and services, stronger social networks, and respect for pastoralism as a profession that delivers public value to society.

7. **Acknowledging and making pastoralism visible strengthens its future.**

Young pastoralists call for better documentation and communication of their contributions through data, success stories, and good practices. Visibility helps counter negative perceptions, encourages new entrants, and reinforces public and institutional support for pastoral livelihoods.

8. **Cultural appreciation and recognition provide concrete protection for pastoral systems.**

Declaring practices such as transhumance as living cultural heritage is more than symbolic—it helps safeguard mobility routes, reinforce community networks, and provide institutional tools that support both cultural continuity and functional land management.

9. **Empowered youth are the strongest guarantee of pastoralism's future.**

Young pastoralists envision communities with real power to shape their own development pathways, protected from marginalization and conflict, supported by intergenerational knowledge transfer, education, research, and public policies that recognize pastoralism as a viable, innovative, and essential livelihood for the future.



Madrid, 9 April 2026. The Agriculture Councillor of the Community of Madrid, Carlos Novillo, and the organisers: IMIDRA, Fundación Trashumancia y Naturaleza, FAO and CIHEAM with some of the Young Pastoralists from Latin America, India, Africa and Mongolia, attending the event



Madrid, 9 April 2026. Speech of the Coordinator of IYRP Young Pastoralists Working Group, who invited the young pastoralists to join



Alice Rana from Kenya, reading the speech of Jacob Lekaitogo, Coordinator of the IYRP Young Pastoralists Working Group, who arrived later, because of visa problems



Madrid, 9 April 2026. **Session 1: Global Context, Public Policies, And Challenges Facing Pastoralism.** From Left: Rolando Manzano, (Presid Foundation High Andean Camelids), Mrs Ariunzaya Enkhtuya, (Min of Agric- Mongolia), Mr Bernard Bonet (IRAM-France) Mr Blamah Diallo (Regional Coord Reseau Bilital Maroobe – Niger), Mr A.de Oteo (Dir Agric Livestock and Food – Community of Madrid), Mrs Ana Rodriguez Castaño, Secr Gen Agric Resources and Food security – Spain) and Ilse Köhler Rollefson (League for Pastoral Peoples – India)



Madrid, 9 April 2026: during the event 200 persons were attending in presence and 200 in remote



Madrid, 9 April 2026: Coffea breaks in the garden of Spanish Institute of Engineers, during the event



Madrid, 9 April 2026. **Session 2: Traditional Knowledge, Indigenous Knowledge, and Social Innovation in Pastoralism**, From Left: Basele Galgesa (Pastoralist Goals Foundation – Kenia), Angela Arevalo – (moderator -secretariat ILC - Colombia), Menita Mpokonyeki (Pastoralist Goals Foundation – Kenia), Abdoul Seidou (Restoration degraded land through grazing-Niger), Livaso Randriamanalina – (Madagascar), Bálint Sándor (Centre Ecol Research - Hungary)



Madrid, 9 April 2026. Shepherdesses from the Andes brought objects of sheep wool (left - Argentina) and Alpaca wool (right - Peru), they had woven themselves



Madrid, 9 April 2026. **Session 3: Value Chains, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Transformation** Victoria Alcasihuincha – Peru, Mireia Llorente (FENT-Spain), Gerardo Báguena (Fund Quebrantahuesos- Spain), Ilse Köhler-Rollefson (Camel Dairy Production – India) Veronica Apaza – (Red Puna – Argentina), Montserrat Castellano (Logo 100%Native Breed -Spanish Min Agric Spain)- Pati Jimenez (Moderator – FENT- Spain)



Madrid, 9 April 2026. **Session 4: Intergenerational Dialogue: The Future of Pastoralism**, From Left: Joseph Bousson (France), Megha Seth (South Asia Pastoral Alliance – India), Milan Seculovich (Save Sinjajevina-Montenegro), Santiago Leon Lucas (Goat cheese Shepherd- Spain), Barbara Aguilar (Shepherdess under High Voltage pylons), Ramiro Palacios (Bush control using livestock), Tamara Mitrofanenko (Moderator - Austria- Carpathian Convention)



Abdoul Seidou - Niger



Basele Galgesa - Kenya



Livaso Randriamanalina - Madagascar



Victoria Alcaisuincha - Peru



Veronica Apaza - Argentina



Menita Kupano - Kenya



Milan Seculovic - Montenegro



Jacob Lekaitogo - Kenya



Joseph Bousson - France



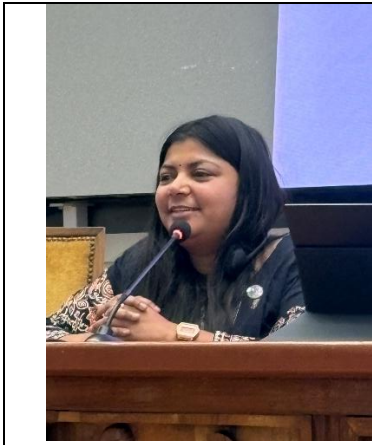
Rolando Manzano Rada - Chile



Balint Sandor - Hungary



Oum Slema Soueilim - Mauritania



Mega Sheth - India



Josefina Velikova – Check Republic



Aquilina Carbajal - Peru



Alice Rana - Kenya



Ariunzaya Enkhtuya - Mongolia



Santiago Leon Lucas - Spain



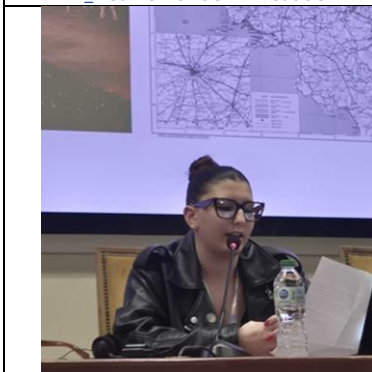
Elsa Fernandez - Ecuador



Sara-Elvira Kuhmunen - Sweden



Levani Misheladze - Georgia



Nicole Colantuono - Italy



Ali Fagouri -Morocco



Thomas Laber - Germany



Madrid, 9 April 2026. **Session 5: Summary of the Day:** Pedro Herrera Calvo (FAO)



Madrid, 10 April 2026. **Session 6: Transhumance as Cultural Heritage** From Left Sonsoles Zabala (Moderator – IMIDRA-Spain), Jose Alberto Millan (head of Livestock Trails Area-Community madrid-Spain), Laura Reyes (Min Culture-Spain), MariCarmen Jimenez and Fuencisla Mendioroz (Min Culture – Spain), Rusudan Mirzikhvili (ICOMOS- Georgia)



Madrid, 10 April 2026. **Session 6: Transhumance as Cultural Heritage**, participation per video Abdoussamad Ag Alhousseini (Mali, did not get visa on time), from Left: Sonsoles Zabala, Mari Carmen Garcia (Transhumance Expert-Spain) Nicoel Colantuono (Transhumant-Italie), Diego Torres (Transhumant-Spain), Juan Maria Gallardo. (RFEAGAS Royal Spanish Federation of Associations for Select Livestock-Spain)



Madrid, 10 April 2026. **Session 7: New Technologies, Innovation, and Modern Shepherds** From left. Agustín Oliet Palá, Director CENSYRA – IMIDRA, Elsa Fernandez (Shepherdess Ganaderas en Red-Ecuador), Hichem Ben Salem, INRAT: “New feed sources”. (Tunisia), Claudio Porqueddu (CNR-ISPAA-Italia), Yolanda Pueyo Estaún, IPE-CSIC. (Spain), Manuel Luque, (RFEAGAS - Spain) Georgios Ziagkas (Transhumant-Greece)



Madrid, 10 April 2026. **Session 8: Pastoralism and Sustainability: Land, Biodiversity, and Climate Change** From Left: Mohamed Ould Baba GUEYA, Director of ONARDEP. (Mauritania), Laia Batalla, School of Shepherds of Catalonia. (Spain), Angela Arevalo (Moderator -ILC-Colombia), Mireia Llorente, Entretantos Foundation. (Spain), Ashwini Machindra Labde, pastoralist community (SAPA). (India), Francisco Martín Azcárate, Autonomous University of Madrid. "Herbivory and ecological restoration". (Spain)



Madrid, 10 April 2026. **Session 8: Pastoralism and Sustainability: Land, Biodiversity, and Climate Change** with participation per video of Irene Namongo from Uganda, who was refused Visa to travel to Madrid



Jesús Garzón (on the screen, in the back) **founder of Trashumancia y Naturaleza** and a pioneer of transhumance and extensive mobile livestock farming since the 1980s, was remembered and mentioned in several of the panel discussions. He has created awareness about the importance of Transhumance and mobile pastoralism since the years 1980s, and organised the first WAMIP meeting in Segovia (Madrid) in 2007, with indigenous transhumants and nomads from the whole world, crossing Madrid, with his flock of 1200 sheep and 300 goats



Madrid, 10 April 2026. **Final Session: Presentation of the Young Pastoralists Declaration** by the committee, who worked intensively on it over several days during the event, From Left: Francesca Pasetti (Italy), Angela Arevalo (Colombia), Menita Mpokonyeki Kupano (Kenia), Sara Elvira Kuhmunen (Sami-Sweden), Gautier Oliveira Soares (France), Joseph Boussion (France), Abdoul Seidou (Niger), Galgesa Basele (Kenia), Tamara Mitrofanenko (Austria)



Aranjuez, 11 April 2026: Demonstration of dogs herding livestock



Aranjuez, 11 April 2026: Demonstration of sheep sheering



Aranjuez, 11 April 2026: musicians with a repertoire of traditional popular songs, playing simple instruments (the flute, the tambourine, the drum and triangle) at festivals. In the room was the exposition of Bestiarium: Big pictures of all native breeds of Spain (horses, cows, sheep, goats, dogs, chicken, pork and turkeys) used by pastoralists (also during transhumance)



The organisation team (from left to right): Gregorio Velasco (FAO-Pastoralists Knowledge Hub), Sonsoles Zabala (IMIDRA), Monica M. Castañeda (Director IMIDRA), Francesca Pasetti (Global Alliance Rangelands & Pastoralists), Pedro Herrera (FAO), Manuel Bahillo (Fundacion Trashumancia y Naturaleza), Mireia Llorente & Pati Jimenez (Fundación Entretantos), Claudia Forte Diaz (FAO), Antonio Lopez-Francos (CIHEAM)



Soto de Henares 08-04-2026. All young pastoralists who arrived the 8th of April have been working in the different languages, finetuning all together the final declaration, that had already been prepared for weeks before the event

With special thanks to all those who contributed to and supported this event, including the volunteers, and especially to all young pastoralists—those who participated in person, as well as those who joined via streaming or shared their video contributions. All of them played an active role in shaping and developing the Final Declaration, working together over several weeks prior to the event.



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