

# GLOBAL LAND OUTLOOK 2024 THEMATIC REPORT ON RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS

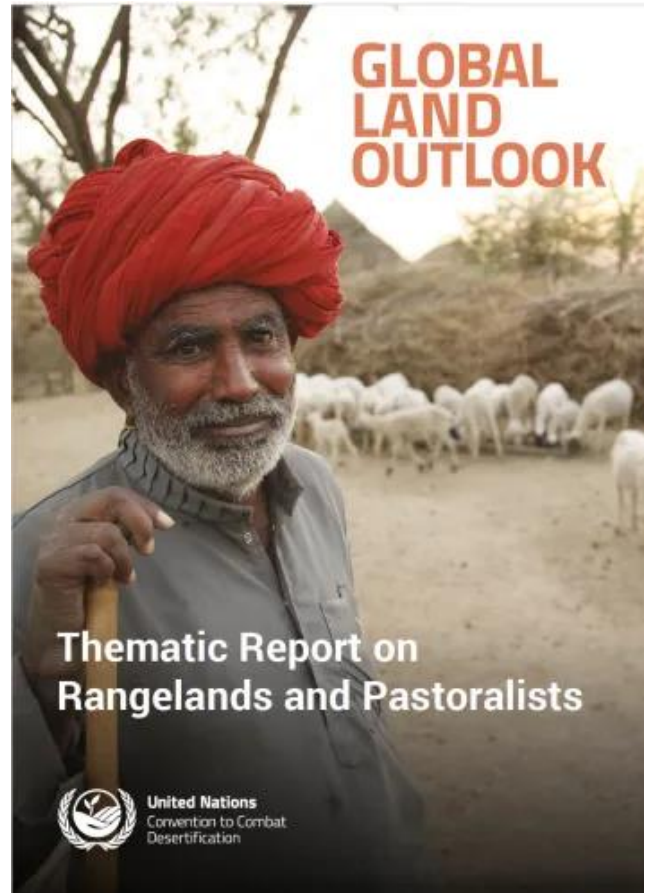
PUBLISHED BY THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO  
COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

In anticipation of the [International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists \(IYRP\) in 2026](#), the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has published in 2024 the [Global Land Outlook: Thematic Report on Rangelands and Pastoralists](#).

This report, which serves as a catalyst for global awareness and action, analyses numerous case studies and good practices from around the world, drawing on the experience and lessons learned, and advocates for a new paradigm to inspire governments, donors, and other stakeholders to prioritize rangeland health in cooperation with local communities. Through these collaborative efforts and a commitment to shared responsibility, we can preserve these rich cultural landscapes for the benefit of people, nature, and the climate.

The Global Land Outlook Thematic Report on Rangelands and Pastoralists was produced by a team led by the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in collaboration with supporting and contributing partners, and in consultation with key stakeholders and experts. It was made possible through the financial support of the European Union.

The first chapter of the Report provides an overview of the report, its theory of change, and key definitions and explanatory notes. The second chapter aims to characterize rangelands, pastoralism, and the challenge of environmental degradation by analysing the drivers and responses within an enhanced conceptual framework to guide strategies and actions. The third chapter, drawing on case studies from different countries, scientific literature, and other knowledge sources, offers a historical perspective and reflects on the lessons learned to improve the quality and performance of rangeland and pastoralist projects and programmes. The fourth chapter includes snapshots for 10 regions of the world which are illustrated with case studies at different scales. The fifth chapter describes existing initiatives that promote and support rangelands and pastoralists around the world. The sixth chapter includes conclusions and additional guidance to support policymakers and other stakeholders in designing and implementing policies, projects, and programmes that protect and enhance rangeland health.



The Report in particular highlights the following conclusions:

- *The conversion and loss of rangelands is done in silence and attracts little public attention.* Often marginalised or considered outsiders, many pastoralist and rangeland communities are unable to influence the policies and programmes that directly impact their food security, livelihoods, and cultural identity. They are voiceless and powerless and represent a small minority in the political and administrative machinery that governs development and investment decisions in the rangelands.
- *Pastoralist livelihoods and cultures around the world are under threat from shortsighted policies, weak governance, and economic incentives that undermine their production systems.* Pastoralists are broadly defined as extensive livestock farmers, herders, and ranchers – whether indigenous or not – whose way of life is closely linked to the health and productivity of rangelands. Up to 500 million people across the world practise this form of animal husbandry. Yet, in many regions, they have little recourse to address the conversion, fragmentation, and degradation of rangelands.
- *Rangelands operate as complex social-ecological systems with critical values, processes, goods, and services.* They are diverse, multifunctional, and encompass a wide variety of ecosystems (e.g., drylands, grasslands, savannahs) that have co-evolved with human communities. Covering over 50 per cent of the Earth's land surface, rangelands are comprised of grasses, herbaceous plants, and shrubs that are grazed by livestock and/or wildlife. In addition to meat, dairy, fibre, and other animal products, rangelands and their biodiversity underpin critical ecosystem services from local to global scales (e.g., nutrient/water cycling, carbon sequestration, animal/human health).
- *Despite the extraordinary diversity and intrinsic value of rangelands and pastoralist systems, they rarely feature in global policy discussions or national development priorities.* Rangelands provide important environmental, social, and economic benefits that are often taken for granted, in part due to the lack of understanding of their extent, condition, use, value, and diversity. While there are many threats to rangeland health, one is the imbalance in the supply and demand for animal forage which leads to overgrazing, invasive species, and bush encroachment as well as the increased risk of drought and wildfires.
- *Pastoralism and extensive livestock production systems are deeply rooted in the rangelands and often the most effective means to protect, sustainably manage, and restore rangelands.* Appreciating that food and fibre production is the most common economic use of rangelands, sustainable grazing is a proven, cost-effective management approach to enhancing their health, productivity, and resilience. Traditional and regenerative grazing practices can often mimic natural processes that build soil



organic matter, increase water retention, sequester carbon, conserve biodiversity, and reduce the spread of invasive species.

- *Greater political attention and informed investments are urgently needed to safeguard and improve the health and productivity of the rangelands and their inhabitants.* This report offers insights and guidance on the policy and operational frameworks and other enabling factors for attracting greater attention and investments in sustainable rangeland management projects and programmes. Illustrated with case studies and good practices from around the world, it highlights the critical role of pastoralist communities in the planning and implementation of rangeland initiatives that deliver benefits in all three dimensions of sustainable development.

The report encourages a rethink of the conceptual framework currently applied to combat desertification and degradation in rangelands through an increased focus on the management practices employed in pastoralist and extensive livestock systems. It draws attention to pathways for improved policies, planning, implementation, and monitoring, with guidance for policymakers and other stakeholders on how to improve rangeland health under a sustainability framework with its three integrated dimensions.

The report hopes to catalyse action at different scales to optimise rangeland benefits through sustainable production systems and value chains. The strategic approaches presented in the report can help create the appropriate enabling environment, mobilise resources (through incentives and investments), and improve the quality and outcomes of interventions that target rangelands and their inhabitants.

[The United Nations Convention to combat desertification website presents the Global Land Outlook Thematic Report on Rangelands and Pastoralists](#) and highlights that this new UNCCD report points out way to restore and better manage rangelands, urging the protection of pastoralism. “The report details an innovative conceptual approach that would enable policy-makers to stabilize, restore and manage rangelands. The new approach is backed by experience detailed in case studies from nearly every world region, drawing important lessons from successes and missteps of rangeland management. A core recommendation: protect pastoralism, a mobile way of life dating back millennia centred on the pasture-based production of sheep, goats, cattle, horses, camels, yaks, llamas or other domesticated herbivores, along with semi-domesticated species such as bison and reindeer”.

The UNCCD website highlights the following main recommendations arising from the Report:

- Design and adopt integrated climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies with sustainable rangeland management plans to increase carbon sequestration and storage while boosting the resilience of pastoralist and rangeland communities.



- Avoid or reduce rangeland conversion and other land use changes that diminish the diversity and multifunctionality of rangelands, especially on indigenous and communal lands.
- Design and adopt rangeland conservation measures, within and outside protected areas, that support biodiversity above and below ground while boosting the health, productivity, and resilience of extensive livestock production systems.
- Adopt and support pastoralism-based strategies and practices that help mitigate harms to rangeland health, such as climate change, overgrazing, soil erosion, invasive species, drought, and wildfires
- Promote supportive policies, full people's participation and flexible management and governance systems to boost the services that rangelands and pastoralists provide to the whole society”.

### To know more

[GLO Rangelands Report in unccd.int website](http://unccd.int)

[Global Land Outlook Report on Rangelands and pastoralists - pdf](#)

[United Nations Convention to combat desertification website](http://unccd.int)

[UNCCD News](#)

[GLO Rangelands Report in UNCCD website](#)

[International Year of Rangelands ad Pastoralists](#)

