



Convention on
Biological Diversity

**Message from the Executive Secretary of the CBD, Astrid Schomaker
on World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought**

17 June 2026

Rangelands: Recognize. Respect. Restore

This year's theme of World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought invites us to recognize, respect and restore rangelands.

Grasslands, savannahs, shrublands and drylands sustain soil health and pollination, and support the regulation of the water and carbon cycles.

They provide almost 70 per cent of livestock feed globally.

Two billion people depend on them, including pastoralist communities, many of whom are indigenous peoples and local communities.

And yet half of the world's rangelands remain degraded or at risk.

In the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework—the KMGBF— Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity have committed to maintaining and enhancing the extent, integrity and connectivity of critical ecosystems.

Rangelands are addressed through a number of KMGBF targets:

- **Target 1** on spatial planning, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero.
- **Target 2** on restoring at least 30 per cent of all degraded terrestrial ecosystems.
- **Target 3** on conservation. This target combines increasing the extent of protected areas with ensuring their ecological representativeness, connectivity and effective governance, including in the context of rangelands.
- **Targets 9 and 10**, covering sustainable pastoralism, biodiversity-friendly grazing, and agroforestry in rangelands.
- **Target 11**, capturing the contributions that rangelands bring to all people.
- **And Targets 21 and 22** on recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including pastoralist communities, over lands, territories, and traditional knowledge, and on their full and effective participation.

Achieving these targets delivers benefits that span the biodiversity-land-climate nexus.

Stretching at the confluence of the three Rio Conventions, rangelands constitute a fertile ground for policy coherence.

2026 is a triple-Rio-COP year coinciding with the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. Together, they are a strong reminder that now is the time for bold, synergistic action to recognize, respect and restore the world's vast and bountiful rangelands.

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