



ICIMOD



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
RANGELANDS AND
PASTORALISTS
2026



GLOBAL GATHERING OF PASTORALIST WOMEN

26-29 MAY 2026
KATHMANDU, NEPAL

ICIMOD

Photo: Tulsi Rauniyar

Background

Rangelands cover half of Earth's land surface and pastoralism is the world's most widespread land-use. In recognition of the importance of rangelands and pastoralists to humanity and the planet, the UN has declared 2026 the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP). The IYRP aims to raise awareness of the values that rangeland ecosystems and pastoral peoples provide the world and to catalyze action to protect rangelands and the livelihoods and communities they support. Women and girls who make up half of the world's pastoralist population make critical contributions to livestock care, land stewardship, food security, community resilience, innovation and entrepreneurship, while also passing on pastoralist traditional knowledge and culture. Yet to date they have little voice and power in many decisions that affect their families, communities and lands. The IYRP Working Group on Pastoralism and Gender (WGPG) includes 70 volunteer members from pastoralist and rangeland communities, governments, research institutions, civil society, the private sector, funding bodies and United Nations (UN) agencies, spanning 11 regions across the globe, seeks to increase recognition of the essential roles women pastoralists play in maintaining vibrant and healthy rangelands and pastoralist communities, and to ensure that their voices and perspectives are included in all decisions that affect them from the local to global.

Goal and objectives

The overall goal is to convene a global gathering of pastoralist women to facilitate knowledge sharing and learning, mutual support, network-building, and advocacy. The Global Gathering will celebrate pastoralist women, their contributions to pastoralism, and their knowledge, skills and cultures. Pastoralist women will have an opportunity to share their challenges, innovations, successes and solutions, and to make global connections that endure beyond the event, increasing global solidarity, mutual support, and sense of worth. Participants will collaborate in revising/developing a shared policy agenda and prepare to carry forward their messages to various global decision during the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026 (IYRP 2026), including the UNCCD COP17 in Mongolia, UNFCCC COP31 in 2026, and the UNCBD COP17. All participants will also take their learning back to their home communities, catalyzing the formation of a global network of networks of women pastoralists. Such a network can help ensure that women pastoralists' voices are always present and included in decision-making across multiple scales, from local to global.

Expected outcomes

1



A global network of pastoralist women and their organizations/networks to support ongoing knowledge sharing, mutual support, and advocacy and to ensure women pastoralists' voices and perspectives are always included in decisions that affect them at the local, regional and global scales.

2



A revised and updated Mera Declaration (Mera +16) or call for action reflecting women pastoralists' priorities for policy, practice and research around the world.

3



A strategy to deliver the declaration/call for action at key global venues during 2026 and onwards, including the UNCCD COP17 in Mongolia (August 2026), UNFCCC COP 31 (November 2026), and UNCBD COP 17.



4

~90 women pastoralists from every inhabited continent inspired and empowered with new knowledge, learning and networks that will directly benefit them, their communities and families.

AGENDA

ARRIVAL | MAY 25

Arrival and Orientation		
18:30	Welcome and Orientation	Hotel Crowne Imperial; Imperial Hall
19:00	DINNER	Hotel Crowne Imperial; Imperial Hall

DAY 1 | MAY 26

Opening and Community Building		
7:00-7:45	BREAKFAST	HOTEL
8:00	BUS TO ICIMOD	
8:30-9:00	Registration & Distribute headsets	ICIMOD
9:00-10:15	Official Opening	
9:00-9:10	Translation Orientation	ICIMOD Kailash Hall
9:10-9:15	Safeguarding and Safety	
9:15-9:25	Opening Circle: Welcome participants and calling directions	
9:25-9:30	Welcome remarks from Honorable Dr Gunakar Bhatta – ICIMOD Board of Governors	
9:30-9:35	Opening remarks from Mr Ken Shimizu , Resident Representative, FAO Nepal	
9:35-9:40	Opening remarks from pastoralist women (Nepal herder representative)	
9:40-9:55	Gathering Goals and Overview of the 4 Days, Dr Maria Fernandez-Gimenez , Co-coordinator, IYRP WG on Pastoralism and Gender	
9:55-10:05	Inaugural address from Chief Guest: Honorable Minister Geeta Chaudhary , Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Environment, Nepal	
10:05-10:10	Launching of rangeland and pastoralism documentary trailer by the Honorable Chief Guest	
10:10- 10:15	Vote of thanks, Dr Sarala Khaling , Strategic Head, Economies and Landscapes	

10:15-10:40	Group Photo, TEA BREAK, and visit booths	Outside hall open space
10:40-10:45	Video message from Izabella Koziell , Deputy Director General, ICIMOD	
10:45-12:00	Community-building	Kailash Hall
12:00-13:00	LUNCH	HKH Hall
13:00-15:00	Presentations from Pastoralist Women from Around the World	Kailash Hall
15:00-15:30	TEA BREAK, booth visits	Outside hall open space
15:30-15:45	Mera Declaration and Themes: Setting the Context	Kailash Hall
15:45-16:30	Highlights and Key Messages from Regional/National Gatherings	
16:30-17:00	Review and Agree on Themes for Day 2 Discussions	
17:00-17:05	Moment of silence to honor and remember	
17:30-19:00	Reception and Nepali Cultural Performances (Yak dance, Tamang dance, Tharu dance)	Outdoor performance area
19:00-20:00	DINNER	HKH Hall
20:00	BUS TO HOTEL	

DAY 2 | MAY 27

Pastoralist Women's Shared Priorities		
7:00	BREAKFAST	HOTEL
8:00	BUS TO ICIMOD	
9:00-9:15	Review Day 1: Highlights and Issues to Address	ICIMOD Kailash Hall
9:15-10:30	Thematic Discussions (World Cafe Round 1) (25 mins each)	Kailash Hall
	Theme 1: Political Representation and Participation of Pastoralist Women	
	Theme 2: Visibility, Recognition and Rights of Pastoralist Women (includes land rights, personal safety and violence prevention subthemes)	

	Theme 3: Health, Education and Social Support	
10:30-10:40	Report out (10 mins) – Report highlights of discussions on that theme	
10:40-10:55	TEA BREAK	Outside Plenary Hall
10:55-12:35	Thematic Discussions continued (World Café round 2) (25 mins each)	Kailash Hall
	Theme 4: Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change	
	Theme 5: Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Continuity (including youth engagement)	
	Theme 6: Access to Infrastructure and New Technologies	
	Theme 7: Economy, Livelihood and Working Conditions	
12:35-12:45	Report Out (10 minutes)	
12:45-13:30	LUNCH (note, shorter today)	HKH Hall
13:30-14:45	Parallel Sessions: Round 1	
	1. Traditional Knowledge and Food Culture: Insights from Reindeer Herding and Pastoralist Food Systems	Kailash Hall
	2. Land and Mobility Rights	Nanda Devi Hall
	3. Pastoralist Women's Networks Lessons on Forming and Sustaining Networks	Annapurna Hall
14:45-15:00	TEA BREAK	Outside hall open space
15:00-16:15	Parallel Sessions: Round 2	
	4. Youth Session	Kailash Hall
	5. Climate Change	Nanda Devi Hall
	6. Roles and Recognition of Pastoralist Women	Annapurna Hall
16:15-17:30	Parallel Sessions: Round 3	
	7. Pastoralist Women as Land Stewards (Restoration & Conservation)	Nanda Devi Hall
	8. Pastoralist Women as Entrepreneurs	Kailash Hall
	9. Pastoralist Women as Researchers	Annapurna Hall
17:40	BUS TO HOTEL	
18:30-19:30	DINNER	HOTEL Imperial Hall
19:30-21:00	Informal gathering time: crafting, sharing stories etc.	HOTEL Imperial Hall

DAY 3 | MAY 28

From Shared Priorities to a Declaration		
7:00	BREAKFAST	HOTEL
8:00	BUS TO ICIMOD	
9:00-9:15	Review Day 2 (Plenary)	ICIMOD Kailash Hall
9:15-10:15	Thematic Discussions (continued), Discussion and prioritization of key issues under each theme (Plenary)	Kailash Hall
10:15-10:30	TEA BREAK	
10:30-11:30	Global Network of Pastoralist Women Discussion (Plenary)	Kailash Hall
11:30-12:00	Visit booths	
12:00-13:00	LUNCH	
13:00-15:00	Concurrent Working Groups (each delegate joins 1 group)	
	1. Declaration (works on drafting declaration from thematic discussions)	Kailash Hall
	2. Strategy (outlines strategy for getting key messages to global decision-makers)	Nanda Devi Hall
	3. Network (works on design of a global network of pastoralist women)	Annapurna Hall
15:00-15:30	TEA BREAK	Outside hall open space
15:30-17:30	Concurrent Working Groups	
	1. Declaration (works on drafting declaration from thematic discussions)	Kailash Hall
	2. Strategy (outlines strategy for getting key messages to global decision-makers)	Nanda Devi Hall
	3. Network (works on design of a global network of pastoralist women)	Annapurna Hall
17:40	BUS to HOTEL	
	OR	
15:00-18:00	Field Trip to ICIMOD Living Mountain Lab (Drop off at hotel)	
19:00-20:00	DINNER	HOTEL Imperial Hall
20:00-21:00	Informal gathering time: crafting, sharing stories etc.	

DAY 4 | MAY 29

Draft Declaration and Closing		
7:00	BREAKFAST	HOTEL
8:00	BUS TO ICIMOD	
9:00-9:15	Review Day 3 (Plenary)	ICIMOD Kailash Hall
9:15-10:15	Presentation and Discussion of Draft Declaration (Plenary)	
10:15-10:30	TEA BREAK	Outside hall open space
10:30-12:30	Strategy and Network Groups Presentation and Discussion (Plenary)	
12:30-13:30	LUNCH	HKH Hall
13:30-15:00	Finalize Declaration, Strategy, Network Plan (Concurrent Groups)	
	1. Declaration	Kailash Hall
	2. Strategy	Nanda Devi Hall
	3. Network	Annapurna Hall
15:00-15:15	TEA BREAK	Outside hall open space
15:15-16:30	Closing Plenary	Kailash Hall
15:15-16:00	Pastoralist Women Present Declaration, Strategy & Network Plan	
16:00-16:05	Dr Ramnandan Tiwari , Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Closing remarks	
16:05-16:10	Pastoralist Woman, Closing remarks	
16:10-16:15	Mr Ken Shimizu , Resident Representative, FAO Nepal, closing remarks	
16:15-16:25	Pema Gyamtsho , Director General, ICIMOD, closing remarks and appreciation	
16:25-16:30	Pastoralism and Gender WG Representative, vote of thanks	
16:30-17:30	Cultural Exchange Stations and Bazaar	Outside stalls
17:30-18:30	Participatory Cultural Performances	Outside performance area
18:30-19:00	Closing Circle and Gratitude Reflection	Open space outside
19:10	BUS TO HOTEL	
19:30	DINNER	HOTEL Imperial Hall

Safeguarding for Events

Note: This guidance applies to ICIMOD organised events such as workshops, conferences, meetings, and trainings. It is not intended for ICIMOD's engagement with communities or field visits, such as community trainings, consultations, or other field interactions.

ICIMOD is committed to safeguarding everyone involved in this event against sexual and other forms of harassment, exploitation, and abuse. This includes participants (including children under the age of 18, if present), speakers, staff, consultants, and service providers. We aim to ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where everyone can participate without fear of harm.

Any type of harm, such as sexual misconduct (including child abuse), by ICIMOD staff, or stakeholders will not be tolerated. At the start of the event, ICIMOD staff will inform participants about the designated safeguarding focal person and provide contact details for raising any concerns during or after the event.



Do's

- Treat everyone with respect, use respectful language, and maintain professional boundaries by keeping all interactions appropriate and related to the event.
- Ensure children (under 18), if present, are safe and that there are appropriate levels of supervision during all activities.
- Always obtain participants' informed consent before taking photos or videos. At the start of the event, organisers or focal points should inform participants if recording will take place. Participants may wish not to be photographed or recorded; this should be respected, and images or videos of them must not be captured or used. Do not post any photos or videos on personal or organisational social media handles without consent.
- Maintain confidentiality and handle personal information responsibly and respect the privacy of participants.
- Protect participants' contact details and any personal or sensitive information (such as phone numbers, emails, or personal experiences shared during the event) and only share it after obtaining consent through appropriate channels.
- In cases where ICIMOD needs to conduct a safeguarding investigation, please cooperate fully if asked to provide information or evidence.
- Maintain professional behaviour during post-event dinners or social gatherings, ensuring that participation is voluntary.
- Coordinate with ICIMOD's event focal person or logistics team to ensure safe travels and accommodation of all involved.
- Report any safeguarding concerns or incidents to ICIMOD's event/safeguarding focal person or through the reporting channels listed below.

Don'ts

- Do not share or post personal information, photos, or stories of participants without their prior informed consent.
- ICIMOD has zero tolerance for sexual exploitation or abuse of any kind. Do not engage in exchanging money, goods, or services for sexual favours; do not have sexual relationships with anyone under 18; do not use or share sexualised images of children; and do not be alone in private with a child or vulnerable participant (including persons with disabilities, young people, or anyone at risk). Any of these behaviours are strictly prohibited at this event, and ICIMOD will act strictly on any violations.
- Do not ignore safeguarding concerns; if you observe behaviour that may cause harm, please report it.
- Do not spread rumours or disclose confidential information related to participants or reported concerns.
- Do not pressure anyone to participate in informal activities such as dinners, drinks, or social gatherings.
- Do not retaliate against anyone involved in a safeguarding report, including the person raising the concern, the alleged victim, the alleged perpetrator, or any individuals cooperating in the process.
- Do not cross professional boundaries or engage in behaviour that may make others feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

If you face harm or witness an incident, you must report it through one or more of the following channels:

Event/safeguarding focal:

Shiba Satyal Banskota- Shiba.Banskota@icimod.org

Carron Basuray- Carron.Basuray@icimod.org

Srijana Joshi- Srijana.Joshi@icimod.org

Indu Chitrakar- Indu.Chitrakar@icimod.org;

Ramesh Timilsina- Ramesh.Timilsina@icimod.org

Ombudsperson: ombudsperson@icimod.org

Head of Human Resources and Organisational

Development: HeadHROD@icimod.org

Director General: DirectorGeneral@icimod.org

Director – Administration, Finance and Operations

(for financial fraud/corruption concerns): DirectorAFO@icimod.org

Your responsibility is to report concerns, not investigate them. If you experience or witness any form of harassment, exploitation, or abuse during the event, you are encouraged to report it to the ICIMOD event/safeguarding focal person or through any of the reporting channels listed above. ICIMOD will provide support and the matter will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. All reports will be treated confidentially. ICIMOD has zero tolerance for retaliation against anyone raising a concern, reporting an incident, or participating as a witness, and will take measures to protect the safety and privacy of those involved.

If a safeguarding incident occurs, ICIMOD will take appropriate action in line with its policies, which may include removal from the event, exclusion from future activities, termination of contracts (where applicable), or referral to relevant authorities. Any retaliation, false reporting, or malicious allegations are serious violations of ICIMOD's safeguarding principles and may result in disciplinary action.

Cultural events

Yak Dance

The Yak Dance is a traditional folk performance from Himalayan and Tibetan communities in Nepal, Bhutan, and the Tibetan plateau, where performers in elaborate costumes humorously mimic yak movements, accompanied by a playful Yeti character adding to the spectacle. Typically performed during festivals like Losar, two performers work together inside a single costume to bring the yak to life, while the Yeti joins in with comic and dramatic flair. Beyond entertainment, the dance pays tribute to the yak's vital cultural role as a symbol of strength and sustenance, with the Yeti serving as a mythical guardian of the Himalayan wilderness. Accompanied by traditional music, drumbeats, and chanting, this lively performance remains a cherished part of Himalayan heritage celebrated at both cultural and tourism festivals.

Tamang Dance/Song

The Tamang Selo is a beloved folk dance of Nepal's Tamang community, performed to the soulful tunes of the Tungna, a traditional string instrument, alongside the rhythmic

Damphu frame drum. Dancers in traditional Tamang attire move with graceful, rhythmic steps that reflect the community's joys, sorrows, and everyday life, often singing as they dance. Rooted in the hills of central Nepal, this tradition is a vibrant expression of Tamang identity performed during festivals, weddings, and cultural celebrations. It continues to keep the community's rich heritage alive across generations.

Tharu Dance

The Tharu dance is a vibrant folk tradition of the Tharu people, the indigenous community of Nepal's Terai lowlands, performed during festivals like Maghi and harvest celebrations. Dancers in colorful attire move in energetic group formations with lively footwork and expressive gestures, accompanied by the Dhol and Majira instruments. One of its most celebrated forms is the Stick Dance or Kulturwa, where performers skilfully strike sticks together in rhythmic patterns. A proud symbol of Tharu identity and resilience, the dance is passed down through generations and continues to be showcased on national and international cultural stages.

Participants

Name	Country
Lucia Ruiz	Argentina
Mariana Quiroga Mendiola	Argentina
Julia Foulkes-Taylor	Australia
Nicola Ann Gilder	Australia
Deborah Louise Alison Dowden	Australia
Robyn Mary Adams	Australia
Tom Tylor	Australia
Ashley Dowden	Australia
Elisabeth Huber-Sannwald	Austria
Nikki Djoudé Issa Demo	Benin
Chimi Wangmo	Bhutan
Cheychey Cheychey	Bhutan
Singay Wangmo	Bhutan
Sonia Flores Mamani	Bolivia
Amadou Nugteren Hindatou	Burkina Faso
Saoudata Walet Aboubacrine	Burkina Faso
Habiba Gambo	Cameroon
Balla Fadimatou	Cameroon
Tessa Ryder	Canada
Karla Lee Hicks	Canada
Min Ai	China
Sargai Yunshaab	China
Siqinqimuge Fnu	China
Na Ta	China
Yiqiqige Su	China
Maira Alejandra Quintero Brito	Colombia
Ashen Jilo Gobu	Ethiopia

Name	Country
Berite Fentale Borda	Ethiopia
Claire Celine Guyat	France
Margot Clavier	France
Anna Sperling	Germany
Wasila Arimeyawu	Ghana
Zsolt Molnar	Hungary
Ibolya Safinané	Hungary
Nagma Badhana	India
Aamrin Jahan	India
Rigzin Yangdol	India
Ashwini Machindra Labde	India
Bhavanaben Ishwarbhai Desai	India
Nitya Sambamurti Ghotge	India
Vasamalli Kurtaz	India
Sara Esposito	Italy
Reem Salah Salah	Jordan
Jamileh M. Dare Aljazi	Jordan
Hillary Semeyan Lenantojye	Kenya
Asma Adow Mohamed	Kenya
Laureen Ongesa	Kenya
Fozia Noor Mohamed	Kenya
Bilach Jimale Golicha	Kenya
Eliza Shailoevna Ismailova	Kyrgyzstan
Salamatkhan Abdyrahimovna Dzhumabaeva	Kyrgyzstan
Fati Walet Attaher	Mali
Fatty Walet Ibrahim	Mali

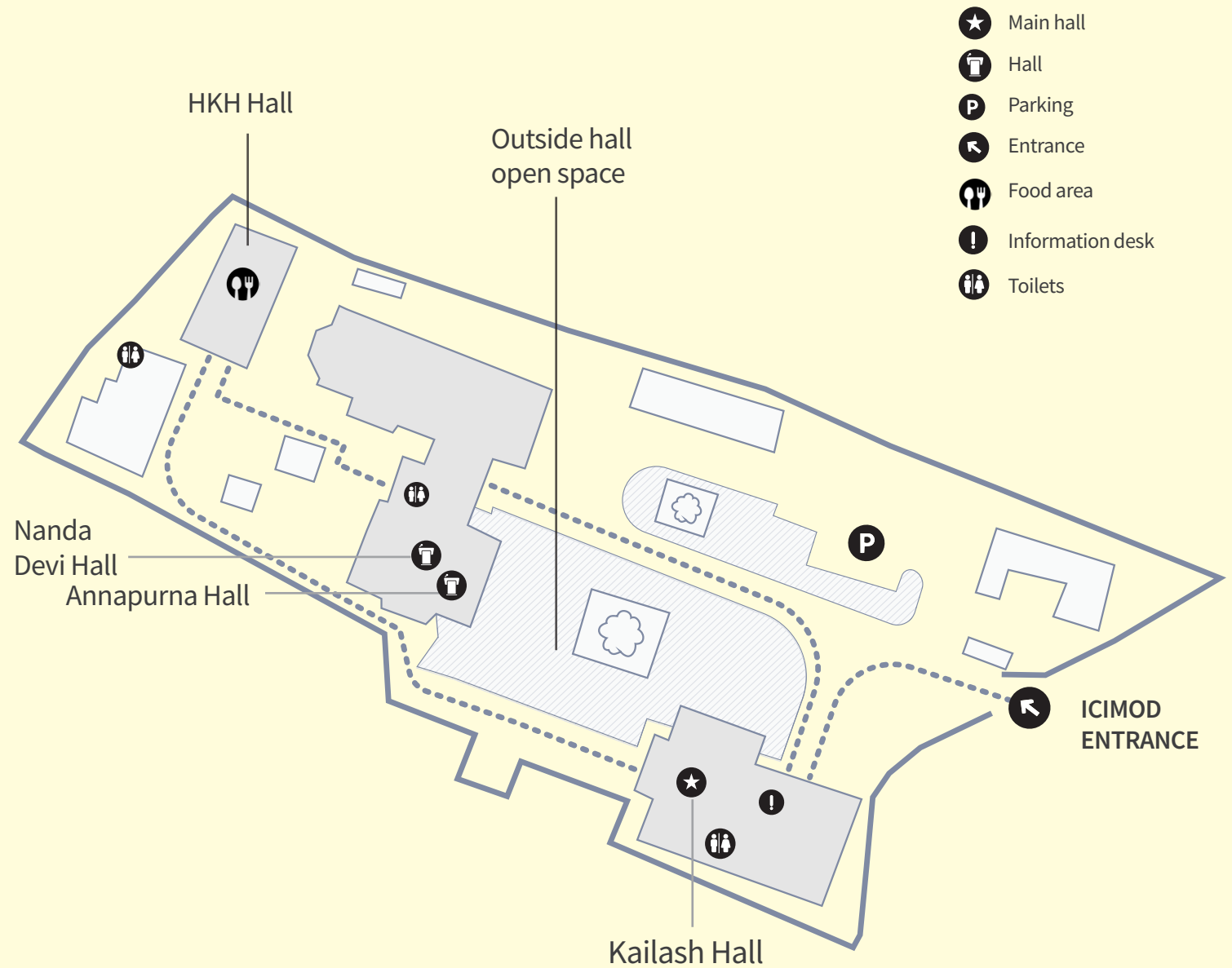
Name	Country
Nancy Hernandez Rodriguez	Mexico
Maria Guadalupe Molina Siller	Mexico
Blanca Patricia Trejo Ortega	Mexico
Mariana Romana Moreno Reyna	Mexico
Tserendolgor Jargalbold	Mongolia
Byambagerel Baatar	Mongolia
Khand Byambaa	Mongolia
Od Munkhdelger	Mongolia
Battsolmon Dovdon	Mongolia
Dalaibayar Gombo	Mongolia
Ariuntuya Damba	Mongolia
Oyunbileg Jigmid Oyunbileg	Mongolia
Otgonchimeg Choimbol	Mongolia
Tungalag Ulambayar	Mongolia
Maamankhuu Sodnom	Mongolia
Mina Abdaoui	Morocco
Dolly Tuaandi	Namibia
Ang Furba Sherpa	Nepal
Maya Sherpa	Nepal
Urken Sangma Lama	Nepal
Mamoudou Hamani Rachida	Niger
Salamatu Ardo Umar	Nigeria
Jari Bala	Nigeria
Inger Anita Smuk	Norway
Hamda Khadayam Al Jabri	Oman
Fatma Khadayam Al Jabri	Oman
Samina Batool	Pakistan

Name	Country
Norma Ccorahua Condori	Peru
Filomena Rojo Quispe	Peru
Martina Josefa Choquehuayta Cabana	Peru
Alena Gerasimova	Russia
Adama Lam Ka	Senegal
Adama Ka	Senegal
Dintle Maphala	South Africa
Nolufefe Nolufefe Nolufefe	South Africa
Arenda Saal	South Africa
Sylvia Sekiwe Gobile	South Africa
Khululiwe Primrose Ntombela	South Africa
Paula Jarque Azañedo	Spain
Maria Del Milagro Turiño Garcia	Spain
Ainhua López Larrauri	Spain
Judith Patrick Singibala	Tanzania
Paulina Peter Ngurumwa	Tanzania
Onur Fidangul	Türkiye
Pervin Savran	Türkiye
Immaculate Nakong	Uganda
Charlotte Elinor Papastavrou Brooks	United Kingdom (UK)
Brittany Jane Bunce	United Kingdom (UK)
Monica Yescenia Islava Corella	United States (US)
Rubina Cohen	United States (US)
Maria Fernandez-Gimenez	United States (US)
Marie Tillie Gladue	United States (US)

Donors

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ICIMOD venue map





The Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women

26–29 May 2026, Kathmandu, Nepal

