



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Roads Less Travelled – A New Global Initiative For Mobile Pastoralists**

**Today, Roads Less Travelled – a new, open and global initiative for mobile pastoralists<sup>1</sup> officially launches at CCRN & IUCN’s *Communities, Conservation and Livelihoods* Conference in Halifax, Canada. Initiated by DiversEarth<sup>2</sup>, Yolda Initiative<sup>3</sup> and Trashumancia y Naturaleza<sup>4</sup> in close collaboration with mobile pastoralist communities and supporting organisations around the world, Roads Less Travelled supports and helps mobile pastoralists maintain their lifestyles and continue moving freely through the landscape.**

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<sup>1</sup> Mobile pastoralism is a catch-all term that encompasses transhumance, semi-nomadic and nomadic pastoralism, and some practices of extensive grazing, where people and their livestock move on foot through the landscape in search of pasture and water.

<sup>2</sup> DiversEarth is Swiss based NGO working with people who, through their lifestyles, cultures and beliefs, protect nature and its resources. They do this by working with custodians of lands and waters to enhance the protection, management, and restoration of Sacred Natural Sites; by supporting and celebrating innovative cultural practices that benefit nature and biodiversity around the world; and by engaging with faith-based leaders, communities and networks to find culturally appropriate ways of protecting the natural world. <http://www.diversearth.org>

Liza Zogib is a steering committee member of IUCN CEESP (Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy) and co-chairs one of its Specialist Groups.

<sup>3</sup> Yolda Initiative is a non profit, non-governmental international organization based in Turkey. Yolda, meaning “on the Road” – we work for conservation of biodiversity. Being the basis of life, biodiversity shapes the lifestyle and culture of human beings. Nature, therefore, cannot be seen as separate from culture. Natural and cultural diversity in fact face a common threat, which is the adverse impact of human activity. Thus Yolda works also for conservation of the cultures respecting the Earth’s fragile ecosystems.

<sup>4</sup> Asociación Trashumancia y Naturaleza (TyN), created in 1997, works to support and promote transhumance, extensive farming and pastoral systems in Spain, which are all traditional practices that help maintain key ecosystems and the services they provide. The recovery of 125,000 kms worth of drovers’ roads is a main objective, as these key biodiversity corridors help avoid the fragmentation of valuable protected areas (such as Natura 2000 and High Nature Value areas).

TyN is one of the founding partners of the [Spanish Platform for Extensive Grazing and Pastoralism](#) and the Mediterranean Consortium for Nature and Culture (MCNC), and is also a member of the [Spanish Association of Communal systems Iniciativa Comunales](#).

Mobile pastoralists on the move with their herds have been shaping our landscapes for thousands of years. In doing so they not only support rural livelihoods but provide the highest quality products, maintain and enhance biodiversity, create connecting natural corridors, contribute to the mitigation of climate change, provide the best welfare for their animals, and much more.

Instead of acknowledging their vital contributions towards a healthy planet, modern society has made the continuing of their lifestyle extremely difficult. Traditional migration routes are being lost, many communities are being forced to settle down (often in the name of nature conservation), lands and territories are being grabbed, and entire cultures are being eroded.

In a bid to support mobile pastoralists, DiversEarth, Yolda Initiative and Trashumancia y Naturaleza, along with mobile pastoralist communities and supporting organisations around the world, are launching Roads Less Travelled – a new open, collaborative and global programme of work that supports and helps mobile pastoralists maintain their lifestyles and continue to move freely through the landscape.

“It is time to celebrate the pastoralists of the world not only for the services they provide but also for the important lessons they hold for life and living” says Liza Zogib, director of DiversEarth and co-founder of Roads Less Travelled. “From the inhospitable valleys of the Himalayas to the deserts of Africa; from the high Andes to the centre of Madrid, indigenous peoples and communities the world over are making the most of marginal lands and struggling against a tide of modernity in which they often can’t find their place.”

“Roads Less Travelled aims to provide support to as many communities as possible by making the case scientifically for the value they bring to society today, by connecting communities in a virtual network, by telling their stories and celebrating their cultures” says Engin Yilmaz, director of Yolda Initiative and co-founder of Roads Less Travelled.

“In Spain we have been working for over 30 years reviving transhumance along the country’s many cañadas” says Jesus Garzon, President of Trashumancia y Naturaleza. “We have much to share with the rest of the world” adds Concha Salguero of Trashumancia y Naturaleza. “From policy interventions to on-the-ground support to shepherds – so this new global initiative is both timely and much needed.”

Roads Less Travelled officially launches today at CCRN & IUCN’s *Communities, Conservation and Livelihoods Conference* in Halifax, Canada, with a panel session including presentations from Turkey, Spain, Portugal, North Africa and Chile. Mobile pastoralist communities and their supporting organisations and individuals are invited to join in this global movement to encourage a new respect for mobile pastoralists, for nature, for culture and for life and living.

Roads Less Travelled is supported in the Mediterranean by the Mava Foundation: <http://mava-foundation.org/>