

Heroes of deserts and highlands: Nourishing people and culture

The United Nations declared 2024 the International Year of Camelids (IYC 2024). The Year will highlight how camelids are key to the livelihoods of millions of households in hostile environments across over 90 countries, particularly Indigenous Peoples and local communities. From alpacas to Bactrian camels, dromedaries, guanacos, llamas, and vicuñas, camelids contribute to **food security**, **nutrition** and **economic growth** as well as holding a strong **cultural** and **social significance** for communities across the world.

Camelids play an important role in advancing the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) related to the fight against hunger, the eradication of extreme poverty, the empowerment of women and the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. From providing milk, meat and fibre for communities to transport for products and people, and organic fertilizer, camelids thrive where other livestock species cannot survive.

Camelids play a key role in the culture, economy, food security and livelihoods of communities in Andean highlands and in the arid and semi-arid lands in Africa and Asia, including Indigenous Peoples. Even in extreme climatic conditions they continue to produce fibre and nutritious food. Indeed, the International Year of Camelids presents a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the role of camelids in building resilience to climate change – particularly in mountains and arid and semi-arid lands.

The International Year of Camelids 2024 aims to build awareness of the untapped potential of camelids and to call for increased investment in the camelid sector, advocating for greater research, capacity development and the use of innovative practices and technologies.

We are camelids! Have we met?

We have been roaming the Earth since long before you arrived, but maybe you haven't noticed.

We are referred to as the heroes of deserts and highlands for we can survive the toughest of climates.

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Camelids contribute to the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and build resilience to climate change

< need to acknowledge the many virtues of camelids in addressing the challenges of climate change. They have the ability to harness the natural resources available in hostile and harsh environments, including mountains and arid and semi-arid lands.



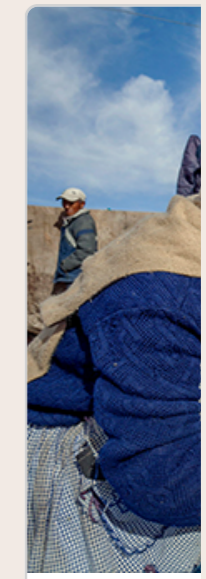
We need to invest in capacity development, research and outreach to develop the camelid sector

Governments and policymakers should invest more in camelid-related research and outreach as well as innovative practices and technologies. They should also invest in developing the capacities of local actors in the camelid sector, prioritize participatory approaches, as well as maintain, revitalize and protect traditional knowledge, practices and heritage of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.



Greater support to the camelid sector can accelerate progress towards achieving Zero Hunger and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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The camelid sector can contribute to achieving Zero Hunger and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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