

“Travel, See the world and the way you see the world”.

My First Experience of COP28 as Pastoralist Youth Delegate, on behalf of Daayyaa Generation Network (DGN)

Preface

Although there are many meetings in the world, few have thousands of participants. The COP is the largest meeting involving many people, young, old, professionals, academicians, technicians, engineers, innovators, researchers Regardless of background, gender and age.

I am the son of a Borana pastoralist community. My people are known as the People of Assembly. As I grew up learning from the elders as a child and gained good experience of herding and watering cattle, I have become a great participant in many home and community level meetings, in various forms.

Over the past three years, I have attended many meetings and training to be a voice for the pastoralist community and to build my capacity too, through experience sharing and networking. In terms of education, I have taken many short online focused that focused on the global challenge. All these efforts made me realize that the biggest problem the world is facing right now is climate change and global warming. There is no doubt that the pastoralists are among the first to be affected by this disaster, as they are the most vulnerable group. For this reason, I had to focus on climate change alongside my field of study. Similarly, I was successful in my short training through AGNES.

Thus, the first large-scale meeting on climate change outside my country that I attended was the Africa Climate Summit (ACS 2023) in Nairobi, Kenya. The ACS2023 was the door open opportunities for me and many Africans youth, those have not got an opportunity to participate in UNFCCC and COPs before. Africa Climate Summit was seeming the small COPs and more than 30,000 participants from all over the world were attended. I got the huge experience from the ACS2023 and built a strong youth network, especially with Africa Pastoralist Youth Initiative and South Africa Pastoralist Youth within the collaboration of IYPR “International Year of Pastoralism and Range Land’ flagship that declared by the United Nations that will take place in the 2026 at year of range land.

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After that, my main focus was to raise awareness about climate change through activism and other systems too. In addition, at ACS2023 I met my Ethiopian friends who have represented Ethiopia at major conferences for many years. That was great for us to build a strong network. Back home, I attended up to 4 pre-COP28 events with my fellow Ethiopian Youth groups, such as Youth Print, Influencers, Green Thinkers, LCOY and Daayyaa Generation Network.



Figure 1 Pre-COP28 Ethiopian Youth Gathering, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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My First Impression

On the 2nd of December 2023 made my way to the world's largest climate change conference organized by UNFCCC outside my country for the first time from the Land of Origin, Ethiopia. My way to COP28 was rough and full of obstacles. After crossing many obstacles and difficult paths, I have arrived DxB Dubai and started participating in COP28 in Dubai, UAE on December 03, 2023, on behalf of the Pastoralists people, as a Daayyaa Generation Network focal Person.



Figure 2 Jatani Bonaya at COP28, Blue Zone, EXPO2020, Dubai, UAE

When I come to the meeting, the crowd looks like a Hajji Festival of Meca or Irrecha and Meskela Festival of Ethiopia. The number of meeting rooms is as large as the shops in Dubai. The number of topics discussed is like the content pages of a large book. All are important topics. I was confused about what to choose and what to do. I sat for a while and sighed. So, I sat down and read everything, and then I started my participation by focusing on the titles of those who were most like me or my people's issues.

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Involvement

My country, Ethiopia, also attended the meeting with numbers of youth, ministers, ambassadors, women from different sectors. But, as the number of people was small, the degree of impact we planned to have been examined here. However, the few who came have been trying to make a big impact. Therefore, the contribution of our country's participants is appreciated.

As for the pastoralists, COP28 has made me realize that the world is still not paying attention to the most vulnerable groups. However, the countries such as Iran, Mongolia, India, Kenya and Tanzania, ... have shown at COP28 that they are struggling to bring on board the issues of pastoralists and semi-agro-pastoralists by raising the issues through their minister of livestock. They have appealed to all concerned parties. In our case, the Daayyaa Generation Network appeal on the part of our country has been registered as the first group to represent officially pastoralist community. But, still there is no minister of livestock or strong policy of livestock in the country. The indigenous community consideration from the world is also good, but it needs more attention, as the indigenous knowledge links the survival of every human being to the wholeness of nature and its elements that support life. It provides the concrete situations of communities in relation with the environment and provides practical solutions to the problems of the people like natural and human made disaster such as climate Change.



Figure 3 The representative from AYPI and Indigenous Community at Expo2020 Cop28

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The Fortuitous to Speak Loudly

The impact of climate change is well known to affect more vulnerable groups like pastoralists and farmers. The East African Pastoralists were huge impact of climate change, in particular Ethiopia and Kenya pastoralists have been in dire straits over the past three years due to climate change. The huge east African Pastoralist Community of Borana that live in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia have lost their livestock. Especially in Ethiopia, the Borana, Bale, Guji, Somali, South Omo, Karayu, Haraghe and Affra have been internally displaced from them because of the prolonged drought. Those on the border side, like Borana and the Somali, have fled to the neighboring country. In the Borana zone, Guji Zone, Bale zone and East Borana zone, many children and the elderly have lost their lives due to hunger and thirst. As an Ethiopian pastoralist of Oromia Regional state, from Borana, Guji, Bale and Haraghe alone, we have lost about 300 Bln USD of assets. The severe stigma attached to the Borana pastoralists is particularly outrageous. More than 46,000 HHs are displaced, and more than 100 people have lost their lives. The COP28 was an appropriate and timely forum for me to talk about this injury. Actually, I have done it proudly with my fellow friends from the pastoralist’s community, Ethiopian Youth and Comrade Omar Gobe.

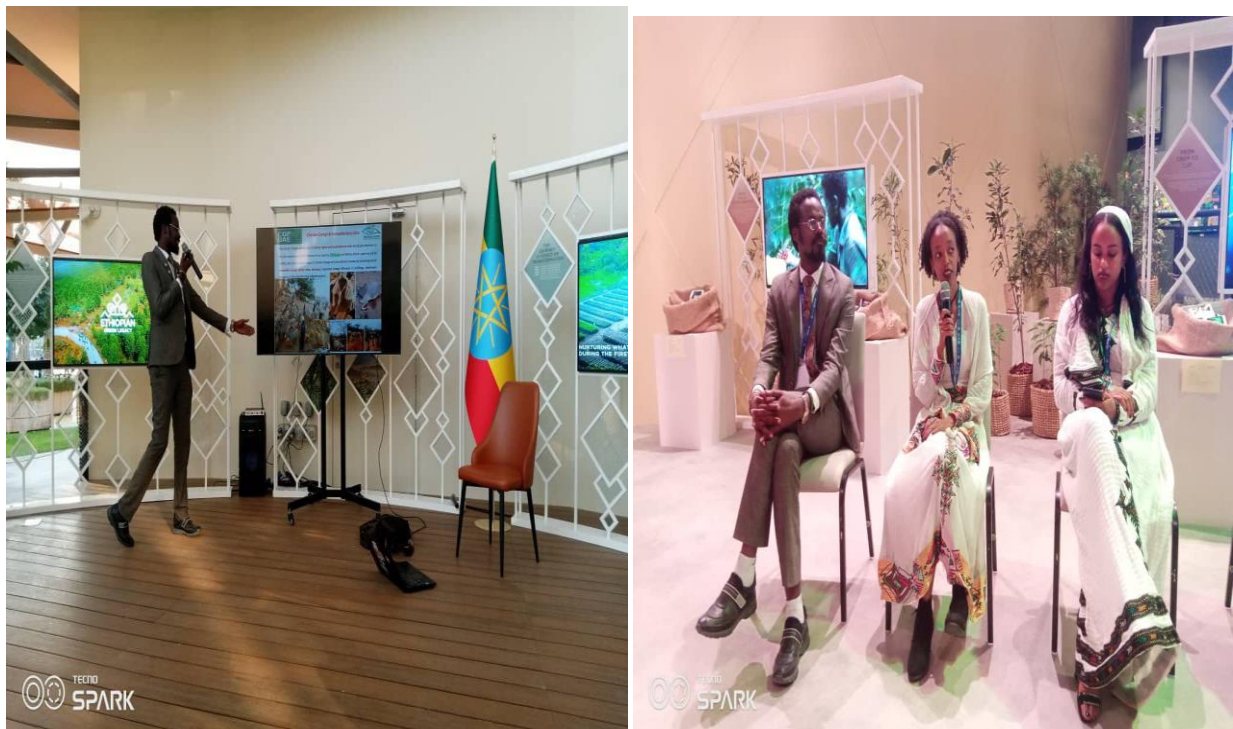


Figure 4 Jatani presenting 'The Climate Change and Pastoralism' at Ethiopian Green Legacy Pavilion Expo2020, COP28, UAE

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The Unexpected Gift from OPEC team

It was the side event of the OPEC Fund on the Adaptation, Mitigation, Loss and Damage” at COP28 on 7th of December. In the afternoon shift, we had these side events in collaboration with AYPI and DGN. There were panelists from Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Western World that were moderated by Dr. Nadia Benamara is the Communication Director of the Department. After the panelist presented their presentation, we start raising the questions. My brother from Tanzania, the AYPI Director, raised questions about how pastoralism should be included in the OPEC Fund. Then, a lot of participants raised different questions. Lastly, I have narrated the impact of climate change on the pastoralist community, especially nailed the loss and Damage to Ethiopian Pastoralists due to prolonged drought. I have mentioned in my history of Borana pastoralist families, that there is no infrastructure like electricity, roads, water, even a market. By that point, the participants, moderators and panelists had traveled to Borana by imagination. Thus, after the session, the Communication Director, Dr. Nadia Benamara award with Expensive Modern Power Bank and OPEC Flash Disc. That was an unexpected gift for me.



Figure 5 DGN & OPEC Team

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Immersed in Negotiations as the listener: Following Loss and Damage

The UNFCCC defines "loss and damage" as things like the price of restoring infrastructure damaged by flooding or the loss of revenue from agricultural harvests lost by drought. This was one of my main concerns during COP28. Negative effects that are difficult or impossible to put a monetary value on are referred to as non-economic loss and harm. Since the pastoralist community is the most vulnerable and severely impacted group of people in need of the loss and damage money, I paid special attention to whether or not they included it under this theme area. This required actively taking part in both official and informal stakeholder engagements and paying attention to the many proposals and interventions made by various organizations and stakeholders. Lastly, I am aware that pastoralists are included, although it varies according to the country's concern to its people. The Loss and Damage Fund's governing document was authorized by the COP 28 resolution, which also determined that the Fund will be run by a brand-new, independent secretariat. Additionally, the decision was made for the Board to oversee and manage the Fund.



Figure 6 Negotiation panel at COP28, B1 Plener

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Some Challenge (Personal)

The Long Distance from Ajman to Dubai

We, the Ethiopian Pastoralists representatives did not come sponsored by government agencies or special NGOs. However, we appreciate the Minister of Development and Planning for their immense support in our accreditation approval from UNFCCC. We have come through a rough journey at least to be a voice for the voiceless pastoral peoples of our country. We were staying in Ajman state, and came to Expo 2020 by crossing the long way from Ajman state, Sarjah state, and participated in the event in Dubai state, which is the 3rd state from where we stayed. We had traveled for 6hrs from and to COP28, 2hrs by train and 4hrs by bus. That was a small sacrifice once paid for his/her communities. We did it and proud to it.



The Sleep-in bus, from Union Metro station to Ajman Al Mussallah Bus station

Because we were trying to make the world hear what climate change brought to the marginalized communities of Africa, what problems the pastoralists faced because of climate change's impact. That was actually one of the COP objectives. Therefore, we presented 'pastoralism' issues and climate change impact at more than 20 formal side events on behalf of our country. That was a great success for us.

As we come to COP28, from a long distance, we wake up early in the morning, leave Ajman at 5:00am; and, back from Expo2020 at 4:00pm. As we come back, again we have to realize and

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review our daily activities and prepare for the second day's events. Thus, we did not have enough time to sleep, and we started sleeping as soon as we got on the bus and took our seats from Al Mussallah bus station to Union Metro station Vice verse. That was a great challenge. We named it the sleep-in bus.



Figure 7 DGN team Travelling from Ajman to Expo2020, COP28 Dubai

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The best image of my country ever at COP

My country at Expo 2020, COP28 was known as 'Ethiopian Green Legacy Pavilion', the best ever single country pavilion at COP. The house has been built with a modern design that includes different sections in terms of Natural Resources, Transport, GERD and historical images painted by Ethiopian painters, which show that the country is the origin of humankind and coffee. I appreciate the “Green Legacy” as a major contribution of Ethiopia to the world and push the world to take responsibility for the damage caused by climate change in developing countries. This has raised the name of our country in the world for good things and built the best image at COP28, UAE.



Figure 8 The great time and different side event activities at Ethiopian Green Legacy Pavilion

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Conclusion

Generally, I learned a lot from the COP28 meeting. I learned a great deal about what international debate and negotiation is like. By building many networks, I have met young people and people around the world, as well as various organizations that are working to recover humanity and nature from the impacts of climate change. The work of Ethiopian Ministry of Planning and Development, in the Negotiations was highly appreciated by DGN.

At the COP28 climate summit in Dubai, all nations have committed to **"transition away from fossil fuels,"** which are the primary cause of climate change. This is part of the UNFCCC 2023 agreement. In the 28 years that international climate talks have taken place, this accord represents the first of its kind. The pledge is a part of the first **"global stocktake"** of ways that nations may step up their efforts to meet the objectives of the historic Paris Agreement. Many nations, however, left the negotiations angry that there was not a clear directive to "phase out" fossil fuels this decade and that there was a "litany of loopholes" in the agreement that may allow the extraction and use of coal, oil, and gas indefinitely.

The absence of fresh financial pledges for moving away from fossil fuels and preparing for the effects of climate change disappointed developing countries, despite an early victory in establishing a fund to cover **"loss and damage"** from the phenomenon.

Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, an oil executive and president of COP28, celebrated the "world-first" accomplishment of include **"fossil fuels"** in a UN climate change accord. However, claims that the UAE planned to use COP28 to close oil and gas deals cast a cloud over his administration. Beyond the talks, COP28 brought with it a flurry of new international commitments ranging from tripling renewable energy and cutting emissions from oil and gas companies to improving global integration of climate change and biodiversity loss measures, as well as food systems. Here, Carbon Brief offers a thorough examination of every significant result from Dubai, both within and outside of the COP. Finally, on the COP28 of UNFCCC agreed on the 5 core points, i.e. Loss and Damage Fund, WIM for Loss and Damage, Santiago Network for LD, Adaptation Fund and Gender and Climate Fund.

“There is COP everywhere, all the time, if we are ready to take part”.

“When you think about quitting, remember why you started.”