ORGANIZATION FOR PASTORAL PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

POST-SESSION REPORT ON PARTICIPATION IN UNCCD COP17

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia | 17–28 August 2026

Submitted to	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat
Submitted by	Organization for Pastoral Peace and Development (OPPD)
Participant	Fozia Noor, Executive Director
Conference	UNCCD COP17, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia | 17–28 August 2026

1. Executive Summary

With the support of a full sponsorship to attend in person, the Executive Director of the Organization for Pastoral Peace and Development (OPPD), Fozia Noor, participated in the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP17), held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 17 to 28 August 2026.

OPPD's engagement focused on the relevance of COP17 discussions and outcomes to pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities, particularly women and young people, and on strengthening the connection between global commitments and community-level priorities. The organisation's contributions and engagement centred on rangeland stewardship, pastoralist livelihoods, drought resilience, land restoration, inclusive land governance, women's leadership and community knowledge.

This report summarises OPPD's preparatory engagement, participation and related activities during COP17, the principal lessons relevant to its work, and the follow-up actions planned or undertaken after the conference. Sections on post-COP activities and organisations reached are intentionally left editable so OPPD can add verified details before submission.

2. Organisational Context and Purpose of Participation

OPPD is a non-profit organisation working with pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia. Its work includes peacebuilding, humanitarian response, community and organisational capacity strengthening, and environmental and natural-resource management. These areas intersect with UNCCD priorities relating to land degradation, drought resilience, sustainable rangeland management and inclusive implementation.

OPPD's participation aimed to: (i) follow discussions and outcomes relevant to pastoralist communities and rangelands; (ii) contribute community-centred perspectives, including the priorities and knowledge of pastoralist women and youth; (iii) connect with civil society and other stakeholders; and (iv) identify practical opportunities for post-COP knowledge-sharing, advocacy, partnership and implementation.

3. Pre-COP Engagement and Liaison with CSOs

Before and in preparation for COP17, OPPD's engagement was informed by its ongoing work and networks on pastoralist livelihoods, women's leadership, rangeland stewardship and community resilience. The organisation's advocacy was also connected to the pastoralist-women agenda advanced through the Mera +16 Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women and the Kathmandu Declaration.

OPPD's preparatory engagement sought to keep community priorities visible in COP17-related conversations and to support exchange around the challenges facing pastoralist communities, including access to land and water, pastoral mobility, drought, land degradation, conflict-sensitive resource governance and the role of women and young people.

- ARIN Friday Review: Pastoral Women at the Frontlines - Our Executive Director Fozia Noor was featured in the ARIN Africa Friday Review on "Pastoral Women at the Frontlines: Advancing Gender-Responsive Climate Resilience in East and the Horn of Africa," held on 7 August 2026. The session provided an opportunity to share OPPD's experiences and perspectives on the contributions of pastoralist women to climate resilience, livelihood protection and the preservation of Indigenous knowledge. The engagement reinforced the importance of gender-responsive approaches that recognise pastoralist women's leadership and strengthen their participation in climate action and community decision-making. Link here

- Landscape Dialogue Series: Beyond Resilience - Pastoralist and Rangeland Community Priorities for Prosperity; On 6 August 2026, OPPD participated as a collaborator in the online Landscape Dialogue Series organised by the Global Landscapes Forum and its partners. Under the theme "Beyond Resilience: Pastoralist and Rangeland Community Priorities for Prosperity," the dialogue created space for pastoralist and rangeland communities to share perspectives on what prosperity means in their contexts. With OPPD Executive Director Fozia Noor joining the panel of facilitators, the session emphasised the importance of centring community priorities, pastoralist voices and Indigenous knowledge in sustainable development discussions. It also highlighted the need to look beyond resilience alone and consider the broader conditions that enable pastoralist communities to thrive. Link here

- SBSSTA 28 Side Event: The Role of Pastoralists in Biodiversity Conservation - OPPD highlighted the importance of placing pastoralist communities and rangelands at the centre of biodiversity conservation efforts through engagement around an SBSSTA side event organised by Impact Trust Kenya. The discussions challenged misconceptions about pastoral mobility, emphasising its role in maintaining healthy rangeland ecosystems, biodiversity and climate resilience. Experiences, including Tanzania's Ujamaa model, demonstrated the importance of governance systems that recognise community rights and collective stewardship of natural resources. The engagement reinforced the need to recognise Indigenous and local knowledge, alongside community-led monitoring, as credible sources of evidence for national and global biodiversity action. Link here

4. Activities and Engagement During COP17

OPPD participated in COP17-related discussions and knowledge-sharing spaces relevant to rangelands, pastoralist communities, women's leadership, drought resilience and land restoration. The activities below reflect the engagements identified in OPPD's available notes and communications records. Where OPPD's role was attendance or engagement rather than formal organisation or speaking, this distinction should be retained.

4.1 Side events and thematic sessions

- "From Mera 2010 to Kathmandu 2026: Pastoralist Women Unite for Land, Climate Change, Justice, Peace and Solidarity." OPPD supported this side event, which brought pastoralist women's voices, rights, experiences and priorities into the COP17 space. The discussion connected the Mera +16 process and the Kathmandu Declaration with continuing advocacy for women's leadership in land governance, climate resilience, peace and community development. Fozia Noor's participation, including her contribution to the closing reflection on future aspirations,

helped reinforce the importance of pastoralist women and youth shaping the decisions that affect their lives and landscapes. Link here

- "Stewarding Rangelands for a Land Degradation-Neutral World: Lessons from Africa." This session focused on pastoralist-led rangeland stewardship, restoration, drought-risk management, sustainable financing and the role of Indigenous and local knowledge. Fozia Noor participated as a speaker, contributing OPPD's perspective on community-centred approaches and the need to connect land restoration with pastoralist livelihoods and locally grounded governance. Link 1 and Link 2
- OPPD participated in the session "Cultivating Resilience Through Data: Youth-Centred Policies as a Catalyst Against Drought and Desertification in Africa," held in the Blue Zone at COP17 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The session explored how reliable data and youth-centred policies can contribute to building resilience against drought, desertification and land degradation across Africa. It brought attention to the importance of engaging young people in evidence-based decision-making and ensuring that their perspectives inform policies and interventions addressing environmental challenges. The session aligned with OPPD's commitment to strengthening youth participation in environmental governance and promoting inclusive approaches to land restoration, climate resilience and sustainable natural resource management. Link 1 , Link 2 and Link 3

- On 24 August 2026, OPPD joined partners for the COP17 side event "Digital Innovations for Land Use and Policy: Opportunities and Partnership," held in the Blue Zone. Under the theme "Land for Youth: Innovate, Secure and Thrive," the session explored how digital technologies can help address barriers that young people face in accessing land and participating in land governance. Discussions showcased mobile and online solutions designed to strengthen youth access to land, support advocacy and create opportunities for young people to influence land-use policies. The session also highlighted the importance of partnerships in translating digital innovation into practical opportunities and more inclusive land governance. Link 1 and Link 2

- On 18 August 2026, OPPD Executive Director Fozia Noor delivered the Civil Society Statement during the 24th session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC24) at UNCCD COP17 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The statement called for stronger implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) at national, subregional and regional levels. Link here

Below are some of the sessions we joined and contributed to, just as participants, not as partners or co-organisers.

- "From Saudi Arabia to Mongolia and Beyond: Global Drought Resilience is Not a Matter of Choice but a Necessity." OPPD engaged with this COP17 Water Day discussion on drought resilience and the importance of preparedness, cooperation and approaches that respond to the growing impacts of drought.
- "COP17 Vision from Targets to Implementation: Achievements and New Horizons in Combating Desertification and Erosion." OPPD followed discussions on implementation, landscape resilience and responses to land degradation and hydrometeorological risks.

4.2 Knowledge-sharing and communications

OPPD also used its communications work to capture and share experiences from COP17. This included a COP17 wrap-up video/reel in which delegates were invited to reflect on their experience of the conference and identify key takeaways. This activity supported peer learning and helped bring perspectives from the conference to audiences beyond the formal meeting rooms. Link 1 and Link 2

OPPD's communications approach highlighted the importance of connecting global discussions with the realities of pastoralist communities, particularly the roles of women and young people in land stewardship, restoration, food systems and resilience.

5. Key Lessons and Relevance to OPPD's Work

- Pastoralists and local communities should be recognised as rights holders, knowledge holders and implementation partners, not only as beneficiaries of environmental programmes.

- Sustainable rangeland management is closely linked to secure and appropriate land and water access, pastoral mobility, locally legitimate governance and conflict-sensitive approaches.
- Women pastoralists' knowledge and leadership are essential to stewardship, food systems and resilience. Their participation should include influence over decisions and access to resources, not only visibility in discussions.
- Drought resilience requires proactive preparedness, early warning, integrated land and water management, and finance that is accessible to local organisations and community-led initiatives.
- Scientific monitoring and technical approaches are strengthened when combined with community-generated evidence and pastoralist knowledge, including women's knowledge of water, grazing, livestock and early warning.
- Commitments made at global level need clear pathways for implementation, partnerships and monitoring that measure community-defined outcomes alongside hectares restored or funds mobilised.

6. OPPD's Follow-up Priorities after COP17

OPPD's initial post-COP priorities, as recorded in its COP17 submission, include convening women, youth, customary and local leaders; documenting community priorities on land, mobility, drought and peace; identifying investment-ready pilot concepts; and sharing evidence and lessons with government, UNCCD partners and civil society. OPPD also intends to continue advocating for pastoral communities to participate as co-designers and co-implementers of restoration and drought-resilience initiatives.

Complete the following section with activities that have actually taken place since returning from COP17. Include dates, formats, audiences, partners and any outputs or evidence where available.

6.1 Post-COP engagement and activities — to be completed by OPPD

1. Exploring Rangeland Myths—Consultation = Participation

Following COP17, OPPD Executive Director Fozia Noor participated as a speaker in the online discussion "Exploring Rangeland Myths: Consultation = Participation," organised by the REPAiR project. The session provided an opportunity to share experiences and insights from COP17 in Mongolia and the Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women in Nepal.The discussion focused on the distinction between consultation and meaningful participation, highlighting the importance of ensuring that pastoralist communities, particularly women, have a genuine voice in decisions affecting their lands, livelihoods and natural resources. The engagement reinforced the need to move beyond simply consulting communities towards approaches that recognise their knowledge, leadership and influence in decision-making. Link Here

2. CIGOFA5- Youth, Women and Inclusive Land Governance

OPPD continued to advance discussions on inclusive land governance through its participation in CIGOFA 5, where Executive Director Fozia Noor moderated a panel titled "The Youth Perspective: Land Needs and Capacity, What Is Changing and Who Is Doing What? Zooming in on Women and Girls."

The session brought together perspectives from grassroots women's leadership, agroecology, youth-led food systems and Indigenous community land rights. Discussions examined the challenges young people and women face in accessing land and participating meaningfully in decisions affecting land use and management. A key message was that access to land alone is insufficient without decision-making power, resources and opportunities to develop sustainable livelihoods.

The engagement connected with key themes raised at COP17, particularly the importance of inclusive governance, meaningful community participation and the recognition of local knowledge in sustainable land management. By moderating the discussion, OPPD's Executive Director helped bring these issues into a broader conversation on youth participation, women's leadership and equitable land access.

Link here

3. Local Communities Caucus - Session 1.

OPPD engaged with discussions concerning local and Indigenous communities, including pastoralists and other groups whose knowledge, livelihoods and rights are directly affected by land and environmental decisions. The caucus provided a relevant space for considering how community perspectives can inform COP processes and follow-up.

Session 2- IYRP Pastoralism and Gender Working Group Meeting

On 22 September 2026, OPPD participated in a meeting of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) Pastoralism and Gender Working Group. The engagement provided an opportunity to share experiences and reflections from UNCCD COP17 and the Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women in Kathmandu, Nepal, while discussing ways to sustain the momentum generated by these international engagements.

Key discussions centred on the Kathmandu Declaration, continued collaboration among working group members, and the need to translate commitments made during the IYRP into sustained action. Participants also explored opportunities to strengthen the network of pastoralist women, improve knowledge-sharing and develop a roadmap with clear objectives and collaborative action points.

The meeting reinforced the importance of continued coordination among civil society organisations and other stakeholders to advance gender equality, strengthen pastoralist women's leadership and ensure that their priorities remain central to rangeland governance and sustainable development beyond COP17.

7. CSOs and Other Organisations Reached

List the civil society organisations, community networks, NGOs, government institutions, research organisations, development partners and other stakeholders with whom COP17 information or outcomes have been shared. Include the means and date of sharing where possible. Do not list an organisation unless information was actually shared with it or a relevant exchange took place.

7.1 Organisations and stakeholders

Organisation / network	Country / constituency
Youth Initiative For Land In Africa (Yilaa)	Benin
Repair Project	SOuth Africa
World Food Forum Kenya	Kenya
UNCCD Africa CSOs	Across Africa
Somali Women Pastoralists Network	Across Somalia
IYRP Gender working group CSOs	Across the globe

8. Recommendations and Implementation Priorities

OPPD encourages UNCCD partners and implementation stakeholders to: (i) institutionalise safe, informed and resourced participation of pastoralist women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities in implementation and monitoring; (ii) make land-restoration and drought-resilience finance more accessible to local and community-led organisations; (iii) support appropriate approaches to communal tenure, grazing access, water access and pastoral mobility; (iv) pair scientific monitoring with pastoralist and community knowledge; and (v) develop scalable, locally accountable restoration and drought-resilience initiatives that can connect community action with wider investment opportunities.

9. Conclusion

COP17 provided an important opportunity to bring global attention to land restoration, drought resilience and the role of people who live on and depend on rangelands. For OPPD, the central lesson is that effective implementation must be inclusive, locally grounded and accountable to pastoralist communities. OPPD will continue to work with communities and partners to strengthen women’s and youth leadership, document local priorities and support practical pathways from global commitments to equitable results on the ground.

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