



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to sincerely thank the host of UNFCCC 18th Conference of Youth (COY 18), United Arab Emirates (UAE), COY 18 partners, YOUNGO, and all the youth delegates at COY 18 who together made this conference a success. I am also grateful to UNICEF Cameroon for financial support. My appreciation also goes to the entire Environment and Food Foundation (E2F) team for their moral and technical support.

Our Founder & Executive Director **ACHARE Elvis AYAMBA** was an official delegate of **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 18th Conference of Youth (COY18)**. He represented both the nation of **Cameroon** and **Environment and Food Foundation (E2F)** at COY 18.



Cameroon delegates at COY 18



Achare Elvis Ayamba



Opening Ceremony of UNFCCC COY 18: Youth from across the world gather at EXPO City, Dubai, UAE.

The COY18 Opening Ceremony welcome delegates from around the world to the **18th Conference of Youth, in Expo City Dubai, UAE**, which happened from November 26th to 28th, 2023. The Conference was under the umbrella of YOUNGO, its co-hosts and many amazing partners.

COY18 was joined by the hosts **Butti Al Muhairi and Lateefa Al Mansouri, Her Excellency Mariam Al Muhairi, Her Excellency Reem Al Hashemy**, representatives from the local co-hosts, a virtual appearance by **Amy E. Pope IOM Director General**, a video address by **Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Her Excellency Shamma Al Mazrui**, and many other distinguished guests.

The COY18 Opening Ceremony was a celebration of youth leadership and a platform for delegates to jumpstart an event meant for connecting and exchanging ideas. With Expo City Dubai as the backdrop, the conference was an exciting and dynamic event, with workshops, sessions, art spaces, a Green Jobs Fair and a lot more.

Here are some key messages from some high dignitaries who gave a speech during the opening ceremony of COY 18:

H.E. Mariam Almheiri, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, UAE

“We have got a huge challenge ahead of us, but I know with your help and your voices, we can heal our mother, planet earth! “

H.E. Reem Al Hashimy, UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation and CEO of the EXPO City Dubai Authority

“We all know this, in both our heads but also in our hearts, because we've realized what we've been doing up until this point won't get us far enough or fast enough. This is the troubling context for the Global Youth Statement.”

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[Website: www.e2fcameroon.org](http://www.e2fcameroon.org).



António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

“Demand that governments, financial institutions and business around the world do the right thing and take every step to safeguard our common future. I know you will never give up, neither will I. Let’s keep pushing.”

Amy E. Pope, Director General of the IOM

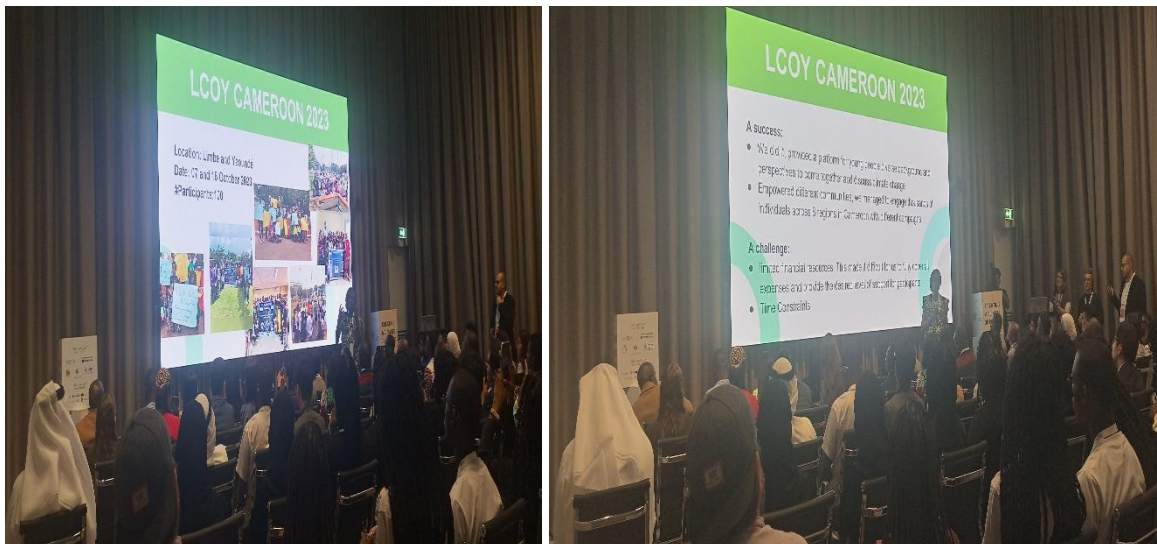
“Young people have to endure challenges that is frankly not of their making, and often this can mean, leaving their world behind to start a new and uncertain life. We believe that migration should always be a choice, not a necessity.”



COY18 Day 1

COY18 took no time to get into the full swing of things after its opening ceremony, and during its first day it was buzzing with incredible delegates, inspiring panels, educational workshops and a lot more. Additionally, a Green Jobs Fair was set up at COY18, which provided an excellent opportunity for attendees to learn about and network with companies and organizations that prioritize sustainability and environmental responsibility. The fair showcased and will continue to be a space for a range of career opportunities in fields such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, conservation, and eco-tourism. Along with the Fair, the first day of COY18 featured a lineup of engaging young speakers and panel discussions that provided valuable insights, a youth and children simulation, breakfast, lunch and dinner for all delegates, other activity spaces such as the Virtual Reality kiosk set up by our partners the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM), and a lot more!

COY 18 day 1 also featured a very interesting side event on the Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) where LCOY Cameroon was presented, by one of Cameroon delegates to COY18.





COY 18 Day 2

COY18 Day 2 kicked off with tremendous energy and purpose, setting the stage for a dynamic second day. The agenda was packed with sessions that delved into critical aspects of climate action. Notably, the presence of **HE Simon Stiell, UNFCCC Executive Secretary**, added gravitas to the event. His statements resonated strongly with the youth, emphasizing the need for unified efforts and highlighting the significance of COP as a global platform. Throughout the day, engaging sessions unfolded across various rooms hosted by a range of speakers and partners, from YOUNGO, UAE based environmental institutions, and international youth organizations. Some highlights include the YOUNGO Migration and Climate session explored adaptive strategies, aligning with the broader theme of youth-driven climate solutions. As well as the Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection, who facilitated a session on youth-powered knowledge exchange for climate action, while Misk Foundation addressed the pivotal role of NPOs in taking action on climate, aligning with the broader theme of collective responsibility. The Youth for Ecocide Law session, led by Taiwan Climate Youth Coalition, emphasized the global movement to change laws and protect the planet.

The Climate Tribe Challenge highlighted the transformative power of sustainable initiatives. The day concluded with the Entertainment + Culture Pavilion showcasing how entertainment and culture can drive climate action.

In parallel, a range of networking and entertainment activities ran throughout COY18, such as the Green Jobs Fair providing a platform for attendees to explore career opportunities in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, conservation, and eco-tourism. Everyone is looking forward to the last day of COY feeling inspired for the last day!



Global Youth Statement Handed Over

COY 18: Global Youth Statement Handed Over to **His Excellency Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of UNFCCC**

The YOUNGO Policy Team achieved a significant milestone by officially launching and presenting the GYS to **Simon Stiell (Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC)**. This comprehensive statement, a culmination of inputs from LCOYs, RCOYs, surveys, and hackathons, encompasses the perspectives of over 700,500 respondents worldwide. You can delve into the impactful insights and recommendations by exploring the GYS at <https://www.coy18uae.org/global-youth-statement> . This collective effort reflects the global youth's commitment and engagement in shaping a sustainable future. Over 700,000 young people from 150 countries contributed to the GYS.

We were honoured to have had **H.E. Simon Stiell, UNFCCC Executive Secretary**, join us to accept the Global Youth Statement (GYS). His impactful statements resonated with our call for united action, emphasising that this COP is crucial in gaining global attention.

“These demands and the whole statement carry enormous moral weight. It does so because of the tremendous amount of work that you've put into ensuring that it represents children and youth from all over the world. With an impressive 110 local conferences of youth and nine regional conferences, as well as 750,000 inputs from 160 countries, this statement can be heard, loud and clear as the voices of youth“, Simon Stiell mentioned in his speech at COY18.

Stiell praised the clarity and weight of the Condensed Demands, acknowledging the significant efforts made to represent the voices of children and youth. He voiced unwavering support, recognizing the importance of our collective work.

Stiell reinforced the focus on solutions, stressing the "how" as the key to success. Change may be challenging, but it is our collective wisdom, especially from youth, women and indigenous communities, that will guide us toward a sustainable future.



Side Events Spotlight

1. Building a more responsible world starts with influencing communities:

One side event to highlight was the one named “Building a more responsible world starts with influencing communities”. During this session, discussions took place around the best ways to learn to gain influence in our communities to construct a more environmentally responsible environment.

It was emphasized that building awareness begins with educating oneself and working within our communities to make them more resilient. It was also emphasized that the key to achieving resilience lies in local authorities making informed and responsible decisions when it comes to disaster risks.





2. Environmental Education as a Strategy to Face Climate Change Issues

Our founder **ACHARE Elvis AYAMBA**, did a presentation in an enlightening session representing the host of the session **Water Energy and Sanitation for Development (WESDE)**, an NGO from Cameroon.

The side event was about Environmental Education as a Strategy to Face Climate Change Issues. The purpose of the session was to discuss key aspects of environmental education, but integrating sustainable development in teaching and learning, emphasizing living in harmony with nature.

He emphasized that it is necessary to include sustainable development in education because we are approaching 2030, because education facilitates behavior change at the grassroots level, and because it promotes a circular economy. The importance of holistic education was also mentioned, including the expansion of information, education, communication sensitization, and adaptation, resilience, and training. Finally, the conversation shifted to the local level, and good on-the-ground practices carried out in Cameroon were discussed.





3. YoU-CAN Future Game: Building a Climate Conscious community through Future Thinking

The session was a dynamic Futures game organized by the UNESCO Youth Climate Action Network (YoU-CAN), based on UNESCO's track record and champion capability-based approach to future for over a decade, where COY18 delegates discovered how futures literacy and foresight can empower organizations, policymakers and youth to be more creative, open, experimental and innovative in planning, preparing and inventing as changes occur, to make them more effective at navigating economic, political, social, and environmental challenges. The session showed COY18 participants how imagining all of the potentialities of the future can enhance climate change preparedness, and draw inspiration to reimagine how to shape long-term policies and systems to withstand the inevitable climate shocks.



Gender and climate justice in the context of accountability and transparency in the implementation of NDCs

We equally participated in an event focused on gender and climate justice in the context of accountability and transparency in the implementation of NDCs. This session was led by the African Youth Initiative on Climate Change Zimbabwe (AYICCZim) and received support from various other organizations.

The objective was to share success stories and best practices contributed by women, children, and youth in the implementation of NDCs, to identify gaps hindering their participation, and

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[TEL: \(+237\) 677040017](tel:+237677040017), [EMAIL: e2fcameroon@gmail.com](mailto:e2fcameroon@gmail.com),
[Website: www.e2fcameroon.org](http://www.e2fcameroon.org).



to stress the importance of considering sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), intersectionality, and discrimination in efforts to prepare for and adapt to climate change.



COY 18 Day 3

Side Event Spotlight

1. Empowering Youth in Resource Management: Bridging the Gap for a Sustainable Future

A great session that took place was related to the empowerment of youth in resource management in the context of a just energy transition. It was highlighted that raw materials are important for this transition, and that it is still important to ask ourselves how this process will affect young people and why it is crucial for intergenerational equity.

The key message of the session was that young people must be involved in this process, being aware that we cannot wait for opportunities to engage, but to take action and create platforms for ourselves and other like-minded youth. Some relevant initiatives in which youth

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[TEL: \(+237\) 677040017](tel:+237677040017), [EMAIL: e2fcameroon@gmail.com](mailto:e2fcameroon@gmail.com),
[Website: www.e2fcameroon.org](http://www.e2fcameroon.org).



can participate are the “Guidebook for Critical Minerals” and the “Resilience Frontiers Initiative”.

2. Youth in Motion: Harnessing Climate Migration as an Adaptive Strategy

The YOUNGO Migration and Climate Change Working Group held an inspiring session on climate migration as an adaptive strategy. This session called our attention to the alarming situation of the Sub Saharan African migration phenomenon that is taking place due to climate disasters, and that is being repeated in other regions, affecting the surveillance of millions and hindering their basic human rights.

Speakers asked how to amplify voices of climate migrants, and highlighted various paths that can be taken in order to address this crisis, namely: coming up with policies to guide them, promoting ecosystem restoration, introducing early warning systems, mobility solutions, among others.

3. ACE: Climate Connection – Local and Global action – Working together for our Planet

The British Council, one of our knowledge partners at COY18, hosted a session on Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) from both a local and global perspective. This session was characterized by a participative and interactive methodology, aimed to gather insights from attendees on the ACE agenda in their communities and to integrate them in their global network.

Attendees had the opportunity to network and discuss the six elements of ACE: education, training, public participation, decision making, public awareness, and international cooperation. Participants emphasized the need for comprehensive climate education, especially for children, and stressed the importance of inclusion in decision-making processes.



Closing Ceremony of COY 18

COY 18 Closes as we head Into COP28 in Dubai, UAE

On December 28th, COY18 celebrated the end of all activities with a closing ceremony. The closing ceremony commenced with a captivating performance by the Emirates Youth Symphony Orchestra, setting the stage for a reflective conclusion to COY18. The ceremony featured a thought-provoking panel of YOUNGO members who shared valuable insights on the GYS drafting process, identified gaps in youth empowerment, and outlined a forward-looking vision to enhance youth engagement in climate diplomacy and climate action.



Distinguished attendees at the COY18 closing ceremony included **H.E. Razan Al Mubarak**, the UN Climate Change High-Level Champion for COP28; **H.E. Shamma Al Mazrui**, the Minister of Community Development and COP28 Youth Climate Champion; and **Dr. Omnia El Omrani**, the First Youth Envoy to the President of the COP27. Their presence underscored the importance of the youth's role in climate initiatives, emphasizing a collaborative approach toward addressing global climate challenges. The closing ceremony thus concluded COY18 on a high note, echoing the commitment to sustained youth involvement in shaping a resilient and sustainable future.

The event was a vibrant display of youth and intergenerational support.



The afternoon began with musical numbers from the Emirates Youth Symphony, who delighted all guests with their young and talented performers, reminding all of the power of music, and the fact that just like art, positive actions for climate change can create lasting impact.

Following their performances, guests were joined by keynote speeches from Her Excellency Shamma Al Mazrui, Minister of Community Development, Her Excellency Razan al Mubarak, Managing Director of the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi, Ina Parvanova, the Director of Communications and Engagement at the UNFCCC, Dr. Omnia Al Omrani, COP27 Presidency Youth Envoy, and a video message from Dr. Felipe Paullier of Uruguay, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs. The event included as well a video of the Global Youth Statement process and a panel by members of YOUNGO's working groups sharing the challenges, rewards and stages of building this masterful document.



The most significant moment of the afternoon came from the Global Youth Statement handover from YOUNGO members to the keynote guests in attendance, and the official launch of the full Document ahead of the start of COP. This document is the most comprehensive list of demands by young people on climate justice, and includes the voices of over 700,000 people from 150 countries.



Some key messages during COY 18 closing ceremony:

H.E. Shamma Al Mazrui, COP28 Youth Climate Champion, Minister of Community Development

“We have got a huge challenge ahead of us, but I know with your help and your voices, we can heal our mother, planet earth! “

H.E. Razan Al Mubarak, UN Climate Change High-Level Champion

“Remember all living generations - the youth of today become elders tomorrow and the elders of today need to be accompanied to a greener, cleaner future”

Ina Parvanova, Director of Communications and Engagement, UNFCCC

“I believe the Global Youth Statement is a beacon of hope. Voices of youth must be heard, your innovative solutions are needed to reach the 1.5C goal.”

Dr Omnia El Omrani, COP27 President Youth Envoy

“We still need a clear measure of success - I believe that success should not be measured in degrees, but in the number of lives saved.



Dr. Felipe Paullier, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, United Nations

It was three amazing days at COY. COY18 had participation of over 800 international youth delegates from over 165 countries, sponsored by 18 different entities and 79 highly relevant knowledge partners. During these days, 75 sessions took place, held by 233 inspiring young speakers. These incredible events were accompanied by the delightful performances of 68 artists, and 15 activations.

None of this would have been possible without you, and we still depend on you. After this great experience and with the Global Youth Statement in our hands, we leave empowered with new skills, knowledge and tools to make our demands heard at COP28, and to engage with our local communities to drive climate action and policies.

The echoes of Dubai's COY18 resonate as a beacon for global youth, marking a crucial milestone in the ongoing fight for a sustainable future. As COY18 concludes, the collective efforts of passionate youth delegates reverberate, contributing to a shared commitment to address and combat climate change.

COY18 in Numbers

800+ Participants

165+ Countries

3 Amazing Days

233 Speakers

68 Artists

15 Activations



18 Sponsors

75+ Sessions

79 Knowledge Partners

ABOUT ENVIRONMENT AND FOOD FOUNDATION (E2F)

Environment and Food Foundation (E2F) is an environmental non-profit with headquarter in the coastal city of Douala, Cameroon. It was founded in 2017 as an initiative to alleviate the city's severe environmental problems, caused by marine plastic pollution like plastic bottles, ghost gears, invasive aquatic weeds, landscapes and seascapes degradation and lack of proper waste management schemes. E2F work to promote sustainable management, restoration, protection and conservation of marine, coastal, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems including mangroves, wetlands, lakes, streams, rivers and oceans while working with coastal Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLC), youth, women, government, Research Institutions, Academia and civil society.

Since its launch, E2F has evolved and grown to be a respected, vibrant, and well-recognized organization and change agent in Cameroon, Africa and globally, with a strong presence in more than 20 international environmental networks and initiatives

Mission of E2F

The mission of E2F is 'to minimize and reduce the degradation of marine, coastal, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems and build a future in which humans have the right mindset to flourish with nature by using the power of: Education, Activism, Policy advocacy, Circular economy, Research and Conservation.



Vision of E2F

The organisation E2F envisage “a sustainable future for Cameroon and Africa where both people and nature flourish together, paving the way towards sustainable, low-carbon, and resilient development”.

CONNECT WITH E2F:

Website: <http://www.e2fcameroon.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Environment-and-Food-Foundation-E2F-2253738778181556/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/environmentandfoodfoundation/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/environment-and-food-foundation-e2f>

EMAIL: e2fcameroon@gmail.com