



Position

PhD Student

Institution

Addis Ababa Science and
Technology University, Ethiopia

Country

Ethiopia

Education

MSc, Animal Breeding and
Genetics, Haramaya University,
Ethiopia

Mentor

Dr. Solomon Dawit, Director,
International Livestock Research
Institute (ILRI), Ethiopia

Research Area

Livestock production and
management.

Dawit Mahilet Teweldebirhan

2021 One Planet Laureate Candidate

Dawit Mahilet Teweldebirhan is currently on study leave from Haramaya University in Eastern Ethiopia, where she is a lecturer and researcher. At the same time, she continues with the data-collection phase of her PhD in biotechnology at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University.

She completed her MSc in animal breeding and genetics and expects to complete her doctorate in 2023.

"I am working on the comparative genomics of Begait and Simien livestock groups (sheep, cattle, and goat)," she explains.

"We intend to see how these animals are adapting to climate change, the genomic footprint of these species for natural adaptation to the environment, and to look over the convergent evolution."

Drawn to science from childhood, she thought of teaching but also dreamed of being a writer.

"Now I'm thinking I can be a scientist who brings a solution to livestock problems in Ethiopia brought on by climate change—I hope to blend my work as a scientist with writing," she says. The mother of three children, including twins, says she is committed to using her gifts to make a difference.

Dawit is interested in animal breeding, genomics, bioinformatics, molecular breeding, women in animal husbandry/development, quantitative and population genetics, as well as aspects of climate financing, "which is aimed at reducing emissions, and enhancing sinks of greenhouse gases," she says.

Her goal is to "reduce the vulnerability of, and increase the resilience of, human and ecological systems to negative climate change impacts," she says.

"I am delighted with my mentor, who works at ILRI on climate change, agriculture, and food security (CCAFS), and is showing me the way to go," she says.

"The coaching session with One Planet/AWARD community (Dr. Douglas) gave me a clear understanding of my strengths and weaknesses, and I look forward to developing linkages so I can extend my network." Dawit also expects the One Planet program to help with her research, thanks to the training she will receive. "I want to be a vibrant scientist to achieve my purpose, and I hope to be a professor/scientist as my career progresses."

Although she originally applied for an AWARD Fellowship, Teweldebirhan decided to pursue a One Planet Fellowship.

As a recipient, she particularly looks forward to leadership training, which she knows will prepare her to influence her colleagues and build their capacity. "I also hope to help with problems in my country," she says.

Dawit says her greatest challenge is the struggle to show that she is as capable as a man. "This is me, and I can do it," she stresses.

Also, she is committed to increasing her networks and professional relationships. "Taking part in mega-projects is important, so we often have to go with the colleagues. "But nowadays, thanks to different types of meeting technology, such as Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, etc., it's possible," she concludes

Dawit's research interests span different sectors, including animal breeding and quantitative genetics, genetic pathway analysis, and gender role in animal husbandry practices.

Dawit Mahilet Teweldebirhan is one of the growing number of candidates selected to participate in the One Planet Fellowship. The One Planet Fellowship is a career development initiative that is building a robust pipeline of highly connected, inter-generational scientists equipped to use a gender lens to help Africa's smallholder farmers cope with climate change. The One Planet Fellowship is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the BNP Paribas Foundation, the European Union and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) and Agropolis Fondation are jointly implementing the Fellowship.

Do you have any further questions? Send an email to : oneplanet.award@cgiar.org

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