



Special Virtual Sessions for SBSTTA-24 and SBI-3

Biodiversity, One Health, & COVID-19

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Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN)

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Thank you **Mister/Madame** Chair. I am speaking on behalf of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused devastation to so many, is a failing of our current unsustainable, oppressive, and dysfunctional systems. All around we see that the hardest hit are once again those who bear the brunt of structural inequality - inequalities in access to healthcare, nutrition, basic services, and education, among other human rights denied for many of our brothers and sisters. What we need now is the genuine intention to rebuild through massive, concerted, transformative changes for the good of all society, future generations and the planet.

This year has clearly brought to light that healthy societies are underpinned by a healthy planet. It has made many of us rethink our lifestyles to improve our health and the health of our communities. We have placed more value on access to healthy and nutritious food. We have begun to value green spaces, traditional medicine, and nature's potential to heal us physically and mentally.

The Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is a unique opportunity to set an ambitious common agenda for the health of people and planet. Youth, women, Indigenous peoples and local communities have much to contribute to an inclusive approach to One Health. To learn from this pandemic means that, in the Post-2020 framework and beyond,

- We must recognize the human right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.
- We must stop thinking in silos and address the root causes of the interconnected biodiversity, health, climate, and cultural crises.
- We need to recognize that nature and culture are inextricably linked, rebuild these connections, and reflect this in the goals and targets.
- We must take efforts to prevent pandemics from reaching Indigenous peoples and local communities, which pose grave threats to their continued survival. And we must learn from their knowledge and values - they have deeply understood the interconnectedness of people and nature for millennia.
- We should recognize the key roles, knowledge and contributions of women in community health, resilience, conservation, and sustainable use.
- We must address rapid and unplanned land use change, agricultural intensification, unsustainable wildlife trade and other activities that put human health at risk.
- We must increase resources invested in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

- And we must ensure intergenerational equity in our actions in rebuilding from this pandemic, ensuring that we lay down a foundation that will prevent future generations from experiencing worse conditions.

Finally, we must take urgent transformative actions that go beyond “building back better”. We need to rethink before rebuilding, towards a future with more resilient, fair and sustainable societies, living in Harmony within Nature and among ourselves.

Thank you **Mister/Madame** Chair.

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