



Global Youth
Biodiversity
Network



Empowering
Youth For
Biodiversity

SBI-3 Informal Session

Statement by the **Global Youth Biodiversity Network**

Agenda Item 3. Review of progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

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Thank you Madame Chair,

Let us use this chance for talking frankly and directly.

Because it is always the same old story time after time. We spend months and years discussing and agreeing on plans to get us out of this crisis, and once we agree on them, we come back 10 years later and find that we are back at where we started. The only difference is, that today the situation is worse than before, and the time to act is even less.

We are in the middle of the 6th mass extinction, losing species at a rate that is unprecedented as long as we humans have been on Earth, and we are already facing the terrifying outcomes of it. This is something we all agree on.

But something we keep turning a deaf ear to is that the *core* of our unsustainable patterns is **deeply rooted in systemic social inequalities, and an unwillingness to question the system of values and priorities behind our actions.**

We understand the incredibly complex challenges behind the implementation of the Aichi targets. We especially recognize the lack of adequate capacity, resources and political support faced by many countries, and the limitations of our systems. But we must persevere. We need true transformation, and this won't come without resistance.

With nothing less than life itself at stake, **we need to do things drastically different.** Because even with shiny new goals and plans, nothing changes when the **systems** through which we implement them stay the same.

We believe that our national strategies moving forward must incorporate meaningful changes in the following areas, many of which are also pointed out in the [2nd edition of the Local Biodiversity Outlooks](#):

Firstly, we need change in our governance systems: Top-down strategies have marginalized less powerful actors from decision-making for far too long. Governance has been happening in silos, privileging economic growth over environmental health and social wellbeing. Our

governance approaches must guarantee the respect for human rights and greater equity, wellbeing, sustainability and resilience for all.

Secondly, in our economic systems: We are living through the dire consequences of an economic system that seeks infinite growth, yet depends on finite resources. We must embrace, support and learn from the many diverse systems embodying local and customary sustainable use, small-scale production, well-guided technological innovation, and scaled-down consumption – providing multiple benefits to society with less resources, as well as sharing those resources more equitably.

Thirdly, in our cultural systems: The role of culture in all of this is too massive to be ignored – culture defines the way we relate to the world around us. But the prevailing culture is one of dominance over nature rather than being part of it. As a central strategy out of this social-ecological crisis, we must celebrate, support, and foster the diverse cultures of sustainability that are in danger of being lost.

Fourth, in our systems of subsidies and incentives, and our resource mobilization strategies: Massive resources continue to be allocated to destructive activities like fossil fuels and extractives. We are still spending 500 Billion dollars every year for subsidies that are harmful to biodiversity – 10 times the funding that goes to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Harmful subsidies must be eliminated and reformed immediately, and substantially more resources must be mobilized and allocated to meet the objectives of the Convention.

And lastly, in our educational systems: We will continue to struggle with achieving the needed changes until we shape our societal values to being in line with living in harmony with nature. We find a key solution in education – in a transformative education system that fosters a society that understands our place in the web of life and stewards us towards a sustainable, peaceful and equitable future.

Reading the documents and being confronted with the lack of progress towards implementation is disheartening. We can't help but feel not only angry or frustrated, but also utterly scared – an entire generation is anxious and fearful of the future that lies ahead of us.

We are not just talking about a somehow blurry distant future for your great great grandkids anymore, **this is happening now, today.** To our generation, to your children.

We implore you to not make us live through another 10 years of business as usual.

With a heavy heart and with unbearable fear, but also with hope for a different trajectory, we thank you for the word Madame Chair.

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