



Statement by

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**Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity
at the occasion of the
International Youth Day 2020
12 August 2020**

The work of the Convention on Biological Diversity has been greatly enriched by youth. From their involvement in global decision-making to community actions, youth have become full partners in the fight against biodiversity loss. They are partners with vivid minds and unique perspectives, who can help define strategic priorities and implement creative solutions.

This is why “Youth Engagement for Global Action” is an inspiring theme for this year’s celebration of International Youth Day. Youth are participating actively in the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, a strategic road map towards a 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature, expected to be agreed by the global community in 2021.

Youth are taking effective action on the ground, leading species campaigns, conservation initiatives, educational activities, trainings and research on biodiversity and other pressing environmental issues.

Youth can take action towards innovation and transformative change. They have the capacity to use and develop new technologies for the benefit of nature as well as to engage with marginalized groups in our societies.

To enable youth to engage to their full potential, our formal institutions need to create the enabling conditions for youth.

Under the Convention on Biological Diversity, such enabling conditions take various forms. Youth can be invited by governments to join their delegations in official meetings; they participate in technical meetings; they receive in-kind or financial support to implement projects; and they get recognition for their work.

Youth are actively engaged in the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN). With 60 national chapters, GYBN enables youth to learn about the Convention, engage meaningfully in its processes, and implement projects in support of its objectives.

Providing support to youth is not only an investment towards a world where we live in harmony with nature, but also in our institutions, better governance, sustainable development, gender and social equity.

At a time when global efforts are focusing on the interlinked crisis of health, climate and biodiversity; at a time when nature is showing us that exploitation and destruction of resources cannot continue; at a time when our public institutions need all the help they can get to build back better as we recover from the COVID 19 pandemic, youth are more than ever a key agent of change, a key partner in action.

Let us welcome and provide space to the 1.8 billion youth as they transition into leaders, citizens, consumers, producers, policy-makers and parents. Let us hear their voices as we collectively define the new normal. Let us welcome them as partners, among the leaders of today, for they will be the ones inheriting the planet tomorrow.

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