

**Statement by Ms. Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological
Diversity on International Youth Day**

12 August 2025

Theme “Local Youth Actions for the SDGs and Beyond”

On this International Youth Day, we celebrate the dedication and commitment of youth to sustainable development.

This year’s theme is “Local Youth Actions for the SDGs and Beyond”. It highlights the unique role of youth in translating global ambitions—including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework -- into community-driven realities.

We at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) strive to underpin, support and enable youth contributions, including by advocating for the whole-of-society approach that the national and local implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework and the SDGs require. We also work to elevate their role in the processes of the CBD.

The Global Youth Biodiversity Network is one of our main partners in securing a seat at the table for youth and in ensuring that their voices are heard.

At the International Youth Conference on Biodiversity held in Yokohama, Japan in August 2024, more than 130 young leaders developed concrete solutions to address biodiversity loss.

The ideas that sprouted in Yokohama continued to grow and spread across the world. They were further discussed in Cali, Colombia, at COP 16 – described as *La COP de la gente*, or the “COP of the people”, including many young people.

There, young minds from around the globe met at the COP16 Youth Summit and shared their perspective and contributions with Parties, observers and participants.

Their contributions to the global debate on how to implement the KMGBF and make peace with nature were heard and still reverberate.

Several decisions adopted by the Parties to the CBD acknowledge the vital role of youth in the implementation of the Convention, its Protocols and the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Working with the Parties, we will continue to support youth-driven solutions and youth-led action as a pillar of the future we owe to young people: one of life in harmony with nature.