



## **GYBN Opening Statement for the Eleventh meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity**

*Montreal, 20 November 2019*

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

In this important meeting of the working group, we would like to express our commitment to being allies of indigenous peoples and local communities in their special role in achieving the collective vision of living in harmony with nature. We are hopeful that significant progress will be made in ensuring that this role will continue to be enhanced in the work of the Convention going into 2020 and beyond.

We would like to take this opportunity to point out that more effort should be taken to enhance the participation of indigenous youth, particularly young women and girls, and build their capacity to participate. Indigenous youth are inheritors of the important stewardship and custodianship roles of safeguarding our planet's most biodiverse areas. They are also the inheritors of indigenous knowledge systems and practices which we rely on greatly in achieving our 2050 vision, all while having great potential to innovate culturally-appropriate solutions to emerging environmental problems. The voices of indigenous youth need to be amplified.

We call on all relevant actors to support young members of indigenous peoples and local communities and their potential in environmental governance based on their customary laws and practices. In the development of the post-2020 framework, we feel it is crucial for both Parties and IPLCs to support intergenerational learning and knowledge transfer and intergenerational equity in decision-making. We also call for steps to be taken to address key challenges affecting indigenous and local youth to the detriment of biodiversity such as (1) the increasing trend in the migration of indigenous youth from their ancestral lands to urban areas driven by economic need, lack of opportunities, or insufficient provision of services by the government; (2) the culturally inappropriate modernization of education; (3) the lack of incentives to continue to practice traditional systems of agriculture and resource management, leading to knowledge loss on sustainable practices; and (4) the erosion of indigenous and local languages.

We in the Global Youth Biodiversity Network assure you of our full support in the continued fight to promote the recognition of the unique role of IPLCs in conserving life on Earth among the wider society.

Thank you Mister Chair.