

**Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) Closing 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, 22 November 2019*

Thank you Mister Chair. We, the indigenous youth present at the 11th meeting of the Working Group on Article 8j, are speaking on behalf of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network. We support the statement made by the IIFB and the [CBD alliance](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DI1SchjNbCkkNmNHA6tFFxI0gUUpwGT5P7JPiEhkhVc/edit).

We are encouraged by the increasing numbers of indigenous youth being present at the CBD and hope that this continues to grow. The Convention would benefit greatly from hearing more of our stories and perspectives and from supporting our work on the ground.

We have hope that the Convention and any meetings and bodies succeeding this Working Group will put in place means for the effective implementation of Article 8j and related provisions. We are also hopeful that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, if it is truly a framework for all, will be able to address the different issues that undermine the ability of indigenous peoples and local communities to practice our culture, continue to live in our ancestral lands, and continue our roles as stewards of much of the world’s biodiversity. This includes addressing the issue that many members of our communities continue to be harassed, criminalized, and killed in the name of defending biodiversity not only from unsustainable development projects being imposed on our lands but also against the fortress conservation model of establishing protected areas without genuine human rights considerations.

As we move forward, we hope that we all continue to put in efforts to ensure that the voices and well-being of indigenous peoples, youth, women and girls, all intersections of these groups, and future generations are heard and considered, and that the decisions that are being made ***for*** us are being made ***with*** us.

We hope that in the work going forward, we can all work together for the future we hope for ourselves and future generations: That is, for all people as the children of Mother Earth to understand biodiversity, respect it, and value it as indigenous peoples and local communities always have. Our lands and seas and all life they hold have always sustained us and nurtured us and they deserve that we return its favors--that we sustain and nurture life in return.

Thank you Chair.