

## **Youth Intervention at the CBD COP11 Opening Ceremony**

*October 8<sup>th</sup>, Hyderabad  
Delivered by Swetha Sthothrabhashyam  
GYBN - India*

Thank you Madam Chair,

Good morning to all participants. We would like to congratulate M. Dias for his appointment, and we would like to thank you for this opportunity to share our perspective with you.

We stand here representing Global Youth - 40% of the world's population; young foresters fighting illegal logging in Indonesia, young environmentalists protecting marshlands in Benin, young volunteers at National Parks in Germany as well as in Canada, students participating in meetings and pressuring their governments in India and Brazil, fighting for their lands, their culture and biodiversity. This vital work is being done by millions of young people in their local communities, which is why it is so important to share our experiences and to work together. Clearly, the will to conserve biodiversity exists everywhere.

We felt the need to unite our voices and to strengthen our position so that we can be heard and understood by you. Today, we are proud to present the Global Youth Biodiversity Network - GYBN for short - for the first time at a CBD COP. We aim to raise awareness on the immeasurable value of Biodiversity and to provide youth with a unique platform for collaboration.

We have the energy, the motivation, the innovation. You have the experience, the knowledge, the power. We want to work with you, learn with you and be part of the change we want to see in the world.

We are not here just to whine about problems and ask you to fix them for us. We are here because we want to take responsibility for our own future. As we mentioned before, we are already committed with our activities back home in reshaping our future. We want to be understood, to be heard.

This will happen if all parties to the CBD agree - here - to include young people in the decision making process at the local, national and international levels. We need your support in becoming permanent stakeholders by including youth participation in NBSAPs and in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Establishing National Youth Delegations and providing Capacity Building, Training, Knowledge Transfer will ultimately empower us to transform our society. We want to build a society that cares for the environment as we care for our own existence and understands the interdependence among all beings.

We are ready to be transformative. Will you join us?



It's not a coincidence that we are here in India, so let's remember what Gandhi said:  
"The Earth, the air, the land and the water are not inheritance from our forefathers but on loan from our children. So we have to hand it over to them at least as it was handed over to us."

If you are interested in our work and would like to support us, please join us at our Side Events on Oct/16th and 18th. You will also find us every day from 8 to 10 pm at our daily strategy meetings.

Thank you very much