



**Global Youth
Biodiversity
Network**

GYBN Intervention on Gene Drives - Synthetic Biology

Montreal, July 02 2018

Thank you Madam Chair.

I am speaking on behalf of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network.

We are millennials and post millennials generations that have been born and raised in a digital world where technology has been elevated to be the main protagonist and driver for development, ultimately changing the world faster than ever before.

Therefore we, perhaps better than any other generation, understand the importance of enabling scientific research in order to improve and develop technologies that are considered to have almost unlimited potential to benefit our well being.

Our current technological development has reached the point where we are taking giant leaps to manipulate and change essential mechanisms that constitute life as we know.

And while we do understand that these technological developments hold extraordinary potential benefits, the risks associated with these technologies are as great and in many cases might have catastrophic consequences that would completely override the benefits.

Which is the case of gene drives.

Once they are released and leave the artificially maintained optimal environment of big laboratories, they will be faced with the complex, random, unpredictable, uncontrolled and unknown realities of our ecosystems, aggravated by the equally complex social, political and cultural dynamics of our societies.

Furthermore, the decision as to whether these extreme forms of technology should be employed must be taken only after free prior and informed consent is given by all the affected communities and a fair, balanced and participatory consultations are conduct with the broader civil society since the scope of potential consequences are far too great and unpredictable. We believe that the release of these organisms even through experimental release simply can't be made under such conditions of uncertainty before we know the real impacts on the environment and have mechanisms to counteract all possible repercussion of gene drive release are in place .

Finally GYBN wants to support Bolivia proposal.