

## **Joint Youth Intervention at HLS – Go4Biodiv & GYBN**

*October 18<sup>th</sup>, Hyderabad*

*Delivered by Ananya Ashok, India & Melina Sakiyama, Brazil*

Thank you M. Chair for the opportunity to share with you our position.

We stand here together with almost half of the world's population representing youth that have shown responsibility for their own future. We are leading conservation projects in schools and in our communities, we volunteer for environmental organizations, we study and research in order to deepen our understanding of Biodiversity, we lobby governments to push for strong leadership on environmental issues. Clearly, the will to conserve biodiversity is very strong among youth.

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We are sharing our on-ground experiences, discussing challenges, building solutions and we understand that it is not easy to reach consensus, but with cooperation we can still protect our biodiversity. Having spent the last days at Go4BioDiv Nature Camp at Sunderbans, we youth messengers representing various marine and coastal heritage sites from across the world have worked on the most immediate issue of “Conserving coastal and marine biodiversity for sustaining lives and livelihoods.” Of all biodiversity, we feel the most urgent need to conserve coastal and marine biodiversity, for not only does half of the world's population live in coastal areas but this biodiversity loss has profound impacts on our lives and livelihoods.

We urge for strong legal regulations and their effective enforcement. As young people we feel the need to conserve a biodiversity resource even before it nears depletion. Therefore, we emphasize the importance of the precautionary principle for the sustainable use of marine resources. We have a strong connection with biodiversity and we urge for fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of coastal and marine biodiversity assets and their related traditional knowledge, through transparent and participative mechanisms, which respect values and traditions.

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We felt the need to unite our voices and to strengthen our position so that we can be heard and respected by you. We aim to raise awareness on the immeasurable value of Biodiversity and to provide youth with a unique platform for collaboration and training.

However, our contribution must go beyond serving just as nice decorations for political purposes! We have the right to be treated as equals and our opinions and positions should be taken seriously. We are grateful that you officially acknowledged the importance of youth participation in decision 5.4 on stakeholder engagement (as in UNEP/CBD/COP/11/1/Add.2). It is necessary that you fully involve us in all decision-making processes on all levels.



We want you to support the creation of independent national youth delegations and provide for capacity building as well establish a Voluntary Fund to ensure the participation of youth from all around the globe.

We expect the Indian government to show strong leadership during the Indian CBD-Presidency! Being a mega diverse country, having an emerging economy as well as the largest youth population in the world, India has all the potential to become a global bridge builder for Biodiversity and to enhance youth participation on both the national and the international level. Hosting an international youth event and giving the youth the opportunity to speak here has been a great step forward - this leadership should continue during the two years of presidency of India.

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You, decision-makers, should go home and put promises into actions and remember that we are the ones who will live with the consequences of today's actions and inactions. We as the youth are already committed to biodiversity conservation around the world, we are the change we all want to see in the world and we urge you to join us!