

Engagement with Stakeholders, including business

Global Youth Biodiversity Network

Thank you Mr. Chair for giving us the opportunity to share our position on agenda item 12.2 on Stakeholder Engagement.

The Global Youth Biodiversity Network fully agrees with the statement presented by the CBD Alliance and would like to further elaborate on specific aspects related to youth.

Over half of the world's population is under thirty. Children and youth will be most negatively affected by the anthropogenic loss of Biodiversity and it will be their responsibility to manage these challenges in the future. However, when it comes to young people's contribution to biodiversity conservation, we see two very different pictures: On one hand, several studies have shown that awareness about and particularly understanding of Biodiversity is shockingly low among children and youth. On the other hand, thousands of young people all around the world are taking action to preserve Biodiversity. They volunteer for environmental organizations, take part in practical nature conservation activities, organize conferences and awareness raising campaigns and make their voices heard in decision-making processes.

The Global Youth Biodiversity Network was established to bring all youth organizations and individuals active on Biodiversity issues together in order to build a global coalition to halt the loss of Biodiversity. GYBN represents the voice of youth in the CBD process and strives to raise awareness among young people on the values of Biodiversity. At COP11, parties to the Convention adopted decision XI/8, which recognizes the importance of youth participation in Biodiversity-related decision making processes on all levels and the CBD Secretariat has always been very committed to support young people and their activities on Biodiversity.

However, compared to other UN processes such as Climate or CSD, youth participation in the CBD is still relatively weak. This is due to a number of obstacles that prevent many youth from participating in the CBD processes. The greatest obstacle is the lack of funding. Most youth delegates are volunteers and, specifically in the Global South, do not have access to any sources of funding. Apart from a few positive exceptions, no dedicated funds to support youth participation in international biodiversity governance exist in the majority of countries. There is also a lack of youth friendly information resources, and many youth delegates struggle to understand the very complex system of negotiations and do not fully grasp their role in the CBD-process.

Christian: GYBN therefore welcomes the document on Stakeholder Engagement and thanks the Secretariat for its preparation. We also welcome the supportive statements by the European Union, Burkina Faso as well as South Africa. GYBN believes that the current forms of participation and engagement of stakeholders limit the potential of major groups to truly contribute to the Convention. GYBN would like to emphasize that the current format of the meetings does not include opportunities for direct dialogue or discussions between parties and

stakeholder groups. We therefore strongly support the proposal to make the procedures of CBD meetings more interactive by holding multi-stakeholder dialogues within the formal proceedings of COP-meetings. We also urge parties to better integrate the outcomes of side events and other relevant events into the procedures of CBD meetings by holding special short sessions to share results. GYBN further calls upon parties to provide additional resources to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to facilitate stakeholder engagement.

Building upon the positive experiences in other processes and the lessons learned from past initiatives such as the Global Biodiversity Forums, GYBN strongly urges parties to provide support for the development of innovative stakeholder engagement mechanisms and strongly supports the proposal to organize Stakeholder Forums before the COP meetings.

GYBN is proud to announce that jointly with the Korean Council for Biological Diversity (KCBD), we are in the process of preparing a Global Youth Biodiversity Summit, to be held just before COP12 in Korea, which would serve as a capacity-building and coordination meeting for youth delegates attending the negotiations .

GYBN is deeply convinced that young people can play an important and active role in implementing measures to achieve the objectives of the Convention, its Protocols and the Strategic Plan. Young people are eager to take responsibility for their own future and be part of the solution to prevent the loss of biological diversity.

GYBN would therefore like to use this opportunity to propose the development of a “Strategy on Youth Engagement for Biodiversity”. This strategy should include outreach and awareness raising activities, the development of information and training resources for education and capacity building, support for local and regional youth activities on Biodiversity, support for youth participation in the CBD through the creation of a voluntary fund, and a call for governments to engage youth in their implementation plan of the Convention. Ultimately this strategy will not only support, but accelerate the implementation of the convention and achievement of Aichi Target Numbers 1, 17 and 19.

GYBN therefore proposes to add the following text to the document on Stakeholder Engagement as on page 10 of UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/11:

“4. Inviting the Executive Secretary to develop in consultation with parties and relevant stakeholders a “Strategy on Youth Engagement for Biodiversity” that focuses on ways and means to raise awareness for the values of Biodiversity among young people as a contribution to the achievement of Aichi Targets No. 1, 17 and 19 and builds capacity to ensure the full and effective participation of young people in Biodiversity-related decision making processes at all levels”

Thank you very much for your attention.