



**Global Youth  
Biodiversity  
Network**

## **GYBN Intervention on Protected Areas and Ecosystem Restoration**

*Montreal, Canada, April 27th 2016*

Thank you Madam/Mister Chair.

I am speaking on behalf of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network on Agenda Item 10.

GYBN thanks the EU for its statement on future generations and all parties who have acknowledged the importance of undisturbed, natural ecosystems. GYBN welcomes the short term action plan on Ecosystem Restoration and commend the increase in global terrestrial, inland as well as in marine and coastal protected areas. While this progress is encouraging, an urgent look at the long term aspects to this action plan is also needed.

We are concerned that the action plan on Ecosystem Restoration does not contain equally well-planned long-term activities. Ecosystem restoration is a process that can easily take decades so it is crucial that parties agree on concrete, measurable targets, with solid monitoring and review mechanisms, that are in line with the 2050 vision of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We recognize the efforts that have been undertaken by parties, but we stress that restoration can only bring back ecosystems to a certain extent and may never be able to fully restore them. Therefore, we emphasize that protected areas still offer the best opportunity to maintain valuable ecosystems and their services within large-scale terrestrial and aquatic networks.

We recall decision XI/24 on protected areas and call upon Parties to fully implement what they have committed to do. In particular we urge Parties to ensure the achievement of all elements of Aichi Target 11 and take urgent action to implement the draft priority actions as outlined in document SBSTTA/20/2.

Parties and other governments should make every possible effort to avoid ecosystem degradation from happening in the first place. While restoration work on degraded ecosystems is inevitable at this point, parties should give priority to maintaining and protecting natural ecosystems.

Thank you.