



**Global Youth  
Biodiversity  
Network**



## **Global Youth Environment Assembly - High-Level Official Opening Plenary**

February 17, 2024

Statement by the **Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN)**

Delivered by: Kevin Lunzalu

Thank you. My name is Kevin Lunzalu, and I am happy to deliver this statement on behalf of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network, a global network of young people that has, for 12 years, been acting together in the global effort to stop biodiversity loss, and that serves as the youth constituency to the Convention on Biological Diversity. We are happy to join this important gathering of young people who are acting, persisting, and leading the way to a better world.

Young people continue to be afflicted by the climate, biodiversity, pollution, and social crises that are defining our lives and futures. Through our lived experiences, we understand that none of these crises are happening in isolation; they are interconnected and therefore require systemic solutions that are rooted in the collective.

In December of 2022, almost every country in the world adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: a global roadmap to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. It is a plan that sets us on course towards a world that is living in harmony with nature—but only if it is implemented fully, implemented by all, and leaves no one behind.

All countries, agencies, and we as young people must always be responsive to our responsibility as stewards of the Earth to address biodiversity loss in our diverse spaces. We emphasize that effective and equitable biodiversity action is necessary to fulfill the right of all to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, to ensure intergenerational equity, and to reach our climate goal of 1.5 degrees. Therefore, this also means that we must take care to ensure that our actions, including climate change interventions, do not cause unintended harm to biodiversity. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and its goals and targets are relevant for all of us to be guided toward holistic action to address our planetary emergency.

Delegates, this is a historical time, with a far-reaching, diverse, and powerful movement of young people acting for the transformative changes that our present and future rely on. Enabling young people to genuinely and meaningfully engage in the processes of shaping environmental policies stands as a critical imperative in combating the biggest challenges our generation is facing. And as young people, we must continue to nurture among ourselves and our communities a culture of care, compassion, and collective well-being so that we can sustain our movement.

Finally, may we not lose sight of the need to address the root causes of the social-ecological crises of today. In our environmental mission, we must be committed to our calls for justice, equity, and

peace, and for an end to the same unsustainable and unjust systems that are endangering our future. By standing together with those in the most vulnerable situations, a better world will undeniably be within our reach.

Thank you for the floor.