



**Statement by
Elizabeth Maruma Mrema
Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
at the occasion of the International Youth Day 2022
12 August 2022**

Youth are, and always have been, incredible allies of the Convention. Their voices are ringing out louder now than ever before and they are crying out on behalf of our planet. They are demanding change. I am so proud to stand in partnership with our youth in the fight against biodiversity loss.

The theme of this year's International Youth Day is Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for All Ages. This theme is incredibly timely as it encourages a call to action across all generations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and all supportive frameworks. In the coming months, the Convention on Biological Diversity will agree on the terms of a global biodiversity framework to provide guidance on building a world where all human beings live in harmony with nature, leaving no one behind.

There are 1.2 billion young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years old worldwide, or one in six persons. The youth population in the poorest countries is projected to increase by 62% by 2050. Youth living in developing countries are among those who are the most affected by the current biodiversity crisis as they often depend on healthy ecosystems for their wellbeing and livelihoods. We must answer their call. We must leave no one behind.

If we hope to achieve the Sustainable Development, we must make space for people of all ages in decision-making processes. Youth are key to making the transformative change needed to preserve biodiversity. Engaging them can help empower actors from all spheres and sectors of society in the implementation of biodiversity-related goals and targets.

Under the Convention on Biological Diversity, youth have a seat at the table. Young people participate actively in decision-making processes, keeping track of governments' commitments on biodiversity, proposing solutions, and turning such commitments into much needed actions.

Youth are the society of today, and tomorrow. They are ready and willing to work together with other generations. They know that we must act today if we have any hope of living in harmony with nature tomorrow.

On this International Youth Day, I encourage every citizen to reflect on their engagement with other generations, and how they can contribute to promoting intergenerational



dialogues. Intergenerational solidarity, equity and dialogues are essential to ensure an inclusive and sustainable future.

Let us answer the call of youth as they speak out on behalf of the planet they are inheriting. Let us welcome their vision, their input and their passion. Let us allow them room to participate and grow as, together, we build a better tomorrow, today.

.....