

**Statement by  
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Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity  
International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples  
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Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-determination**

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The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity joins this year's commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples to highlight the critical role that indigenous youth play as agents of change for self-determination. This theme is of the highest relevance to the objectives of the Convention and the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#).

The interacting crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and the degradation of lands and waters are threatening the health of the planet and undermining the health of people. Indigenous peoples, including young people, are among the most directly affected by these crises, but they are also at the forefront of defending the environment, of protecting Mother Earth.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework acknowledges the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity and as partners in its conservation, restoration and sustainable use. Implementation must ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples are respected, in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and other national and international law.

The Framework calls for the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive participation in decision-making of indigenous peoples, including children and youth, for access to justice, and for the full protection of environmental human rights defenders.

As indigenous youth proudly embrace their cultural heritage, they assume a critical role in promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Indigenous-led conservation efforts have demonstrated that engaging indigenous youth is vital to ensure that they carry forward their cultural and ecological heritage and equip future generations with the skills and knowledge needed to manage and conserve biodiversity, to protect their territories, and to care for Mother Earth.

Indigenous youth must have their voices heard during decision-making. As we confront the multiple planetary crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and the degradation of lands and waters, indigenous youth provide practical and dynamic solutions to address these complex issues with optimism and ingenuity.

Let's listen to their advice and respect, enable and support their contribution to protecting our planet and our common future.