

YOUTH, BIODIVERSITY AND EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Accelerating implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework



COP17 / CP-MOP-12 / NP-MOP-6

From Binding Treaty Obligations to the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:

 **Yerevan, Armenia**

 **19-30 October 2026**

The [Convention on Biological Diversity](#), [Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety](#), [Nagoya Protocol](#) are all legally binding international treaties. The [Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) sets a vision for four global biodiversity goals for 2050 and a mission for 2030 with 23 action orientated targets, in an effort to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. The [17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties \(COP 17\)](#) will mark the first global review of collective progress towards the implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and will be held under the theme “Taking Action for Nature”.

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Who We Are?

Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) is the largest, global, youth-led network of youth in agrifood systems. With a network reach of over 40,000 young professionals, YPARD is active in over 60 countries across different regions of the globe. We work around the objective to shape and transform agri-food systems, acknowledging youth as key partners in this transformation.

Over the years, **YPARD has actively engaged** in the processes of the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, contributing to policy dialogue and the development of youth-led position papers **including the Rural Youth Manifesto presented to the COP16 Presidency in Cali, Colombia.**

Building on this engagement, YPARD's Policy Working Group has developed this position paper for UNCBD COP17 in Armenia.

We call for a paradigm shift: young people and farmers are not mere beneficiaries, but key partners in implementing solutions to protect biodiversity, restore land, and build food systems.

We urge the Parties and international and multilateral organizations to prioritize:

Uplifting Young People as Key Actors, Not Just Beneficiaries

- Recalling the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the decision 16/33 the agenda item 8, YPARD calls on the parties **to promote the meaningful participation of young people**—particularly those from countries vulnerable to climate change and biodiversity loss—in the **formulation and implementation of decisions** under this convention by mobilizing the necessary financial and technical resources.
- YPARD urges the parties to ensure that **measures and resources reach those working on the ground** and that **young people participate meaningfully as partners, collaborators, and co-leaders**, and not as beneficiaries.
- Across all these priorities, YPARD emphasizes a central message: the decisions made at this convention must translate into inclusive, locally relevant, and tangible implementation on the ground.

YOUTH, BIODIVERSITY AND EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

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Supporting Resource Mobilisation and Accessible Biodiversity Finance

- Create **simplified and non-debt youth-accessible financing windows and small-grant mechanisms**.
- Reduce **disproportionate administrative and co-financing barriers** for youth- and community-led initiatives.
- Increase finance for **agroecology, local food systems,, locally adapted crops, cultural approaches, knowledge transmission, and biodiversity-positive enterprises**, also prioritising paying farmers for the ecosystem services / restoration and conservation they lead.
- Make contributions to the Cali fund obligatory for any use of digital sequence information.
- Track the **accessibility and distribution of biodiversity finance**, including whether resources reach local implementation.



YOUTH, BIODIVERSITY AND EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

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Recognizing and Supporting Farmer-Led Conservation

- Support the effective implementation of the Nagoya Protocol as a central instrument for equity in the biodiversity economy, particularly its **provisions on benefit-sharing, traditional knowledge, compliance, monitoring, capacity-building, and technology transfer.**
- Ensure stronger **protection of traditional knowledge and interests associated with genetic resources of provider countries, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, holders of traditional knowledge,** including prior informed consent or approval and involvement and mutually agreed terms where applicable under the Protocol and domestic law.
- Commit to **creating strong safeguarding measures around responsible and ethical use of Digital sequence information (DSI).**
- Implement **stronger accountability, transparency, and traceability across biodiversity-based research, innovation, and commercialization,** including effective national ABS legislation, competent authorities, checkpoints and use of the ABS Clearing-House.



YOUTH, BIODIVERSITY AND EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

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Strengthening the Synergies between the Rio Conventions

- In accordance with **Resolutions 16/31 and 16/32**, as well as **agenda item 9(b)**, we urge the parties to **strengthen national coordination in the planning and implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), particularly with regard to common objectives and reporting mechanisms, recognizing that **agriculture is of crucial importance for climate resilience, nature conservation, and restoration.**"
- Pursue **integrated programs that generate demonstrable co-benefits** without weakening the **objectives, safeguards, or reporting responsibilities** of any convention.
- Recalling Decision **16/35 and Agenda Item 13**, we urge the parties and relevant organizations to **develop and fund integrated programs that can generate measurable progress in the areas of biodiversity, climate resilience, and restoration**, while protecting the integrity of ecosystems and the rights of communities.



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Mainstreaming Biodiversity Across Food Systems and Economies

- Recalling Decisions 16/13 and 16/19, as well as Agenda Item 14a, we call on the parties to **promote approaches to the integration of food systems as a driver of biodiversity conservation, land restoration, and food security.**
- Recalling Decision 15/28 and agenda item 18(d), we call on the parties to **recognize agroecology as a key strategy for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of soil biodiversity.**
- Champion sustainable agriculture as a driver of decent work and resilient rural economies, **develop national strategies linking biodiversity implementation to sustainable, rural, and agricultural employment.**
- Invest in biodiversity-positive enterprises **led by youth and strengthen supply chains based on sustainable agricultural products, ecosystem restoration, ecotourism, non-timber forest products, and nature-based solutions.**
- Invest in **soil biodiversity monitoring and soil health indicators within national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs),** including youth participation in data collection and decision-making.
- Finance the **remediation of environments and healthcare for communities impacted by agricultural pollution.**



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Uplifting Indigenous Knowledges and Multicultural Leadership

- Recalling Decision 16/5, we call on the parties to **establish the modus operandi of the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j)** and other **provisions of the Convention** on Biological Diversity relating to indigenous peoples and local communities.
- Recognize and strengthen **land rights, tenure, and access for Indigenous peoples and local communities, new farmers, youth, and vulnerable communities.**
- Support **youth-led innovation and solutions to biodiversity, agricultural, and climate crises.**
- Include **traditional and Indigenous knowledge in biodiversity solutions and policies**, and uplift them in **financing opportunities.**
- **Resource intergenerational learning led by knowledge holders and communities** to support its transmission and preservation. "Rutang bana ditaola, le se ye le tšona badimong" is a Setswana cultural proverb that means **"teach your children the vital wisdom, culture, and tools of life so you do not take that knowledge with you to the ancestors.**
- **Protect traditional knowledge from misappropriation and extraction, ensuring research, documentation, and ethical digitisation** with traceability measures, prior consent, and benefit-sharing requirements respecting that some knowledge may be confidential or culturally restricted.



YOUTH, BIODIVERSITY AND EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

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Protecting Equity in the Biodiversity Economy

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- Ensure **stronger protection of traditional knowledge and interests associated with genetic resources of provider countries, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, traditional knowledge holders**, including prior informed consent or approval and involvement and mutually agreed terms where applicable under the Protocol and domestic law.
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Building Capacity through Education and Research

- Strengthen **existing networks and educational efforts for sustainable agriculture and agroecology with financing and technical assistance** while uplifting the perspectives of youth, farmers, Indigenous, and local knowledge holders alongside scientific knowledge in appropriate decision-making contexts.
- Support **South-South, North-South, and cross-sector scientific cooperation** and enable universities, regional institutions, and youth networks as long-term implementation partners.
- Improve the **capacity of developing countries for implementing sustainable cultivation methods** and **fostering innovation through emerging technologies** while promoting access to global markets, and support must be a direct benefit from the Cali fund used for uplifting local communities and economies.

This Position Paper has been authored by the UNCBD Policy Working Group of YPARD with contributions from:

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