

Monday, 22 February 2021

Second Youth Environment Assembly: 12-13 and 18-20 February 2021

The second Youth Environment Assembly was organized by youth for youth as an opportunity to coordinate, mobilize, and build capacity ahead of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA). Preparing for UNEA was a key focus, although participation was open to any youth and youth organizations to discuss and identify their broader priorities for environmental action. Several consultations related to the thematic areas of the Children and Youth Major Group to UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Thematic consultations convened on:

- chemicals and wastes, including the launch of a Chemical and Wastes Youth Platform that will connect youth with relevant UN bodies;
- youth and faith-based engagement;
- the Science-Policy-Business (SPB) nexus, including the launch of a platform to bring together the SPB Forum and youth;
- education and environment; and
- nature and food security and environment and health.

Participants also engaged in sessions to coordinate and offer input to other forums for youth engagement. There were sessions to discuss the Youth Manifesto for Nature, put together by the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN). Participants engaged in a consultation with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum. Youth from around the world shared their stories, and anxieties, about the links between mental health and the environment as part of the global consultation on the upcoming World Youth Report.

The Assembly convened online 12-13 and 18-20 February 2021. Over 7,000 people from 180 countries registered for the Assembly.

A Brief History of the Youth Environment Assembly

There are over 400 youth-led or youth-serving organizations in the UN Major Group of Children and Youth, which is a dedicated space for children and youth in the UN, working to address issues that range from the environment to human rights, and peace and security. Those organizations in the Major Group of Children and Youth that share a focus on environment and sustainable development can become accredited to UNEP and engage through the Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP.

The UNEP MGCY is a less formal term that encompasses young people and youth organizations working toward environmental conservation and the representation of young people's voices in governance and conservation processes. It includes organizations beyond those accredited to UNEP.

There are seven working groups within the MGCY:

- chemicals and wastes;
- ecosystem restoration;
- environmental law;
- human rights and environmental defenders;
- marine litter and microplastics;
- Stockholm+50 processes; and
- UNEA and Committee of Permanent Representatives.

UNEP began its work with young people in 1985, the International Year of Youth, but it was not until 1992 and the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, that engagement became more concrete. Agenda 21, which was adopted at the "Rio Earth Summit," identified nine sectors and rightsholder groups, including children and

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youth. The involvement of these nine constituencies would be facilitated in UN activities related to sustainable development. Accordingly, youth is a constituency in several treaty bodies and other organizations related to sustainable development.

Within UNEP, the Governing Council furthered its engagement with youth through a long-term strategy from 2003 to 2013. The programme was called “Tunza,” which means “to treat with care or affection” in Kiswahili. It aimed to create a global movement for children and youth’s involvement in sustainable development. There was an annual Tunza International Children and Youth Conference, a Tunza Youth Advisory Council, a Tunza Junior Board, and a quarterly magazine. During its ten years, the programme also organized the International Children and Youth Conference in Daejeon, South Korea (2009), the International Children’s Conference before the Convention on Biological Diversity conference in Nagoya, Japan (2010), and the International Children and Youth Conference in Bandung, Indonesia (2011).

The Rio+20 Conference in 2012 led to the nine Major Groups becoming more formalized in their engagement with the processes of UNEP. The Children and Youth Major Group facilitates the engagement of children and youth with UNEP and was established mid-2012. A first virtual Assembly, in which over 2,000 youth participated from more than 150 countries, took place from 3-6 June 2020.

Youth Environment Assembly Report

Opening Ceremony

Opening the meeting, Teresa Oberhauser, facilitator of Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP and Global Coordinator, MGCY, welcomed participants to the second Youth Environment Assembly. She reported that over 17 government representatives, nine UN representatives, and several partner organizations would join youth to discuss issues during the Assembly.

Yugratna Srivastava, facilitator of Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP and Global Coordinator, MGCY, stressed the crucial co-leadership role of youth, noting that there can be “nothing about us, without us.” While the impact of the pandemic is profound, she underlined how ecological, climate, social, and democratic crises can only be overcome through collective solutions.

Jorge Laguna-Celis, UNEP, said that the Children and Youth Major Group has “earned their seat at the table” through providing clear, loud, and constructive contributions even in the most difficult negotiations. He stressed the unprecedented level of support for youth shown by the UN and UNEP, and he urged working together to press the restart button to address the climate, biodiversity, and pollution crises in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sophie Howe, Commissioner of Future Generations, Wales, outlined how building back better from the pandemic will require efforts that are inclusive, interconnected, intergenerational, and international. She stressed how youth are changemakers that rightly call out the systems that do not support their futures.



Archana Soreng, Major Group of Children and Youth to UNEP

Archana Soreng, UN Secretary-General Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, emphasized five priorities for climate action:

- providing free, safe and enabling spaces for young people;
- investing in green jobs, reskilling affected workers in a just recovery from the pandemic, and avoiding greenwashing;
- recognizing indigenous communities as integral to decision making;
- allowing climate-vulnerable countries to convert their debt towards funds to fulfill their nationally determined contributions (NDCs); and
- appreciating intersectionality in the climate justice movement.

Leteris Arapakis, Young Champion of the Earth, shared his experiences with Enaleia, an organization he co-founded that works with fishermen to recycle plastic they find in oceans. Arapakis shared three messages: find a problem you care about; start small and local when considering solutions; and lead by example: do not tell people what to do, show them how it is done.

During discussion, participants raised concerns about getting local government to support their initiatives and engaging constructively with students. Howe highlighted that Welsh law requires all schools to have young people’s representatives, and cited examples of their success in influencing policies related to recycling school uniforms and reducing emissions through improved lighting and heating.

On indigenous participation in decision making, Soreng emphasized the need to secure the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous communities in development projects, including in implementing offset schemes. She encouraged young people to speak up, associate with environmental groups, and create intergenerational sharing circles to facilitate knowledge sharing. Building on this, Laguna-Celis urged young people to speak up, innovate, and connect to find solutions to the climate crisis. Arapakis encouraged the youth to see failure as a learning process and start small and local.

Stockholm+50 Dialogue - A Youth Perspective

Ambassador Johanna Lissinger Peitz, Stockholm+50 Secretariat, Sweden, said stakeholders have an essential role in multilateral meetings, noting that the Paris Agreement on climate

change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would not have happened without them. She observed a growing youth movement that urges the world to recognize the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises. She identified three of the priorities for Stockholm+50 as: redefining humans' relationship with nature; assessing progress on an inclusive and sustainable COVID-19 recovery; and ensuring the meaningful participation of youth.

Heli Shah, youth advocate, India, highlighted the need to approach development and environmental protection in an integrated manner, and called for treating natural resources as assets.

David Mwabila, MGCY, underscored that local communities must be considered in all climate and biodiversity policymaking and funding processes. He noted that environmental governance must be country specific and rooted in local realities. He added that bridging digital and access to information gaps is essential for informed civic participation in environmental governance.

Youth Dialogue with Member States - Tell the Governments What You Want!

There were two dialogues with member states, held Friday, 12 February and Saturday, 13 February.

On Friday, Giacomo Montemarani, Deputy Permanent Representative to UNEP, Italy, characterized UNEA as the "starting point" to gain momentum and stressed the need for an ambitious outcome. He stressed the need for clear signals for a green and just recovery and an ambitious medium-term strategy (MTS), among other outcomes. He reported that Italy will host a Youth for Climate event as part of the pre-meetings before the Glasgow Climate Change Conference.

Sebastián Lucas Nicolino, Deputy Permanent Representative to UNEP, Argentina, outlined that UNEA-5 will convene in an online session of UNEA-5 in February 2021 and a resumed session in 2022. He drew attention to a high-level dialogue on the contributions of the environment to the 2030 Agenda and to building an inclusive post-pandemic recovery.

Patrick Luna, Deputy Permanent Representative to UNEP, Brazil, said the pandemic has led to deeper reflection on the principles of sustainable development. He recalled, in the context of the pandemic, the first principle of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, which states that humans are at the center of sustainable development. As the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) begins, he underlined the need for additional efforts by all.

Estelle Halimi-Dagron, Deputy Permanent Representative to UNEP, France, emphasized that building back better means building back greener and that the youth voice is critical in reminding governments how the youth want countries to develop.

Cathal Swan, MGCY, highlighted the need for the greatest possible ambition at UNEA-5 and conveyed the MGCY's strong desire to be involved not just in monitoring and evaluation, but also in implementation of the programme of work and the

medium-term strategy. He also called for greater funding to support youth initiatives.

Christianne Zakour, MGCY, emphasized that development cannot be sustainable unless it is supported by a strong rule of law. She welcomed the Global Pact for the Environment's aim to close gaps and strengthen implementation of environmental governance, and highlighted the importance of an ambitious political declaration at UNEA-5, particularly in protecting environmental defenders.

Several participants commented that fighting climate change would be impossible without fighting poverty and hunger, and called for greater awareness on the environmental impacts of development aid and structural adjustment policies.

Montemarani reiterated the need to balance countries' priorities with the need for strong ambition. Luna underscored the importance of respecting financial commitments for achieving environmental goals and implementing environmental norms. Halimi-Dagron observed that "means of implementation" could also refer to "political will and political resources," adding that everyone needs to take ownership of development.

On Saturday, Sebastian Gil, Deputy Permanent Representative to UNEP, European Union (EU), noted that UNEA characterized the medium-term strategy as a very good compromise that tackles the climate, biodiversity, and pollution crises synergistically. He called for UNEA to provide a signal that it is time to get multilateralism started again, with key meetings on climate, biodiversity, wastes, and food systems planned for later this year.

Ambassador Marek Rohr-Garztecki, Permanent Representative to UNEP, Poland, noted that there are a range of views and interests represented at UNEA, which he said often run along the divide between "poor and rich" countries. He called for more understanding on both sides. He drew attention to the role of businesses that encourage consumerism and suggested that youth could be a stakeholder in addressing such issues.

Youth participants asked a wide range of questions related to forestry, e-waste management, sustainable consumption and production, and just transition, in particular away from coal.

Answering questions, Gil highlighted plastics and said that the real problem lies in product design. He said single-use plastics are a priority for UNEA and noted a decision to regulate global trade in plastic wastes in the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Certain Hazardous Wastes. He reported that 80% of recipient countries selected green economy, circular economy, and biodiversity as priorities for EU development cooperation. He supported discussions with the aim of adopting a resolution at UNEA on sustainable consumption and production.

Rohr-Garztecki relayed the experience of Poland in transitioning away from coal. He said that coal extraction is no longer economically viable, creating an incentive to move to other energy sources such as wind. He characterized the speed of the transition as "amazing," and said outside changes can

dramatically affect the speed of change, although much work remains.

Participants asked how to reconcile conservation narratives promoted by global institutions that also support and fund unsustainable activities. Srivastava observed that international institutions create their own platforms for youth engagement, which can undermine and divide the self-organized spaces created by youth for global engagement. She asked about modalities for ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups and people of colour.

Rohr-Garztecki highlighted the environmental impact of global conferences and called for a change of attitude among those who speak on behalf of countries to try to address this environmental footprint.

Gil underlined that forest management is not an isolated issue; it relates to biodiversity, climate change, and desertification, among others. He called for countries to submit new NDCs and to feature forests as a key sector. On e-waste, he called for policy frameworks that empower consumers, such as giving consumers the right to repair electronics. Gil said “there is a long way to go” for inter-state bodies to meaningfully engage all communities and stakeholders, especially the most marginalized.

Srivastava thanked the Permanent Representatives for the frank exchange, noting the importance of the relationships that youth have built with countries. Gil encouraged youth to make their voices heard for positive change. Rohr-Garztecki said youth are a source of moral support to push countries to do the right thing.

Youth and Faith-Based Engagement

Shantanu Mandal, Brahma Kumaris, Children and Youth Major Group, began this thematic consultation by leading participants through an exercise to connect with their favourite seasons and experiences of nature. He drew a parallel between the optimism of building back better from the pandemic and the optimism that is the basis of faith-based action.

Alphonse Munyao Muia, Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability Africa, MGCY, started the session with a prayer. He underlined that the climate, biodiversity, and pollution crises are caused by selfishness, greed, and apathy, and that these problems require spiritual, rather than political or technical, responses. He relayed that religious leaders are already supporting environmental goals and undertaking actions to contribute to sustainability.

Iyad Abumoghli, Faith for Earth Initiative UNEP, reported that the Initiative’s three goals are empowering leadership of faith-based organizations in decision making; greening faith-based financial and investment institutions; and bridging the gap between science and scripture. He stressed the need to bring the highest level of leadership of faith-based organizations together to discuss the environment with one another and with stakeholders such as youth through a Youth Council.



Shantanu Mandal, Brahma Kumaris, Major Group of Children & Youth to UNEP

Neeshad Shafi, Arab Youth Climate Movement Qatar, highlighted that religion can be fundamental in igniting the behavioral change needed to enable environmental protection. He underscored the need for a gender equality perspective.

In the ensuing discussion, youth participants raised issues related to, *inter alia*, incentives for cross-faith youth collaboration, the need for the SDGs to be the basis for all faith-based discussions and children participation.

In response, the panelists discussed eco-literacy and the potential to use all religions’ common concern for natural resources as a unifying and peacebuilding tool, and welcomed a forthcoming resolution led by Iceland, supported by the Nordic countries, recognizing the role of ethics and values in environmental governance, which represents the first such resolution in UN history.

Closing the session, Munyao Muia, emphasized the need to “put our morals and values ahead” in advancing the work on environmental protection, adding that religion has a crucial role to play in that.

Chemicals and Wastes

A consultation with youth to outline actions and identify priorities for chemicals and wastes was held Saturday, 13 February. On Thursday, 18 February, the MGCY launched the Chemicals and Wastes Youth Platform.

Thematic Consultation on Chemicals and Wastes: Dickson Ho, MGCY, presented the Chemicals and Wastes Platform, which aims to bring together youth and relevant UN bodies to coordinate meaningful engagement and participation in decision making on chemicals and wastes. He highlighted its two workstreams: the first, focusing on UN processes, includes youth participation, youth engagement, and awareness raising; the second, focusing on the youth, includes advocacy, capacity building, action, and research and knowledge sharing.

Ho moderated discussions on how chemicals and wastes have impacted young people’s lives. Participants talked about health and environmental impacts like bioaccumulation and increased

respiratory diseases; adverse effects on agricultural and food systems; contamination of soil, air, and water systems; and problems with data gaps, particularly at the community level; as well as lack of awareness and concern about where wastes go after disposal.

On how the youth envision the future of chemicals and wastes, participants reflected on the need for more holistic approaches to waste and e-waste management; tighter regulations; greater focus on nature-based solutions and the circular economy; and more research. They noted that they would like to see a future with equity and justice incorporated in chemicals and wastes management, and a world with breathable air, drinkable water, clean rivers and water systems, and reduced respiratory diseases.

Chemicals and Wastes Youth Platform: Basundhara Dutta, youth advocate, moderated. She said the platform acts as a bridge between youth and UN bodies to coordinate youth engagement on chemicals and wastes.

Akash Chandrayan, MGCY, said 165 participants from all regions were consulted on whether and how chemicals and wastes impact their community, as well as on what improved management of these issues could look like in the future.

Emiel Dobbelaar, German Chemical Society, outlined two recent activities by the German Chemical Society: the creation of international communications guidelines aimed at promoting sustainability among chemists; and a survey of young chemists on their expectations from their education and the chemical sector. He warned that sustainability matters are often non-existent in chemistry curricula.

Nalini Sharma, Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) Secretariat, described SAICM's work and issues youth can engage with in the intersessional process, particularly when multilateral negotiations reconvene to design a new strategic approach to the sound management of chemicals and wastes beyond 2020.

During a panel discussion on how youth can meaningfully engage in the work of the UN on chemicals and wastes issues, Claudia Ten Have, Minamata Convention on Mercury Secretariat, pointed to the 127 countries that have institutionalized the Convention's lifecycle approach to regulating mercury. She called on youth to use all tools, from poetry to technological development, to help make mercury history.

Tatiana Terekhova, Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions Secretariat, noted that the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants mentions women and children as particularly vulnerable. She highlighted the contributions of observer organizations, including youth organizations, in the work of the Conventions and their respective expert bodies.

Juliana Vidal, Network of Early-Career Sustainable Scientists and Engineers, highlighted the role of youth in raising awareness, noting that many of the current problems were created because chemical manufacturers did not consider sustainability. She encouraged participants to use their skills for education and research.

Maxine Brassell, SAICM Communities of Practice, University of Cape Town, said that the UN has ways of creating

opportunities for people to engage in multilateral spaces and in their own communities. She encouraged participants to engage with those that share similar goals and to think beyond silos.

Leselle Vincent, Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology for the Caribbean, stressed the need to support youth engagement, particularly through paid internships, and underlined how unpaid opportunities disadvantage youth from developing countries and marginalized communities.

In answer to a question from the audience on how chemists understand their role in transitioning away from hydrocarbon-based fertilizers, Vidal said chemistry can come up with multiple short and long-term solutions. Dobbelaar emphasized it is a management and policy issue, as fertilizers are not naturally hazardous but are overused. Ten Have noted the importance of social scientific and economic approaches. Sharma called for better science-policy collaboration.

In answer to a question on how to improve plastic waste management, Terekhova described the many challenges currently facing plastic recycling, noting that youth organizations have an edge in finding solutions considering their technological skills.

In answer to a question about how young Indonesians can take action to tackle chemical waste from batik, a technique of wax-resist dyeing, Vincent said using one's youth voice on social media will have an impact. Sharma pointed to the Alliance to End Plastic Waste.

Science-Policy-Business Nexus

There was a consultation on the SPB nexus held on Saturday, 13 February to identify priorities for future work on this area. On Thursday, 18 February, a joint event with the SPB Forum took place to launch a collaborative platform between youth and the SPB Forum.

Thematic Consultation on SPB Nexus: Gyubin Hwang, MGCY, described the world's 1.2 billion youth as "the most scientifically literate and most environmentally aware generation in human history." Thus, rather than being passive bystanders of science and policy, he highlighted their key role in leading and influencing negotiations in line with the Youth Environment



Gyubin Hwang, MGCY Steering Committee

Assembly's slogan, "nothing about us, without us." He presented opportunities for engagement in four levels of citizen science: crowdsourcing, distributed intelligence, participatory science, and collaborative science.

Participants spoke of the inability of policymakers to address urgent issues and listen to science. Some questioned if more science was needed. One participant observed that science can take a long time, but the window for action is short. Several participants raised the need for implementation and action, not just policy development. He noted the value of systematic reviews and continued engagement with politicians and bureaucrats.

Several participants called for anchoring policy in science, but also addressing human and socio-economic realities through involving communities and their knowledge systems.

Hwang stressed the need to move beyond consultation with youth and find ways to ensure that policymakers and businesses take their input seriously.

Joint Event with the SPB Forum: Hwang and Edie Thralfell, youth advocate, moderated. Asad Naqvi, UNEP Partnership for Action on Green Economy, delivered three key messages: the environment is the foundation of the economy; policies play a crucial role in transitioning to a sustainable economy; and business is the biggest player in economic growth and job creation.

Jin Tanaka, MGCY, reflected that the youth are highly engaged in environmental protection and climate action but need other sectors to cooperate.

Moustapha Kamal Gueye, International Labour Organization (ILO), reported that ILO analyses show there is no trade-off between greening the economy and creating jobs and incomes. He noted that, while some jobs may be lost, many others will be created, and called for a skills transition to align educational systems with the jobs of the future, particularly in renewable energy and the circular economy.



Asad Naqvi, UNEP Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)

Shreya Ramachandran, The Grey Water Project, responded that greater efforts must be made to encourage the participation of women and girls in green entrepreneurship and to raise youth interest in green jobs. Gueye added that youth were well placed to develop technological responses to environmental issues.

Jaee Nikam, Global Environment Outlook-6 (GEO-6) for Youth report author, described the GEO-6 for Youth report as an effort to correct challenges such as identifying green jobs by, for example, outlining paths for young green entrepreneurs to access knowledge and resources more easily. Saad Uakkas, International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA), responded by calling for more spaces for young people to discuss the green economy.

Thralfell then introduced three young entrepreneurs.

Cassandra Delage, Plast'if, said Plast'if developed a machine that showcases the full recycling process, turning plastic into 3-D printing. Delage noted that this assists companies with their ecological transition by encouraging their staff to recycle and 3-D print commonly used objects such as meeting room chairs and tables.

Dhruv Khanna, Triton Foodworks, said the ecological impact of his company's proprietary hydroponics and vertical farming systems included: saving 6 billion liters of water so far; being pesticide-free; and providing safer to eat, nutritious fruits and vegetables year-round in regions where supply is usually limited.

Steven Shutong Jiang, Soarability, explained how his company developed aerial and ground vehicle-based systems that detect gases and particles in real-time to show street-by-street air quality variation. He added young entrepreneurs must believe in their ideas at the start, regardless of how unsupportive others might be.

Responding to a question on the ecological foundations of the economy, Naqvi drew attention to sectors such as agriculture, fashion, and technology that rely on water, soil, and minerals. He stressed the impact of overconsumption.

Susan Mute, MGCY, highlighted the need to reduce reliance on raw materials, increase government support for young green entrepreneurs, and strengthen environmental impact assessments of businesses.

On energy efficiency, Gueye observed that developers pay more for building designs that are more efficient while subsequent users reap the benefits. He called for government regulation and incentives as key to changing this scenario.

In response to a question on tax and other incentives expected by businesses, especially those in developing countries, Khanna and Delage highlighted the need for funding and incentives for research and development. Jiang noted that New Zealand and China have good tax incentives toward small, green businesses, but that green entrepreneurship involves developing hardware, which is not as well supported.

Uakkas called for UNEP to reflect its commitment to youth engagement in its programme and budget; foster and open and inclusive dialogue with the SPB Forum and youth; and for the Forum to remain open to supporting youth-led initiatives.

Launching the SPB Forum and Youth Platform, he shared its vision of becoming a leading platform to build meaningful intergenerational and intersectional partnerships between youth and stakeholders in the SPB community.

Shereen Zorba, SPB Forum Secretariat, said that, while employment and entrepreneurship were the current areas of focus, future sessions would convene on e-waste, future digital technology, and big data. She observed that the acceleration of technologies means that young people bring knowledge and have opportunities to help create a future better than that left to them.

Education and Environment

Kazi Zubair Hossain, MGCY, moderated this thematic consultation and announced that MGCY will soon launch an environmental education working group. Representatives of UNEP's Youth, Education & Advocacy unit presented their work and engagement opportunities for youth.

Carina Mutschele, Youth and Education Officer, UNEP, presented the UNEP Youth and Education Alliance, which aims to increase environmental awareness among young people to advance progress on environmental goals. She said the Alliance is supporting the inception of environmental education networks in areas where they do not yet exist, such as in Africa and India. Mutschele offered details on several initiatives, including: implementing the Little Book of Green Nudges; gathering decarbonization commitments from 1000 universities by 2050; integrating climate and the environment in higher education curricula; and strengthening green skills among young people while working with employers to create a market for such skills.

Siiri Mäkelä, UNEP, explained that through its education and youth programmes, UNEP aims to create the next generation of young leaders. UNEP's work has two streams of focus, she said, informal and formal education. Within the informal education track, she highlighted the Playing for the Planet Alliance, which is working to integrate "green nudges" into games played by 2.6 billion people and support the game industry to decarbonize. She also spoke about the Tide Turners Plastic Challenge, which is

based on the cooperation with the biggest youth organizations in the world to educate young people about plastic pollution.

During the ensuing consultation on youth priorities on education and environment, participants raised issues related to, *inter alia*, ways in which community-based organizations can get involved in UNEP's initiatives; challenges and opportunities brought by COVID-19; reaching children in marginalized communities, particularly in conflict-affected areas; and involving youth in the development of educational materials and initiatives advanced by UNEP.

Responding to questions and comments, Mutschele invited youth to explore existing online resources for community engagement, adding that UNEP plans to get involved in efforts to bridge the digital gap. She mentioned the "Earth School" as an opportunity brought by COVID-19, while as challenge she noted difficulties with implementing the Little Book of Green Nudges on campuses because of school closures. Mäkelä noted the need to increase efforts to reach children from marginalized communities.

An online poll conducted with the participants in the session revealed that environmental education should be fun, hands on, and inclusive.

Nature and Food Security, Environment and Health

In this thematic consultation, participants discussed nature and food security, and then the links between the environment and health.

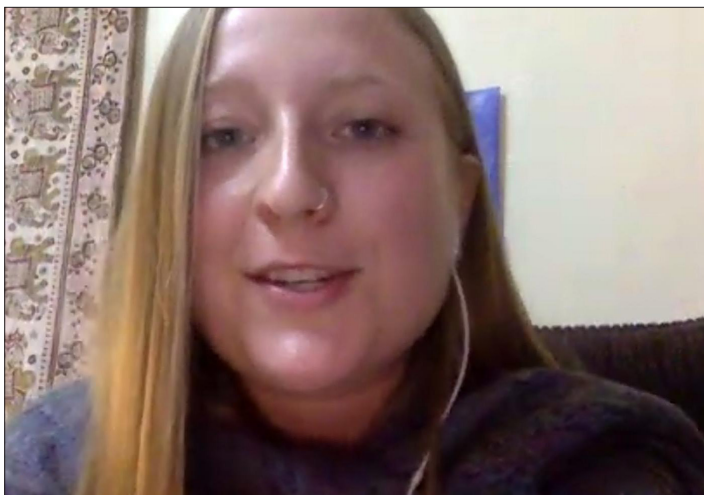
Nature and Food Security: Rayan Kassem, MGCY, presented six priority areas and corresponding forums and platforms for youth engagement:

- tackling the root causes of food insecurity: Food Systems Summit (September 2021)
- nature-based solutions grounded in justice: Youth4Nature
- switching to sustainable diets: Real Food Systems
- protecting indigenous rights to nature: Glasgow Climate Change Conference, UN Biodiversity Summit, Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- improving water security: UNEP Generation Restoration
- supporting climate change adaptation in developing countries, especially using nature-based solutions: UNEP

Participants responded that focusing on nature-based solutions should be grounded in justice and avoiding greenwashing as top priorities. Some suggested adding multi-species justice and the nexus among climate change, food security and conflict as priority areas to engage in. Participants noted the importance of tackling corruption and enforcing environmental laws properly to address environmental degradation.

Responding to concerns about the ability of existing food systems to support a global population of 10 billion, Kassem emphasized the potential of switching plant-based diets, noting that 75% of global deforestation is due to land being cleared for food production.

The Environment and Health: Omnia El-Omrani, International Federation of Medical Students Associations, explained that there are direct and indirect health impacts related



Carina Mutschele, Youth & Education Officer, UNEP

to the environment. She cited direct impacts associated with extreme weather events, such as hurricanes or tornadoes, which cause injuries and death. Among the indirect health impacts, she said, are air pollution, climate change, and water pollution, the last of which leads to infectious diseases such as cholera. On climate change, she highlighted its negative impacts on nutrition and mental health related to crop losses, which cause both food and jobs losses, and thus anxiety and depression. El-Omrani further underscored that environmental destruction and deforestation bring humans closer to animals, increasing the risk for zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19. She highlighted opportunities for engagement in 2021: the climate and biodiversity Conferences of Parties (COPs); the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Pre-COP Youth Summit; and the Youth Summit of the 2021 Global Conference on Health and Climate Change.

In the ensuing discussion, participants raised issues related to, *inter alia*, the role of charities and non-profits in supporting youth environmental education, the health hazards caused by plastic pollution, and the implementation challenges of climate plans. Responding to comments and questions, El-Omrani noted the importance of the health argument in advancing the fight against plastic pollution.

Global Consultation on the World Youth Report

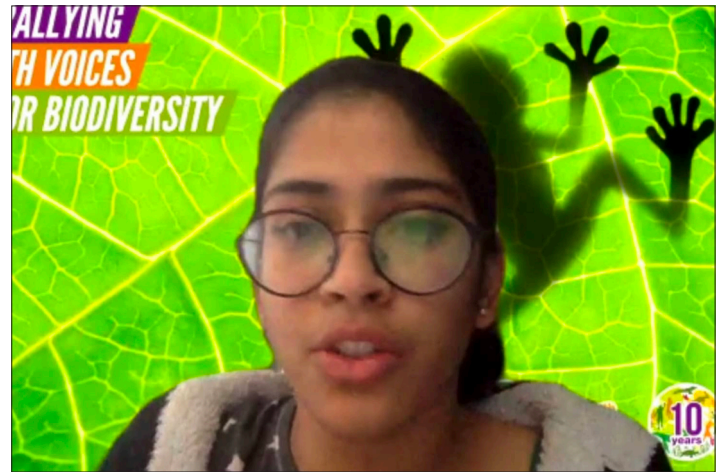
The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) hosted a global consultation to reflect young people's voices in its flagship biennial publication, the World Youth Report. The Report, to be published in 2022, will incorporate discussions from the consultation along with surveys, interviews, and similar focus groups with youth around the world.

Katie Acheson and Gemma Wood, Numbers and People Synergy, led the focus group on how climate change and the environmental crisis impact the mental health of young people. Lucy Fagan, MGCY, co-coordinated the consultation.

Participants uniformly said climate change has affected their mental health, including by giving them eco-anxiety and depression; confusion, despair, and hopelessness; uncertainty about what the future will look like; fear of losing their homes and lives; and anxiety about whether there will even be a world left for them and future generations. Some already suffering mental health challenges shared they felt more distressed because climate anxiety made it harder to function normally. Concerns were raised about young women hesitating to have kids due to fear about the world their children might live in.

Participants defined climate anxiety as including fear of multiple crises like food shortages, lack of water and clean air, and biodiversity loss resulting from insufficient action today; worries that our planet might become uninhabitable for their and future generations; and hopelessness. To combat these, participants shared various strategies: nature-based healing and reconnecting with nature; channeling energy towards activism; fundraising for conservation organizations; sharing concerns with friends; staying informed; and focusing on actions they can take.

The youth overwhelmingly deemed education as a tool to reduce mental health impacts of the climate crisis: from



Swetha Stotram Bhashyam, Global Coordinator, GYBN

incorporating climate education in school curricula to engaging with schools and students, to funding awareness raising campaigns. They want leaders to recognize climate anxiety as a legitimate impact of the climate emergency and treat it as the crisis that it is.

Youth Voices for Nature

Swetha Stotram Bhashyam, Global Coordinator, GYBN, presented 11 key priorities of the Youth Manifesto to protect biodiversity and the environment:

- ensure intergenerational equity and justice between and within generations;
- declare a planetary emergency and urgently address the severity of the ecological crisis;
- take a strong, just, courageous, inclusive, rights-based approach in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and Stockholm+50 processes;
- acknowledge links between the ecological and socio-economic crises;
- create real and transformative behavioral change, particularly through education and environmental governance;
- develop effective strategies for biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use, and adopt bold, ambitious and binding environmental global goals;
- improve participation of indigenous and local communities, women and youth in environmental governance mechanisms;
- guarantee rights-based approaches;
- ensure gender-responsiveness;
- ensure responsible private sector involvement; and
- create strong means of implementation and enabling conditions.

She acknowledged challenges related to tokenistic youth engagement, highlighted the need for greater financial support for youth initiatives, and invited participants to sign the Manifesto and open letter, as well as to join massive youth mobilizations calling for environmental action.

In answer to a round of questions on how to promote the Manifesto, Stotram Bhashyam noted that, in rural areas



John Aggrey, Major Group for Children and Youth

where internet connection was minimal, organizing in-person national consultations towards a national manifesto was a way forward. Oberhauser explained that, to promote the Manifesto in universities, it was important to build networks with local organizations.

Mandal said the Manifesto should be positive and solution-oriented, and focus on the need to shift values and behaviors. Any campaign to promote it should foster emotional connections with the Manifesto and its messages, he concluded.

Participants asked how to encourage people to connect with nature, and Mandal suggested drawing connections between natural processes and everyday actions such as enjoying clean drinking water, for example.

Aleksandr Stommels, Circle of Sustainable Europe, offered advice on how young people can approach decision makers, including learning how lobbyists work, identifying key stakeholders and trends, and honing networking skills.

Participants discussed engagement with youth around the world, noting that political contexts can constrain youth's ability to engage in advocacy campaigns. For those able, Stotram Bhashyam suggested holding events or campaigns based on the Manifesto and speaking about whichever parts of the Manifesto resonate most with individuals.

Anatomy of Action

John Aggrey, MGCY, moderated the session. Garrette Clark, UNEP, presented the Anatomy of Action Campaign, focusing on how people's daily decisions relating to food, fashion, and mobility impact the planet. She highlighted the importance of reversing current consumption trends, noting that two to three billion new consumers will be urban youth who set consumption patterns, get 90% of their information from social media, and will be tomorrow's decision makers.

Clark emphasized the importance of systematic behavioral change to reduce impacts on the planet. She suggested changes like consuming less meat, reducing food waste, buying second-hand clothes and extending their lifespan, and advocating for cleaner mobility. She acknowledged that there is no universal

sustainable lifestyle, since individuals make daily decisions based on their context.

Sharing their experiences from the campaign, "activators" commented on: difficulties they personally faced when switching to sustainable living habits; challenges and successes when educating communities on the importance of, among others, re-forestation, waste management, and environment-related health issues; and the impact small, targeted actions can have on communities.

Sehaj Sahni, MGCY, opened the second segment of the meeting by highlighting barriers in getting adults and less environmentally-minded young people to take action. In response, Clark said awareness campaigns should stay away from frightening messages and big data, and instead promote positive and feasible actions. She highlighted the pivotal role that cultural influencers such as celebrities have in reinforcing these messages.

Sahni then introduced a short video celebrating the work of the "activators," noting its soundtrack was composed of natural sounds collected during the pandemic.

Participants raised points around the role of art to inspire people and the potential and limitations of social media to create real world change. One participant asked how to convince companies to consider future generations and the environment. Clark drew attention to inefficient resource use and marketing that shape consumer behavior. She noted that, while social media was the platform for this project, the domains identified and the content reflect changes in how people view the world and relate to consumption. To conclude, she encouraged participants to "go for it" to co-create new ways of living and being.

Youth Leaders During the COVID-19 Crisis

Intisar Rouabhia, MGCY, and Mirna Gharbi, youth advocate, moderated the session on how youth are turning the threat of COVID-19 into opportunities.

Sarra Messaoudi, Young Peacebuilder, Tunisia, shared lessons from her journey of self-discovery. She underlined that every experience matters, noting that her activism journey started with just a three-day peacebuilding program which led to her becoming the youngest Youth Advisory Council member of the United States Institute of Peace. She said that young people can follow more than one path, encouraging participants to leverage digital opportunities to expand their networks, enhance their knowledge, and build the career they want. She urged young people to live courageously to overcome challenges.

Responding to concerns from youth without access to digital services, Messaoudi urged participants to pressure governments to provide citizens internet access and, meanwhile, share knowledge gained from the Youth Environment Assembly with their communities.

Alaa Emad El-Din Selim, Schneider Electric Egypt, said the pandemic provided opportunities to grow on personal and professional levels: personally, by further appreciating public health, education, and family, and professionally, by rethinking work practices. He said free online courses were essential to expanding his knowledge on artificial intelligence. He said such new knowledge can be passed on to colleagues and other



Elizabeth Mrema, CBD Executive Secretary

peers, providing a collective opportunity for growth. Answering a question on the value of online certificates, he said they were primarily a means to learn new skills.

Mais Hassan, youth advocate, Syria, shared her work with Let's Do It World, a global movement that tackles the solid waste crisis. She said that in 2020, despite the pandemic, 11 million volunteers from 166 countries collected 43,000 tonnes of waste for World Cleanup Day. Hassan lauded the positive role young people play in societies, even those recovering from conflict like Syria, where volunteers continued cleanups despite the pandemic.

John Leo Algo, Living Laudato Si' Philippines (LLSP), shared his experiences continuing his advocacy efforts throughout the pandemic. He outlined how LLSP, an interfaith movement campaigning for coal divestment and attitudinal shifts towards sustainability, leveraged the shift to virtual meetings to engage with national and local policymakers, resulting in a declared climate emergency. He said LLSP is also lobbying for legislation to phase out single-use plastics and improve urban mobility by promoting cycling.

Shreya Ramachandran, The Grey Water Project, explained her mission to raise awareness about the need to recycle grey, or lightly used, water, noting that the average American household wastes 180 gallons of this water per day. To make the best out of the pandemic, she: made her curriculum about grey water free for school educators to teach online; took up several high-level speaking engagements; and assisted in turning the EarthX Summit into a virtual reality conference. As a result, the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth recognized her as one of 10 youths that can change the world. In response to a question about grey water management options for developing countries, she described the "laundry to lawn system" which captures the water left from laundry for other non-potable uses.

Ibrahim Inusa, Nature Conservation Advocates for Climate Initiative (NCACI), Nigeria, characterized SDG13 (climate action) as the center that holds the SDGs together, particularly in a development context. He outlined NCACI's initiatives such as planting 17 million trees by 2030 and creating EcoClubs to raise awareness and foster environmental stewardship. During the

pandemic, he said that they have engaged with over 200 young people and 10 youth organizations in Yobe state, Nigeria, to plant trees.

In response to a question about how to motivate youth, Inusa underscored the importance of personal connections and using your own experience to connect with others and relate values.

In closing, Gharbi highlighted that challenges are opportunities and youth are the catalysts for change. Rouabhia thanked the speakers and participants for their generosity in sharing their knowledge and experiences.

Environmental Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), spoke about the pandemic's impacts on the environment, biodiversity, and health, and opportunities for youth engagement in the post-pandemic recovery. She lamented that initial air and water quality improvements, noise pollution reduction, and wild species sighting in urban centers were short-lived.

Mrema said the pandemic has increased the use of personal protective equipment and biochemical waste, worsening water, air, and soil pollution and aggravating biodiversity loss. While the reduction of international tourism gave nature a break, she explained how the loss of tourism revenue has reduced funding for biodiversity conservation, leading to increased poaching.

Mrema called the youth the "torchbearers for biodiversity," listing engagement opportunities including: holding governments accountable for CBD implementation; organizing conservation and cleanup campaigns; contributing to data collection on species; advancing research; training others; setting sustainable consumption trends; encouraging climate-smart agriculture, energy efficiency, and sustainable tourism; and advocating for better regulation of meat and animal trade. Mrema said youth voices have been heard in consultations for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Responding to a question, Mrema highlighted the importance of individual level action, beginning with changes at home.

A panel of two researchers, Francesco Granella, Bocconi University, and Kim van Daalen, Cambridge University, took questions. In answer to a question on the environmental impacts of the pandemic, Granella emphasized that the improved urban air pollution represents an opportunity to learn how to reduce our collective environmental footprint. Van Daalen said that governments have demonstrated they can muster the kind of political ambition required to tackle the climate crisis. At the individual level, she noted the potential for framing climate change as a health issue to encourage action.

In answer to a question on how to sustain positive changes after the pandemic, Granella said youth have a moral duty to fight for the environment and to ensure that post-pandemic policies are aligned with climate targets. Van Daalen emphasized the need to address inequalities exacerbated by the climate crisis, noting women have expertise that is not leveraged as they are inadequately represented at international climate negotiations.

In answer to a question on the types of policies needed going forward to decrease plastic pollution, Granella said more work needs to be done to raise awareness of the impact of consumption choices. Van Daalen warned that, as plastic takes 150 years to decompose, the plastic pollution stemming from the pandemic will far outlast it. She underlined the healthcare sector itself must become more sustainable.

Mrema said that governments have begun to put measures in place to recycle face masks, but called for greater awareness raising as many people leave face masks in the street. She stressed that the post-COVID recovery will have to take nature and biodiversity into account to prevent future pandemics.

Youth Consultation on ECOSOC Youth Forum

Srivastava highlighted that strengthening institutions to support the environment or to support youth engagement both require empowering young people. Oberhauser looked forward to discussing how to increase the youth voice in the “enormous” process of ECOSOC.

Steve Lee, MGCY to ECOSOC, outlined how the ECOSOC Youth Forum fits into the work of ECOSOC, with a focus on the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) that reviews progress on the SDGs. He characterized the ECOSOC Youth Forum as a “mini-HLPF.” He said the consultations at this session would feed into the Forum and, in turn, the HLPF.

Sahir Baig, Youth NGO Constituency to the UNFCCC (YOUNGO), explained that the group has a non-hierarchical structure with working groups focused on various issues, from finance to human rights. She said they are organizing a virtual conference for youth to hear their voices and those of marginalized communities. She highlighted challenges to participation, including the costs and emissions of travel.

Lilah Gaafar, UNEP, said the work of the Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Team, which created the Anatomy of Action framework, involves breaking down the science behind the SDGs and relating it to concrete everyday actions.

Diego Padilla, UNEP, said youth was an essential driver for change on SDG12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG13 (climate action), and encouraged young people to use their voice at the ECOSOC Youth Forum.

In an interactive discussion, participants proposed several priorities and issues they would like to see reflected at the ECOSOC Youth Forum, including:

- getting grassroots activists involved in the policymaking sphere;
- organizing more consultations with youth in the weeks leading to the Forum;
- prioritizing climate mitigation in vulnerable regions;
- raising awareness of global processes among youth in the communities;
- recognizing the political agency and knowledge of youth, indigenous and local communities; and
- strengthening networks as the ECOSOC Youth Forum celebrates 10 years.

UN co-organizers shared their work on youth, climate, and environmental action:

Giulia Jacovella, UN Development Programme (UNDP), highlighted UNDP’s commitment to: deepening youth engagement; recognizing youth as change agents for development and peace; and promoting their right to participate in decision making processes, including through the NDC Partnership Youth Engagement Plan.

Martha-Marie Vogel, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), drew attention to its “Changing minds, not the climate” initiative, which prioritizes youth participation through education, science, culture, information, and communication for SDG13 (climate action) and fosters inter- and intra-regional youth collaboration.

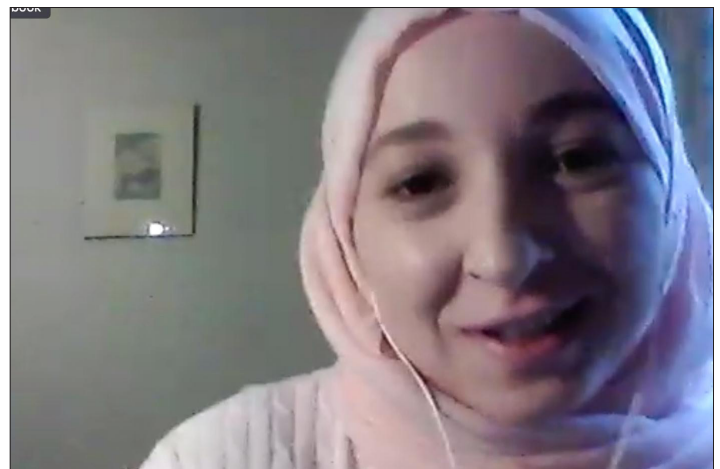
Amy Wickham, UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), reported its scaled-up support for youth, including through policy action and a youth engagement plan. She highlighted work on sustainability and environmental education in the World’s Largest Lesson project, and advocacy and campaigning in the climate action toolkits.

Marcos Montoiro, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), discussed engagement with youth about land through the three Rio Conventions (on biodiversity, climate change, and desertification), promoting sustainability in land-based jobs, and urging the grant of land tenure for those working the land.

Oberhauser closed by thanking all youth constituencies and UN colleagues and saying she was looking forward to further aligning priorities.

Ministerial Dialogues

In opening remarks, Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary, German Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety, said the pandemic had steered discussions at UNEA-5 towards the theme of acting with, and not against, nature. He said resources used to recover from the pandemic globally must support transformation, suggesting that is already the case in Germany and in the EU. He pointed to the European Green Deal and the EU’s target to be climate-neutral by 2050 as examples of improved ambition, and noted key upcoming opportunities



Intisar Rouabhia, MGCY



Participants attend the online session discussing COVID-19 and the environment.

to raise ambition further, including COP26 in Glasgow and the resumed UNEA session in 2022.

Intisar Rouabhia, MGCY, read extracts from the Assembly's draft outcome, noting that key recommendations included: advocating for all youth, especially those who are unable to attend multilateral events; strengthening the role of and focus on sustainable consumption and production; engaging youth not as a separate constituency, but as an integral part of UNEP's work; and working towards more meaningful online conferencing. She also highlighted the Assembly's outcomes, such as the launch of a platform for youth engagement in the SPB Forum.

In answer, Flasbarth said that to empower youth involvement in decision-making process, achieving SDG implementation is essential as these include goals relating to access to education. He also noted that chemicals represent an underestimated global environmental problem that is high on the agenda for Germany as host country for the International Conference on Chemicals Management.

Asked what solutions he would propose if he were a young climate activist, Flasbarth stressed keeping up pressure on governments to, *inter alia*, phase out coal since, without pressure, governments would act too slowly. Asked why Germany's own energy policy still allows new natural gas pipelines, he underscored that German law already contains a 2050 emissions neutrality target, saying gas will be gone in the 2040s.

He acknowledged the importance of two types of youth involvement: taking to the streets to make their voices heard and participating in processes like the Assembly. He recognized the need to support safe spaces for youth. On challenges in enforcing international agreements, Flasbarth highlighted the need to share financial resources, technology and know-how; and to have constructive discussions to improve implementation. He stressed that the backbone of action is government commitment, and action cannot be left to the private sector and their associated foundations.

Srivastava invited Flasbarth to work with youth to push for climate action and to help empower youth in countries where

taking action is difficult or dangerous. Flasbarth said he hoped to participate in future Youth Environment Assemblies.

Closing Youth Dialogue with Executive Director Inger Andersen and UNEA-5 President Rotevatn

Sveinung Rotevatn, UNEA President, stressed that while youth are advocates for future generations, they also provide solutions in the present, citing the UNEPs' Young Champions of the Earth and youth delegates. He suggested youth would benefit from the three draft decisions negotiated during the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, to be adopted during the online meeting of UNEA-5: a decision on trust funds; a decision on UNEP's medium-term strategy 2022-2025; and the adjournment of UNEA-5 in hopes of meeting in person in 2022.

Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP, urged fundamental shifts in humanity's relationship with nature, as outlined in UNEP's "Making Peace With Nature" report. She stressed the Children and Youth Major Group is not about "youthwashing" but about meaningful youth engagement, and lauded the delegations that have included youth as part of their UNEA-5 delegations. She encouraged youth to continue pushing states to act, and assured them that UNEA-5's three decisions are not "business as usual," but essential for youth to "get the UNEP they want."

Claudia Taboada, MGCY, cited key themes from the Assembly, especially the need to integrate indigenous youth and youth from rural areas in decision-making processes, and to take intergenerational action. She called for drafting a resolution on youth engagement before the resumed UNEA session in 2022. She reported outcomes from the Assembly, including the launch of new mechanisms such as the Chemical and Wastes Platform, which demonstrates how youth are changing the culture in the chemistry sector. Finally, she listed common themes that emerged from the Assembly's regional consultations, including: that governments, supported by UNEP, must show greater ambition; that environmental rights must guide policy decisions; and that a circular economy must be promoted through economic incentives.

Khaled Emam, Co-Chair, UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, focused on empowerment. He spoke of his work assisting environmental and human rights defenders facing threats from government and private sector. He called on governments and UN entities to empower youth and protect rights defenders.

Responding to comments, Andersen: acknowledged the importance of protecting rights defenders; agreed that sound environmental management is integral to poverty eradication; noted the priorities MGCY highlighted; and welcomed the suggestion to establish a trust fund for youth initiatives.

Ane Serreli, Norwegian Youth Council, emphasized the need for youth to be considered equal to other delegates and empowered to influence every part of environmental decision-making processes. Rotevatn said, as President of UNEA-5, he promised to do his best to ensure actions are taken in response to youth's inputs.

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15 actions across 5 lifestyle domains

More than social media tool, AOA is a framework to:

- Talk about lifestyles in a holistic way
- Maximize impacts by choice of action
- Use to design Lifestyle events, webinars, competitions, other challenges

The third day of the Youth Environment Assembly highlighted the impressive action undertaken by young people around the world.

Starting the “fireside” chat, Adedeji Adetoyi, YOUNGO, highlighted the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) Dialogue, and Convention Article 6 (education and training) as key processes in the UNFCCC where greater youth engagement would help lead to greater climate literacy and action.

Mika Tan, GYBN, called for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to adopt a rights-based approach, reflect the transformative power of education, and integrate intergenerational equity. She called for mechanisms to hold governments and corporations accountable.

Participants posed a wide range of questions. Some asked about UNEP’s role, including in countering climate denial, greening the construction industry, and supporting projects in countries while avoiding government corruption. One asked about educational resources for remote indigenous communities. Another participant noted the growing climate emergency and asked about how to bring all countries on board in a form of common but shared responsibilities.

Andersen responded that UNEP is one part of the UN family and often will work in countries to show that a project is possible, and then hand the idea to other, larger UN agencies such as UNDP to scale up the project. She observed how many countries have made net zero pledges, although noted many of these have yet to be concretely put into action. She reminded participants of the need for developed country leadership and the goal of USD 100 billion by 2020 in climate finance. She thanked participants for their work on the ground to make positive change, and said there is an ongoing conversation between UNEP and youth on how to facilitate meaningful engagement.

Upcoming Meetings

ECOSOC Youth Forum: The 2021 Forum’s discussions will be guided by the overall theme of the 2021 ECOSOC and HLPF: “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: Building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the Decade of Action and delivery for sustainable

development.” **dates:** 7-8 April 2021 **location:** online **www:** <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/content/ecosoc-youth-forum-2021>

Third meeting of the CBD Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF): The final meeting of the Working Group is expected to develop the text of the post-2020 GBF for consideration at COP 15. **dates:** second quarter of 2021 (TBC) **location:** to be determined **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/WG2020-03>

15th meeting of the COP to the CBD (COP 15/CP 10/ NP 4): The meeting will review the achievement and delivery of the CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is anticipated that the final decision on the post-2020 GBF will be taken, together with decisions on related topics including capacity building and resource mobilization. **dates:** second quarter of 2021 (TBC) **location:** Kunming, China **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/COP-15>

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2021: ECOSOC will convene the 2021 session of the HLPF under the theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.” Following the first five days, the HLPF’s three-day ministerial segment takes place jointly with ECOSOC’s high-level segment. **dates:** 6-15 July 2021 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021>

2021 UN Food Systems Summit: Convened by the UN Secretary-General, the Summit aims to maximize the co-benefits of a food systems approach across the 2030 Agenda and address the challenges of climate change. The Summit will provide a platform for ambitious new actions, innovative solutions, and plans to transform food systems and leverage these shifts to deliver progress across all of the SDGs. **dates:** September 2021 (TBC) **location:** TBC **www:** <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit>

2021 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 26): The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26), the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 16), and the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 3) will convene one year after their originally scheduled dates. **dates:** 1-12 November 2021 **location:** Glasgow, UK **www:** <https://unfccc.int>

UNEA-5.2: Convening under the theme, “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the SDGs,” UNEA-5 provides a platform for discussing and implementing nature-based solutions that contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, by holistically addressing its social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Building on the online UNEA session in February 2021, the meeting will discuss ways to ensure that policies for economic recovery following COVID-19 lead to a resilient and inclusive post-pandemic world. **dates:** February 2022 (TBC) **location:** UNEP, Nairobi **www:** <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/>

For additional meetings, see <https://sdg.iisd.org/>