



Go4BioDiv International Youth Forum D E C L A R A T I O N

CONSERVING COASTAL AND MARINE BIODIVERSITY *for* SUSTAINING LIFE AND LIVELIHOODS

We, as international Go4BioDiv youth Messengers from around the globe, represent local and indigenous communities, students, scientists, educators, communicators, lawyers and economists from outstanding marine sites. We want to raise our voice for conserving coastal and marine biodiversity for sustaining life and livelihoods. Today, young people under 30 represent more than half of the world population. It is us who will live with the consequences of today's actions and inactions, and we are here to create our future.

• Marine and coastal biodiversity loss has profound implications on humanity

We, as the youth of today, are concerned that coastal and marine ecosystems are under threat from anthropogenic impacts including mismanagement and overuse of marine resources, habitat loss, pollution, invasive species, massive tourism and unsustainable development, which will further be exacerbated by climate change.

We see conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources as crucial towards livelihoods. Marine ecosystems cannot exist in isolation. Thus, the approach towards conservation must be in the context of wider land- and seascapes, fostering connectivity and the resilience of ecosystems. We therefore call for biodiversity conservation measures including sustainable and socially inclusive resource use practices to be a priority at all levels.



- **We want policy driven by scientific and traditional knowledge**

We, as young researchers, demand that scientists are made part of decision-making processes, to guide policies on a more ecologically sound path. It must be ensured that research findings are implemented in immediate and effective action. Science findings must not be compromised due to conflicting interests of media, lobby groups and industries.

- **Wide participation in decision-making processes requires transparent information**

We, as young leaders, call for cooperation and unity among stakeholders on all levels, going beyond the border of age, gender and cultural background. We demand for coordination of and compliance with all environment-related treaties.

A bottom-up governance approach is needed to empower local communities, encouraging them to maintain their traditions and values of sustainable resource use practices. This can be achieved with an effective participation process based on transparent information, accessible and understandable by all. Capacity building and training of facilitators is essential to encourage communication and to share knowledge between science, media, general public and authorities.

- **We urge to fairly and equitably share the costs and benefits of biodiversity use.**

We, as young ecologists and economists, know that biodiversity has an intrinsic value. However, we believe that the economic valuation of ecological goods and services can promote biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of its components.

Moreover, the benefits arising from the use of marine and coastal genetic resources and their related traditional knowledge must be fairly and equitably shared. To foster sustainable use of biodiversity and its resources, more technical and financial support is essential.

- **Strong legal regulations and their enforcement are necessary to protect our marine and coastal realms worldwide**

We, as young environmental stewards, emphasize that the precautionary principle should be applied at regional, national and international levels. We urge for strong legal mechanisms, clear rules and regulations as well as their effective and active enforcement to prevent the misuse of resources, especially concerning illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. Corruption must be combated at every level. Perverse incentives and subsidies must be converted into ecologically sound ones. If livelihoods are negatively affected, alternative income options must be provided.

- **We want a strong emphasis on environmental education and communication**

We, as youth educators and communicators strongly believe that it is vital to include environmental education in the curriculum and have nature connection programs. We are convinced that individuals from all sections of society should have the possibility and financial means to experience the natural environment to become aware of the importance of coastal and marine biodiversity and its ecosystem services.

- **We call for coordination, cooperation and unity among all stakeholders**

We, as the youth are strongly committed to biodiversity conservation and its sustainable and responsible use. By being globally connected and working in unity, we will create a change for our common future. And we invite the international community to join us!