



Statement from the Children and Youth Major Group For the 8th Annual Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, 25th October 2021

<https://www.unep.org/events/annual-subcommittee-cpr/8th-annual-subcommittee-meeting-committee-permanent-representatives>

Intervention on Agenda Item 2. Adoption of the provisional agenda; Opening statement from representatives from Major Groups

Thank you for the floor.

I am Alejandro Luque from Ecuador and I am 18 years old. I am part of the Latin America and Caribbean Coordination Team of the children and youth major group. As the youth constituency, we consist of more than 400 youth organisations, including accredited and grassroots groups from all regions of the world.

We congratulate member states and UNEP secretariat on the progress made virtually, including the session of UNEA in February. We also highlight to you that even in unprecedented times of COVID, this approach is still exclusionary in nature in the world of multilateralism.

We call for equal and in-person participation of member states, major groups and stakeholders to move forward. We suggest using online formats as additional, and not as replacement, to the in-person events already being conducted. This will help progress to be reached even faster. That is why, in the last months, youth have hosted regional consultations voluntarily in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and a Youth Forum in the Asia Pacific region. Consultations in other regions are coming up. We also organised a virtual Global Youth Environment Assembly in the lead-up to the first session of UNEA 5. And we are organising **a hybrid youth assembly for UNEA and the youth-pre event for Stockholm+50 in Nairobi in February**. We also work across 10 different thematic working groups. Earlier this month, we also **established the Youth Segment of the UN Environment Management Group**.

What young people have stated as a necessity is:

- ❖ They want their voice to be taken into account **by mandate and not just by invitation**, across all levels of governance.
- ❖ They want to be given environmental education, be empowered through relevant resources
- ❖ They want their rights as frontline environmental defenders to be protected by **all governments**.
- ❖ They want the creation of opportunities for young people on the aspect of green & sustainable equitable jobs, which should be highlighted while aiming for a just transition.
- ❖ They want to be part of the main stages of decision making.



On UNEP@50 and UNEA Special Session, we renew our call for a leadership dialogue or plenary discussion focussed on the role of young and future generations in environmental action, as part of the special Session agenda. Furthermore, we are developing the UNEP We Want report and we ask that outcomes of this report be presented during the Special Session. **The leadership dialogue on the next 50 years can be titled - the UNEP We Want.**

On Stockholm+50, together with the Swedish Youth Council, we are co-leading the Stockholm+50 Youth Task Force - coordinating the formal youth engagement for Stockholm+50. **More detailed inputs and updates on UNEP@50 and Stockholm+50 youth engagement will be shared by us on Wednesday.**

We expect the outcomes of UNEA 5.2 and Stockholm+50 to make up for the time lost over the past 50 years, especially when it comes to substantive progress on ambitious environmental law, supporting programmes for developing countries and **putting intergenerational equity at the heart of environmental governance. Talking about having 50 more years sounds very encouraging. But we know we do not have that time, if we do not do something now.**

In the coming days of the Annual Sub Committee, around fifteen youth delegates from all regions will participate and share inputs; and we call upon member states to reflect youth inputs. Some of our written submissions are already on the meeting portal.

To conclude our opening remarks, we remind you that Youth is not the future, it is half of the truth. Youth is the present, that is why it is prevailing that we must have rights-based participation in decision-making and negotiations, **as well as structures to assure the rights of future generations not yet born.** This is a message of inclusiveness, peace, justice, and accountability.

On behalf of the Children and Youth Major Group, we thank you once again for the time given to us, and we hope this week of sessions will be as progressive and useful as we expect.

Delivered by:

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