

## Youth4Nature

Mobilizing youth on nature-based solutions

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# Mobilizing and Empowering Youth on Nature and Climate

Proposal to the UNSG Climate Action Summit | May, 2019

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**Youth4Nature** is a youth-led, international initiative advocating for nature-based climate solutions which intends to mobilize its network around UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit. We intend to hold political leaders to account on the urgent need to reset our relationship with nature, as well as to mobilize young people around the world to be champions of nature-based solutions by providing a platform to share their stories and build their capacity as advocates.

We seek the endorsement of the UNSG and his team so that members of our network may deliver our messages and search for opportunities to align our campaigns with the broader outcomes and initiatives across the nine thematic areas at the Summit, as well as the important moments leading up to it.

## About Youth4Nature

Youth4Nature is a youth-led, international initiative with three core objectives:

1. To **mobilize** youth to take action and advocate for political leaders to deliver up to **30% of climate solutions** needed by 2030 to result from nature-based solutions with a clear vision for the future;
2. To **elevate the voices** of youth by providing a platform to share their stories and have them be heard; and,
3. To **build the capacity** of youth to serve as leaders of a "nature for climate" movement.

## Our Vision

Our message is simple: in the search for solutions to climate change, political leaders cannot forget young people; they cannot forget frontline and marginalized communities; and they cannot forget nature.

We no longer have the luxury of being short-sighted in our actions – older generations and industries have already wasted decades – we must act now. While all countries need to urgently reduce their emissions, we must not forget that the goals of the Paris Agreement cannot be achieved without nature.

As young people, we demand adherence to the 1.5 degree target, and we expect that natural climate solutions will represent 30% of on-the-ground climate solutions by 2030. This requires

## Youth4Nature

### Mobilizing youth on nature-based solutions

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political leaders to urgently increase their support for nature-based solutions, which currently receive only 3% of climate mitigation funding and make up only 1% of the global climate conversation.

We also call on political leaders to provide universal access to education on nature and climate in school curriculums and to guarantee access to nature in our everyday lives. Not only is this ethically responsible, it is also critical to building capacity amongst young people as nature and climate leaders.

Finally, we expect clear safe-guards so that all solutions, including and especially nature-based solutions, do not leave anyone behind. In particular, we expect the roles and rights of indigenous peoples to be recognized and upheld in the pursuit of these solutions.

We also acknowledge that youth have their own agency. There are a number of actions that we can take in our own lives and communities that can help drive change. The global student strike movement, which has already mobilized more than a million youth around the world, is the perfect example of this. Young people understand the need to act, and we have the drive and will to do so, but we don't always know how to act beyond protests and behavioural change. Give us the tools, the training, and the resources, and we will march forward decisively.

### **Support for the Summit and Requests for Endorsement**

Over the course of the year, Youth4Nature will conduct regional webinars that bring together scientists and young people to increase the knowledge base of youth around nature-based solutions – what they look like and how they work – and to empower them to take action.

We are also calling on young people from all over the world to submit stories about how nature and their relationship with the lands and waters they live on has influenced their climate agenda, how the land has changed (or will change) due to climate, and how they are engaging with nature-based solutions on-the-ground within their communities. These stories will be shared online through a multimedia platform, as well as through digital and social media as components of a growing #youth4nature movement. By the time the Summit comes in September, we will have a very rich network of young nature champions, a diverse collection of compelling and impactful stories, and will be on the precipice of a movement of young people advocating for nature in climate action.

In order to mobilize this network for the Summit, we request the following from the UNSG and the Summit organizing team:

## Youth4Nature

### Mobilizing youth on nature-based solutions

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1. The opportunity for our nature champions to deliver our calls to action and share some of our stories during the Summit in a meaningful way; and
2. To search for opportunities to align the campaigns we outline below with the broader outcomes and initiatives across the nine thematic areas.

### Our Call to Political Leaders

- Provide young people **universal access to education on nature and climate** in school curriculums and **guarantee access to nature** in their everyday lives;
- Acknowledge that nature offers indispensable solutions to climate change and that it is not possible **to limit warming to 1.5 degrees** without nature's help;
- Adhere to the 1.5 target and use nature to deliver up to **30% of the climate solutions** needed by 2030, which will require much greater representation in the next round of national targets in 2020;
- Direct **sufficient climate finance** for nature to deliver 30% of the Paris target by 2030;
- **Halve the rate of forest loss by 2020, against the rate in 2014 in alignment with the New York Declaration of Forests**, and to **end deforestation altogether by 2030**;
- Formally **protect 30% of the world's land and water by 2030 and 50% by 2050** through legally enforced protected areas and other conservation measures ;
- Restore **150 million hectares** of degraded and deforested land by 2020, and **350 million hectares** by 2030;
- Recognize the **roles and rights of indigenous peoples** in the pursuit of natural climate solutions by upholding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including its article mandating free, prior, and informed consent;
- Promote **climate-smart agriculture**, including agroecology, that strengthens food security, protects and enhances natural resources, and combats climate change; and,
- Ensure that all natural climate solutions are aligned with **sound biodiversity science**, effectively addressing ecological as well as climate breakdown. Mono-plantations are not natural climate solutions.

### Our Pledges

As young people determined to protect nature in order to safeguard our future, we pledge to:

- Work closely with climate school strikers around the world to include support for nature in their calls to action and to wear green during strikes to express support for nature as an indispensable solution to climate change, in addition to a rapid transition to clean energy. The global school strikes have given young people more agency in the climate

## Youth4Nature

Mobilizing youth on nature-based solutions

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struggle than they have ever had before, and we want to ensure that support for nature is included in our demands to those in power;

- Boycott retailers whose supply chain production is linked to deforestation. While we are extremely disappointed that no single company is on track to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains by 2020, we acknowledge that some companies are doing more than others, and our boycott will reflect this;
- Call on our families, our schools, and our communities to divest any money from savings or pension funds that invest in companies that are harming nature. We understand the power we have as advocates within our families, our schools, and our communities and we commit to educate and empower young people to make full use of this power to support nature;
- Mobilize behind the frontline, marginalized, and Indigenous communities that are already facing the impacts of climate and ecological breakdown. We will address this through campaign messaging, knowledge-sharing, and on-the-ground mobilization. Many of these communities have been stewards of nature for generations; it is critical that all action for nature and climate is enshrined in climate justice; and,
- Educate our contemporaries about the importance of protecting nature and the power of nature to provide solutions to a wide range of challenges, including climate change. We will encourage them to share their stories about their relationship with land and waters and how climate change threatens this relationship.

### Contact

To learn more about Youth4Nature, visit us at the following platforms:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

Website (coming soon!): [youth4nature.org](https://youth4nature.org)

You can also contact us at:

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