



TOWARDS POST-2020 MOBILIZATION OF #2

TRANSLATING THE MANY DIMENSIONS OF INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY WITHIN THE POST2020 FRAMEWORK



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The Open-Ended Working Group on the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the driving body in the process leading to the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held its first session in Nairobi, Kenya from August 27th to 29th 2019. It was a great opportunity to engage in discussions on intergenerational equity with an innovative, inclusive and broader approach.



“INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY MEANS THAT ALL GENERATIONS SHARE A COMMON BUT DIFFERENTIATED RESPONSIBILITY IN ENSURING A HEALTHY PLANET FOR THE GENERATIONS THAT FOLLOW. THROUGH THIS CONCEPT, GENERATIONS IN POLICY-MAKING POSITIONS ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR CHOICES AND INVITED TO ACKNOWLEDGE, RESPECT, HEAR AND GIVE SPACE FOR YOUTH TO BE INCLUDED IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AT ALL LEVELS, IN ALL FAIRNESS FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE HUMAN POPULATIONS AND ACROSS AGES AND GENDERS.”

An expert meeting was convened on August 25th and 26th, to explore the intricacies of this conceptual framework and to study the potential of adapting Intergenerational Equity and its goals to the Post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

The joint initiative by the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, EU Support and Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) gathered experts from various youth organizations, delegates from CBD Parties, Academia, Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders. During those two days, participants gained knowledge on the concept and implications of intergenerational equity and looked into the modalities to translate it into implementable actions in environmental and biodiversity policies. This resulted in the establishment of a first strategy to make the case for intergenerational equity on the road to Kunming.

This represented the very first opportunity to better refine and adapt intergenerational equity in all its complexity to the framework of global biodiversity governance and the CBD community. It also launched Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework. EU Support’s “#BiodiversityNeedsYouTH” awareness-raising campaign, with various milestones, including the first Youth Leadership Dialogue on biodiversity (UNESCO, HQ) and the ensuing Paris Peace Forum (November 6th to 13th).



1. TRANSLATING THE MANY DIMENSIONS OF INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY WITHIN THE POST2020 FRAMEWORK

Upholding Intergenerational equity also boils down to linking environmental governance and human rights. Taking into account three main categories (political, the economic and social, and group and collective including the rights to a healthy environment, to natural resources, to communicate and to participate in cultural heritage) we see that the intergenerational equity approach is not only consistent, but also is in a mutually positive relationship with sound implementation of human rights.

Intergenerational Equity is the recognition that all generations share a common but differentiated responsibility in ensuring a healthy planet for the generations that follow. More particularly, it advocates for those generations in policy-making positions to be accountable for their choices and to acknowledge, respect, hear and give space for youth to be included in decision-making processes at all levels, in all fairness for current and future human populations. In the process of defining a new global deal for Nature and People, taking an inclusive approach to mobilization across constituencies and age groups will help make peace with future generations and can be an additional step towards living in harmony with nature.

“ALL GENERATIONS ARE INHERENTLY LINKED TO OTHER GENERATIONS, PAST AND FUTURE, IN USING THE COMMON PATRIMONY OF EARTH.”
 Edith Brown Weiss, 1992

2. FROM NATIONAL AND SECTORAL BEST CASES TO A BROAD IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY

Intergenerational equity has already shown to be a decisive core value to many actors on the ground. From the Youth, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, Gender or Human Rights perspectives, the potential for fruitful applications is widely recognized, including in relation to the post-2020 biodiversity framework level.

Moving on from theoretical arguments, intergenerational equity has already been integrated at various levels, from national to international and local programs.

In Nairobi, Josefa Tauli from GYBN Philippines and the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB), highlighted how indigenous traditions value the inherent links and reciprocal responsibilities between generations, especially in caring for the environment and the future.

The South African constitution integrates the underlying values of intergenerational Equity in clause 24: “all South Africans have the right to an environment [...] for the benefit of present and future generations.” Simangele Msweli (GYBN South Africa) highlighted how her country’s history shaped an emancipation movement towards the inclusion of youth empowerment and care for future generations in the national Constitution. This goal is also implemented through several programs and projects established by the State to give young people from all sectors of society the tools they need to thrive in their communities.¹

Amelia Arreguin (CBD Women’s Caucus) showed that a cross-cutting and inclusive initiative should bring marginalized communities to take part in decision-making. Intergenerational equity is intrinsically linked to societal developments and the inclusion of all human population, especially upholding gender equality, including among younger populations.

The South African example also highlights the challenges in implementing intergenerational equity on the ground. Indeed, most youth-oriented programs remain reactive rather than proactive and focused on correcting current socio-political issues arising from the past, while action oriented towards the future is still in the making. A lot remains to be done regarding systemic integration of intergenerational equity across sectors. This is just as true for South Africa as it is on the international governance level.

While the very idea of “caring” for all forms of life is traditionally considered as a women’s task, it is an essential aspect of living sustainably and in harmony with nature. As a factor in matters of human wellbeing, health, ecosystem and species management, “care” activities should be a societal, intergenerational endeavor. Helping young women be empowered to take part in global discussions thus becomes an integral part of intergenerational equity in biodiversity governance.

¹ Among those, we find the National Youth Services Programme, the Youth Environmental Service Programme, while the People and Parks Programme, designed to facilitate the active participation of rural communities, has founded the People and Parks Youth Forum in 2016.



The post-2020 global biodiversity framework could also find inspiration in the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

The UNFCCC Preamble includes a reference to “present and future generations of mankind”, while article 3.1 calls for Parties to “protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind.” Intergenerational equity is also featured in the UNFCCC guidelines and implementation tools such as the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE).

Those references could become an example for other multilateral environmental agreements to start their own process of empowering younger generations from the very beginning.

Although Intergenerational Equity is not explicitly referenced among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), many youth constituencies are active and supporting its implementation in their specific line of action such as the Major Group of Children and Youth (MGCY); YOUNGO for SDG13 “Climate Action”; GYBN for SDGs 14 “Life Below Water” and 15 “Life on Land”.

Other national and international best practices regarding the implementation of Intergenerational Equity such as the creation of Youth Ministries, improvements of youth national data, or state partnerships with youth organizations also contribute to bringing intergenerational equity at the operational level. Intergenerational Equity, as an overarching core value, offers an opportunity to move away from short-term policies to a more comprehensive process leading to 2020 and far beyond.

concept targets all social actors, empowers and holds them accountable as regards of the general goal of leaving a viable planet to those who will follow us.

The Nairobi expert meeting showed how Intergenerational Equity could be an enabling factor for the alignment of goals among various international processes, especially as regards to the three CBD objectives the SDGs.

Youth were very active at the Rio +20 Conference where they brought up key aspirations such as green jobs, ensuring sustainability and quality of life, and proposed the creation of a High Commissioner/ Ombudsman for future generations.

Conversely, they were disappointed with the new SDGs agenda in which they were not included through a dedicated target. Young people’s empowerment was only integrated transversally as a priority, but it was difficult to measure its importance. Intragenerational equality (across social groups within a given generation) seemed to be favored over intergenerational equity.

The appointment of a UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, with a dedicated office and a mandate to work on SDGs implementation, was a real step forward in including youth delegates at international decision-making level. However, a lack of resources and leeway still hinders the Youth Envoy’s capacity to bring young people’s concern to the global arena.

Achieving the SDGs largely depends on the involvement of youth. The next challenge is then to move on from limited initiatives to wide-range implementation.

THREE KEY DEMANDS RELATED TO INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY AROSE FROM THE EXPERT MEETING, ALL OVERLAPPING WITH THE THREE CBD OBJECTIVES:

- Current generations need to consider future generations and resources;
- Future generations should not suffer because current generations were unable to act on the planetary crisis, protect the environment and manage resources sustainably;
- Fairness and justice between all generations.²

The COP21 proposals in Paris related to intergenerational equity were very ambitious but ultimately bracketed in the text. As a result, youth constituents, through YOUNGO, established lobbying strategies so that those references would, for the first time, be integrated in an international agreement. This precedent can potentially generate positive externalities for other international Conventions and national policies (creation of youth constituencies, support to lowering the voting age).

² GYBN undertook an extensive research and consultation work, to offer a complete conceptual framework for transformational change in biodiversity governance, which includes: the transformation of our core values and principles (fairness, sustainability, equity, peace, safety, etc.), a set of key enabling conditions, and three fundamental conditions to reach the 2050 Vision of Living in Harmony with Nature:

- Intergenerational equity
- The integrity of life-supporting integrity
- Living sustainably

INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY SHOWS THAT CARING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS AND IMPROVING THE LIVES OF THE CURRENT GENERATION ARE NOT TWO OPPOSING OBJECTIVES BUT RATHER TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN.

3. ALIGNING CBD OBJECTIVES AND SDGS: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM YOUTH MOVEMENTS

Intergenerational equity is often mistaken for a “young people’s topic”, which only leads to lobbying and protesting. This is a misconception, as this



It also catalyzes a switch from a narrative focused on the past and short-term decisions, to a discussion about the future, inclusive of all societies and countries irrespective of age, wealth or development. The concept ultimately appeared in the Paris Agreement’s Preamble, among general principles such as gender equality. In the Post-Paris era, the priority is now to operationalize.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF THE COMING GENERATIONS WITHOUT INCLUDING THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE CURRENT ONES. INTRA- AND INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY CANNOT BE SEPARATED.

BUILDING UP THE MOMENTUM FOR A GLOBAL YOUTH CAMPAIGN FOR BIODIVERSITY AHEAD OF COP15

Youth is already very actively involved in the pursuit of the CBD objectives and further biodiversity policies through the “Life on Land” and on “Life below water” SDGs, as well as on topics of sustainable consumption and production.

Understanding that intergenerational equity does not oppose generations but rather unites them is crucial to its implementation and for the post-2020 biodiversity framework to be as ambitious as hoped. The Nairobi expert meeting, the Youth Leadership Dialogue on biodiversity held in Paris and the Paris Peace Forum brought together, for the first time, youth from all walks of environmental and social activism.

Concerns about our common future and the planet are voiced all around the world by young people, many of whom are ready to take their rightful place in decision-making positions. The moment is right to recognize this commitment and give youth the role it deserves at the negotiating tables ahead of COP15, and beyond.

Youth is now the growing voice challenging decision-makers on environmental governance and calling for intergenerational equity to become a driver of global action.

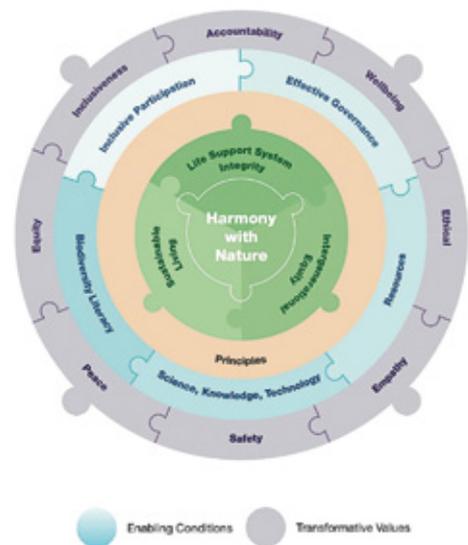
The 21st century has seen the rise of many youth movements advocating for urgent environmental actions. But young people need to go beyond being simply heard. They need to be included in all dialogues, in decision-making, in choosing to live in harmony with nature and ourselves. Youth is a creative force that, when empowered, will shape our common future and help us achieve the global deal for Nature and People.

Youth and environmental movements are active and numerous. They can come together to define the future of our planet. This will be the start of an exciting journey, taking us to a Global Youth Forum for the Planet. We hope to help build a “collaborative thinking and coordination among actors that do not interact in other settings, and to facilitate an aligned youth voice, which may engage with decision-makers on biodiversity matters inside and outside the CBD” (Melina Sakiyama – GYBN).

By challenging prejudices and mobilizing all actors, we will find the path to leave a viable Earth to future generations.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE A DRIVING FORCE OF TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE AND ARE CALLING FOR STRONG COMMITMENTS FOR A VIABLE EARTH.

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE



TOGETHER
CBD COP 15 — KUNMING 2020
TOWARDS
A GLOBAL
DEAL FOR
NATURE &
PEOPLE

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POST2020 BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK – EU SUPPORT IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AND IMPLEMENTED BY EXPERTISE FRANCE. IT AIMS AT FACILITATING A COMPREHENSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESS LEADING TO THE ADOPTION OF AN AMBITIOUS POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK THAT FOSTERS COMMITMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.

