

# United Nations Convention Biological Diversity (UNCBD) Conference Of Parties (COP) 16 2024

## Delegation Report

### I. Summary of The Event

The Conference covered the Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 16), the Eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the Fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization.

The official logo was an Inírida flower, endemic to Guainía, Colombia, decorated with 36 petals, 23 of which represented the targets set by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, whereas the remaining 13 symbolized the ecoregions of Colombia. The COP16 to the Convention on Biological Diversity was suspended in the morning of 2 November for lack of a quorum for decision-making, since the plenary session was extended and some delegates had to leave due to their flights



The 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD COP16) took place from October 21 to November 1, 2024, in Cali, Colombia, with the theme 'Peace with Nature' (Paz con la Naturaleza).

COP16 focused on translating these global commitments into actionable strategies and implementation mechanisms while COP15 (Montreal, Canada) was pivotal for adopting the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). A notable emphasis was placed on strengthening synergies between biodiversity conservation and climate action, as well as integrating peace-building efforts into environmental strategies, reflecting the unique theme of this meeting.

Moreover, COP16 expanded platforms for Indigenous peoples, local communities, women, and youth, ensuring their active participation in shaping biodiversity policies. This inclusive approach was further reinforced by stronger financial commitments aimed at equitable resource distribution for biodiversity initiatives globally. COP16 placed particular attention on addressing biodiversity loss in conflict-affected regions, recognizing the intertwined relationship between environmental degradation and sociopolitical instability. The meeting showcased innovative solutions, such as nature-based approaches to fostering resilience in vulnerable areas.

Overall, COP16 marked a transformative step in operationalizing the GBF, with a focus on integrated, inclusive, and sustainable pathways to achieve global biodiversity targets. COP16 saw unprecedented participation compared to previous conferences, with over 23,000 pre-registered delegates from nearly every country worldwide. The IFSA team actively engaged with a wide range of delegates across various sectors as for:

- Maya Nahor: Sustainability advocate with expertise in cross-sector collaborations for nature conservation.
- Monica Gabay: Senior Environmental Policy Advisor and expert in international negotiations, focusing on biocultural diversity.
- Mark Day: Winner of the 2024 Earthshot Prize in the "Protect and Restore Nature" category, recognized for his leadership in ecosystem restoration.
- Genna Tesdall: Director of Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD), advocating for youth involvement in sustainable agriculture.
- Felix Finkbeiner: Founder of the Plant-for-the-Planet Foundation and renowned leader in youth-driven tree-planting initiatives.
- Victoria Rachmaninoff: Restoration Policy and Biodiversity Research Associate at Initiative 20x20, focusing on scaling restoration in Latin America.
- Chrispus Ongom: Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) Network Intern, contributing expertise on policy and sustainability.
- Maria Angela Reyes: Marine conservationist and scientific project manager at Ocean Ecostructures.
- Andrea Chávarri Marrese: Social Media Specialist at GLF, amplifying biodiversity conversations.

- Pedro Magalhães: Specialist in People and Nature, development management, and grassroots innovations, with expertise in community building and knowledge sharing within GLF.

Apart from the cited delegations, this diverse assembly included representatives from a wide range of sectors:

- Government Officials: Delegations from 85 countries, including five heads of state and 85 environment ministers, attended to discuss and negotiate key biodiversity policies.
- Indigenous and Local Communities: Approximately 2,000 Indigenous representatives from various regions participated, advocating for the respect of nature and emphasizing the critical role of Indigenous perspectives in biodiversity conservation. It is estimated that up to 80% of global biodiversity is managed by Indigenous communities, underscoring their importance in these discussions.
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): Prominent organizations such as the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) and the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), among others, brought valuable expertise in areas like landscape restoration and youth engagement in biodiversity issues.
- Civil Society and Academia: The conference also engaged civil society groups, academic institutions, and research organizations, contributing scientific knowledge and advocating for evidence-based policymaking.

CBD COP16 2024 centers on the concrete implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which aims to preserve and sustainably use biodiversity, and share fair and equal benefits of biological resources. Based on the 23 objectives set for 2030 at COP15, the previous meeting, COP16 focuses on strengthening the implementation of each country's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and specifying global cooperation and funding mechanisms to support these efforts.

While COP15 was primarily focused on drawing "comprehensive agreements" and setting new global goals, COP16 is focused on discussing systematic measures to implement these goals. In particular, COP16 emphasizes assessing each country's progress, strengthening transparency, establishing technology and financial support mechanisms, and mobilizing resources through cooperation with the private sector. In addition, COP16 lays the groundwork for practical changes by recognizing the rights and knowledge systems of local and indigenous communities and seeks specific policy measures to protect them.

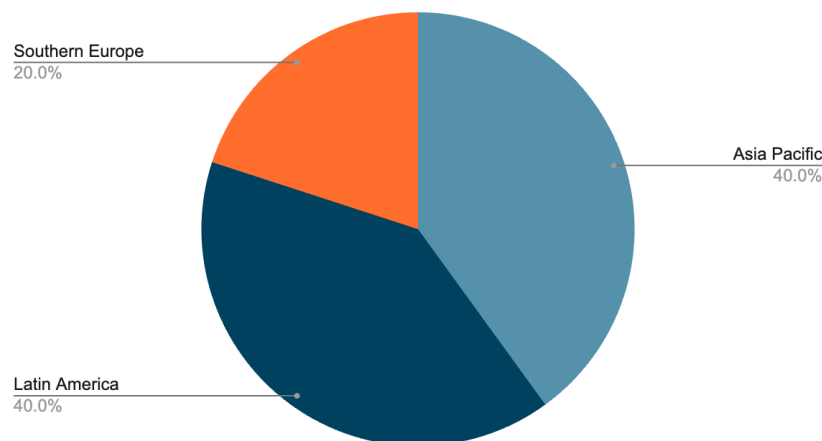
In conclusion, the main purpose of COP16 is to increase execution power on the foundation prepared at COP15, through which it promotes the process of realizing global biodiversity goals by 2030. While COP15 was a 'goal setting ground', COP16 is positioned as a 'field of action'.

## II. Delegation

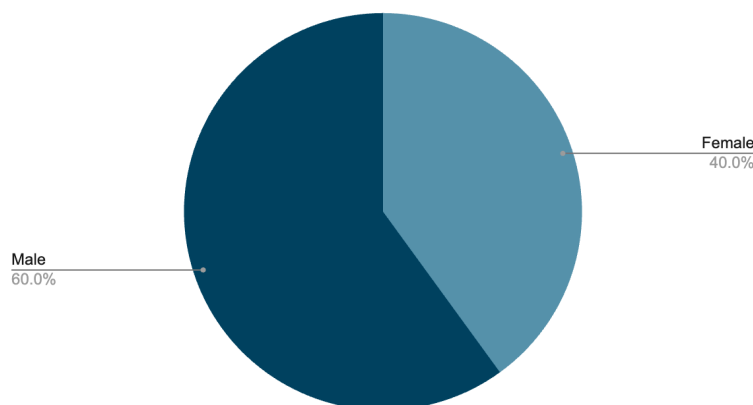
This year, IFSA sent a team of five delegates to represent the organization at the UNCBD COP16 in Cali, Colombia. These delegates, from diverse regions and Local Committees (LCs), contributed to discussions, networked with global stakeholders, and amplified youth voices in biodiversity governance:

1. Yoonjung Yang, LC KMU (IFSA KOREA), Asia Pacific, Female
2. JungWoo Na, LC KMU (IFSA KOREA), Asia Pacific, Male
3. Fernando Morales de Rueda, LC Spain, University of Granada, South Europe, Male
4. Iarin Victoriano Ascencio, LC CHAUPEA, Latin America, Male
5. Jocelyn Briones Pablo, LC CHAUPEA, Latin America, Female

Regional Distribution



Gender Distribution





### III. Experience

#### Sessions attended as organisers, moderators and speakers

#### IFSA Side-Event: Youth leading the way: Bridging Climate action and Biodiversity at GYBN Youth Pavilion



The session began with a concise introduction to the International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA), highlighting our work in forestry, climate action, and youth empowerment. Following this, an engaging carbon footprint quiz challenged participants to reflect on the environmental impact of everyday lifestyle choices. Using the WWF Footprint Calculator, attendees analyzed fictional characters' carbon footprints, sparking lively discussions about how sectors like housing, food, and travel contribute to climate change. This activity provided a relatable entry point to the broader conversation on climate action and its ties to biodiversity.

Panelists shared diverse perspectives on how climate change disrupts forests, biodiversity, and climate crisis using examples from local and global contexts. Innovative solutions, such as drone-assisted seeding for forest restoration, illustrated how technology can bridge conservation efforts and climate resilience (Fernando Morales, IFSA). Panelists from Latin America also highlighted regional strategies for biodiversity protection,

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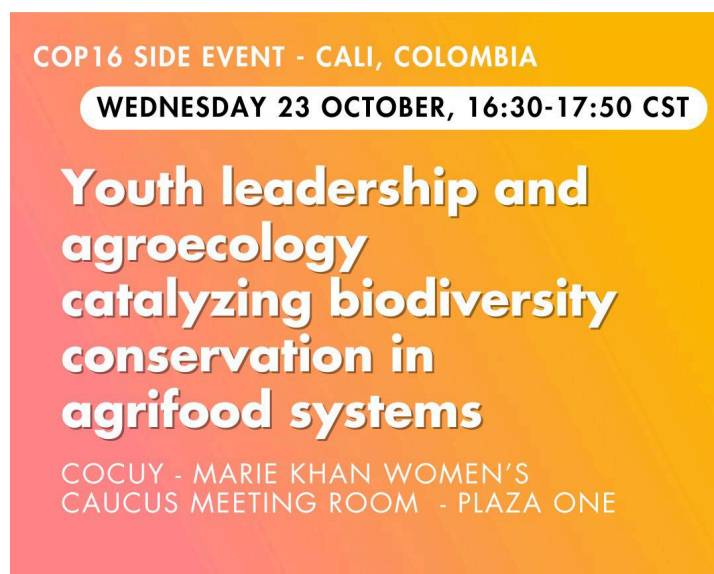
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reinforcing the value of localized approaches within global frameworks (Iarin Ascencio, IFSA). The discussion concluded with a powerful call for action, as panelists envisioned a future shaped by youth leadership and collaborative problem-solving.

The session ended with a resounding message: the climate and biodiversity crises are deeply intertwined, and addressing them requires integrated efforts and inclusive participation. By equipping youth with knowledge and opportunities for action, events like this lay the foundation for a sustainable future. The energy and insights shared at the GYBN Youth Pavilion underscored the pivotal role of young people as change-makers in the fight for a healthier planet. Diverse mechanisms in addressing food security and climate change have become our main priority in overcoming hunger and health issues amid climate change. In addition to the interested youth who attended the activity, it was noticeable how different delegates approached to listen.

Reimagining how we approach the relationship between people and nature will require innovation. As youth, we are uniquely positioned to drive this transformation by blending traditional ecological knowledge with modern tools like Artificial Intelligence, drone seeding, and data-driven monitoring. However, innovation must go beyond technology. It involves fostering inclusivity, empowering local communities, and addressing social and ecological complexities holistically. The loss of biodiversity is directly related to climate change, this is a reality that we cannot ignore, so it is necessary to focus climate action on the conservation of biodiversity, although this part has been ignored for many years, youth are an agent of change, vital to create and execute projects, this begins by recognizing the current situation of our country and our communities of origin.

## Youth leadership and agroecology catalyzing biodiversity conservation in agrifood systems



The COP16 Side Event, held on October 23, 2024, "Conservation of Biodiversity in Agri-Food Systems through Youth Leadership and Ecological Agriculture," was a meaningful gathering of various stakeholders to discuss ways to preserve biodiversity in the agri-food system. The event was co-hosted by the World Food Forum (WFF) and the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), emphasizing the importance of youth leadership, ecological agriculture, and biodiversity-friendly practices.

The event was closely linked to the objectives of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and covered Targets 10, 16, and 22, which aim to protect biodiversity and reduce threats, as well as sustainably manage and utilize agriculture, aquaculture, and forests. The session focused on the interconnectivity of the agri-food system and the importance of rights-based approaches such as youth participation and ecological agriculture.

The event consisted of an opening speech, a keynote speech, a presentation of the results of the youth consultation, a panel discussion, and an audience participation Q&A session. The keynote speech emphasized the intersection of the agri-food system and biodiversity conservation and highlighted the importance of indigenous knowledge to biodiversity restoration and conservation. Farmers, policymakers, researchers, and youth

representatives participated in the panel to discuss actual examples of sustainable agriculture, policy frameworks, research results, and innovative solutions led by youth.

In particular, the discussion on the ecological agriculture approach received attention, addressing the advantages and action plans of biodiversity-friendly agriculture using traditional knowledge. As a representative of IFSA, I actively participated in the Q&A session and asked questions about the role and importance of forests in ensuring water sustainability in the agri-food system. This question emphasized the critical connection between forest ecosystems and water resource management, underscoring the essential role of forests in biodiversity conservation.

One of our IFSA Delegates, participated in the Q&A session and posed a question about the role and importance of forests in ensuring water sustainability within the agri-food system. This highlighted the interconnection between forests and water management and emphasized the need to incorporate forest ecosystems into biodiversity-friendly agricultural strategies. These discussions are expected to contribute to empowering the younger generation and fostering a sustainable agri-food system.

## The 7th GLF Investment Case Symposium Charters meeting

The 7th Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) Investment Case Symposium Charters Meeting reflected on the progress of the GLF, highlight testimonies from Restoration Stewards and GLFx Chapters, and outline future steps, including preparations for the upcoming COP30 in Belém—anticipated to be the largest GLF event to date.

### Key Highlights and Updates

#### 1. Impacts of GLF

- Since its inception, the GLF has engaged over 1.8 million participants globally across its events, with a virtual reach extending to more than 345 million people.
- Restoration Stewards and GLFx Chapters were emphasized as core pillars driving local restoration efforts. Their grassroots contributions were celebrated through shared testimonies, showcasing successful community-led projects in reforestation, sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity conservation. The Restoration Stewards Jann Vinze Barcinal from the Philippines and Sergio Esteban Lozano-Baez from Colombia embodied the community-led restoration. Jann's work through Dulungan Youth focuses on empowering local communities to protect the critically endangered Rufous-headed Hornbill by fostering behavioral change, alternative livelihoods, and agroforestry, ensuring inclusive and sustainable

conservation. Sergio emphasized that restoration is more than planting trees, highlighting soil health and habitat recovery as key to thriving ecosystems.

## 2. Future Directions

- Preparations for COP30 in Belém, Brazil, aim to make it the largest event in GLF history, focusing on South-to-South and South-to-North collaborations.
- New initiatives will prioritize the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance landscape conservation, management, and restoration. AI is expected to accelerate impacts but must be balanced with ethical considerations and equitable regulation.

## IFSA Contributions

Fernando Morales brought forward various inputs, highlighting its commitment to intergenerational collaboration and capacity building:

- Collaborative Initiatives:
  - IFSA's partnership with IUFRO's Task Force on Forestry Education was highlighted for addressing educational gaps, launching a global competition on best practices, and fostering partnerships with FSC, FAO, and CIFOR-ICRAF.
- Tree-Learning Platform:
  - A robust platform designed to enhance forestry knowledge, soft skills, and specific modules such as Indigenous and Community-Based Forestry was introduced.
- Advocacy for AI Training:
  - Fernando Morales initiated discussions about training youth on AI, emphasizing human-rights-based approaches. The importance of integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies, including focus groups and event organization, was also discussed.

## Debates and Discussions

### 1. AI Integration in Restoration

- While AI was acknowledged as a powerful tool for landscape restoration, a robust debate emerged about its limitations and ethical concerns. Discussions referenced successful projects driven by community knowledge, which often outperform high-tech solutions in cost-effectiveness and sustainability.
  - Concerns Raised:
    - Mainstreaming AI could overshadow traditional, cost-effective practices that have proven their value.



- Regulation must precede widespread adoption to ensure equitable distribution of benefits, with some universities already pausing research until clearer policies are in place.
2. Balancing Priorities: Food Security vs. Reforestation
    - Participants debated prioritizing feeding people over planting trees, emphasizing the need to align restoration efforts with food security to address immediate human needs.
  3. Aligning Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches
    - A call was made to establish robust financial structures and align top-down frameworks (finance, policy, standards) with bottom-up approaches (local capacities, ecosystem functions, and socio-economic considerations). This alignment is critical to incentivizing investment in restoration projects.

At the conclusion of the Charters Meeting, youth organizations (YIL, GYBN, Y4N, YPARD, and IFSA) gathered to plan collaborative efforts for COP30 in Belém.

The discussion emphasized the importance of a unified youth agenda to amplify their impact on climate negotiations. Plans include hosting pre-COP30 workshops to build advocacy capacity, organizing joint fundraising initiatives such as grant applications and crowdfunding, and sharing resources to support impactful side events and pavilion activities at the conference.



## Session Attendees as Participants: First Week of the Event

### UNCBD COP16 Capacity building (19.10.24.)



On October 19, 2024, **2024 Biodiversity Capacity-Building and Development Forum** was held as part of the UNCBD COP16. This forum, organized by the CBD Secretariat in collaboration with the Government of Colombia and the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, was an exclusive event, allowing only one representative per observer organization. As Jungwoo was the sole IFSA member present in Colombia on this date, he participated in this gathering.

### Forum Theme and Objectives

The theme of the forum was **“Strengthening Capacities for the Implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) in the Context of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.”** The event aimed to foster collaboration, build institutional capacity, and share best practices to enhance the implementation of NBSAPs worldwide. The forum featured a mix of high-level panel discussions, interactive World Café sessions, and plenary presentations, providing a platform for stakeholders to exchange ideas and develop actionable strategies.

The opening session included remarks from prominent figures such as Ms. Astrid Schomaker, CBD Executive Secretary, and Mr. Mauricio Cabrera Leal, Vice Minister of Environmental Policies for Colombia. These speeches emphasized the importance of collective action and capacity development in addressing the global biodiversity crisis.

### Panel Discussions and Key Topics

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The forum began with two panel discussions, each focusing on different perspectives related to capacity-building:

1. **Country Perspectives:** This session featured representatives from countries such as South Africa, Bangladesh, and Colombia, who shared insights on their current capacity-building needs, action plans, and lessons learned.
2. **Provider Perspectives:** Representatives from organizations like UNEP, FAO, and IUCN discussed their experiences in supporting capacity-building initiatives, highlighting the challenges and successes of their programs.
3. **Non-State Actors and Stakeholders:** A diverse panel, including representatives of youth, women, indigenous peoples, and NGOs, shared their perspectives on how capacity-building efforts could be more inclusive and effective.

Each panel discussion concluded with an open Q&A session, where participants had the chance to explore key themes further.

## World Café Sessions and Interactive Discussions

The highlight of the forum was the World Café sessions, where participants engaged in small group discussions on topics such as:

- Conducting capacity assessments and developing national capacity-building action plans.
- Enhancing coordination among capacity-building initiatives at the national level.
- Strategies for monitoring, evaluation, and institutionalization of capacity-building programs.

I contributed by sharing insights from IFSA's youth-led initiatives and discussing ways to integrate the voices of young professionals into national biodiversity strategies. These sessions provided a unique opportunity to learn from other stakeholders, including representatives from indigenous communities, international organizations, and donor agencies. Participants rotated between groups, ensuring diverse interactions and the opportunity to discuss multiple topics. At the end of the sessions, group hosts summarized the key outcomes, which were shared during the final plenary discussion.

## Outcomes and Personal Takeaways

The forum concluded with a plenary session, where key takeaways and recommendations were presented. These outcomes will be documented in the forum's summary report, to be made available on the CBD website. As an IFSA representative, I appreciated how the importance of youth was highly recognized throughout the event. It



was also valuable to experience diverse perspectives related to the theme, which broadened my understanding and approach to biodiversity capacity-building efforts.

This experience provided me with insights into global capacity-building strategies and highlighted the critical role of diverse stakeholders in addressing biodiversity challenges. Representing IFSA at this forum not only allowed me to contribute to meaningful discussions but also reinforced my commitment to advancing youth-led biodiversity initiatives on an international scale. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this exclusive event and look forward to applying the knowledge and connections gained to further IFSA's mission and strengthen the role of youth in biodiversity conservation efforts globally.

### **Reflections on Focus and Structure: Feedback from the UNCBD Secretariat**

At the conclusion of the forum, I had the opportunity to speak with a staff member from the UNCBD Secretariat. During our conversation, he shared a thought-provoking and somewhat critical perspective on the challenges of capacity-building discussions. He noted that while capacity-building is undeniably critical, it often lacks the focus seen in other topics. In many cases, as discussions progress in other areas, themes and viewpoints tend to converge, leading to clearer conclusions.

However, in the context of capacity-building, discussions often expand, with topics and perspectives diverging rather than converging, which can lead to a lack of direction. He suggested that the forum might have been more effective as a smaller, more focused meeting, with a narrower scope and participation limited to highly relevant stakeholders. This feedback provided a valuable perspective on how such events might be refined to achieve greater impact in the future.

### **The 7th GLF Investment Case Symposium Workshop**

The workshop started on a discussion panel with three panelists; Ameil Harikishun, Mirna Inés Fernández and Jann Vinze Barcinal, who shared their perspectives on economic, agro-food, and forestry-related topics. They addressed the need to rethink economic models to make them more inclusive, sustainable, and regenerative, grounded in natural and cultural principles. Criticisms were made of the current system dominated by capitalism and globalization, arguing that it prioritizes profit over human and ecological well-being, disregarding natural laws and the intrinsic value of resources.

The metaphor of agricultural monocultures was used to illustrate how a lack of diversity creates vulnerability and dependence on external resources. In contrast, an economy based on cultural and ecological diversity, along with local production, can foster independence, reduce exploitation, and protect communities from monopoly or oligopoly systems. Additionally, the importance of reconnecting with nature by learning about local

plants, animals, and ecosystems was highlighted. This knowledge not only strengthens the relationship between humans and their environment but also challenges the perception of nature as a mere commodity. For instance, the Amazon holds little economic value under the current system, facilitating its destruction for activities such as cattle ranching or soybean cultivation.

Some points were proposed for conserving biodiversity while coexisting with it:

1. Diversity and representation: Include people from diverse backgrounds in business and government decisions to balance power and promote fairer models.
2. Technologies and local knowledge: Broaden the definition of technology to include indigenous knowledge and local solutions, recognizing that these are part of a broader system rather than standalone solutions.
3. Shared responsibility: Break the dynamic of dependence between the Global North and South, demanding that each country take responsibility for managing its resources and biodiversity.
4. Intersectoral collaboration: Promote synergies between governments, civil organizations, and international funds (e.g., the Green Climate Fund) to ensure resources reach the local level, especially indigenous and rural communities.
5. Transformative narratives: Foster community-led initiatives to tackle urgent issues, challenging extractivist systems and neoliberal values.

The discussion concluded with a call to transform current structures to prioritize social, environmental, and economic justice through collaborative and diverse models.

Once the panel discussion was over, they proceeded to involve dividing participants into five teams. Each team was invited to imagine and sketch on a large sheet of paper what they envisioned the world would look like in 2050. Using a timeline starting in 2024 with 10-year intervals, they placed achievements envisioned for the future at the top of the timeline and challenges that might prevent reaching those goals at the bottom.

Each team illustrated their vision based on the insights gained from the first panel and presented their ideas to the other groups and participants. Most teams envisioned a world where governments, the private sector, and



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civil society collaborate to prioritize human rights, ecological balance, and social justice. In this vision, the private sector would consist of local and regenerative businesses, while government policies would focus on collective well-being and environmental protection, moving away from the current model of debt and exploitation.

Teams largely agreed on key challenges, such as inequality, global warming, biodiversity loss, overpopulation, the lack of public policies, and the lack of commitment from nations and the economic system.

### Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (FERI): taking forward a decade of ecosystem recovery (23.10.24.)

This event, hosted by the Korean Forest Service (KFS), aimed to share the achievements of the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (FERI) over its 10-year history. FERI, established by the CBD Secretariat and the Republic of Korea during COP12 in 2014, has been instrumental in advancing global forest restoration efforts. Moreover, the event emphasized the ongoing relevance of FERI in implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The discussions highlighted both the successes and the challenges in forest restoration, while also focusing on the critical synergies between biodiversity conservation and climate action.

FERI itself, has been supported by the Korea Forest Service and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat, provides technical support, capacity building, and funding to help countries meet biodiversity targets, particularly in ecosystem restoration and habitat conservation.

#### Key Highlights:

1. Accomplishments of FERI:
  - Supported countries through capacity development, decision-support tools, and pilot project funding.
  - Advanced restoration goals by providing knowledge products and technical expertise.
  - Helped refine Aichi Targets and promoted actionable restoration frameworks.
2. Future Challenges and Goals:
  - Scaling up restoration efforts and addressing persistent deforestation remain critical to achieving KM-GBF targets.
  - Discussions highlighted the need for improved regional scientific and technical support, as well as stronger integration of forest-related priorities in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
3. Discussions and Objectives:

- Reflected on FERI's impact on advancing forest biodiversity conservation within the CBD framework.
- Highlighted the role of forests in achieving the KM-GBF's ambitious biodiversity goals and targets.
- Initiated dialogue on capacity-building needs, scientific advancements, and regional collaboration to support forest-related restoration efforts.

This session, which commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (FERI) led by the Korea Forest Service (KFS), was a meaningful opportunity to reflect on Korea's significant role in global biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration. The keynote session by Mr. Hyungu Lee, International Cooperation Affairs Officer at the Korean Forest Service, provided valuable insights into the history, present, and future of Korea's forestry. The presentation was both enlightening and inspiring, offering meaningful perspectives on sustainable forest management and international collaboration.

As a Korean participant, I felt a profound sense of pride and acknowledgment of Korea's contributions in this field. In particular, the session underscored Korea's successful post-war forest restoration efforts and the importance of sharing these experiences and technologies with developing countries through global collaborations.

Moreover, the session provided a deeper understanding of the critical role forest restoration plays in achieving climate change mitigation and ecosystem restoration goals. Among the key takeaways was the affirmation that Korea can continue to make significant contributions to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) through specific initiatives such as technical assistance, pilot project support, and the development of knowledge products.

The 10-year achievements of FERI reinforced the importance of Korea maintaining its leadership in international forest restoration and biodiversity conservation efforts. This session inspired confidence in Korea's ability to further enhance global initiatives like FERI to achieve biodiversity targets.

## Session Attendees as Participants: Second Week of the Event

1. Please explain what you guys did in the second week as a delegate, containing the side event (pavilion, plenary session, negotiation, or other event) that you guys joined or participated as a participant, make it more detailed even if you guys have discussions with other people, should mention their name here. Make it as detailed as possible!

## Panel in the Nature & Culture Summit

“Uso la palabra porque no puedo contribuir con mi silencio al dolor de mis ancestros.”

“I use my voice because I cannot contribute by staying silent to the grief of my ancestors.”

This panel emphasized the importance of indigenous and local communities in the conservation of biodiversity and criticized the failure to comply with international agreements related to climate change that have not been achieved due to our inefficiency and the notable lack of a focus on human rights.

There is also a need to consider communities and their culture in actions to combat climate change, as well as in decision-making, since indigenous peoples not only work with human rights, also with territorial rights.

Afro-descendant communities have made themselves known, showing that they have traditions and customs with African roots. There are more than 200 million Afro-descendants in Latin America. Regarding their participation, it was requested that Afro-descendants be included in Article 8j of the CBD as guardians and managers of biodiversity, since their worldview has allowed them to conserve approximately 78% of their territories.

“Sin la naturaleza no hay cultura, sin la naturaleza no hay vida.”

“Without nature there is no culture, without nature there is no life.”

**UPDATE:** The creation of a subsidiary body for indigenous peoples and local communities was approved, and Afro-descendants are recognized in Article 8j, thus highlighting their history and knowledge as fundamental in global discussions on biodiversity conservation.



Jocelyn Pablo, Panel in the Nature & Culture Summit, 26th October, Sierra Nevada - Blue Zone.

## Finance for Holistic Landscape Restoration in Latin America and the Caribbean

This event hosted by Commonland at the Dutch Pavilion during CBD COP16, provided insights into the critical role of innovative financial mechanisms in supporting large-scale landscape restoration.

The session featured a panel of experts, who explored questions on integrating landscape and water management approaches, scaling restoration efforts, and drawing actionable lessons from global initiatives. Key highlights included the launch of the 'Towards Financing Large-scale Restoration in Latin America and the Caribbean' publication, offering clear policy recommendations aligned with the ecosystem approach.

Speakers shared interesting insights that underscored the urgency and opportunity for action:

- Victoria Gutierrez (Commonland) emphasized, *"We must align landscape restoration financing with community needs and biodiversity goals, ensuring that every dollar supports both ecological health and social equity."*
- Alberto Menghini (European Union) highlighted the policy dimension, stating, *"Scaling holistic restoration requires robust partnerships and cross-sectoral policy frameworks that truly incentivize sustainable practices."*



- Sandra Valenzuela de Narvaez (WWF Colombia) pointed out the interconnectedness of water and landscapes, remarking, *"Water management is not just a component of restoration—it is the thread that connects ecosystems and communities."*

The event also sparked inspiring discussions about successful restoration models worldwide. René Zamora-Cristales (WRI) shared insights from Initiative 20x20, noting, *"Innovative financial models rooted in local contexts can transform degraded landscapes into thriving ecosystems that benefit both people and nature."*



## Mangrove conservation and restoration maximizing synergies with climate change control, disaster risk and poverty reduction for coastal communities (28.10.24.)

This event organised by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity (S-CBD), Ministry of Environment, Japan (MOE-J), Ministry of Environment and Forestry Indonesia (MOEF-I), Wetlands International, Overseas Environmental Cooperation Center Japan (OECC).

### Background and purposes

Healthy mangrove ecosystems help address problems like climate change, coastal disasters, and improving local communities' lives. However, mangroves have been shrinking globally for decades, reducing these benefits. Many countries and private

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companies are now working to restore mangroves, especially for their ability to store large amounts of carbon, supporting carbon neutrality goals. However, planting mangroves without considering other ecological benefits can create conflicts between different services.

To address this, an integrated approach is needed, including stakeholder involvement, monitoring the ecosystem's health, and adapting plans based on findings. This method maximizes the benefits of mangrove restoration, such as climate change mitigation, disaster risk reduction, and poverty alleviation. It also supports international biodiversity goals like restoring degraded coastal ecosystems and enhancing nature's contributions to people while helping countries meet their biodiversity and climate change commitments.

#### Key Highlights:

**Evaluation on Multiple Services:** Develop protocols for quantitative evaluation, including indicators and methodologies.

**Technical & Institutional Guidelines/Schemes:** Project design, MRV (monitoring, reporting, and verification), carbon pricing/crediting, and sustainable business development.

**Stakeholder Collaboration & Capacity Building:** Community involvement in management, income generation through sustainable businesses, training, and knowledge sharing.

To achieve high-quality carbon outcomes while scaling up restoration and conservation efforts, it's crucial to maximize synergies among carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, coastal protection, and improving livelihoods. Mangrove restoration through carbon finance offers a powerful solution, but it requires several key considerations to ensure effectiveness. Socially, it's essential to work collaboratively with local communities, ensuring that human rights and equity are upheld.

Technically, projects must demonstrate additionality, proving that the area was not a mangrove ecosystem in the past, and monitor seedling survival rates, considering factors like water depth, soil conditions, and climate. It's also vital to avoid planting in areas where mangroves are not naturally suited. For successful credit issuance, accurate monitoring using remote sensing is necessary, and the project must be designed to ensure long-term sustainability by detecting deforestation and degradation. By carefully selecting project locations and conducting precise monitoring, these efforts can enhance both the credibility and long-term environmental impact of mangrove restoration projects, ultimately contributing to climate change mitigation, biodiversity preservation, and the protection of coastal communities.



It became clear that integrating local knowledge with scientific research is crucial for enhancing the success of environmental projects. Effective mangrove restoration not only mitigates climate change but also provides significant benefits to local communities, such as job creation and improved resilience to coastal disasters.

Moving forward, it is essential to ensure that future projects strike a balance between environmental and social goals to achieve long-term, positive impacts. This approach reinforces the importance of integrating restoration efforts with carbon finance strategies to support sustainable development and scale up conservation initiatives.



Yoonjung Yang, Side-event in Cocuy – Marie Khan Women's Caucus meeting room

## High-Level Segment (HLS)

Three sessions were held.

### Session 1.

#### President of Colombia (Gustavo Petro):

- Highlighted Colombia's biodiversity, being the most biodiverse country per square meter, with Cali as the "biodiversity capital."
- Emphasized the need for unique and democratic decisions to address the climate crisis, which he described as an era of extinction driven by greed.
- Criticized the lack of focus on key topics like oil in previous COPs, noting that this COP is the first in a country rich in biodiversity, not oil.
- Advocated for a transition to renewable energies and an economic model based on life, not exploitation.

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- Proposed an inter-American pact to conserve the Amazon and combat climate change.

### UN Secretary-General (António Guterres):

- Stressed that biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation are global crises threatening humanity's survival.
- Highlighted the crucial role of Indigenous peoples as guardians of biodiversity.
- Called for mobilizing financial resources and fostering an economy based on renewable energy and sustainable agricultural practices.

### Luis Murillo (Colombia's Foreign Affairs Minister):

- Presented the "Peace with Nature" initiative, a voluntary declaration to build a global coalition committed to conservation and sustainable development.
- Emphasized the role of youth and Indigenous communities in achieving these goals.

### Presidents of Armenia, Ecuador, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Suriname, and Bolivia:

- **Armenia:** Proposed hosting COP17, emphasizing its commitment to ecosystem preservation and green transition.
- **Ecuador:** Highlighted the link between poverty, youth violence, and lack of conservation, stressing the need to meet basic needs to involve youth in environmental protection.
- **Guinea-Bissau:** Shared efforts in mangrove and biosphere reserve conservation, calling for accessible financing for developing countries.
- **Haiti:** Spoke about the resilience of its population and called for financial resources to address environmental degradation and inequality.
- **Suriname:** Reiterated the importance of harmonizing conservation and growth, being the only country with a negative carbon emissions balance.
- **Bolivia:** Advocated for a paradigm shift toward a model based on the rights of Mother Earth (Pachamama) and criticized the anthropocentric focus of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

### Key Themes Addressed:

- **Role of Biodiversity:** Colombia leads as a global example in conservation and sustainability.
- **Climate Justice:** The need for an economic model prioritizing life over economic profits.
- **Importance of Indigenous Peoples:** Recognized as essential actors in ecosystem preservation.

- **Youth and Intergenerational Equity:** Proposals to include younger generations in decision-making and resource access.
- **Calls for Financing:** Urgency to channel resources to developing countries to tackle the environmental crisis.

### Session 3

#### Key Presentations:

##### Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim (UNPFII):

- Indigenous Peoples (IPs) possess deep knowledge of nature and are leaders in its protection but receive minimal climate funding.
- Direct access to financial resources for IPs is needed, as well as a subsidiary body to implement the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

##### Astrid Puentes Riaño:

- The GBF incorporates a human rights, equity, and inclusion approach.
- This approach strengthens coherence among goals and recognizes the importance of gender equality and the rights of IPLCs (Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities).

##### Martha Rojas Urrego (IWC):

- Cooperation between biodiversity conventions, such as CITES and Ramsar, is essential for GBF implementation.

#### Key Country Interventions:

- **Sweden:** Promotes a comprehensive monitoring framework and financing to meet GBF objectives. Highlights the importance of Indigenous communities and marine protection.
- **Nigeria:** Focuses on implementing 30x30, combating deforestation, and calls for increased financial resources for the GBF.
- **Germany:** Urges science-based monitoring, adequate funding, and collaboration with IPLCs. Contributed €1.3 billion in 2023.
- **Chile:** Emphasizes regional biodiversity (60% of the global total) and advocates for more financial resources and a human rights-based approach.
- **Barbados:** Balances conservation with economic development, showcasing its 2022 biodiversity action plan.
- **United Kingdom:** Prioritizes financing, transformative mechanisms, and the implementation of 30x30.

- **Mexico:** Focuses on combating deforestation and restoring mangroves, advocating for efficient financial mechanisms.
- **Ghana:** Promotes landscape restoration, sustainable agriculture, and ecotourism, calling for financial support and technology transfer.
- **Tajikistan and Nepal:** Highlight updates to national plans and capacity building, citing achievements in protected areas and species recovery.

### Key Themes:

- **Financing:** Calls to mobilize resources from diverse sources and establish dedicated biodiversity funds.
- **Participation of IPLCs:** Recognition of their crucial role and the need for direct access to funding.
- **Monitoring and Objectives:** Urgency for effective frameworks to track progress and achieve conservation goals.
- **International Cooperation:** Importance of synergies between climate and biodiversity agreements.
- **Ecological Crisis:** Connection between climate change and biodiversity loss; need for cross-cutting solutions.

## IV. Indicator Reporting

For this section, please visit <https://ifsa.net/documents/> for more detailed information. Each of the points should have some explanation from your experience in this delegation.

### Sub-goal 1.5: Strengthening equality and inclusivity

On the one hand, our delegation was integrated of women and men, with participation from the LGBTQ+ community.

During the COP we were able to attend different side events with a focus on female participation in the care and management of biodiversity, where different speakers talked about the work they do, but they also expressed the challenges of being a woman in their communities of origin, seeking to make visible the different realities they experience.

However, gender inclusion was not the only thing we were able to observe, as there were also spaces for expression where indigenous groups and Afro-descendant communities participated.

Although these activities were carried out, more spaces are needed not only for expression, but also for participation by vulnerable groups.

### Sub-Goal 3.1: Advocate for youth in international policy and decision making processes

IFSA (International Forestry Students' Association) sent five delegates from regions with diverse backgrounds to the UNCBD COP16 to advocate for youth involvement in forestry and biodiversity policy discussions. This initiative aligns with IFSA's goal to advocate for youth representation in international policy and decision-making processes, as outlined in its strategic objectives.

The delegates participated in various events, representing youth interests in both regional and global contexts, which is in line with IFSA's mission to increase the visibility of young people in the forestry sector. Their involvement also contributes to the broader goal of ensuring that youth perspectives are included in international processes such as the UNCBD. Through their presence at COP16, the delegates helped raise awareness on issues like sustainable forestry, biodiversity conservation, and the importance of youth engagement in policy decisions.

By being present at such influential events, IFSA is not only advocating for youth representation but also showcasing the potential of young people as change agents in environmental management. Our participation in the COP16 discussions demonstrates the importance of including diverse youth voices, ensuring that future policy frameworks reflect the interests of the next generation of environmental stewards.

### Sub-Goal 3.2: Promote Participation of IFSA Members at International Events

- Organizing In-Person Delegations: Attending events like UNCBD COP16 enabled IFSA members to engage with policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, building professional skills such as networking, public speaking, and intercultural communication. I participated in discussions on forest management that fostered meaningful collaborations.

- Creating Collaborative Content on Climate Agendas: Delegates share insights through articles, videos, and reports to inspire and inform others. I co-authored an opinion article with Isabelle Claire de la Paz on COP28 outcomes, collaborating with young professionals outside IFSA. The article reflected key challenges and opportunities for youth in forest restoration, amplifying youth voices in global discussions and extending the impact of my delegation experience.

## VI. Outcomes

Please tell us in this section, what the outcomes you guys have from this delegation. It would be some statement or anything else (hard skills and soft skills are allowed in this section).

Yoonjung Yang: Participating as the Head of Delegation at COP16, significant outcomes were achieved in advocating for youth involvement in global environmental processes. One of the key accomplishments was the planning and facilitation of the side event "Youth Leading the Way: Bridging Climate Action and Biodiversity" at the GYBN Youth Pavilion. This event provided a platform to effectively convey the perspectives of youth on a global stage, enhancing skills in delivering complex environmental issues to diverse audiences, including government bodies and grassroots organizations.

Through interactions with stakeholders from various sectors, the delegation learned how to bridge differing viewpoints and find common ground, deepening understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing different countries in terms of biodiversity loss and climate change.

Personally, leadership and public speaking skills were strengthened as the delegation actively participated in sessions and discussions, gaining confidence in speaking at international forums. The opportunity to network with youth leaders from organizations such as GYBN, YiL, and Y4N, as well as global experts and policymakers, provided valuable connections that will be instrumental for future environmental collaborations.

In conclusion, the IFSA delegation's participation in COP16 reinforced advocacy skills for sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation, enhanced the ability to collaborate with teams from diverse cultural backgrounds, and provided practical experience in developing the leadership skills necessary for future international environmental initiatives.

Fernando: Collaborating with Youth Networks: this IFSA delegation has fostered collaboration with youth networks beyond the organization, enriching discussions and expanding its global reach. During COP16, I worked with youth organizations such as YIL, GYBN, and Y4N to align efforts for upcoming initiatives like COP30, exchanging ideas and building synergies.

- **Balancing Innovation and Tradition:** Discussions on integrating AI into landscape restoration highlighted the need to balance cutting-edge technology with traditional, cost-effective practices, while ensuring equitable access and ethical considerations in its implementation.
- **Cross-Sector Synergies:** Engaging with diverse stakeholders—from grassroots organizations to international financial institutions—reinforced the importance of

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aligning top-down approaches (policies, standards, and funding) with bottom-up initiatives (local capacities, ecosystem functions, and community needs) for impactful restoration and conservation efforts.

- The Importance of Collaborative Advocacy: Witnessing the effectiveness of youth organizations (particularly IFSA, GYBN, YIL, Y4N, and YPARD) working together demonstrated the power of unified messaging and shared resources in influencing global environmental policy and amplifying youth voices

Jocelyn Pablo: The interaction that was achieved even with people from my own country, gives me the opportunity to meet and join projects and initiatives that are being developed in the field of biodiversity.

Meeting specialists in various environmental topics is a starting point for international collaboration, starting from small activities such as interviews and webinars, but at the same time opening up a space for more important academic activities such as research, events, etc.

As for learning/reflections, I would like to highlight:

- The importance of networking to execute new projects, including outside the event.
- Expressing your position and listening to others, allows us to have a better understanding of the situation.
- Not knowing a context should not become indifferent to situations that are lived in other countries, listening and empathy are necessary.

Iarin Ascencio: At COP 16, I gained a new perspective on the biological diversity of forests. I observed how countries work diligently (to varying degrees) to combat biodiversity loss. I found it remarkable that civil society and Indigenous communities were given a voice and included in the discussions.

During the conference, we established a closer relationship with GYBN Global, especially GYBN Mexico. We had the opportunity to join discussions, dialogue tables, and forums. It was a great opportunity to exchange opinions, experiences, and knowledge about the Convention on Biological Diversity, GYBN's efforts, and their perspectives on forests, including their ecological, economic, and social importance.

Through this enriching academic exchange, we broadened our understanding beyond forestry, while they gained a better insight into the challenges and issues that forests face today.

## VII. Pictures

Please, insert the picture and give a brief description.



Fernando Morales, Hall Venue Blue Zone





Fernando Morales, 7th Global Landscape Forum Investment Case.



Fernando Morales, Youth In Landscape Workshop on alternative economic models





## Fernando Morales, Design presentation of the KMGBF goals



## Fernando Morales, Gustavo Petro's Speech at the Opening Ceremony of COP16





Jocelyn Pablo, Side event “Defendiendo a las mujeres que defienden el planeta” - Defending women who defend the planet, 24th October, Sierra Nevada - Blue Zone.



Jocelyn Pablo, Panel in the Nature & Culture Summit, 26th October, Sierra Nevada - Blue Zone.