



JOINT STATEMENT BY MCF, PFCN, PLCN & CYN

COP16 of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Cali, Colombia, 25 October 2024

Representatives of Cambodian monks, Indigenous Peoples, and youth participate in COP16.

"Historically, faith-based, Indigenous and local communities have been morally and actively working in forest and biodiversity protection from generation to generation and up to today. Most of the world's remaining forests are located in the territory of the local and Indigenous communities where they conserve their identity, including respecting their ancestors' spirits and secrets and maintaining their long-lasting culture and tradition. Their roles have significantly contributed to preventing the loss of bio species, eco-systems, climate change and maintaining the planet's beauty."

We, the representatives of the Monk Community Forest (MCF, known as Songrukhavorn), the Preahroka Forest Community (PFCN), the Prey Lang Community Network (PLCN), and the Cambodian Youth Network Association, are participating in COP16 to raise the voice of Cambodian youth, faith-based, Indigenous, and local communities on biodiversity issues and build regional and global partnerships and alliances.

"COP16 in Cali aims to implement the Global Biodiversity Framework to promote the sustainable use of forests, ecosystems, and biodiversity while fostering peace with nature. This high-level forum brings representatives from signatory countries, communities, and civil society organizations together to exchange experiences and renew their commitment to protecting natural resources and wildlife.

Buddhism emphasises living virtuously and showing compassion for nature. The Buddha taught that monks should not harm plants or animals, highlighting the importance of respecting our nature. When we honour nature, it nurtures us in return. As we strive to protect ourselves and our environment, we must remember that harming wildlife, especially rare species, leads to greater destruction. It's essential to live harmoniously with nature, in line with Buddhist values", states Ven. Poeut Tur, MCF.

"I am excited to participate in the COP16 in Cali, Colombia – a valuable opportunity for PLCN to engage on the international stage. Different side events and workshops are full of people discussing natural resources, biodiversity, cultures, and traditions. Indigenous People and Local Communities, particularly in Colombia and Brazil, are rightfully recognised for their customs and are supported by their governments with funding for their conservation efforts. The PLCN seeks the freedom to actively participate in protecting natural resources, biodiversity, and the traditions of our Indigenous people. We advocate for full cooperation with local authorities to safeguard our resources for future generations. We hope the government, especially the Ministry of Environment, will support our forest and biodiversity conservation efforts", tells Khut Soeum, a Core Member of PLCN.

"At COP16 in Cali, I observed that the world pays close attention to natural resources and biodiversity, with young people displaying a strong commitment to conserve biodiversity. We must protect our Prey Preahroka. To us, the forest is a BANK - our vital source of food, traditional medicine, and income. Kui Indigenous Peoples

and Local Communities around Prey Preahroka depend on the forest for their livelihoods, collecting Non-Timber Forest Products like mushrooms, honey, wild vegetables, herbs, and resin. Moreover, Prey Preahroka is our ancestral home, integral to our cultural practices and heritage, passed down through generations”, says Lon Lunna, Core Member of PFCN.

“Investing in youth to protect the environment and biodiversity is essential. Young people should have opportunities to engage in conservation efforts at both national and international levels through dialogue and cross-border collaborations. I hope COP16 will ensure strong support systems for youth involvement in biodiversity conservation and monitor member states' policy implementations. Increasing funding for youth initiatives must be a priority. The Cambodian government should be transparent about its policies and encourage youth participation in environmental protection. As youth, we are part of the solution today and will become future leaders in inclusive conservation efforts”, tells Heng Kimhong, President, CYN.

MCF, PFCN, PLCN, and CYN are strongly committed to supporting the Cambodian government in implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Cambodian National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. We encourage the government to engage youth, faith-based, Indigenous, and local communities to protect and conserve Cambodia’s valuable forests and biodiversity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO ARE ATTENDING THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY BELOW:

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