[The Children’s Environmental Rights Initiative (CERI)](https://www.childrenvironment.org/) welcomes the opportunity to submit written information following the UN Special Rapporteur’s call for inputs for his report regarding Healthy Ecosystems and Human Rights: Sustaining the Foundations of Life. This input is provided, recognising:

* Children’s **heightened vulnerability** to the impacts of environmental harm.
* The corresponding **heightened obligations of States** (and duties of businesses) to uphold children’s rights as set down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, noting its near universal ratification.
* The consistent **infringement of** **children’s right to be heard** on environmental issues, as vividly demonstrated by the disconnect between the current emissions gap, policies and the demands of the growing movement of school strikes for the environment.

CERI seeks to promote the recognition and implementation of children’s right to a healthy and sustainable environment at national, regional and international levels.In April 2019 we launched a [global poll](https://www.childrenvironment.org/online-poll) to collect and integrate child and youth voices into regional reports, a Global Charter and other relevant forums centered on children’s rights and the environment. The poll will remain open until the development of the Global Charter (2021, TBC).

**This submission provides a summary of the online poll messages received from over 400 children (under the age of 18) from 60 plus countries regarding ecosystems and biodiversity in response to “What actions do you want world leaders to take that you would like to be included in a Global Declaration on Child Rights and the Environment?”**

**Key Message: Make environmental education compulsory in schools.**

**Integrate experiential learning as an important component in the curriculum, including having children visit and explore different ecosystems, and learn how to protect them by participating in projects.**

“Promoting outings in forest areas, in regions of environmental or heritage preservation, regions with free access to green areas. Other activities that can promote collective well-being and practical learning for all.”

“In schools, give classes on the care of the environment and that every school has to have a project for the care of the environment. For example planting trees, every month, organizing an outing to clean streets with garbage, holding workshops where they promote the use of recycling, informing how our planet earth needs us and what we can do.”

“Basic discipline of Environmental Education for students - practical activities of ecology, agroforestry, community garden, selective collection.”

**Provide information tailored to children.**

“Raising awareness in an easy to understand manner.”

“...easy access to information regarding the environment...tailored to children”

**Educate children on key topics, including children’s environmental rights, government actions and progress, and how young people can take action to protect the environment.**

“They should educate on the need to protect children’s rights and environmental conservation.”

“Right to know and study the natural habitat before its extinction.”

“Communication of government actions and progress.”

“There must be compulsory education from the first phase of student life about the environment and our duties towards the environment.”

“Teach them to be more careful with plants and animals and not to contaminate the water with toxic waste.”

**Provide environmental education for the parents/guardians of students.**

“Adoption of the Environmental Education subject in schools, aiming at an educational impact both with the students themselves and also with those responsible for the child and / or young person who attends this institution.”

**Key Message: Empower children to participate in environmental action and decision-making.**

**Build platforms and opportunities for children to share their voices and meaningfully influence decision-making.**

“Give youth opportunity to share their voices with governments support”

“giving chances to tell their ideas”

“listening to all the kids and adults who want to help.”

“For children to have the right to speak out to the world, And have their say. I think that that is very important indeed.”

“...they have to listen to the opinions of the people especially the children”

“There is no point in asking the youth for their opinion and input if it does not influence the final decision.”

**Protect children’s right to a healthy environment and as environmental defenders.**

“Greater rights to protest and not face penalisation from police for environmental actions.”

“Raise global importance of Optional Protocol 3 of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of the Child so children can take action against governments breaching their right to a healthy environment.”

**Create programs and opportunities for children to support biodiversity and ecosystems.**

“Give young people opportunities to take action to support biodiversity and ecosystems.”

“give us...projects that support biodiversity.”

“making programs, such as holding a million tree seedlings which are now rarely done. I really hope this program can be done again so that the earth will be green again :).”

**Key Message: Protect animals and their habitats.**

**Stop killing and start protecting animals.**

“Stop killing animals!”

“...stop killing animals for fun”

“Promote the safeguarding of species”

“Protection to plants and animals”

**Stop polluting oceans, especially with plastic.**

“I don't like how people litter. It goes into the ocean and kills animals. Turtles get stuck in plastic and that harms them. One time my friend told me that she went to a beach and all you could see was trash. When my friend told me that I felt bad for all the animals. People should take a minute to pick up some trash they see.”

“We should reduce the amount of plastic in the classroom and in food packets. I believe we should all work together to try and clean the great Pacific garbage patch to prevent animals from eating the plastic.”

“I would like world leaders to act on a straw ban for the world so that straws can stop polluting the ocean and save animals and the world.”

“Banning single use plastic. Fund the removal of plastic from the neighboring seas or oceans.”

“Start cleaning the sea and oceans from plastic.”

**Develop new and more stringent laws protecting animals from harm.**

“I live in a place where animals are not treated properly. I am an avid animal lover and would like the leaders to do something. Though there are animal laws, they are neither stringent nor effective. I want the leaders to discuss and make a whole new worldwide law for animals.”

“pass laws to ensure the oceans are cleaned, pollution is reduced, animals are protected, and life is sustained.”

“the penalty for animal treatment must be increased”

“Keeping any type of bird must be made illegal.”

**Reduce and better regulate animal agriculture.**

“...significant reduction of animal agriculture to make way for more sustainable farming practices.”

“Science explicitly highlights the animal agriculture industry as a greater source of emissions than the transport industry.”

“we can try our best to cut down all kinds of animal abuse and control the meat production”

“Encouraging a change in eating habits to a plant-based diet”

**Key Message: Protect forests and promote growth of green spaces**

**Stop and regulate deforestation, including for agriculture.**

“Stop cutting trees!”

“Stop cutting down and burning forests”

“more bureaucracy for agriculture (especially when it comes to large estates), for less water consumption and less deforestation.”

“..limit the deforestation caused by agriculture.”

“Monetary incentive to organic agriculture.”

“Stop cutting down and burning forests and replanting deforested forests.”

**Protect and rebuild forests.**

“Reforestation of deforested areas”

“The territory of the Amazon forest should be put in permanent preservation”

“creating a nature conservation organization such as recycling plastic waste and caring for the environment to stay sustainable.”

**Build green spaces in cities and communities.**

“Implementation of green areas in large or medium-sized cities, with free access to its population, ensuring conscious cleaning for visitors, and a healthy environment for children and young people to remain. Individual waste baskets (that is, for each product that is used and, soon after, discarded), defining the ones that will be for inorganic waste and another for organic waste (you can also use organic waste for fertilization practice, being able to donate it to small farmers or sell it to a affordable price for people who have plants in their homes)

“Every city must have a large amount of green space relative to the size and population of the city.”

“Every little community should be encouraged to raise and propagate trees for ‘Mini Forests’. In urban areas, five to six plants per house should become mandatory not by imposing laws but by being self-responsible.”

“...planting in public squares, offering a more pleasant environment for everyone.”

“More trees in schools”

“It should be made compulsory to plant a sapling at least once in a week for every citizen just like paying income tax”

“Plant a tree on birthdays”

“Plant a seed for each new born everywhere in the world”

“Every household must have at least 5-8 trees in their garden if they have a space.”

**Key Message: Use nature-based solutions.**

“Everything we ever needed to live to survive to enjoy the wonders of the world was provided by nature: oxygen, water, food and shelter.”

“Respect for nature is essential. Nations have in their hands the ability to protect key ecosystems to combat climate change: rivers, wetlands, oceans, forests and mangroves absorb large amounts of carbon, reversing the problem.”

“Greater investment in...renewable energy (wind and solar, for example), aiming to cause less negative effects to the population and to the beings that inhabit certain spaces / environments”

“Use renewable natural resources.”

**Key Message: Hold the private sector accountable for harming nature.**

“Judge entrepreneurs and companies that harm nature.”

“Prohibition of sewers that dump industrial / hospital / toxic waste in open sea regions...punishments for companies or other sectors that practice such action, such as collecting fines, cleaning the areas affected by the discarded garbage, treating the population's water, reforestation...”

“Encourage investments in technologies that reduce environmental impact, such as solar energy, sustainable land use, water desalination.”

“Greater investment in products that cause little or no damage to the environment as a whole, in order to improve the quality of life of the flora and fauna of planet Earth and of the human beings that live on it.”