



# CEC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT 2024 Summary

WEEK



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# Introduction

The 2024 Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) Youth Engagement Week (YEW) provided a unique opportunity for youth in North America to contribute actively to the CEC's work through the Joint Public Advisory Committee's (JPAC) public consultation mechanism, particularly related to the Reaching Horizon 2030: An Environmental Outlook for North American Cooperation (H-2030) initiative.

The 2024 CEC Youth Engagement Week's core activity was a workshop facilitated by three youth leaders and members of the CEC youth network: Sophie McCafferty for Canada, Frida Treviño for Mexico and Agustín Ángel Bernabé for the United States. This youth-inclusive workshop introduced participants to the JPAC's public engagement mechanisms, enabling them to contribute to the North American environmental dialogue, specifically advancing the H-2030 initiative.

Building on these discussions, the YEW workshop facilitators served as panelists in the "Youth Voices on H-2030" session during the JPAC Public Forum, held in Mexico City on 4–5 December 2024. They shared youth perspectives, priorities and recommendations from the workshop, advocating for regional action on pressing environmental challenges and emphasizing the need for greater youth participation. The forum provided a valuable platform for young people across the three countries, including the three YEW panelists, to engage directly with North American experts and the public, fostering meaningful dialogue on the region's environmental priorities.







# Perspectives and Recommendations from the Workshop

## **The Triple Planetary Crisis**

Youth perspectives on the triple planetary crisis emphasize the importance of meaningful engagement and tangible results. Youth are particularly concerned about gaps in current environmental legislation and threats posed by mega-projects to ecosystems and biodiversity. They advocate for creating spaces for connection, collaboration and support for existing solution-making groups, and for reducing tokenism by involving underrepresented groups in meaningful ways. Additionally, youth highlight the need for capacity building, financial support and visibility, to ensure their voices are heard and their contributions valued in policy advocacy spaces.





**Frida  
Treviño**  
Climate  
Activist

## Earth Observation Technologies and Other Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) Tools

**Accessibility | Education | Financing | Infrastructure | Modernization**

Extreme environmental events, like forest fires, highlight the urgent need for widespread access to GIS technologies. These technologies should be introduced earlier in the education system to better prepare future generations. Current reference models are outdated and require updates to accurately guide infrastructure development in the context of climate change. Youth recommendations included:

1

Enhance the ability to use and implement GIS and include youth and under-represented communities in technological innovation.

2

Ensure the implementation of sustainable technological development to reduce negative impacts on ecosystems by incorporating Indigenous Knowledge.

3

Improve existing monitoring networks and systems for environmental health, and ensure models are up to date, to reflect the rapid changes and frequency of climatic events.

4

Map ecological value and culturally sensitive areas for land-use planning to protect Indigenous Peoples and their lands.



Agustín  
Ángel  
Bernabé  
Leaders4Earth

## Sustainable Transportation

Infrastructure | Collaboration | Education | Affordability | Community Support

High emissions are not the only problem in the transportation sector: inefficient and even non-existent public and active transportation is a safety issue that impacts youth disproportionately. From the insights gained from key conversations with youth across North America, the issues extend from highly polluting port expansions to increased opposition to infrastructure and the need for increased inclusion of young people in decision-making at international scale.

1

Build cities for people, not for cars, to allow for ecosystem connectivity, while following urbanization criteria.

2

Increase sustainable transportation infrastructure to make this a secure, accessible, affordable and viable solution for people who need to move within cities and towns and between them.

3

Create more public awareness campaigns and greater incentives to encourage people to adopt modes of sustainable transportation.

4

Get inspired by other jurisdictions whose initiatives and regulations are already working.





## Ecosystem Services / Sustainable Use and Management of Biodiversity

**Collaboration | Education | Circular Economy | Indigenous Knowledge | Accountability**

Ecosystems are increasingly threatened by mega-projects. Monocrops and illegal logging are degrading land and displacing native species. People who live in rural communities often must walk long distances to access clean freshwater. Bringing rightsholders and key actors together, identifying the causes of biodiversity loss, creating climate prevention and adaptation educational tools and aligning modern technology with Indigenous knowledge can be key to biodiversity stewardship.

1

Support meaningful platforms for sharing Indigenous knowledge.

2

Rally for policies that hold decision-makers accountable.

3

Increase support for the adoption of biodiversity practices in all sectors.

4

Strengthen the role of youth and women in conservation and restoration decision-making.



**As part of the CEC Youth Engagement Strategy**, the Youth Engagement Week is an annual event designed to embrace youth perspectives in North America by fostering their active participation in the CEC's work. The YEW aims to create an enabling environment for youth from Canada, Mexico and the United States to engage in meaningful dialogues, contribute to environmental discussions at the regional level and collaborate on innovative solutions to address pressing environmental challenges. Through workshops, consultations and collaborative projects, the CEC Youth Engagement Week supports the development of an intergenerational network committed to sustainability and environmental stewardship.



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