



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Summary of Side Event
Becoming Generation Restoration:
UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030

2 February 2022, 1-1:50pm ET

Event Background

This event, moderated by UNA-USA Youth Observer to the UN Cynthia Yue, focused on the current challenges and initiatives in ecosystem restoration and the goals of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to facilitate a healthier and prosperous planet. This event brought together individuals involved in sustainability research, ecosystems management, and youth climate activism to discuss where we are with protecting our ecosystem and how young people can join the fight to protect and restore them.

Key Issues

- Humanity has a “now or never” opportunity to change the course of climate change. The MIT Earth System Model calculates societal collapse, sharp declines in food, standard of living, and ultimately the human population, within the 21st century.
- Simulations by MIT revealed that an increase in technological innovation, nonrenewable resources, and societal priorities resulted in the longevity of our world, known as the Stabilized World (SW) simulation. This was compared to the less successful “business as usual” scenario.
- Ecosystem destruction and degradation is harming our planet and the people and animals that live on it. Preserving ecosystems from forests to cities can reduce poverty, CO2 emissions, and extinction levels.
- Diversifying youth involvement in leadership and key decision-making roles in climate action is critical to addressing this issue.
- Methods individuals, regardless of issue-area background, can join the mission of UN Decade.

Key Recommendations

- The goal of the economy must change from growth to meeting human needs within a planetary boundary. This means a change in goals and values—from a degenerative economy to a regenerative one, and from exploitative to restorative.
- Restoration initiatives can be initiated by anyone from governments to individuals, and can vary depending on the community. Individuals should research their local issues

to determine opportunities for advocacy and ensure basic infrastructure based on science that protects our ecosystem. Examples include better flood mitigation strategies, managing rock salt solutions to prevent underground water pollution, and more.

- Start advocating at the local level and look at local opportunities that bring you to the table. For example, some municipal governments may have committees around conservation that allow junior members, giving you an opportunity to speak with your locally elected officials in how to bring ecosystem restoration to your city.
- Read the [Youth Manifesto for Nature](#) to learn more about youth voices and efforts being uplifted and find ideas to become involved in existing efforts or create your own.
- Become familiar with the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#) and [World Environment Day 2021 #Generation Restoration Youth Toolkit](#) to start, or continue, your activism.