

Special Event to Commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Late Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari

Maathai

19th May 2014 1:15-2:45pm

Concept Note

The Kenya Mission to the United Nations in collaboration with the Green Belt Movement International (USA) office, the Women's Environment & Development Organization, United Nations Forum on Forests, UN Representatives, family and friends of the late Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai will on 19th May 2014, host the unveiling and laying of a plaque on the tree planted by the late Prof. Wangari Maathai (2005) and to commemorate the occasion, plant a similar indigenous Dogwood tree. This year, 2014, marks 10 years since Prof Maathai, won the Nobel Peace Prize, becoming the first African woman and environmentalist to do so. This Special Commemorative Event will be held on the sidelines of the 13th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Professor Maathai was internationally acknowledged for her struggle for democracy, human rights, environmental conservation, poverty alleviation and security for which she was awarded the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. Professor Maathai contributed over many decades to furthering the ideals and objectives of the United Nations. In recognition of her deep commitment to the environment, the United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki Moon named Professor Maathai a UN Messenger of Peace in December 2009, with a focus on the Environment and Climate Change. In 2010 she was appointed to the Millennium Development Goals Advocacy Group; a panel of political leaders, business people and civil society members, established to galvanize worldwide support for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). During the five-year review of the Earth Summit Prof. Maathai served on the Commission for Global Governance and the Commission on the Future and appointed to the United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament.

Prof Maathai was an Assistant Minister for Environment and Natural Resources in Kenya's ninth parliament (2003–2007) and Member of Parliament for Tetu constituency (2002–2007) when she won the Nobel Peace Prize. Born in Nyeri, Kenya in 1940, Prof. Wangari Maathai was the first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a doctorate degree. She obtained a degree in Biological Sciences from Mount St. Scholastica College in Atchison, Kansas, a Master of Science degree from the University of Pittsburgh, and pursued doctoral studies in Germany and the University of Nairobi, obtaining a Ph.D. from the University of Nairobi where she also taught veterinary anatomy.

Professor Maathai held honorary doctoral degrees from several institutions around the world, including William's

College, MA, USA (1990), Hobart & William Smith Colleges (1994), University of Norway (1997) and Yale University (2004) and Syracuse University (2012) awarded posthumously.

She served on the board of many organizations including the Green Belt Movement which she founded in the 1970s and through which she assisted women in planting more than 40 million trees on their farms, on schools and church compounds all to improve environmental conservation and alleviate poverty. She founded the Green Belt Movement International in the 1980s, with offices in the US and the UK, to make this work widely known and seek support for it. The Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies (WMI) of the University of Nairobi was later created on 50 acres donated by the University, to transfer knowledge and skills on sustainable use of natural resources from academic halls and laboratories to the citizenry in villages and rural communities throughout Africa. Prof Maathai received extensive recognition and numerous awards for her efforts.

Prof. Maathai was also an active member of the National Council of Women of Kenya from 1976 to 1987, including its Chair from 1981-87. She was a member of the Jane Goodall Institute, Women and Environment Development Organization (WEDO), World Learning for International Development, Green Cross International, Environment Liaison Center International, and the WorldWIDE Network of Women in Environmental Work. Amongst the commemorative initiatives in her honour is the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), a biannual United Nations Award named after Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai, presented to persons committed to safeguarding the environment and the alleviation of poverty. The Partners of CPF are UNCCD Secretariat, UNDP, UNEP, UNFF Secretariat, UNFCCC Secretariat, ICRAF and The World Bank. The first recipient of the Award is Narayan Kaji Shrestha for his outstanding contribution to forests (2012).

Overall Objective of the Side Event

1. The overall objective is to highlight the work and achievements of the late Prof. Wangari Maathai and identify how best to continue to commemorate and celebrate her life.

Specific Objectives of the Side Event

1. To celebrate and honour the legacy of Prof. Maathai by unveiling the tree she planted in May 2005
2. To commemorate and celebrate the 10th Anniversary of her becoming a Nobel Peace Laureate.
3. To plant a commemorative tree in her honour and in celebration of this event.

Prospect of the Side Event

To host an annual event, which may take the form of a lecture to commemorate the legacy of the Late. Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai

Speakers

The Special Event will be officiated by Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Water and Natural Resources Prof. Judi Wakhungu. Key dignitaries include UN Secretary General, the President of the General Assembly, the Commissioner of Parks of New York (the Dogwood tree planted by the Late Prof Maathai was donated by the City of New York), family members of Prof. Maathai and members of the Diplomatic Corps. Other invitees include UN Observers, UNFF, UNEP, UN DESA, GBM, WEDO, stakeholders and friends of Prof. Maathai.

Event Format

The side event will take place in two segments. The formal presentations in the Conference Building meeting room 2 from 1:15-2:15pm, followed by the tree planting ceremony in the NLB Gardens from 2:20-2:45pm where the commemorative plaques will be unveiled and the tree planted.

Please visit the following websites to find out more about **Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai**

www.GreenBeltMovement.org

http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2004/maathai-bio.html

<http://takingrootfilm.com/>

http://www.wangfoundation.net/humming_bird.pdf

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGMW6YWjMxw>

[Http://takingrootfilm.com/purchase.htm](http://takingrootfilm.com/purchase.htm)