



Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that we are already mid-year & at the end of the first planting season here in Kenya! In the first half of the year GBM has undergone a period of internal review and strategic planning. Our need to build capacity within GBM to respond to the great need for our work remains the key to our future success. Community demand for GBM programs across Kenya is ever-increasing, especially in areas of the Rift Valley, while internationally our friends and supporters remain interested and committed in our work and the stories from rural Kenya.

Overall, the peace & reconciliation efforts in Kenya continue to improve the situation and for that we are very grateful. We hope that the settlement of the remaining internally displaced people is addressed so they can get on with their lives, in a safe and secure environment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of our work. To find out more about our latest adventures visit www.greenbeltmovement.org.

With warm wishes,
Wangari

GBM Annual Program Review

In February 2008, GBM staff gathered at the Langata Learning Center near Nairobi for the 3rd Annual Program Review meeting. Prof. Maathai & representatives from the international offices were also present to review the accomplishments and challenges that GBM programs faced last year. Among the many achievements shared, the highlights were:

- GBM planted a record 4.9 million trees in Kenya in 2007!
- GBM trained over 5,000 people through Civic & Environmental Education workshops to make connections between environmental degradation and their activities.

Following the Review, our GIS (Geographic Information Systems) team launched an internal audit of all GBM program activities to enhance our accountability & refine our measures of success. After a long & detailed process over the past few months, a GIS database is nearly complete to map all of our program sites.



Documentary about Prof. Maathai & GBM earns top awards!

TAKING ROOT: The Vision of Wangari Maathai, a new film by Lisa Merton and Alan Dater (Marlboro Productions), tells the inspiring story of the Green Belt Movement of Kenya and its unstoppable founder, Wangari Maathai. The 80-minute film weaves a compelling and dramatic narrative of Prof. Maathai's personal journey in the context of the turbulent political history of Kenya. The development of her holistic worldview and model for sustainable development is at the heart of the film.

Taking Root has won 5 awards since premiering at Full Frame Documentary Film Festival in Durham, North Carolina in April 2008. Awards include the "Audience Award Winner" at Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, the largest documentary film festival in North America. Film festival audience members selected Taking Root from over 170 films shown.

The film will continue to be shown at film

Prof. Maathai participates in discussions at GBM's Annual Program Review in Langata.

festivals around the world this year. **Taking Root** is an independent production of Lisa Merton and Alan Dater and is not a production of the Green Belt Movement. To learn more about the film visit www.takingrootfilm.com

"Where in the World is Wangari?"

After 2 months of touring the US, Japan & Europe, Prof. Maathai arrived home in Nairobi last week for some much needed time in Kenya. Her journey started in mid-May in the US with visits to Arkansas, California, DC, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington. Audiences from academia, religious groups, community organizations, and the US government gathered to hear Prof. Maathai's message about the critical link between democracy, the environment, and peace. She also joined fellow Nobel Laureate Jodi Williams in [public discussions](#) about the impact of climate change on poor communities worldwide & the need to include women in the solutions.

Finally, Prof. Maathai landed for 9 days in London, prepared for a schedule packed with media appearances, interviews, and speaking opportunities which included a keynote address at the Ashen Awards.

While visiting the U.K. Prof. Maathai also witnessed the launch of the Congo Basin Forest Fund, which she Co-Chairs alongside Canada's former Prime Minister, Paul Martin. This fund seeks to preserve the area rainforests while providing support to programs. For more information about the fund and how to apply please visit www.cbf-fund.org.

While in Japan, Prof. Maathai continued to lend her voice to the Mottainai Campaign which continues to gain momentum there. The campaign seeks to promote the sustainable use of resources by promoting the 3Rs – Reduce, Reuse & Recycle. Specific to the Mottainai Campaign are the additional elements of Respect and Gratitude for the resources. For more about this campaign please visit www.mottainai.info/english/ or contact us through the Green Belt Movement [website](#).

We are very excited that Prof Maathai will be joining a high level delegation to South Sudan and Chad in solidarity with the situation in Darfur. Organized by the Nobel Women's Initiative, the trip will also include Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams and Activist & Actress Mia Farrow, among other activists. The mission of the visit is to establish how NWI can amplify the call for action for Darfur. Look here for an update on that visit in our next issue.

Halfway Through with Much More to do!

In Kenya, GBM communities have come a long way since the post-election violence at the start of the year that caused several of our programs to come to a halt. Many of our programs have resumed on the ground but some are still faced with the reality of living in displaced camps. Some communities that suffered heavily have incorporated a peace & reconciliation component into their Civic & Environmental Education workshops that accompany tree-planting activities. Much has been achieved in the first half of the year, but there is more work to be done to achieve our 2008 goals...

...which is why the support of our friends worldwide is so important now. Your support will help us expand GBM programs into even more communities and allow GBM to increase the number of trees planted and maintained each year. Please visit the Giving sections of our website to learn about ways to show your support today.

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Employee Spotlight: Mercy Karuriditu



Mercy Karuriditu is from Nyeri, Kenya & began working with GBM one year ago as an Extension Officer. Today, she is a Project Officer & responsible for monitoring the progress of field activities, writing project reports, supervising GBM Extension Officers in the field, and implementing GBM programs in communities.

The Green Belt Movement means the world to me because it understands people at the local level. As a trained environmental scientist, I was given the opportunity to work with people at the grassroots to conserve our degraded resources through rehabilitation programs. GBM helps improve community livelihoods using tree-planting as the entry point.

In GBM, we have a very big heart that accommodates the most vulnerable groups and the forgotten. We hear the cries from the grassroots and speak the language that they understand. We feel the pain that they feel and we share their experiences. GBM is an exceptional community-based organization and, in the future, it is my hope that will be able to reach even more areas than we do now.

Coming Soon!!!

Check our [website](#) soon for copies of our Annual Reports for 2006 & 2007 to download.

Printed copies will also be available through our offices listed at the bottom of this newsletter.

...also check for regular updates about [events](#) in your area, latest [news](#) from the field, and [blogs](#) by our staff.

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