

Internal News Bulletin



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President Obama's reminiscence of Wangari Maathai during Kenyan visit

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Green Belt Movement (GBM) was well represented at the State Banquet held at State House Nairobi in honour of visiting U.S. President Barack Obama on July 25, 2015 .

Among the invited guests was Wanjira Mathai, GBM's Board Chair, who had the opportunity to meet President Obama and share a few words.

In his speech, President Uhuru Kenyatta referred to Professor Wangari Maathai and Barack Obama Sr. as distinguished Kenyans who had strong historical ties to the United States through the Kennedy Airlift.



During his speech to the people of Kenya, President Obama highlighted the great strides made by Kenyan women as evidence of the value of women in the society. Among them the Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai.

"Kenya continues to carve out a distinct place among the nations. The country is a leader for conservation, following in the footprints of Wangari Maathai," he said.

On his last day in the country, President Obama met with representatives of Civil Society organizations at the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Regional Leadership Center in Nairobi and in attendance was Ms. Wanjira Mathai.

When he last visited Kenya in August 2006 as the Illinois State Senator, Barack Obama met Professor Maathai and together they planted a tree at Uhuru Park in Nairobi.



Green Belt Movement participates at the ESRI UC 2015

The Green Belt Movement (GBM) participated at the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) International User Conference (Esri UC) at San Diego, California in USA. GBM was represented by our GIS Officer Nancy Neema.

Esri UC is the world's largest event dedicated to geographic information system (GIS) technology. GBM has joined thousands of professionals from different industries from more than 100 countries to share ideas on how we are using GIS to solve environmental problems.

This was a great opportunity to connect, discuss and explore how we could work together with other local and international stakeholders to conserve the environment and improve the livelihoods of the grassroots communities.

The GBM GIS team uses GIS technology to track and monitor tree planting so that resources and efforts are recorded, this helps locate where, when, and how many trees have been planted. GIS technology helps GBM use its resources and time more efficiently and track areas in need of conservation and tree planting more effectively,



Third Annual Wangari Maathai Memorial Lecture

On June 16 2015, Green Belt Movement International (GBMI) Europe hosted the Third Annual Wangari Maathai Memorial Lecture in St James Church Piccadilly.

More than 200 people joined us for an evening with Kumi Naidoo, Executive Director of Greenpeace International as he shared his thoughts on Professor Maathai's life, legacy and the climate change injustices she fought for, punctuated by stories from Kumi's own life of campaigning and advocacy.



The event culminated with a panel discussion chaired by Nick Robins, UNEP's Co-Director, Inquiry into the Design of a Sustainable Financial System. Wanjira Mathai, Chair of the Green Belt Movement, Aisha Karanja, Executive Director of the Green Belt Movement and Kumi Naidoo all took part in an informal and informative discussion and gave their insights to questions provided by the audience.

Response from the audience was overwhelmingly positive with many guests commenting on their renewed sense of commitment to their own acts of courage and desire to see change. Guests coming from sectors outside of conservation and human rights commented on how accessible Kumi, Wanjira, Aisha, and Nick's words were and how much it resonated with their own interest in identifying how they could become activists in their own right.

After the Wangari Maathai Memorial Lecture event in London, GBM Chair and the Executive Director planted a tree in honor of Professor Maathai at Abbey Park organized by the Kenyan Community in Leicester (PAMOJA) and the County Council of Leicester.



The third Wangari Maathai Scholarship Award



From left - Janet Mawiyoo CEO KCDF, Mwihaki Muraguri Senior Associate Director of Rockefeller Foundation Africa Regional Office, Claire Nasike Akello third recipient, Dr. Isaac Kalua Founder Green Africa Foundation and Wanjira Mathai Chair Green Belt Movement.

Established in 2012, the Wangari Maathai Scholarship Fund is an environmental innovations fund set up in memory of Professor Wangari Maathai that is aimed at developing action-oriented young people with strong values and commitment to the conservation of the physical and social environment in Kenya.

This year's recipient is Claire Nasike Akello, a student at the Technical University of Kenya pursuing a degree in Environmental Resource Management. Claire also leads a project dubbed "Return to Sisterhood". The project seeks to empower school children to regain control of their environment.

The Chief Guest at the event, Dr. Isaac Kalua, Founder of Green Africa Foundation, commended the Wangari Maathai Scholarship Fund for promoting a generation of young women who embrace the spirit of environmentalism as propagated by Wangari Maathai.

World Environment Day 2015



World Environment Day (WED) is held each year on June 5. Since it was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972, WED has grown to a global platform for public outreach widely celebrated by stakeholders in over 100 countries.

The WED theme this year is "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care." The well-being of humanity, the environment, and the functioning of the economy, ultimately depend upon the responsible management of the planet's natural resources.

In partnership with UN Women, Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) and Kenya Forest Service (KFS), we marked this special day and also commemorated Beijing +20 on Friday June 5, 2015.

In her keynote speech, Ms. Wanjira Mathai, Chair, Green Belt Movement (GBM), noted the gains made for women and girls over the last two decades but despite all these, gaps remain, and we are not there yet.

500 indigenous tree seedlings were planted at the ceremony held in Karura Forest.

African Union honors Professor Wangari Maathai



The African Union (AU) has honored Professor Wangari Maathai by naming the gardens in front of its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia after the late Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.

The AU Assembly endorsed the proposal by the Republic of Congo to name the AU Garden after Professor Wangari Maathai in recognition of environmental conservation and protection and in appreciation by the African Union for her contribution to the African Continent and the whole world. This was during 25th AU summit in Johannesburg, South Africa in June 2015.

An article on *Business Daily Africa* says “She will be remembered for her instrumental role in engaging women in rural areas of Kenya to plant and nurture trees, mainly through agroforestry.”

In 2004, Wangari Maathai became the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize after decades of environmental and political activism to conserve forests in Kenya and beyond.

Professor Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement in 1977 which has assisted communities plant over 51 million trees in Kenya, in watersheds in the highlands of Mt. Kenya, the Aberdares, and the Mau Complex—three of the five major mountain ecosystems in Kenya, as well as on private lands.

The naming of the garden in her honor highlights the work and achievements of this remarkable woman in the fields of environment, human rights and democracy.

Read the full story: [AU names gardens in Addis after Prof Wangari Maathai](#)

Staff Moments

It is that time of the year again, the dreaded cold season. We have come to realize that the best way to beat this cold is by sharing hugs.



While some who could not find hugging buddies opted to stay aloft, others had to improvise and one of them, well, took it a notch higher.



Good thing we have our very own paparazzi to capture every moment.

