

# **World Environment Day 2007 at Nairobi Arboretum**

## **9 June 2007**

The Nairobi celebrations of World Environment Day 2007 at Nairobi Arboretum took place on Saturday, 9 June. Nairobi Arboretum is a unique green oasis in the middle of Nairobi city. It consists of 65 acres of wooded landscape and the event took place at the central lawn which is an open space of about 500x500m in the middle of this beautiful 'place of trees'.

### **Tree Relay Run**

The programme started at 9 am with the Tree Relay Run. Teams consisted of 4 members with at least one woman in each team. The circuit consisted of 4 laps of about 1 km, with each runner running one lap of 1 km. The team members were passing each other a baton made from recycled flip flops. A total of 20 teams participated in the run - 10 from corporations who also sponsored the event and 10 individual teams. They competed in two categories – for the fastest team and for the most original team. All participants took both challenges very seriously. The fastest team - Mosoriot Team - ran the circuit of 4 km in an amazing 11, 14 minutes. The members of the most original team - Nation Media Group - painted themselves to match the green environment. The Forest Guards, who guard the Arboretum day and night, received a special mention and proved to be fit runners!

### **Educational Programme for Schools**

FONA's educational officers, UNEP's Children and Youth Unit and UNEP expert Christian Lambrechts ran an educational programme for 10 selected schools from Nairobi. The students received lectures on the impact of climate change in East Africa and the importance of biodiversity. The centre of the attention at the central lawn was a huge ice sculpture symbolizing Mt. Kenya. The statue was placed in a basin and gradually melted during the day. Schools were asked in advanced to create islands which were placed around the sculpture. Children and adults alike took great interest to watch how the islands were gradually inundated by the rising water level. The UNEP expert used the sculpture as a tool to illustrate the impacts of global warming on human settlements as a result of melting ice caps. Secondary school children had an opportunity to watch the film 'An Inconvenient Truth'. Primary school children were taken on a biodiversity walk around the Arboretum where they learned about the importance and use of different indigenous and exotic trees and plants. About 400 primary and secondary school children attended the educational programme. Many other schools came spontaneously to see the event and booked a biodiversity visit at the Arboretum later this year.

### **Organic Farmers Market and Environmental Fair**

An Organic Farmers Market organized by the Kenyan Organic Agricultural Network (KOAN) took place throughout the day. FONA arranged all logistics for the stalls and KOAN organized their members to come, sell and exhibit their products. The market consisted of a tree nursery, art gallery, and stalls that sold organic products ranging from camel milk to organic vegetables, honey and many more. We also organized an Environmental Fair – 10 stalls exhibiting environmentally friendly technologies or selling

products made from natural, recycled or organically produced materials. Products included solar cookers, recycled flip flops, natural products from small cooperatives and clothes.

### **Official Programme**

The main programme started at 1 pm with a traditional African dance followed by speeches from official guests – Mrs. Beverly Miller, Secretary of Governing Bodies of UNEP, H.E. Bo Jensen, Ambassador of the Royal Danish Embassy and Mrs. Charity Munyasya, the provincial Forest Officer. After the speeches, the guests planted a *Brucea macrocarpa*, a carefully selected tree which will enhance the Arboretum's tree collection. The programme continued with salsa and modern dance performances by the Sarakasi Dance Group. The audience responded very enthusiastically. A short lecture about climate change and its impact on East Africa by UNEP experts Dr. Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Policy Advisor, and Christian Lambrechts also captured the full attention of the audience. The last performance of the day came from a classical jazz band lead by Donald Otoy.

### **Attendance**

About 2,500 visitors enjoyed this World Environment Day programme, visited exhibitions and stalls of FONA, UNEP, Nature Kenya, CHEK and many others. Market stalls were very happy with their sales and the opportunity to advertise their products. About 700 children enjoyed a big inflatable slide, trampolines, face painting and two puppet shows. About 20 families became new members of FONA.

### **Publicity**

Three thousand flyers and 500 posters were distributed prior the event. The event was listed on the websites of the organizing institutions and also Nairobi events websites. There was an advertisement in The Daily Nation and two radio interviews on KCB radio before the event. A news piece from the event in Citizen Radio and Capital FM were aired during the day. One week after the event there was an article in Saturday Nation newspaper recapturing the day.