



Greetings from Kenya!

The last two months have been an extraordinarily difficult time for Kenya and for the Green Belt Movement and all that we stand for. As you know, over a thousand people have lost their lives and property, and over 300,000 have been displaced from their homes. Unfortunately, some of our GBM staff, volunteers and family members were also directly affected by the violence and destruction of property. We are looking for ways that we can assist those who were affected.

In spite of the tragic consequences of what has happened, the recently signed power-sharing agreement provides an opportunity for Kenyans to come together and resolve some of the deep-seated issues that contributed to the unrest.

As peace returns, our work becomes even more important as we do everything we can to support the peace and reconciliation process, to promote good governance and peace at the community level, and to restore the environment through planting *Trees of Peace*.

So many of you wrote to us in solidarity during this difficult time. Your thoughts and prayers were most appreciated. We will continue to keep you informed as the reconciliation process unfolds.

Wangari Maathai

PEACE TENT:

GBM has launched a [Peace Tent Initiative](#) to facilitate reconciliation in affected communities. The Peace Tent is a physical space and visible symbol for peace where people can come together to record and share personal experiences, gain support and relief, and add their names to a petition in solidarity with the victims of violence.

Wangari Maathai opened the first Peace Tent in Nairobi this January. She said: *"We can make a deliberate choice to move forward together towards a more cohesive Nation State, where we can all feel free, secure, and at peace with ourselves and our neighbors."*

[Read the full speech here.](#)

Community elders and others have held meetings and workshops at the Peace Tent to begin addressing the root causes of the conflict through dialogue in a non-judging neutral space. GBM now plans to take the Peace Tent into other affected communities to bring people together and initiate a process of understanding and healing.

To learn more, please [visit our website](#) or contact your regional office.



Community members meet in the Peace Tent to share their stories and start the process of healing & reconciliation.

New Pages to GBM Website!

In recognition of the importance of global warming we have created a new section on our website dedicated to the [Climate Change](#) issue. It will include information about climate change, GBM's carbon offset projects, and writings on the subject.

Momentum continues to build throughout the world on developing an integrated global strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to combat



GBM's Peace Tent in Nairobi

climate change. GBM is expanding its involvement, both on the international advocacy front, and partnering on carbon offset projects through our forest protection and restoration programs.

Similarly, in view of GBM's work on [Peace and Reconciliation in Kenya](#), we have dedicated a new section on the website to this topic.

Death Threats

Just before the announcement of the power-sharing agreement when political tensions in Kenya were again rising, Wangari Maathai received [death threats through SMS messages](#) on her cell phone. Her security which had previously been withdrawn by the government was quickly restored when the matter was reported to the Kenya police.

With the signing of the power-sharing agreement, tensions are easing. Wangari Maathai will continue to [promote truth, reconciliation and dialogue](#), while advocating for the political changes that are needed for Kenya to attain a stable and long-lasting peace.

Employee Spotlight: Irene Muthuka

Irene Muthuka began working for GBM 9 months ago in our Geographical Information Systems (GIS) lab. As a GIS Analyst, Irene carries out data processing, baseline surveys, spatial analysis, and cartographic support for GBM's programs. Irene was born in Thika, Kenya and graduated from Moi University with Honors and a B.A. in Geography. Her achievements and leadership in a highly technical field of work are inspirational to young girls throughout GBM communities.

"Growing up I always wanted to work for a conservation organization, and it was thanks to my Lecturers that I was directed to the Green Belt Movement.

My interests in conservation began during my primary school education. Activities around the home – planting flowers, shutting off the running water taps, caring for the grass and trees – seemed very minor to me then, but I have come to appreciate their enormous contribution towards conservation.

Later in my education I learned how GIS could help to manage the earth's limited natural resources. Now I am just overwhelmed by the fact that I am working with Green Belt!

Today I am always motivated by the enthusiasm, spirit and desire of the Green Belt communities to conserve their environments and change their lives. Through Green Belt I get to see all levels of people, including the poorest, who try to learn more about the importance of our environment. Other organizations that I see do not go to such an extent of educating, especially the women and children, about conservation in their communities. We work internationally and everyone respects the fact that Green Belt puts education first."

[Meet other GBM staff members & volunteers highlighted in past e-newsletters!](#)



Planting "Trees of Peace"

Trees are wonderful symbols of the shared future of Kenya and the planet. The trees that GBM plants are "Trees of Peace."

Promoting [peace and reconciliation](#) are at the very heart of GBM's mission. By bringing communities together to restore their environment, improve livelihoods and defend their rights, GBM communities form the foundations for grassroots democracy and peace...

...which is why [your support](#) is needed now more than ever.

GBM's classic community development & tree-planting programs continue on the ground, but in some communities affected by conflict, more immediate peace-building and relief efforts are needed. The [Peace Tent](#) project & other reconciliation efforts led by GBM continue to expand into affected communities.

Please help us respond to the increasing needs and demands of Kenyans seeking to rebuild their lives & their homeland. Please help us with a gift for peace today.



[Donate now](#)

Coming Soon!

Learn about our achievements in 2007 - including the record 5 million trees planted in Kenya! - in our next e-newsletter. More details to come in our Annual Report!

Check our [website](#) for regular updates.

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