

**STATEMENT FOR USE BY H.E. THE PRESIDENT TO INTRODUCE
THE PROPOSAL BY KENYA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
PROFESSOR WANGARI MAATHAI PRIZE AND SUPPORT FOR
WANGARI MAATHAI INSTITUTE OF PEACE AND
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND
WORK OF WANGARI MUTA MAATHAI**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce Kenya's proposal for the establishment of Professor Wangari Maathai Prize.

Following the passing away of Professor Wangari Muta Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace laureate and founder of the Green Belt Movement, my government is convinced that it would be befitting of Africa to honour this gallant African daughter in recognition of her contribution and achievements in raising awareness on issues related to biodiversity, women's rights and natural resource management.

Throughout her dynamic career, Professor Maathai worked tirelessly to inspire and motivate ordinary citizens and leaders to contribute to environmental conservation. Recognizing her role and contributions will further inspire those countless African individuals, groups and organizations that are quietly working to protect the environment, promote democracy and defend human rights.

Excellencies,

Professor Maathai's achievements and contributions speak for themselves. As founder of the Green Belt Movement, Professor Maathai became a great advocate for better management of natural resources and for sustainability, equity, and justice.

In 2003, in recognition of her pioneering work in environment, I appointed Professor Wangari Maathai Deputy Minister for the Environment.

In 2004, in an unprecedented decision, the Nobel Committee made the link that would define the future security of the world between environmental management, and peace and security and awarded Wangari Maathai the Nobel Prize for Peace. Professor Maathai was also the African Union Peace Ambassador.

In 2005, Professor Maathai was appointed first presiding officer of the African Union's Economic, Social and Cultural Council. In the same year, Central African Heads of State appointed her as the Goodwill Ambassador for the Congo Basin rainforest, the world's largest forest cover where she served as an advocate for the region's conservation and protection.

In 2006, Prof. Wangari Maathai joined with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to launch the Billion Tree Campaign, whose aim was to plant a billion trees around the world. That aim was surpassed in less than a year, with more than 3 billion trees planted in the world.

Excellencies,

There are initiatives around the world to honor the vision, contribution, dedication and values of Wangari Maathai. However, it is imperative that Africa distinctly immortalize the legacy of Wangari Maathai. It is in this regard that Kenya proposes certain actions which are outlined in the document before Your Excellencies.

The honour we bestow on Professor Wangari Maathai will inspire current and future generations to preserve the Planet's already stressed natural resource base.

Thank You.