



**Green Cross: world must continue work of late environmental champion, Wangari Maathai.**

26 September, 2011/Geneva: Green Cross International and its global network mourns the passing of its Honorary Board Member and the eminent environmentalist, Wangari Maathai.

“Her leadership and work serves to enlighten us all that alleviation of poverty, sustainable development, preservation of our environment, establishment of truly democratic institutions, and peaceful resolution of conflict are all integral parts of a safe and secure global future,” said Mikhail Gorbachev, Founding President of [Green Cross International](#) and fellow Nobel Peace Prize laureate. “As the first recipient of a Nobel Peace prize for her environmental work she helped bring about a new understanding of the inter-connections between environment and peace. This is one of her very important contributions.”

Alexander Likhotal, President of Green Cross International, said civil society movements worldwide, especially in Africa, have been empowered by Professor Maathai’s impassioned and practical stands on environmental protection, youth development and grassroots action to protect societies.

“Professor Maathai’s personal efforts, leadership, and practical community work in Kenya and Africa inspire us all by demonstrating the real progress that can be made in addressing environmental security and sustainable development challenges where people have the courage to make the difference,” Mr Likhotal said. “She was a true visionary whose local approach to protecting the environment has so many global applications and possibilities.”

Professor Maathai, who passed away on 25 September 2011, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004, becoming the first recipient to receive the award for environmental work. She was awarded the Nobel Prize in recognition of her success in protecting the forests in Kenya and her dedication to increasing

environmental awareness in Africa.

During a Green Cross event in 2009, Professor Maathai discussed the challenges facing human kind and the actions that the global population must undertake to save both our race and the planet. "We are now nearly 7 billion people, and those extra people also need land and water to continue to survive," she said. "With the current trend of mass consumerism and greed, it will be us, and not the planet that is going to be extinct if we don't change our attitudes."

"When you upset the balance in Africa, then the ripples will go out to Europe, this is inevitable. Please work every day towards doing something to protect the planet. You can only do the best you can, and that is all you can do."

Green Cross International, founded by Mikhail Gorbachev, is an independent non-profit and nongovernmental organization working to address the inter-connected global challenges of security, poverty eradication and environmental degradation through a combination of high-level advocacy and local projects. GCI is headquartered in Geneva and has a growing network of national organisations in over 30 countries.

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