

## Children's Meeting Place

**19 to 20 September 2001 at UNEP Headquarters  
Nairobi, Kenya**

### Inauguration

A Children's Meeting Place with a beautiful tree has been established at the United Nations Offices in Nairobi. Over 250 children from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Finland and Sweden gathered under the Tree from 19 to 20 September 2001 with each child bringing a cup of water and a handful of earth to honour the new Meeting Place. Children wrote messages, danced sang and played together under the Tree.

### The Launch

This was planned to coincide with the United Nations Special Session for Children in New York but was postponed after the attacks in New York and Washington. The launch was attended by UNEP Executive Director, Dr. Klaus Topfer; Habitat Deputy Executive Director, Mr. Daniel Biau; Ms. Denise Shephard-Johnson from UNICEF; Swedish Ambassador to Kenya, H.E. Inga Björk-Klevby and the President of Globetree, Kajsa Dahlström.

Special messages from United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan; HM Queen Silvia of Sweden; Prime Minister Göran Persson; Swedish Ambassador to the USA Mr. Jan Eliasson; Swedish Minister for Environment Kjell Larsson; The Governor of Aland/Finland Peter Lindback and Astronaut Loren Acton were read to the children.

Addressing the children, UNEP Executive Director Klaus Toepfer said that they cannot be any development without peace and its pursuit should be each and every individual's concern. He also said that he looks forward to playing under the Tree with the children as he did with his children when they were young.

Globetree President, Kajsa Dahlström thanked UNEP for giving Globetree the opportunity to run the Children's Meeting Place at the United Nations Offices, Nairobi

## **The Children's Tree**

The name of the Children's Tree is Acacia xanthopholea of the Mimosaceae family known as the Fever Tree.

- Seeds: The Children are the seeds of the Tree
- Branches: The Visions and Ideas of the children are in the branches
- Leaves: The Leaves falling down give life to ideas and visions
- Roots: Adults are the roots and by using their wisdom and knowledge of life experiences, they nourish the Tree
- Trunk: The Trunk of the Tree is the Civil Society
- Thorns: Thorns should remind us of the difficult task to bring the children's visions and ideas to reality

## **The Vision**

The Children's Meeting Place will be a place for Respect, Love and Care and Learning from one another by sharing wisdom and knowledge. The children will also invite and challenge decision-makers on decision made that affect them and their future

## **The Declarations**

- ✓ We have to take care of the environment. Stop cutting down trees and dumping chemicals into lakes and rivers
- ✓ Provide the basic needs and rights of clothing, shelter and food to all children
- ✓ Stop abusing and mistreating children
- ✓ All rights like education should be provided equally to all children irrespective of their sex and colour
- ✓ Sustain peace and love for children
- ✓ Involve children in decision making especially decisions that affect their future
- ✓ Establish Meeting Places for children worldwide