

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2002

Give Earth a chance

In 1972, the United Nations General Assembly established World Environment Day to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Since then the event has been marked each year on the 5th of June



and serves as one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates world-

wide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action.

This year's theme is "Give Earth a Chance", and calls on everyone to contribute to healing the environment. Despite considerable efforts and significant achievements, many of the problems that plagued the Earth during the 20th Century, still linger. More than ever, the necessary steps have to be taken to ensure that the environment remains at the top of the global agenda.

The main international celebration of the World Environment Day was held in the City of Shenzhen in the People's Republic of China. The event aimed to present a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable develop-

ment; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership that will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future. Celebrations included colourful activities such as street rallies, bicycle parades, green concerts, essays and poster compe-



tions in schools, tree plantings, as well as recycling and clean-up campaigns. Environmental, academic and government organisations also conducted symposia and roundtable meetings to commemorate World Environment Day. In many countries,

this event often provided an opportunity to sign or ratify international conventions as well as the establishment of permanent government structures dealing with environmental management.

In a speech delivered on June 5, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that this year's theme was meant to convey a message of urgency -- about the state of the earth and the broader quest for sustainable development. Despite advances, considerable efforts and significant achievements in the past 10 years, the latest readings reveal a planet still in need of intensive care. Poverty, pollution and population growth; rural poverty and rapid urbanization; wasteful consumption habits and growing demands for water, land and energy continue to place intense pressures on the planet's life support systems, threatening our ability to achieve sustainable development.

In 2002, 10 years after the first Earth Summit, the call for greater environmental protection is more urgent than ever. The future of the world's natural resources and its people's welfare are hanging in the balance, and perhaps it is about time to really give the planet a chance. ■

World Environment Day in History

2001	Connect with the World Wide Web of Life	1995	We the Peoples: United for the Global Environment
2000	The Environment Millennium - Time to Act	1994	One Earth, One Family
1999	Our Earth - Our Future - Just Save It!	1993	Poverty and the Environment - Breaking the Vicious Circle
1998	For Life on Earth - Save Our Seas	1992	Only One Earth, Care and Share
1997	For Life on Earth	1991	Climate Change: Need for Global Partnership
1996	Our Earth, Our Habitat, Our Home	1990	Children and the Environment