

## Tree-planting photos win UN environmental contest in Africa



Green Wedding - first place winner in the amateur category of 'The Picture This: Caring for the Earth' contest

18 November 2009 – Photos of Kenyans planting trees and Moroccan women turning plastic bags into handbags today won a United Nations-backed eco-themed contest focused on Africa, which profiles ordinary people working to preserve the environment and reduce the effects of climate change in their communities.

“By showing us what ordinary citizens of Africa are doing to tackle climate change, we see the extraordinary power of photographs to tell stories,” said Helen Clark, Administrator the UN Development Programme (**UNDP**), which launched the contest in partnership with Tokyo-based camera maker Olympus Corporation and the French news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP) Foundation.

“These photographs will help carry the message to Copenhagen that the poorest and most vulnerable stand to lose the most from climate change, and must be part of any agreement,” she added, referring to next month’s UN Climate Change Conference in the Danish capital, which is expected to be attended by 15,000 officials from 200 countries.

First prize winners in '**The Picture This: Caring for the Earth**' contest are Kenyan newspaper photo editor Jacob Otieno in the professional category for his image of environmentalists planting trees in a water catchment area; Faiza Hajji Wozniak, a Moroccan social entrepreneur, in the photo essay category for the women making handbags; and Simon Ndegwa, a Kenyan youth pastor, in the amateur category for a Kenyan couple planting a tree on their wedding day.

Their awards include a certificate of acknowledgement from UNDP and digital cameras and camera equipment from Olympus Corporation. Mr. Otieno will receive a two-week internship at one of AFP’s bureaus in Africa. The second and third place winners from Cameroon, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Senegal and South Africa will all receive digital cameras from Olympus.

The contest jurors were Nobel Peace Prize winner and Kenyan environmentalist Wangari Maathai and four professional photojournalists, including Peter Magubane, one of South Africa’s most internationally acclaimed photographers, and John Isaac, Olympus Visionary photographer and a UN photojournalist for nearly 30 years.

Protecting the environment and working to mitigate the effects of climate change lie at the heart of UNDP's mandate, focusing on helping developing countries adapt to climate change while reducing poverty through improving disaster coping methods, strengthening institutions and charting a low-carbon development path.

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