

## Kenya: Climate Watch Adopt a Forest Today

By Agatha Ngotho And Dickson Soire, 29 May 2013

There have been efforts to meet the 10 per cent tree cover in Kenya by 2030 but according to an expert, the survival rate of trees planted in the country is less than 20 per cent because there is no 'after planting care'.

Peter Odhengo, the Greening Kenya Initiative national co-ordinator, says trees need care and very few people do this.

To address this problem, children and the youth have taken up a new initiative of adopt a forest, river, hill or wetland in a bid to promote sustainable environment.

This initiative was unveiled by the United Nations Environmental Programme in partnership with the Greening Kenya Initiative targeting school children and the youth.

"I believe young people have a passion and responsibility to become green champions who will be able to supervise the adopt tree initiative," said Odhengo during the International Day for Biological Diversity at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in Juja.

He added that young people are best placed to take up this responsibility as they will grow with it.

To emphasise the importance of involving young people in environmental issues, Odhengo says: " He who causes the problem is not the best person to solve it and the current environmental problem has been caused by the old generation. It is time for the young generation to stand up and get to work."

Felix Finkbeiner, 14, from Germany and his counterpart Stephen Njoroge, 13, from Kenya have taken a lead in championing this cause.

"We have a problem facing our future and adults are doing little about this; it is time for children to take charge of the future," said Felix Finkbeiner as he took the podium to address pupils from St Anne's Lioki, Moi Forces Academy, Hillcrest and Makini schools at the Migaa estate in Kiambu.

Behind him was a poster with children covering the mouths of prominent people in the world to depict that it is time to stop talking and start acting.

This is a path many children below the ages of 15 are now following in a bid to plant trees and promote peace and development through environment in schools and home.

Felix, who is a climate ambassador in Germany, was in the country to sensitise children on the need to take charge of the future.