



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

San Diego Public Library

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AWARD-WINNING FILM, CONNECTING ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION WITH HUMAN RIGHTS, SCREENS AT SAN DIEGO PUBLIC LIBRARY *The Story of the First Environmentalist and African Woman to Win the Nobel Peace Prize*

SAN DIEGO – The San Diego Public Library and Media Arts Center San Diego will host a preview film showing and discussion of *Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai*. This film by Lisa Merton and Alan Dater tells the inspiring story of the Green Belt Movement of Kenya and its unstoppable founder, Wangari Maathai, who, in 2004, became the first environmentalist and first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. The screening begins at 2:00 PM on Sunday, March 8, in the 3rd floor auditorium of the Central Library, located at 820 E Street in downtown San Diego. This event is FREE to the public.

Taking Root illustrates the development of Maathai's holistic worldview and model for sustainable development. Maathai discovered the core of her life's work when she turned her attention to the rural women with whom she had grown up in Kenya's central highlands. Their daily lives had become intolerable: they were walking exhaustive distances for firewood, clean water was scarce, the soil was eroding, and their children were suffering from malnutrition. One hundred years of colonialism and neocolonialism had devastated the forests they'd lived with for centuries.

In 1977, Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement in Kenya and began teaching women about the connection between environmental problems and their daily problems. Through chilling first person accounts and TV-news footage, *Taking Root* documents the Green Belt Movement's dramatic political confrontations of the 1980s and '90s –a time when Maathai and other Kenyan women endured violent suppression, hunger strike, and risked personal injury. *Taking Root* also chronicles the women's successful political action in 2002 that helped to bring down Daniel Arap Moi, dictator of Kenya for 24 years. Contemporary *cinema verité* footage of the tree

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nurseries, and the improved lives of the women and children who tend them, is testimony to the power of Maathai’s vision and the positive change it has brought about. *Taking Root* captures a world-view in which nothing is perceived as impossible

Community Cinema is affiliated with the independent media organization ITVS or Independent Television Service. ITVS Community Cinema is a monthly screening series that pairs independently produced documentary films with leading organizations working to resolve related social issues in communities across the country. All film content featured in ITVS Community Cinema will broadcast nationally on the Emmy Award-winning PBS series Independent Lens. The national broadcast premiere is April 14, 2009; check listings for the local broadcast date.

Learn about other events at the San Diego Public Library’s Central Library and 35 branches, find links to numerous additional resources, or search for materials in the Library’s catalog online at www.sandiegolibrary.org.

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