

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

People's participation

Children pick blueberries in Finland – where an “Everyman’s Right” provides open access to all forests, making it possible for anyone to pick berries and mushrooms without restriction in any forest, whether private or publicly owned.

METLA/ERKKI OKSANEN



Democratic, participatory decision-making, involving all those who have a direct stake in forest resources, is of critical importance for their effective, sustainable management. A women's forest user group in Nepal helps give a voice to those who have traditionally had less say.

FAO/FO-5505/THOMAS HOFER

Trees are often gathering places for community democracy: a local government development planning meeting in Guinea, near Fouta Djallon. UNCDF/841/ADAM ROGERS



15 SEPTEMBER
International Day of Democracy
10 DECEMBER
Human Rights Day

The Tree of Guernica ("Gernikako Arbola" in Basque) is an oak tree that symbolizes traditional freedoms for the Basque people of Spain. The original tree was planted in the fourteenth century and lasted 450 years. Under it, the Lords of Biscay swore to respect the Biscayan liberties. The tree has been replanted several times on the same site, and modern leaders continue to be sworn in there. Government gardeners keep several spare trees grown from the tree's acorns. The trunk of the original tree's successor, planted in 1742, is preserved in a small temple nearby (right).

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Public service



Participants in a food-for-work project sponsored by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in Afghanistan planted over 80 000 trees during the first six months of 2007, in addition to building or repairing roads and canals. UN PHOTO/WFP/167254



These volunteers in Umbria, Italy cleaned the mountain forest in observation of an Ecological Day sponsored by a local hunting association. They gathered more than a tonne of refuse, including old appliances, mattresses and tyres left by the roadsides, restoring the forest as a place of beauty.

GOODMORNING UMBRIA



Farmers and community pillars Houssain (centre) and Mahfoud (right) volunteer with a project for community-based adaptation to climate change, supported by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. They contribute their time, tools and land in developing water-sharing systems and tree-planting initiatives, and share their knowledge with local youth. Here, they discuss climate change and its effect on their oasis at Iguiouaz, Morocco, with a respected elder. On International Volunteer Day in 2009, UNV organized for thousands of volunteers around the world to collectively put in 1.5 million hours of effort to tackle climate change and other environmental issues.

UNV/BAPTISTE DE VILLE D'AVRAY

- 23 JUNE
United Nations Public Service Day
- 19 AUGUST
World Humanitarian Day
- 24 OCTOBER
United Nations Day
- 5 DECEMBER
International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development



Corporate volunteers in a Swiss mountain forest clear a stump area to help favour regeneration and prevent blockage of streams (see article in *Unasylva* 236). BERGWALDPROJECT

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Conflict and peace

The Nobel Peace Prize (2004) awarded to Wangari Maathai, founder of Kenya's Green Belt Movement, underlined the interconnectedness of environmental conservation, gender issues and peace. Through its extensive tree planting and other projects, the Green Belt Movement (composed primarily of women) has promoted environmental consciousness, volunteerism, conservation of local biodiversity, self-empowerment, community development and accountability. Maathai is shown here handing over a plant for distribution in 1983.

UN PHOTO/317842/JACKIE CURTIS



1 JANUARY

**One Day of Peace and Sharing/
World Day of Peace**

20 FEBRUARY

World Day of Social Justice

29 MAY

**International Day of United Nations
Peacekeepers**

21 SEPTEMBER

International Day of Peace

2 OCTOBER

International Day of Non-Violence

6 NOVEMBER

**International Day for Preventing the
Exploitation of the Environment in
War and Armed Conflict**

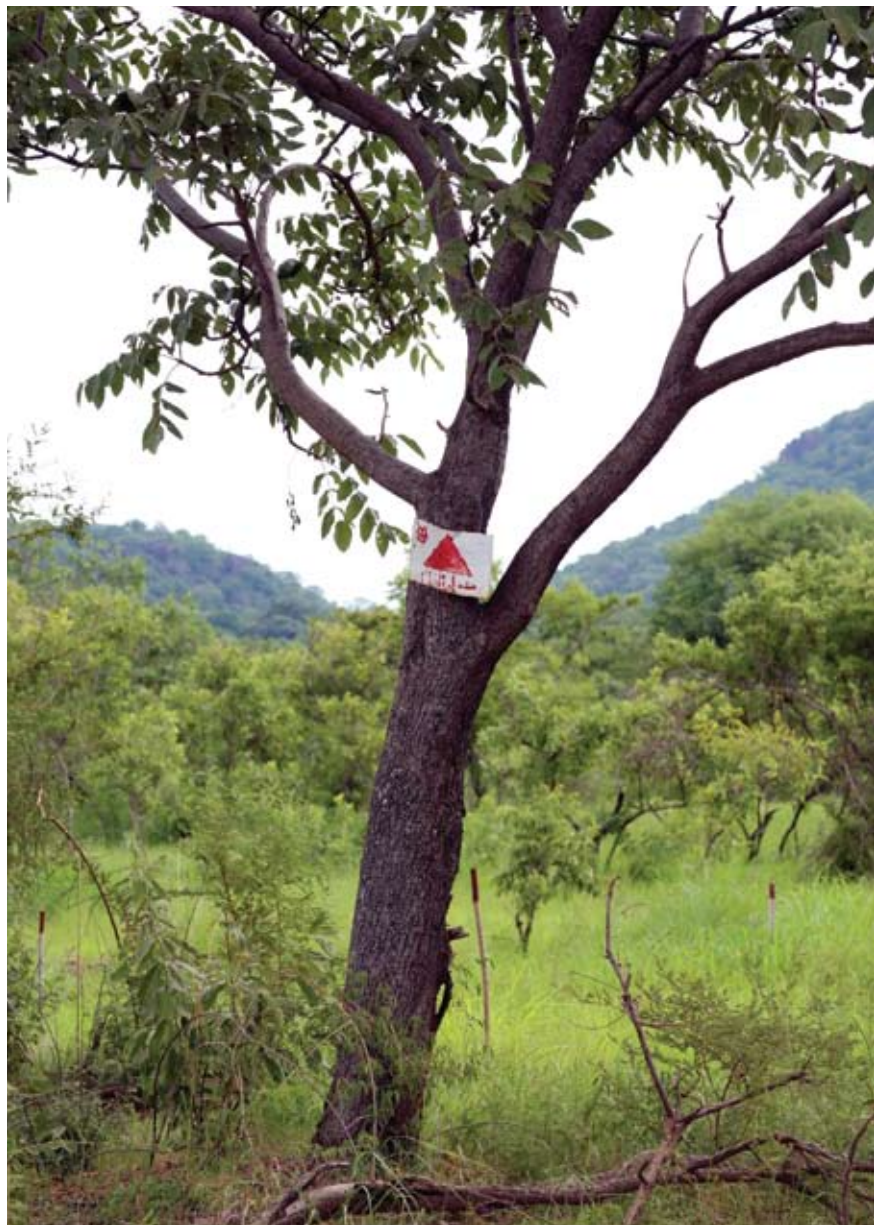


Buddhist monks of the Santi Sena (or Peace Army), meeting in the Prey Koki forest in Cambodia's Svay Rieng province. Monks from Santi Sena have replanted tens of thousands of trees here after the forest was destroyed by bombing during the Viet Nam war, and more recently by illegal loggers.

IRIN/200907131044260489/©DAVID GOUGH



Conflict and violence are particularly widespread in forested regions, in part because many impoverished people live in remote forested areas far from government influence, where property rights are often poorly developed. Outside intervention can also cause local conflict, particularly when it is profit driven (as in extraction of natural resources such as timber). Remote forest areas also provide cover for insurgents. Furthermore, war in forest areas is often financed by timber incomes, usually illegal.



4 APRIL
**International Day for Mine
Awareness and Assistance in
Mine Action**

A sign on a tree warning of land mines in Southern Sudan, 2007. Land mines are a threat to both people and forests.

IRIN/2007070512/©MANOOCHER DEGhati

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Human rights

21 MARCH

**International Day for the
Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

20 JUNE

World Refugee Day

Southern Sudan is richly endowed with natural forest and woodlands, on which people depend for grazing, fuelwood and charcoal, and wood and non-wood forest products. During the second Sudanese Civil War, many Dinka, one of the main tribes in Southern Sudan, had to flee from their homes to escape racial and religious persecution or massacre. These displaced Dinkas wave on their return to their home and traditional livelihoods. ©SVENTORFINN/IOM 2006 - MSD0134



The area of Thailand along the Myanmar border has some of the country's most beautiful forest. It also houses seven refugee camps holding up to half a million refugees at any one time. The largest, Mae La, is home to over 45 000 refugees from Myanmar. Most are ethnic Karen who fled to Thailand because of systematic ethnicity-based persecution which resulted in loss of their freedoms and livelihoods, forced labour and demolition of their villages. Although movement outside the camp is restricted, many of the refugees find a way to forage in the forest for goods to barter and trade.

©IOM/MTH0243/THIERRY FALISE



20 FEBRUARY
World Day of Social Justice

25 MARCH
**International Day of Remembrance
of the Victims of Slavery and the
Transatlantic Slave Trade**

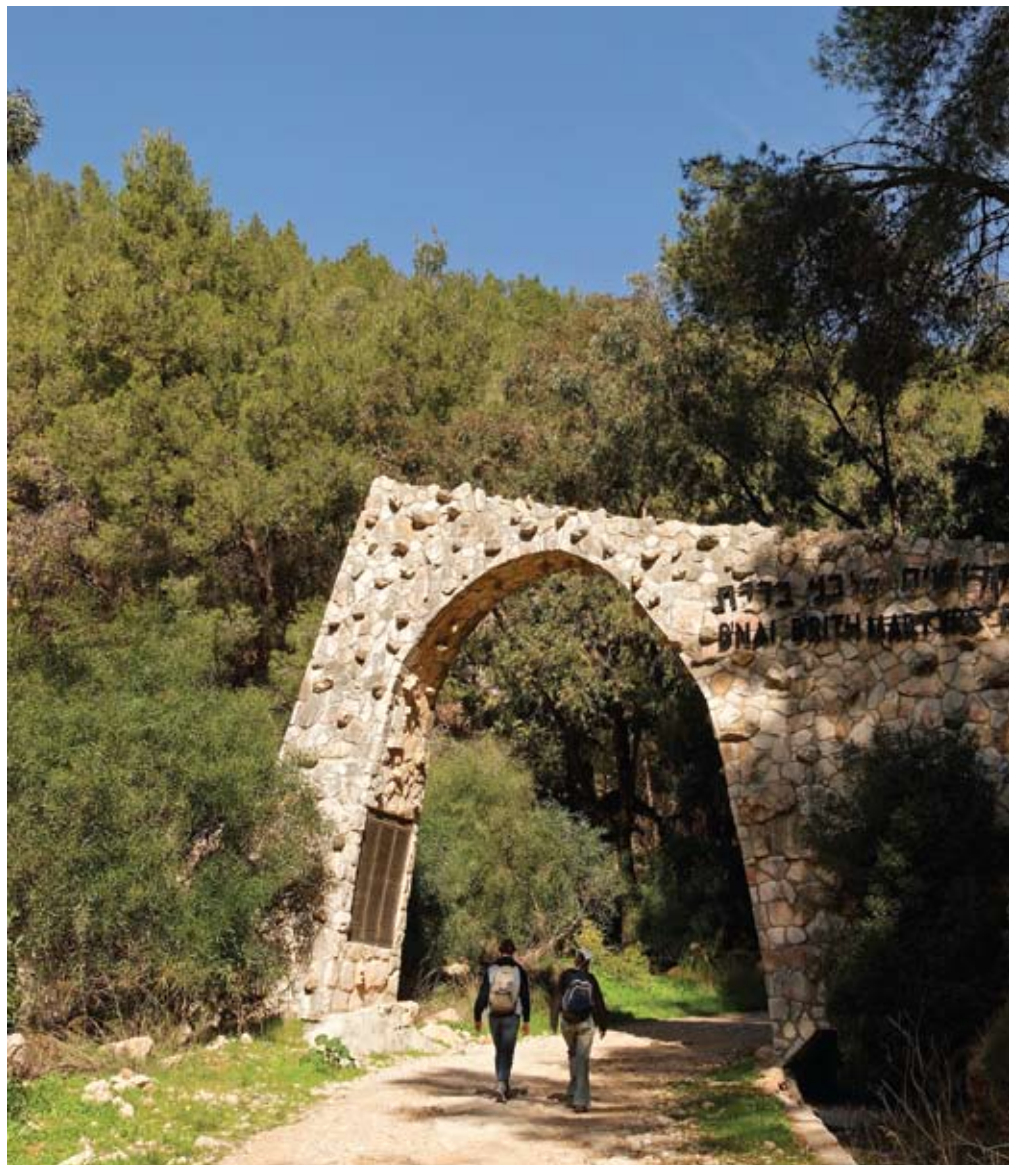
23 AUGUST
**International Day for the
Remembrance of the Slave Trade
and its Abolition**

2 DECEMBER
**International Day for the Abolition
of Slavery**

The famous Cotton Tree of Freetown, Sierra Leone. In 1792 a group of former African American slaves, who had gained their freedom by fighting for the British during the American War of Independence, founded modern Freetown. According to legend, they held a service around the tree upon their arrival to give thanks for their deliverance to a free land. Sierra Leoneans believe that this very tree was where the settlers prayed more than 200 years ago, and they regard it as the symbol of their capital city. Sierra Leoneans still pray and make offerings for peace and prosperity beneath the great Cotton Tree. PETER C. ANDERSEN

27 JANUARY
**International Day of
Commemoration in Memory of the
Victims of the Holocaust**

Planting trees, which live long lives, is a fitting way to remember the dead. The Martyrs' Forest on the outskirts of Jerusalem, Israel (shown in the photo), was planted as a memorial to those who died in the Holocaust. It will eventually contain six million trees, symbolizing the six million Jews who perished at the hands of the Nazis in the Second World War. And in the Forest of the Righteous, adjacent to the Holocaust museum of Yad Vashem, one tree has been planted in honour of every non-Jew who made an effort to oppose the Holocaust. These commemorative forests also contribute to the afforestation of Israel, a low-forest-cover country. ©HANAN ISACHAR



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Legality



An employee of the National Tapajos Forest in Brazil shows effects of illegal logging in a government protected area. This forest has a management programme for sustainable industrial timber production.

UN PHOTO/160710/ESKINDER DEBEBE

9 DECEMBER
International Anti-Corruption Day



At a government checkpoint in the Congo, all vehicles are monitored for illegal bushmeat, valuable non-wood forest products or timber. ©CIB/CONGO

26 JUNE
International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking



Fighting cocaine means fighting deforestation: In the last 30 years of the twentieth century, the Cochabamba tropics of Bolivia suffered severe loss of forest resources as a result of clearing for coca leaf cultivation. An FAO project helped introduce alternative forestry and agroforestry practices to diversify and strengthen local economies and raise living standards so that farmers would have less incentive to grow coca illegally. FAO/20753/JON SPAULL