

Friday, 29 May 2015

New Generation Appeals to World Leaders: 'Save Our Soils for Us and Our Children!'

Amsterdam Declaration focuses on need for immediate action to safeguard soils - vital for food supplies - for future generations

AMSTERDAM - "Please look after our planet. Cultivate it, pass it on responsibly, so we may do the same. Please look after the soil."

This was the urgent plea, on behalf of the Youth Food Movement and the world's children, of 20-year-old Nyakallo Makgoba at the closing ceremony of the Celebrating Soil! Celebrating Life! conference in Amsterdam last Friday.

Speaking at the UN-backed event on the importance of soil to food supplies, Nyakallo Makgoba and Joszi Smeets of the Youth Food Movement demanded delegates, including ministers, royalty and business leaders, act to stop to soil erosion and degradation.

After a deeply felt moment of silence, eight-year-old Meike from the Netherlands raised the Amsterdam Declaration above her head and led the way out to thunderous applause.

The moment made clear what the event was really about, this encounter of spiritual leaders, NGOs, business leaders, activists and politicians, which took place in Amsterdam's Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) from 26-27 June.

With 24 billion tons of soil, worth €1.5 trillion (10¹²) euros, lost per year, these are no mere statistics - without fertile soil, food security goals are hopeless. While support by stars like Julia Roberts has added weight, it was the next generation's appeal which made the biggest impact.

As part of the 'Amsterdam' Declaration, delegates promised to work to save fertile soils. The Declaration makes a strong case for organic farming, stating that it should be acknowledged as a fundamental solution for biodiversity, the climate and food security.

Guerrilla

action

Earlier on Friday, a group of VIP's carried out a guerrilla gardening action on the Amsterdam pavement. Among them were author-activist Vandana Shiva, Volkert Engelsman (CEO Nature & More), Thabo Makgoba (Archbishop, South Africa) and Joszi Smeets (director of the Youth Food Movement).

Wielding spades, they ripped out slabs of the Amsterdam pavement in a symbolic gesture, before adding compost and planting organic seeds.

Volkert Engelsman, who leads the Save Our Soils coalition, said: "Farmers who look after soils are the doctors of the future. But consumers are the 'sleeping giant': only if they fill shopping bags with products that sustain soil health, will change take place."

<http://www.saveoursoils.com>

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SOURCE: Nature & More / Save Our Soils

Posted by Thabo Makgoba at 19:43