



Photos: C.M. Bordier

TAKING ACTION

TUNZA means 'to treat with care and affection' in Kiswahili, East Africa's most widely spoken language. Theo Oben, Chief of UNEP's Children and Youth/Sport and Environment Unit, told this year's delegates that this concept kicked off the first Tunza Conference, which took place in Dubna, Russia, in 2003. 'The conferences are part of UNEP's long-term strategy. We want to foster a generation of environmentally conscious people who, through their actions and advocacy, help create a sustainable world.'

Michael Schade, Senior Vice-President of Bayer, added: 'The conferences promote awareness, networking and the sharing of experiences and good practices among young people. UNEP and Bayer have the same aim: to support young people worldwide in their environmental activities.' To that

end, field trips were organized around Bangalore for us – delegates from 67 countries – providing chances to talk to and learn from local activists. To take one example, Mahila Samakhya, a Government programme that has been working for the last 14 years across 10 Indian states, hosted a session on gender issues and female empowerment.

Delegates also learned more about the December 2004 tsunami, which killed at least 150,000 people in India and Southeast Asia. We were especially touched by the experiences of two volunteers who have been working in Sri Lanka with the International Internship on Disaster Management, a programme of the Centre for Environment Education (CEE), in collaboration with UNEP. They showed that young people can help make a better world.*

'It's my first time outside China,' said Li Yin, a Bayer Young Environmental Envoy. 'This Conference is a very good chance to meet people, to share ideas and get experience.'

We can discuss what we can do at home,

and we have the opportunity to build partnerships with others.'

Presentations given by UNEP and CEE associates offered delegates more information about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Workshops, held over two days, allowed small groups to share their experiences of specific aspects of activism such as fund-raising and education on sustainable development, providing practical advice about how to further individual action.

'It was very interesting and useful to discuss ways of involving our communities in achieving the MDGs, and seeing how we could introduce them in our own countries, with our different cultures,' said Alancay Morales Garro, from Costa Rica, who works with indigenous people. 'I found it inspiring.'

Delegates were also able to develop networks by getting to know one



TAMAR KIM
 and knowledge
 responsibility
 activities / TAKE ACTION
 understanding what we do
 non-formal / peer education
 pedagogy
 system / program of learning
 educating for goal
 sharing - two way

STRENGTHENING COMMITMENTS

Cécile Marie Bordier

MAKING FRIENDS

TUNZA Youth Advisor for Europe

Bangalore, the 'green city of India', turned a little greener when more than 140 youth leaders from around the world arrived for the second Tunza International Youth Conference, which took place in October 2005. The Conference – organized by UNEP and Bayer, its partner for Youth and the Environment; India's Centre for Environment Education (CEE); and the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) of India – brought together people aged between 15 and 24 from around the world to discuss practical action to help achieve three of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

* If you are interested in volunteering with the International Internship on Disaster Management, please contact children.youth@unep.org.

another, swapping e-mail addresses and working together to create a community to help further our projects and turn the MDGs into reality.

Each delegate made a personal commitment, coming onto the stage and promising to turn words into action – walking the walk, as well as talking the talk. Zach Bjornson, from the United States, pledged to 'make my school greener'. Others vowed to organize workshops to raise awareness about the MDGs. Delegates from the same region discussed ways to work together to have a wider impact, such as the Europeans, who committed themselves to campaigning against air pollution.

The Conference was a wonderful experience for all who were there, particularly the exchange of ideas, learning from different cultures and savouring India in an environment of positive energy and inspiration. We developed strong friendships that will help us support one another in our common pursuit – to be the change.

