

Wangari Maathai



Passion or Profession: Environmentalist

Period: 1940–

In 2004, Maathai became the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded for her commitment to sustainable development and democracy. In 1977, she formed the Green Belt Movement, which encouraged poor women to combat deforestation and desertification by planting trees. She has since campaigned on a range of social and environmental issues. Maathai was elected to Kenya's parliament in 2002 and became deputy environment minister in 2003.