**Section 2 ‘Something Wonderful Happens When You Plant a Seed’**

**Reading 1**

1. The two major events that have earned Wangari Maathai worldwide recognition are —hercontribution to the Green Belt Movement since 1977. She formed a network of rural womenwho planted 30 million trees and in 2004 she got the Nobel Peace Prize. The other

contribution that won her respect and appreciation internationally is that despite being

beaten, harassed and jailed for her good work, she fought the elections to get into the

Parliament so that she could change the system from within.

2. Wangari Maathai believed that we all should assist the earth. We should together heal thewounds of the earth and in the process heal our own wounds too. She said that we need to embrace the creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder.

4. The rural women in Kenya faced the problem of not having enough energy for the home.The main source of energy which they used came from firewood. Another major problem was the lack of clean drinking water. Wangari thought that planting trees would solve much of the problem. Because planting a tree was easy, anybody could do it. Planting a seed led to something wonderful. Also, water came from the forested mountains, from the mountains that her efforts with rural women had afforested.

5. A lot of farmers were growing cash crops like tea and coffee for selling in the international market. They had stopped growing food crops for household consumption which became the main cause of malnutrition.

It was linked to environmental degradation because the environment provides us with many basic necessities of life. Thus, environmental degradation was linked to the basic needs of communities.

6. According to Wangari, trees were a good source of fuel, this meant the problem of energy deficiency that the rural women of Kenya were facing could be solved by planting trees. Trees also provided building material for fences, fruits, fodder and added to the aesthetic beauty of the place. Additionally, the women were able to earn a little money because the Green Belt Movement paid them for each seedling they planted.

7. Environment health and good governance are linked because maintaining good

environmental health was also a responsibility of the government. The people always blamed the government whenever they were asked about their grievances and why their basic requirements were not met. The Green Belt Movement started explaining to the people why the trees were disappearing and thus forced the government to sit up, take notice and take action. This movement encouraged the people to stand up for their environment and their rights, and most importantly, to play active parts in preserving the environment that gave them everything.

8. Wangari did not give up her herculean task because she knew the people did not have to live like this always. As long as there was a way of breaking this cycle of poverty and

disempowerment she found the courage and power to continue fighting. She saw that her

efforts were bearing fruits, their campaign became successful, it said—When you planted a tree, it grew.

9. Wangari said that she was used to having only a few shillings in her pocket. The prize money of $1.3million would be spent to establish the Wangari Maathai Foundation. She wanted the people of Kenya and also in other countries to have the opportunity of doing what she had done.