



## Food Garden opens at United Nations Headquarters, New York

### Press Release

New York, 24 July 2015 - The first ever food garden on international territory has opened at the United Nations Headquarters in New York today.

Officially opened by Secretary-General's Chef de Cabinet, Ms. Susana Malcorra, the New York City Commissioner for International Affairs, Ms. Penny Abeywardena and New York City Commissioner for Parks and Recreation, Mr. Mitchell Silver, the event also included the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, H.E. Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, H.E. Mr. Kingsley Mamabolo, Permanent Representative of South Africa, the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

The UN Food Garden is an initiative of a small group of UN staff who partnered with local volunteers, NYC Parks' Green Thumb Program and Brooklyn Grange farms to transform unused land at the United Nations Headquarters complex into food gardens.

The opening of the Food Garden was held in conjunction with events in honor of Nelson Mandela International Day and participants were invited to contribute to the garden by planting seedlings as part of a campaign to take action and inspire change.

The UN Food Gardens are managed by an independent body consisting of UN staff and local community members. They currently receive no funding from the UN or any UN agency. They seek additional financial sponsors and advisory board members to help them build on their success and expand the ground-breaking project throughout the UN grounds.

"The opening of our food garden today is an amazing accomplishment. We feel passionate about connecting policy makers and international representatives through the simple act of growing food. For 10,000 years, people grew most of their own food. In the past 50 years or so, we have lost that connection to the very thing that supports us," said Arif Khan, founder of the UN Food Gardens. "The UN is a unique place and we hope that the gardens serve to connect a wide variety of people through the most basic of activities. No politics here."

Staff at the UN hope that the garden will not only provide food, but also opportunities for intercultural exchange and learning, setting an example of good urban land stewardship right at the heart of Manhattan.

Eventually the UN Food Garden team hopes that food grown in the gardens will be used in the UN staff canteens, and seeds will be distributed to UN visitors from around the world. Food waste from the UN catering facilities will be recycled into compost for the garden beds.

#### Further Information:

[www.unfoodgardens.org](http://www.unfoodgardens.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/UNFoodGardens>

[www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay](http://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay)

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