

The World in Our Hands: Protecting the Planet

Twelve-year-old Alice Abassah from Africa cares about the environment. She recently started a clean-up program in her home country of Ghana. "I was inspired by my teacher to go around once a week and collect litter," Alice told *Weekly Reader*. "When my friends and neighbors saw me, they joined me."

Alice is one of 450 kids from 50 countries around the world who recently [2004] gathered to help care for the planet. The kids attended the 2004 International Children's Conference on the **Environment**². The conference was held in New London, Connecticut.

Weekly Reader joined the festivities to learn how the kid **delegates** are helping the environment. A delegate is someone who represents his or her country.

United Nations



Weekly Reader

Parade of Flags. Some children dressed in costumes to represent their countries and walked with their national flags.

During their week long conference, the kid delegates participated in workshops, discussions, and field trips. Some kids traded pins representing their nations. They also displayed their countries' flags during a special ceremony. The environmental conference resembled a miniature version of the **United Nations**.

² **environment:** the air, water, minerals, and living things that surround and affect living things at any time

Lesson 1: **Worksheet for Independent Practice**

The United Nations is an organization made up of countries around the world. Members of the United Nations work toward achieving world peace and solving global problems, such as environmental concerns. The United Nations helped to arrange the conference.

Kids Speak Out

At the conference, kids challenged world leaders to help them protect the environment. They asked leaders to enforce laws that support the environment and **conserve**, or save, natural resources, such as trees and water.

In their own schools and communities, the delegates all participate in environmental projects. Many of the children shared their projects and ideas at the conference.



Weekly Reader
The Little Eco Friends put on a play and gave a speech about helping to protect the environment.

A group of boys from India, called the Little Eco Friends, put on a play and talked about the ways people can help the environment--from planting trees to protecting wildlife.

It's a Small World!



Weekly Reader
The kids made lots of new friends.

The conference also provided kids with the opportunity to learn about different **cultures** and to make international friends. A person's culture is his or her way of life, ideas, and traditions.

Eleven-year-old Federico Gonzalez from Colombia enjoyed learning about new cultures. Colombia is a country located in South America. "You get to know people who

speak different languages," he said.

Amanda Loewy, 11, from Massachusetts, had a blast! "I met kids from Japan, Taiwan, Uganda, Canada, Australia, and many other places," she told *Weekly Reader*. "I heard about the environmental issues that kids are facing all over the world. We talked about what we are doing to help the environment. I also made lots of good friends."