



70 interdisciplinary teams of educators, landscape architects, environmental educators and health professionals from 32 nations met in October at Arbor Day Farm in Nebraska City, Nebraska, to create action plans to reconnect the world's children with nature.

The **Connecting Children with Nature Action Forum**, sponsored by the World Forum Foundation's Nature Action Collaborative for Children, was held at Arbor Day Farm's Lied Lodge & Conference Center on Oct. 17-20, 2010.

The purpose of the Forum was to nurture future generations of environmental stewards by equipping and training nature action teams from around the world to lead campaigns to connect children with nature in their communities, regions, and nations.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Joan Lombardi, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Inter-Departmental Liaison for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services, said:

"Encouraging young children to enjoy nature, to understand and value it, contributes to their health and well being and gives them a sense of discovery so important to a successful education."

Teams from nations as diverse as Scotland and Swaziland, Kenya and Canada, Malaysia and Montenegro, Bangladesh and Belize and Bolivia, as well as a number from the United States, participated in the Forum.

"We need to connect the child with the natural environment and help the child value it, so we will have individuals who become stewards and have a different attitude about our natural resources other than exploitation," said Irma Allen, who traveled from her native Swaziland to participate in the Forum.

The **Connecting Children with Nature Action Forum** added to the success of two prior international working forums on nature education sponsored by the World Forum Foundation. The Nature Action Forum, a featured project of the Clinton Global Initiative, brought together teams selected from hundreds of applications throughout the globe.

The teams focused on adopting public policy, creating nature-friendly spaces for children, supporting families, hosting conferences and community forums, and creating multi-disciplinary college courses.

In addition to the training received at the Forum, the teams from throughout the world will be supported by an online Environmental Action Kit sponsored by IBM Global Work/Life Fund and created by Dimensions Educational Research Foundation in collaboration with the Nature Action Collaborative for Children. The Connecting Children with Nature Action Forum was hosted locally by the Arbor Day Foundation.