

Scotland to take centre stage in global #MoveTheDate conversation

SEPA is taking the #MoveTheDate conversation into homes and businesses across the world this August, as it hosts the global launch of Earth Overshoot Day.

Journalist, presenter and broadcaster Steph McGovern will join SEPA and co-hosts the University of Glasgow, in a virtual event on Thursday 20 August, featuring panellists Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform; Mathis Wackernagel, President of California-based Global Footprint Network; John Elkington, founder of Volans; Terry A'Hearn, CEO of SEPA; Jaime L Toney, Professor in Environmental and Climate Science at the University of Glasgow and Catriona Patterson, board member of the 2050 Climate Group.

The webinar – *Choosing our future by design, not disaster* – is being delivered in partnership with Global Footprint Network, the international think-tank behind Earth Overshoot Day, which marks the day when humanity has used more ecological resources this year than natural ecosystems can regenerate in the whole year.

This year, the Global Footprint Network has calculated Earth Overshoot Day as 22 August, more than three weeks later than last year. The date reflects the 9.3% reduction of humanity's Ecological Footprint from 1 January to Earth Overshoot Day compared to the same period last year, which is a direct consequence of the coronavirus-induced lockdowns around the world. Decreases in wood harvest and CO2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion are the major drivers behind the historic shift in the long-term growth of humanity's Ecological Footprint.

This event is the centrepiece of this year's global #MoveTheDate conversation, with Scotland taking centre stage in recognition of its important role in the upcoming COP discussions in 2021.

It is the second #MoveTheDate event led by SEPA and Global Footprint Network this month, after more than 500 delegates representing 100 organisations took part in an early debate, where polls showed delegates believe the world isn't moving fast enough on climate change, their opinion of employers is influenced by their commitment to social and sustainability issues and the global lockdown is an opportunity to re-assess and restart our economy more sustainably.

Terry A'Hearn, SEPA's CEO, said: "SEPA's 'one planet prosperity' vision is focused on helping our communities and businesses thrive within the resources of our one planet. The scale of the environmental challenge facing humanity is enormous and we know no organisation can tackle this alone.

“That’s why we’ve brought the #MoveTheDate discussion to Scotland and why we’re partnering with the Global Footprint Network and the University of Glasgow to spark the conversation internationally later this month.

“The time to act is now. In the future, the only successful countries, corporates and communities will be those that confront our sustainability challenges head-on and turn them into economic and social innovation opportunities.

“Yes, the scale of the task is enormous. Even in a year when human activity across parts of the world ground to a halt due to COVID-19, we are still vastly overusing our planet’s natural resources. But this year has also shown us that we do have the ability to change and we can #MoveTheDate.”

Mathis Wackernagel, President of Global Footprint Network added: “A delayed COP26 means that local initiatives are even more important if we want to secure our own futures. Those who embrace one-planet prosperity early on vastly increase their chances to secure their well-being for the long-term. They are choosing the future they want by design over being driven into an imposed future by disaster.”

Jaime L Toney, Professor in Environmental and Climate Science at the University of Glasgow said: “Universities are well placed to influence the sustainability agenda through education, research and partnership. They have a duty to create the next generation of climate and carbon literate students who will become our agents of cultural change for a sustainable future.”

Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform said:

“Earth Overshoot Day is a striking reminder of the urgency of the climate emergency and the need for action and global cooperation to ensure that we tackle climate change and conserve the world’s precious resources.

“We can and must continue to push this date back by building a green recovery from COVID-19 which has sustainability and wellbeing at its heart.”

Registration for the free event is open now at <https://hopin.to/events/movethedate>. *Choosing our future by design, not disaster* takes place on Thursday 20 August.

Ends