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September 27th is Earth Overshoot Day: Humanity has exhausted the budget of what nature can provide this year

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Press Release ^[1]

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Similar to the way a bank statement tracks income against expenditures, Global Footprint Network tracks human demand on nature (for example, for providing food, producing raw materials and absorbing CO₂) against nature's capacity to regenerate those resources and absorb the waste. Its calculations show that, in approximately nine months, we have surpassed a level of demand on resources that the planet would be able to sustainably support this year.

For the rest of the year, we will maintain our ecological deficit by depleting resource stocks and accumulating CO₂ in the atmosphere. "That's like spending your annual salary three months before the year is over, and eating into savings year after year. Pretty soon, you run out of savings," said Global Footprint Network President.

For the vast majority of human history, humanity has used nature's services – to build cities and roads; provide food and create products; and absorb the CO₂ generated by human activities – at a rate that was well within the means of what nature could regenerate. But, sometime in the 1970s, we crossed a critical threshold. Human demand on nature began outstripping what it could renewably produce, a condition known as ecological overshoot.

Global Footprint Network's preliminary 2011 calculations show we are now using resources at a rate it would take between 1.2 and 1.5 planets to sustainably support. Our research shows us on track to require the resources of two planets well before mid-century.

Ecological Footprint and biocapacity calculations that Global Footprint Network made last year placed Earth Overshoot Day a few weeks earlier in the year than this year's estimates do. This has raised the question as to whether we have reduced global overshoot. The answer, unfortunately, is no. Global Footprint Network is constantly improving the calculations and data sets that are the basis for determining Earth Overshoot Day, and as such the date of Earth Overshoot Day varies from year to year.

It is possible to turn the tide. Global Footprint Network and its network of partners, such as the Emirates Environmental Group, is working with individuals, organizations and governments around the globe to make decisions that are aligned with ecological reality –

decisions that can help close the ecological budget gap and provide for a prosperous future in the face of changing and challenging resource trends.

EEG's overall mission was formulated to help increase the protection for the environment and planet, through means of education and community action. EEG has many successful Campaigns and events that directly help to reduce the planet's ecological debt that is increasing year to year. Every participant and volunteer that takes part in EEG's campaigns is helping to reduce the burden of the human race on the planet and together we can and are, making a difference.

EEG's recycling campaigns are the major contributors to reversing this debt within the UAE, and everyone can take part! Through the collection and recycling of precious materials and resources, EEG is helping to divert thousands of tonnes of material away from the landfills and offer them a new lease of life as a recycled product. Using materials that are already manufactured saves the planet's remaining natural resources and precious habitats.

The benefits of recycling are endless; it also makes social and economic sense. Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for 3 hours; it takes approximately 60% less energy to turn existing paper into recycled paper, than it does to turn wood into paper; recycling 1 ton of paper saves around 17 averaged sized trees while saving at least 30,000 liters of water and 3000 - 4000 KWh of electricity. The facts and figures continue, but ultimately recycling saves resources, saves energy, reduces our carbon and ecological footprints, and prevents precious materials from sitting idle in a landfill whilst we destroy more habitats to manufacture more goods.

Emirates Environmental Group is dedicated to increase recycling efforts and environmental protection throughout the UAE. By running several campaigns, programmes and events throughout the year, awareness and dedication from the community, corporate sector and governments is thriving, but we can still recycle more and waste less.

To supplement these recycling efforts EEG also supports the 'Plant for the Planet' under a movement called 'The Million Tree Campaign'. This positive and interactive campaign is one of the favorites within the UAE and has led to over 2 million trees indigenous and plants to be planted across all areas of the UAE.

All of these additional green plants have so many benefits; they increase the natural areas within the country, which in turn increases the number of micro-habitats for a range of different species and wildlife. This helps to increase biodiversity and help maintain healthier and more stable environments. Additionally, believe it or not, more trees actually help to regulate the fresh water supply, by reducing land run off and keeping the water and the little rain that the UAE receives within nature's systems.

Trees also help to absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen, which on a small scale will not solve the world's greenhouse gas issues, but when combined with all the other tree planting projects across the world, EEG's efforts really are making a difference to planet.

Organizations like Global Footprint Network help us to see and understand the consequences of our actions. However, its huge army of supporters and independent environmental groups such as EEG is where the ground work takes place in every country across the globe.

You can help to reduce the Earth's ecological debt by getting involved with EEG's programmes and campaigns. Whether it is recycling, tree planting, education or community lectures, EEG has something that you will enjoy and feel proud to be apart of.

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