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Media FAQs: Guidelines on how to answer the most common questions on Earth Hour 2018

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What is Earth Hour?

Earth Hour is a global environmental movement of WWF, aimed at inspiring and empowering individuals, businesses, organizations and governments to take tangible action for the planet. As one of the first open-source climate change campaigns, it has grown from a symbolic event in one city in 2007 to the world's largest grassroots environmental movement spanning over 7,000 cities and 180 countries and territories. As the movement grows, the one-hour lights-out event continues to be the symbol of a broader commitment toward the planet. Learn more about Earth Hour at www.earthhour.org

How are Earth Hour and WWF related?

Earth Hour is an initiative of WWF, the world's leading conservation organization. In 2007, WWF began Earth Hour as an open-source campaign to engage a broader section of society to take a stand against climate change. The creation of Earth Hour was a step to bridge the gap between the conference rooms and living rooms - ensuring the efforts to tackle the planet's biggest environmental challenges include those around whom the issue revolves - people themselves.

What are the major landmarks that will be switching off lights?

Famous landmarks around the world participate in Earth Hour every year, including Big Ben (UK), Burj Khalifa (UAE), Colosseum (Italy), Eiffel Tower (France), Empire State Building (USA), Kremlin (Russia), Pyramids (Egypt), Sydney Opera House (Australia), Taipei 101 (Taiwan), the Acropolis (Greece), Victoria Harbour (Hong Kong), among many others. The final list of landmarks participating in Earth Hour 2018 will be available closer to the day itself.

When and where is Earth Hour taking place this year?

Earth Hour 2018 is on Saturday 24 March at 8:30 p.m. local time. Different countries are organizing events according to environmental issues that they feel are most relevant to them. Visit www.earthhour.org to see what's happening in locations around the world. Last year, more than 7,000 cities and 180 countries and territories participated in Earth Hour to show their commitment to a healthy planet.

What has Earth Hour achieved since the movement began?

Since 2007, WWF's Earth Hour has mobilized millions around the world to encourage action to protect our planet and its biodiversity against climate change. Impacts include:

- Successfully urging for new legislation for protection of forests twice the size of France in Russia in 2013-14, following a law to protect seas against oil pollution the previous year;
- Mobilizing public support for the creation of a 3.5 million hectare marine-protected area in Argentina;
- The creation of a 2,700-hectare Earth Hour forest in Uganda;



- Planting of 17 million trees in Kazakhstan.

But these are just some of the highlights of what has become the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment. There are so many more Earth Hour stories out there we're still discovering, and of course much more to do.

How is this year's Earth Hour different from previous years?

Together we have achieved so much on climate action but to realize its full potential, we must act today to stop biodiversity or nature loss. Protecting the planet's biodiversity is key to achieve our goal of a healthy, sustainable and climate-resilient future for all. Biodiversity is essential to the food we eat, to the water we drink and the air we breathe. But now, things are changing. Our planet is getting warmer, our forest cover thinner and our oceans dying and it is because of human activity – and climate change. Biodiversity loss is happening near each of us at a much larger scale than one would think, impacting everyone including people living in cities. If we don't act now on biodiversity loss, our cities could run out of water, the prices of our favourite foods may skyrocket and extreme weather events could increase in frequency and intensity.

As the world's largest grassroots environmental movement, Earth Hour is a unique opportunity to engage hundreds of millions of people and raise awareness about biodiversity. In the past decade, Earth Hour has played a key role in inspiring millions to take climate action, and this is exactly the kind of momentum we need to generate today around the importance of biodiversity. Earth Hour 2018 will spark global conversations about biodiversity to make people aware of how we are a part of biodiversity and biodiversity is a part of our well-being.

OR (depending on the media)

For Earth Hour 2018-2020, WWF's objective is to help achieve the UN [Convention on Biological Diversity's \(CBD\) Aichi Biodiversity Target 1](#), so that hundreds of millions of people understand the values of biodiversity and the current condition of our planet. Better informed and aware, they can take actions to live more sustainably and expect the same of businesses and their governments.

We aim to drive awareness, conversations and actions in the public and media about the importance of nature or biodiversity (and the danger of its loss) – in preparation of the Super Year 2020 when some of the world's most important policy instruments for sustainable development - the Paris Agreement, SDGs and CBD - will converge and influence policy makers to make the right decisions on loss of biodiversity by 2030.

Earth Hour is just the beginning. We want to use the 'moment' of Earth Hour to kickstart the conversation and engage hundreds of millions of people worldwide to take action through 2018-2020 and beyond. Through the movement and its mainstream appeal, we want to communicate to people the interconnectivity between us and our environment (biodiversity/Earth and its impact on climate change and vice versa and the role people play). Earth Hour will do this by asking people to Connect2Earth.

What does Earth Hour aim to achieve?

Today, as accelerating climate change and staggering biodiversity loss threaten the planet, we want to leverage the momentum and energy of the Earth Hour movement to connect people to Earth. All around us, biodiversity loss is happening like never before and we must act now to put a stop to it.

In the last 50 years alone, global wildlife numbers have declined by 67 per cent. And yet biodiversity forms the foundation of healthy forests, rivers and oceans. Take away species, and these ecosystems will collapse along with the clean air, water, food, medicines and climate services that they provide us. This has never been more



urgent.

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What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity found on Earth today consists of many millions of distinct biological species, the product of four billion years of evolution. Biological diversity is the resource upon which families, communities, nations and future generations depend. It is the link between all organisms on earth, binding each into an interdependent ecosystem, in which all species have their role - including human beings. It is the web of life.

Why is biodiversity important? How does it affect us?

Biodiversity is essential to the food we eat, to the water we drink and the air we breathe and yet, at present, biodiversity is not widely understood. Like climate change in the past, the concept of biodiversity loss seems unrelatable, distant and abstract and, as a result, its economic, social and environmental importance is often poorly undermined. This needs to change. By 2020, at the latest, people should be aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

Earth Hour has always been associated with climate change but in recent years this has extended to 'climate actions'. Like in previous years, Earth Hour aims to encourage individuals, businesses and governments around the world to push environmental issues up the agenda. From promoting renewable energy and sustainable agriculture, to funding projects that protect forests and ecosystems and encourage environmental education, the list of actions we can take — individually and collectively — for the environment is endless.

What does Earth Hour ask people to do?

The first thing anyone can do to get involved is to turn off non-essential lights during Earth Hour. But there is much more. Our objective is for people to take action for the environment beyond the hour, whether it is joining the conversation on earthhour.org and finding out more about what the loss of biodiversity means and what people can do about it, or [supporting a local WWF project](#) or getting involved in Earth Hour campaigns in their own country, or starting the movement in their own community. The vision is always to do more, so make the light switch the beginning of your journey.

What is the Connect2Earth concept?

Earth Hour has always been about the power of individuals to be a part of global conversations and solutions for our planet. Connect2Earth is a call for people worldwide to connect with the environmental issues and causes that they personally care about. This Earth Hour, we invite people around the world to 'spark' never-before conversations on the loss of nature around them. connect2earth.org is a platform to capture global conversations around biodiversity, for people to connect to each other and drive global awareness and action on biodiversity. It is the first step toward creating the global momentum we need to steer the planet away from a path of staggering biodiversity or nature loss.

After years of asking people to turn off the lights, why are you asking them to 'Connect2Earth'?



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Earth Hour is still about turning off the lights. But it is also about people going “beyond the hour”. We want to get people talking about biodiversity, nature, environment, oceans, forests, etc. Anything that helps them Connect2Earth and join the conversation on the most pressing environmental issues affecting them and our planet today.

What energy/carbon reductions have resulted from Earth Hour in previous years?

Earth hour does not claim that the event is an energy or carbon reduction exercise - it is a symbolic action. Therefore, we do not engage in the measurement of energy or carbon reduction levels. Earth Hour is an initiative to encourage individuals, businesses and governments around the world to take accountability for their ecological footprint and engage in dialogue that provides real solutions to our environmental challenges. Participation in Earth Hour symbolizes a commitment to change beyond the hour.

If everyone turns their lights back on at the same time will there be a power surge?

People celebrate Earth Hour in a variety of ways for different lengths of time, with many continuing to keep their lights off well beyond the designated hour. After ten years, it is clear everyone usually does not switch their lights back on simultaneously.

Aren't you using a lot of electricity and resources to promote this event?

Earth Hour takes every effort to minimize our footprint, not just for the hour but also all year round. We strive to ensure emissions from our team and different campaigns are offset and all participants are encouraged to think sustainably when planning or organizing events.

Earth Hour is advertised all over the world. Does Earth Hour pay for this advertising?

WWF's Earth Hour secures millions of dollars of free advertising space with the help of partners. Earth Hour's advice to teams around the world running local campaigns is to only seek either pro-bono or if absolutely necessary, low-bono advertising space.

What candles should people use for my Earth Hour event?

If you plan on burning candles during Earth Hour, make sure you use 100% beeswax candles or soy candles, which are gentler on our planet - smoke free, non-toxic and non-allergenic. They are also made of natural products, not petroleum-based materials, so they are effectively carbon neutral (the CO₂ they emit has already been taken from the atmosphere to produce the wax). Many communities are now replacing candles with LED lights for their event, as a way to promote energy efficient lighting - a key for any sustainable future. If you're using candles, though, make sure you take care. We suggest you carefully follow these tips:

1. Candles should only be used under adult supervision
2. Candles should never be left unattended
3. Candles should be kept away from children and pets
4. Extinguish candles before going to sleep
5. Keep candles away from flammable liquids and gas-combustible materials
6. Candles should be kept clear of any combustible materials such as paper, curtains and clothing
7. Candles should not be placed in windows as they can be blown over. Blinds and curtains can also catch alight
8. Candles should be placed on a stable, dry, heat-resistant surface away from drafts

How does switching off the lights make any difference?

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Switching off the lights is a symbolic gesture, the first step toward taking a stand for our planet. These are powerful visual reminders that not only do people care about the environmental issues we face but when individuals unite, the power of the collective can create massive impact as we have seen with Earth Hour over the past decade. As people turn off the light switch, they are making the switch from passive bystanders to showing they care and are ready to take action for the planet. The popular appeal of these highly visual symbolic gestures also helps WWF and Earth Hour communicate the importance of environmental issues and the need to take action through media and social media channels throughout the year.

Isn't Earth Hour just a gimmick or the kind of armchair activism that doesn't really translate into real impact?

Consider this: In 2014, the Galapagos Islands became the first place in Ecuador to ban all plastic; thousands of families in Madagascar are now using wood-saving stoves; homes in India and the Philippines are lit up with solar power; and WWF-China is crowdsourcing thousands of solutions to air pollution thanks to Earth Hour. These are just some of the changes that Earth Hour has helped bring about to date. As people turn off the light switch, they are making the switch from passive bystanders to showing they care and are ready to take action for the planet and that is the beginning of the kind of people engagement and mobilization we need to build a healthy, sustainable planet for all.

One issue with Earth Hour in developing-nation cities such as Jakarta and Mumbai, is that people are used to living with blackouts. Is powering down the lights sending the right message in places where power outages are so common?

Earth Hour is so much more than lights out. Yes, global landmarks switching off is often what catches people's attention but at the same time, we have had communities in off the grid villages in India and the Philippines, in energy scarce areas in Ghana, Uganda and Libya, celebrate Earth Hour in different ways (switching to solar lamps, creating an Earth Hour forest) to use this powerful moment of solidarity for the planet to show decision-makers that we are united in our hope of building a green, safe and clean energy future for the planet and people.

Critics say the switch-off is an insult to human progress. A problem with Earth Hour in some countries is that power outages have - controversially - been linked to renewables. Opponents of clean energy use the annual switch-off to associate climate action with living in the darkness. How do we react to this?

Earth Hour is the opposite of living in darkness. It is a moment that shines for the hope and potential we have to create a brighter, better future for people and the planet. Yes, global landmarks switching off is often what catches people's attention but at the same time, Earth Hour has been the force behind global momentum for action on climate- from climate-friendly policy and legislation at national and business level to actions by individuals and communities to switch to renewables, sustainable living choices and more. This is what Earth Hour is about, the positive impact we can create as individuals and a collective to build a green, healthy and sustainable future for the planet.

Climate change and biodiversity loss are too big an issue for us to make any real difference. How does supporting Earth Hour change this?

Yes, these are challenging issues, but it is possible to tackle it if every person, organization and country decides to take actions to make a difference. What makes Earth Hour unique is its grassroots appeal that empowers people to act on locally-relevant issues to make a larger, global impact. Through all of the outcomes generated by Earth Hour in the past ten years, we aim to inspire even more people to act on the environmental

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challenges facing our planet.

Is Earth Hour still relevant at a time when some major countries and governments are turning away from environmental and climate action?

Perhaps more than ever. When Earth Hour started in 2007 it was precisely to send a strong message to a climate-sceptic government that climate change was an issue people cared about. Since then, not only has the movement grown but the momentum we are seeing among people, businesses, cities and even countries, is irreversible. As new climate records are broken with increasing frequency and nature sends us constant reminders of growing environmental challenges, movements like Earth Hour which spans over 180 countries and territories are an important reminder of the determination of communities, organizations and governments around the world to create a healthy, sustainable future - and planet - for all.

Our use of internet-based technology and data has quite a large carbon footprint itself. Why then is Earth Hour advocating the use of technology to promote sustainable living?

The reality is we all need to make sustainable choices in different aspects of our life - food, energy, transport, electricity use etc - and this begins with awareness. The use of technology has grown exponentially to pervade almost all of our lives in some form or shape and when we thought about how we can reach and connect a maximum number of people with the conversation we urgently need to have on the state of our planet, we realized we could perhaps look at this prevalence of technology as an asset to create that mass awareness and engagement we need to spark. Like the Earth Hour lights out event which has now grown into the world's largest grassroots movement, the use of the connect2earth platform is the first step to inspire more people to take environmental action at individual, community, regional and national levels to create the impact we need to build a healthy and sustainable planet for all.

Whose idea was Earth Hour?

Earth Hour came from a think tank initiated by Earth Hour Co-Founder, Andy Ridley, resulting in the formation of a partnership between WWF-Australia, Leo Burnett and Fairfax Media to address the climate change issue. In 2007, there was still a degree of skepticism and denial on the issue of climate change. Earth Hour came as the inspiration to rally people to the reality of climate change and start a dialogue about what we as individuals can do to help address the planet's biggest environmental challenge yet. Leo Burnett partnered with WWF to promote the idea and help make the campaign a reality in Sydney, a campaign which has now gone beyond Australia and climate change to symbolize the growing global pursuit of a better, sustainable future for all.

You will find below a list of questions compiled from previous Earth Hour interviews and questions we anticipate for Earth Hour 2018. While some may not come across as standard, you will note that the messaging guidelines do provide you with the approach and thinking you would need to respond and please feel free to adapt the below pointers or ideas as per your own tone, interviewer's interest and type of outlet.

So it's that time of the year again when the world plunges into darkness to raise awareness for climate change and the environment. Tell us, what do you think is the reason for Earth Hour's appeal?

The connect with people. Climate change and biodiversity loss affects us all and we all are increasingly aware that we have a role to play in causing it...and solving it.

But all of this lights out, does this really help the cause?

In the past ten years with Earth Hour, we have seen...

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Consider this: In 2014, the Galapagos Islands became the first province in Ecuador to ban all plastic; thousands of families in Madagascar are now using wood-saving stoves; homes in India and the Philippines are lit up with solar power; and WWF-China is crowdsourcing thousands of solutions to air pollution thanks to Earth Hour. These are just some of the changes that Earth Hour has helped bring about to date.

The movement is about what people can achieve when we come together and that is the kind of momentum we need to tackle our planet's biggest environmental challenge yet...

So what are the outcomes people have achieved with Earth Hour? Any parting words?

From a sea of change in Russia and Argentina to an Earth Hour forest in Uganda, there are numerous living examples of what people can achieve across the world and that is what I want to leave people with - together we can create a resounding impact. We have been doing it for a decade and our efforts must continue. Join us.

If you could have one message for everyone watching what would it be?

We are causing unprecedented climate change and biodiversity loss, now is our time to spark real change instead. Join us on....

What is happening for Earth Hour 2018?

From Zambia to Spain and China to Colombia, people are coming together to take action on renewable energy, forests, sustainable lifestyles, climate education and more...

Why should people join the movement?

Climate change and nature loss are the biggest environmental challenges facing our planet today and we all have a role to play...WWF works with governments, businesses and people are the missing link...

How can we make a difference?

People are at the heart of the environmental challenges we face today - and the solutions we need to turn things around.

What are your favourite Earth Hour stories?

Every Earth Hour story leaves me inspired but a favourite has to be...

Do you think we will see more initiatives like Earth Hour in the future?

I hope we do. Science and everyday reality is showing us that people are pushing the planet to the brink and we need everyone to be involved if we want to solve global challenges such as biodiversity loss, food insecurity etc... Earth Hour shows us that together we can make a difference and regardless of the form or shape or name of the movement, people need to be a part of solutions.

What is your expected turnout for Earth Hour this year? What was it last year?

We have some of the world's most recognized landmarks and largest cities participating so we are very excited about Earth Hour this year. Last year 7,000 cities and more than 180 countries and territories celebrated Earth Hour which shows the global appeal of the movement.

What, for you, are the highlight events this year?

There are going to be some great events in XXX...but often the highlight events are those that don't make the news...homes where the children ask their parents to turn off the lights or picnics that friends get together and organize...



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Climate change and biodiversity loss is happening now - we see events every day. How is planting trees in Uganda today going to help the islands in the Pacific?

We know that all our actions - and ecosystems - are interconnected. Actions we take today will have an impact and Earth Hour gives us the option of choosing whether we want that change to be positive or negative...

What about energy efficiency when it comes to the parties and concerts Earth Hour is famous for around the world?

Earth Hour takes every effort to minimize our footprint, not just for the hour but also all year round. We strive to ensure emissions from our team and different campaigns are offset and all participants are encouraged to think sustainably when planning or organizing events.

How many of the people who turn up for Earth Hour actually go home and practice sustainable lifestyles?

You could also ask yourself how many people see their friends, neighbours, colleagues, celebrating Earth Hour and taking a stand for climate action and start becoming aware of the impacts of their actions. Awareness is the first step and in the past decade, we have seen real, concrete impact such as....

Is the power of the crowd the only hope for climate action now?

Given the scale and impacts of climate change we are already seeing, people everywhere have a very important role to play in climate action...WWF works with governments and businesses and we are seeing momentum like never before, a mobilization that is further spurred by movements like Earth Hour...

Is it hopeful to think climate change can be solved by small individual actions?

Even the 3.5 million hectare marine protected area in Argentina is made up of several million drops of water...every action counts...

What about the companies WWF works with - how are they acting to change climate change?

WWF's works with businesses on...

It has been over 20 years, there has been no firm action from countries on climate- why does Earth Hour think we can change it?

We have seen change, from the Paris Agreement to the impacts we have seen with Earth Hour over the past decade...our millions of supporters demanding and driving change is what makes us believe we can change it...

What is your opinion on fracking/nuclear energy?

What we know is that we need a change in our energy systems and we need to move to clean, green and safe energy...WWF firmly believes a future powered by renewables is possible...

Like many users I switch off the lights but then I go right back to turning up my air conditioning, driving my car, wasting food, etc. How has that hour helped?

It is a start. Perhaps the next time you will think twice...and outside of your home, in places like India, the Philippines, Argentina, there has been real change that has been created to Earth Hour, actions add up...

What are the challenges you face in getting people interested in climate change/biodiversity/Earth Hour?

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Today people are more and more aware of climate change and nature loss, our role and its impacts but the challenge lies in explaining how our actions can also help change this story, turn it around. Yes, these are challenging issues, but it is possible to tackle it if every person, organization and country decides to take actions to make a difference. We shouldn't get daunted with each new climate records or stories of nature loss occurring around the world but remember that together, we can still turn the tide.