

## Live Earth artistes leave hefty carbon footprint

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Article

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JULY 7, 2007, or 070707, is a rare occurrence. As such, many marked the event with special commitments like marriages or working towards a better quality of life.

The live Earth concert was one such commitment at a global level to highlight the climate crisis, bringing together more than 100 music artistes and two billion people.

Whether Live Earth will have the same lasting impact as the 1987 Brundtland Commission (formally known as the World Commission on Environment and Development or WCED) is doubtful.

Convened by the United Nations in 1983, WCED was successful in creating awareness "about the accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development".

In doing so, the UN General Assembly recognised that environmental issues were global in dimension and it was in the common interest of all nations to establish policies for sustainable development.

The Brundtland Commission described this as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Sustainable development is closely linked to global warming and climate change. Invariably, this led to the need for education for sustainable development—as declared by the United Nations under its Decade on Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014.

Last week, ending on July 7, this aspect was the subject of discussion at the Second Unesco Chair Conference on Higher Education for Sustainable Development, held in San Luis Potosi, Mexico.

Representatives, from more than 30 countries, discussed the theme "World in Transition — Sustainability Perspectives for Higher Education". It focused mainly on higher education's contributions to different processes of change—local, regional or international —during the transition to global sustainability.

The discussion centred on experiences in the reformation of education and providing students with innovative methods in higher education.

There must be total commitment to achieve global sustainability. This is one lesson that we can learn from Live Earth—some of the celebrities were criticised as having a carbon footprint equivalent to that of more than 10,000 people in a less developed society.

This is in view of their lavish way of life that produces a large amount of carbon emissions individually — including possessing an excessive number of gas-guzzling cars and a jet-setting lifestyle.

To quote the managing director of Carbon Footprint Ltd: "It's OK for pop stars to preach to us, but it will be better if they look at their own lifestyles to reduce their carbon emissions."

This is, of course, not limited to just celebrities but just about anyone who professes such opulent behaviour. It is, therefore, necessary to re-learn to live in a sustainable way, formally or otherwise.

Already, as a nation, the ecological footprint of Malaysia has exceeded that of the world's average, meaning that we have started to live beyond our means. So it's time to act collectively, beginning today.

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