



Now more than ever we must move towards a sustainable climate future for the world...

Earth hour will be celebrated on the 25th of March under the theme “Shine a Light on Climate Action”.

Earth Hour is a worldwide grassroots movement uniting people to protect the planet organised by World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Engaging a massive mainstream community on a broad range of environmental issues, **Earth Hour** was famously started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia in 2007. Since then, it is celebrated annually at the end of March encouraging countries, individuals, communities, households and businesses to turn off their non-essential lights for one hour from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Within the last ten years, numerous countries have shown their support for action by turning off lights on famous landmarks and towers such as the Eifel Tower-Paris, CN Tower-Toronto, The Empire State Building-New York, and Dubai Burj Khalifa to name a few. Public concerts and events were also held in cities such as Toronto, Dublin and Tel Aviv while some cities opted to turn off 50% of their lights. This year Jamaica will host an Earth Hour public concert in honor of Bob Marley among many other activities planned globally.

Each participating country will ‘shine a light’ on the most relevant climate issues they are facing. Guyana’s earth hour celebration will focus on three (3) themes: Agriculture, Energy and Conservation and Biodiversity.

Earth Hour is the World’s largest demonstration of support for action on climate change.

To “shine a light” on Earth Hour 2017, the Iwokrama International Centre will be collaborating with WWF and other partnering organisations. To raise awareness of the three key climate change issues during the month of March, Iwokrama will be providing judges for a local Secondary School Debating Competition, where students will discuss issues facing Agriculture, Energy and conservation and biodiversity in Guyana. Iwokrama will also be visiting local schools alongside CYEN in Georgetown, Linden and Berbice to educate students on Climate change as well as hosting Candle lit dinners at the Iwokrama River lodge during Earth hour itself-turning off all non-essential lighting.,

On the 25th March, The Rotaract Club of Georgetown, supported by Iwokrama, will host a Recycle Fair at the Parade Ground, Georgetown. This is an all day event and we would like to encourage everyone to help the environment and those in need by donating items such as toys, books, clothing, school supplies and household items. For Earth Hour itself, there will be a “Lights out” concert held in the National Park starting at 7:30pm, in time for the start of Earth Hour at 8:30pm when all non-essential lights will be switched off. The concert will play host to live performances, cultural presentations and pledges from WWF and local partners.

Iwokrama: Our conservation and biodiversity protection strategies for climate change mitigation

The Iwokrama International Centre is responsible for the management of almost one million acres of tropical forest that was gifted to the world by the Government of Guyana to demonstrate its

commitment to climate change mitigation and sustainable forest management. This green heart of Guyana is home to 471 bird species, 134 types of fish, 81 different reptiles, 56 species of amphibians and 142 different mammals, South America's largest cat - the jaguar; the world's largest scaled fresh water fish - the Arapaima. Not to mention, the world's largest otters, river turtles, anteaters, snakes, eagles and caimans and more than 1250 recorded plant species.

We have brought together 20 Indigenous communities of approximately 7000 people who make up our shareholders, participants, partners and staff, working together to achieve Iwokrama's mission. Over the last twenty years of operation, Iwokrama has worked to mitigate climate change by engaging scientists, researchers, funding agencies, NGOs and communities to work together to:

- Provide ongoing training and capacity building programmes for land and water monitoring to prevent illegal forest activities.
- Provide effective landscape-scale monitoring and modeling of linked forest cover, forest degradation, biodiversity and aquatic ecosystem function in Iwokrama Forest and Rupununi region
- Reduced the rate of deforestation and forest degradation through adoption and implementation of Sustainable Forest Management and Reduced Impact Logging practices by Amerindian communities, Government and Private Sector
- Conduct climate change and REDD+ awareness workshops across Guyana for regulatory and other government agencies, NGOs and advocacy groups, loggers, schools and tertiary institutions to name a few
- Collaborate with Conservation International - Guyana and the NRDDDB to produce a comprehensive Community Manual and Training Material on **Climate Change and the Role of Forests for the communities of the NRDDDB**;
- Collaborate with the Government of Guyana and Conservation International to organize 3-part Public Stakeholder Dialogue Series on Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy
- Conduct ongoing Public Awareness Programmes such as: Secondary School Outreach Programme, Inter-organization Workshops, Presentations and media releases. The aim of these activities are to continuously share knowledge on Iwokrama Biodiversity and Conservation efforts and bring awareness to all on the effects of Climate Change on our country and the role we all play in combating this plight.

Furthermore, The Iwokrama Forest, is the only place in Guyana to receive International Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification – the highest international accolade for meeting international best practices on forest management.

H.E. President David Granger recognizes our work and is a forceful advocate to Iwokrama. In his drive for a green economy, he said that **“We cannot develop this country unless we learn the lesson of Iwokrama”**. Seen as the flag ship of his agenda for a 'green' state, he is placing the spotlight on Iwokrama. “It is my Government's intention, with the support of international partners, to make Iwokrama into a world class institute for biodiversity research, a centre of excellence to serve the educational needs of our students for generations to come. He has since pledged resources to ensure Iwokrama fulfils its mission while plans are currently in progress for the construction of a Biodiversity Research Centre in the Iwokrama Forest. The centre will be a full-service facility that will include laboratories, classrooms, a conference facility and accommodation on top of our existing services facilities. The new Biodiversity centre will enhance visits of researchers, students and scientists from both Guyana and the rest of the world to study our unique Forest ecosystem.

In the pursuit of Guyana becoming a 'green' state and a leader in the fight against climate change, the President noted that as the world continues to grapple with the effects of climate change and global warming, Guyana in becoming a 'green' state; has the potential and resources to help in the fight against the phenomena.

"I've undertaken to improve the monitoring of our forests so as to reduce illegal deforestation, increase value-added activities in the forestry sector so as to augment carbon storage in long-use wood products and introduced mineral mapping in order to better identify exploitable deposits thus, reducing deforestation caused by the clearing of lands.. The ultimate objective of Guyana's 'green' agenda is the creation of a green state. Guyana's green state rests on six pillars: the protection of our biodiversity and wildlife; the provision of educational, environmental services and ecotourism; the generation of sustainable energy, the mitigation of the adverse effects of climate change; management of our coastal zone, rivers, wetlands and protected areas; and the management of waste and sanitation services."

The Commonwealth Secretary General, Baroness Scotland, in her visit to Iwokrama last July also applauded Iwokrama on its role in Climate Change mitigation. Baroness Scotland noted "that climatic stability is incredibly important and it's to be applauded, the way Guyana, for the world, has sought to harvest the good things that come out of Iwokrama and preserve them." The Baroness urged that Guyana take into consideration carbon farming as a way to slow down the rapidly changing climate. Carbon farming is cultivating in such a manner that greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.

"Many countries in the world now," the Baroness said, "are trying to meet their COP21 commitments. And the question is: How can they do that within the same framework of their countries?" "So, they will be looking for other countries to assess and to assist." Therefore, Iwokrama's Forest model can be used as a best practice blueprint for other countries worldwide, wishing to use their forests without losing them.

Iwokrama urges you to participate in Earth Hour 2017 –whether this is showing solidarity by turning of non-essential lights from 8:30-9:30pm on the 25th March or taking steps towards leaner, greener practices to protect our natural environment and resources. It's time to take action and be an advocate for action against climate change.

"Shine a Light on Climate Action"