

**Media release**  
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## **Changing the climate with children**

### **Unique project giving children role in shaping climate change legislation launches**

*Issued by: Children in Scotland, WWF Scotland, Children's Parliament, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People and Scottish Government*

Children from across Scotland are getting the chance to contribute to the debate about climate change through a unique new project. Children in Scotland, WWF Scotland and the Children's Parliament, with support from Scottish Government and the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People, are working together to enable 200 children from different backgrounds to have their views heard and heeded on this vital subject.

Later this year the Scottish Parliament will consider the proposed Scottish Climate Change Bill, which has the potential to establish Scotland as an international leader in tackling climate change. This project will ensure that all children's views are heard in this debate.

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth John Swinney said:

“We are pleased to support this exciting project, which will enable young children to play an active role in the democratic process and have their views heard on climate change.

“The Scottish Government is determined to reduce Scotland's emissions by 80 per cent by 2050, and engaging young people is a vital part of how this target will be reached. This generation of young people in Scotland will be at the heart of changing behaviour, in developing and using new technologies and making sustainability part of every day life, and we need to work with young people who will play a vital part in reaching this target.”

“I look forward to hearing what conclusions the project reaches in due course.”

This weekend (6th-8th June) 20 MCPs (Members of the Children's Parliament) from South Ayrshire, Edinburgh, Fife and the Western Isles, aged 9-14, have been taking part in an innovative and creative weekend residential at Kinghorn Loch that will

help them to develop their views on Scotland's role in addressing the world's changing climate. These MCPs will seek to engage up to 200 other children in the consultation process.

The final conclusions of all the children involved will be presented by the children at the Festival of Politics in the Scottish Parliament in August 2008.

Quotes from the partner organisations:

Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, Kathleen Marshall, said: "Scotland's children are global citizens and have a greater stake than any other group in the future of our planet. It is not only right but extremely important that they are aware of the issues around climate change, and asked their views on the future direction of climate change policy. I hope politicians will seize this opportunity to listen to and learn from our children."

Richard Dixon, Director of WWF Scotland said: "Climate change is the biggest threat we face and so it is vital that children have the opportunity to participate in discussions about how we tackle it. This project will provide a diverse group of Scottish children with a chance to really engage with the issues, put across their conclusions to the decision-makers of Scotland, and help to shape this country's critical climate change legislation."

Dr Jonathan Sher, Director of Policy, Research and Practice Development at Children in Scotland said "Many of those making the policy on climate change will be dead by the time its impact is truly felt. It is Scotland's children who will benefit or suffer from the action or inaction of today's politicians. Therefore it is to them that we should look for a steer when we set ourselves goals and targets in this area."

Colin Morrison, Director Children's Parliament said: "This is a dynamic way for children to learn about climate change and express their opinions to policy makers. The fact that their views will be heard at the Festival of Politics and by Ministers of the Scottish Government encourages all children to become active citizens."

Editors Notes:

This project will provide access to the latest information, create a space and provide facilitation to enable a group of children to discuss and debate their thinking on climate change. The project will give the children the opportunity to articulate their conclusions to a wider audience of adults, including key players in the climate change debate, politicians and the media. The conclusions will be fed into the debate on climate change and Scottish climate change legislation through 2008 and beyond.

Environmental charity WWF Scotland is part of the worldwide network which addresses global threats to people and nature.

The Children's Parliament is a charity which provides sustainable and meaningful opportunities for children aged 9 to 14 years old to engage in local, national and international democratic processes.

Children in Scotland is the national agency for voluntary, statutory and professional organisations and individuals working with children and their families in Scotland.

Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People promotes and safeguards the rights of children and young people living in Scotland.

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