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**August 22nd is Earth Overshoot Day:
*Humanity has exhausted nature's budget for the year***

(OAKLAND, CA, USA) — AUGUST 22, 2012 — Humanity has surpassed nature's budget for the year, and is now operating in overdraft, according to data from Global Footprint Network, an international research organization with offices in California and Europe.

Earth Overshoot Day (from a concept devised by the UK think tank [new economics foundation](#)) helps conceptualize the gap between what nature can regenerate, and how much is required to support human activities. Similar to the way a bank statement tracks income against expenditures, Global Footprint Network tracks humanity's demand for, and supply of, natural resources and ecological services. Global Footprint Network's calculations show that in just over eight months, we have used up the resources and CO₂ sequestration that the planet can sustainably provide this year.

For the rest of the year, we will maintain our ecological deficit by depleting resource stocks and accumulating carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

"Nations around the world, and particularly in the south of Europe, have started to painfully experience what it means to spend more money than what they earn," said Dr. Mathis Wackernagel, President of Global Footprint Network. "The resource pressure is similar to such financial overspending, and can become devastating. As resource deficits get larger, and resource prices remain high, the costs to nations become unbearable."

Our ecological overspending has become a vicious cycle, in which we draw down more and more principal at the same time our level of consumption, or "spending," grows. The social and economic costs could be staggering.

"From soaring fossil fuel prices to crippling national debts partly due to rising natural resource prices, our economies are now confronting the reality of years of spending beyond our means," Dr. Wackernagel said. "If we are to maintain stable societies and productive lives, we can no longer sustain a widening budget gap between what nature is able to provide and how much our infrastructure, economies and lifestyles require."

For most 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 Earth's budget. But sometime in the 1970s, we crossed a critical threshold. Human demand began outstripping what the planet could renewably produce, and we went into ecological overshoot.

Today, humanity is using the equivalent of just over 1.5 Earth's worth of ecological resources and services. If current trends continue unchanged, we are on track to require the resources of two planets well before mid-century.

Ecological Overshoot and the Global Economy

While the global recession that began in October 2008 slowed humanity's demand for resources and CO₂ sequestration, our consumption is still rising. To truly reverse trends without risk of greater economic

downturns, resource limits must be at the core of decision-making. Current resource trends already cannot meet the needs of the planet's 7 billion—and growing—population. About two billion people lack access to the resources required to meet their basic needs. As millions in emerging economies join the middle class, our resource consumption and the world's ecological deficit will only increase.

China's total Ecological Footprint—that is, its demand for natural resources and the services they provide—is the world's largest, yet its per person Footprint remains modest. As its economy grows and its people prosper, China's large population and increasing per capita consumption will have an ever-greater impact on the world's widening ecological deficit. Already, we see how consumption patterns of individual countries grow global Overshoot: The per capita resource demands of the United States, which went into Overshoot on March 28, is still equivalent to the supply of more than four Earths. The per capita demands of Brazil, which went into Overshoot on July 6, requires the resources of just under two Earths. In Qatar, the typical citizen requires the resources of six and a half Earths.

Over the past few years, financial crises, civil unrest and environmental catastrophes have shaken several nations. Earth Overshoot Day offers a sobering reminder of the risks of ecological overspending—not just to humanity as a whole, but to nations, cities and businesses, whose long-term success and stability depend upon continued access to and sustainable consumption of natural resources.

It is possible to turn the tide and reverse current consumption trends. Global Footprint Network and its network of partners are working with organizations, governments and financial institutions 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.

“Now is the time to come up with ways of running our economies that will continue to work into the future,” Dr. Wackernagel said. “Long-term recovery will only succeed if it occurs along with systematic reductions to our demand on resources and ecosystem services.”

Organizations around the world are observing Earth Overshoot Day with events to raise awareness of humanity's Ecological Overshoot. Global Footprint Network is hosting a **Tweet Chat on Twitter (@EndOvershoot) using the hashtag #OvershootDay at 8am, 1pm, and 6pm (PST) on August 22** to discuss Ecological Overshoot and how the Ecological Footprint is calculated.

Global Footprint Network is an international research organization working to make ecological limits central to decision-making by advancing the use of the Ecological Footprint, a resource management tool that measures how much nature we have, how much we use and who uses what.

To learn more about Earth Overshoot Day, go to:

http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/earth_overshoot_day/

To calculate your own personal Ecological Footprint, and learn what you can do to reduce it, go to

<http://www.footprintnetwork.org/calculator>

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