



## Everyone's Watching

### Foreword

Not only is 2007 a year of Parliamentary and Local Government elections in Scotland; it is the year that all the world's major institutions have at least recognized that the human habitat, this planet, is in significant danger. Some such institutions are taking the initial steps to address this danger. The United Nations has recognized that environmental matters are likely to be the biggest obstacles to achieving the millennium development goals. The European Union has set tough targets on renewable energy and Britain has introduced its first significant climate change legislation. Cracks in the United State's administration's attitude to energy use have appeared and many individual States in the Union are addressing climate change either unilaterally or in State groupings.

2007 is the year when the marked difference between the more distant horizons scanned by the environmental nongovernmental organizations (eNGOs) and the closer horizons, to which politicians pay regard, began to narrow dramatically.

2007 is a year of enhanced ecological awareness of the connectedness of things. An understanding that climate change is a function of sustainability is emerging. That unravelling biodiversity is not simply about charismatic and iconic species but about the web of life, harm to which the powerful and the rich can in the short term protect themselves and the poor and powerless can not.

This year has seen the first serious attempts to begin to put a value on the ecological processes freely supplied by nature.

It is the year when even those who cherished most the market place, recognized and put a price on both addressing issues of climate change and not so doing.

It is a cusp year: those of us who know that the envelope sustaining human life on this planet has non negotiable limits sense the almost tangible dawning of a structural, institutional awareness that the environment *is the context* - it is politics and economics that are negotiable issues.

Our coalition government in Scotland has over the last four years helped to take forward some of these considerations and our parliament has engendered discussion and debate keeping these matters alive and developing understanding.

All this is mentioned because while this report focuses on past record it is important to remember that its only value is in forming and encouraging future political action.

In that context it is crucial to appreciate just what a pivotal stage the world is currently at in environmental terms.

The coalition has played a part in contributing to the 2007 canvass referred to above.

This report attempts to give a fair and objective assessment of the Labour and Liberal Democrat's performance as Scotland's Coalition Government over the last four years. It records much of which the 'Partnership' can be notably proud. Such matters are properly noted in this report. There are also some policy ambiguities, and contradictions which are highlighted. There are also recorded some deep disappointments and missed opportunities. It is fair to say however that the Coalition Government has overall played a significant part in taking forward the safeguarding of Scotland's environment and played a role in global environment terms.

The report reflects work in progress and **everyone's Watching.**

Fred Edwards