

# **Prestigious Edinburgh Medal to be awarded to Indian environmentalist and political activist Sunita Narain**

**Sunita Narain, Indian environmentalist, activist, author and Director General of Center for Science and Environment and editor of the Down to Earth magazine receives the prestigious Edinburgh Medal for her pioneering work on climate justice during a YouTube-streamed ceremony on [Wednesday, 18 November at 2.30pm](#).**

This award was instituted by the City of Edinburgh Council in 1988 and is awarded to men and women of science and technology who have made significant contributions to humanity. List of previous Medallists include Prof Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Sir David Attenborough, Prof Jane Goodall, Prof Cordelia Fine, Prof Colin Blakemore, Prof Peter Higgs and Christiana Figueres, among others.

Sunita Narain plays an active role in policy formulation on issues of environment and development in India and globally. She was a member of the Indian Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change and has been awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian honour. In 2005, the Centre for Science and Environment, under her leadership was also awarded the Stockholm Water Prize. In 2016, Time Magazine listed her as one of the 100 most influential in the world and she appeared alongside Leonardo DiCaprio in his documentary on climate crisis, Before the Flood. [For more information on Sunita](#)

[Narain click here.](#)

In her Medal Address, Sunita Narain will focus on climate crisis and the necessity to act now as our existence is at stake. She will explain how the climate crisis affects the poorest areas of the globe, how the volatile politics of immigration deepen the divide between the marginalised and the rich and how the latter get distracted by trade wars, Brexit, economic crisis and many other issues, not recognising it is the climate crisis that has to have the priority.

[Dr. Deborah O'Neil](#), founder, CEO and Scientific Officer of NovaBiotics, leading clinical-stage biotechnology company developing first-in-class medicines for medically unmet diseases will deliver the Oration ahead of the Medal Address with Dominic Fry, Chair of the Board of Trustees at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh delivering the Vote of Thanks. The Ceremony will be hosted by Rt. Hon. Lord Provost and Lord Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh, Frank Ross and [Jan Thompson](#), Acting British High Commissioner to India will present Sunita Narain with the Edinburgh Medal on behalf of Lord Provost.

The event is generously supported by Artemis, a leading UK-based fund manager who specialise in investment management for individual investors, financial advisers and institutions.



Indian environmentalist and political activist Sunita Narain  
Of her win, Sunita Narain said: “I am honoured and humbled to accept the Edinburgh Medal for 2020. The Edinburgh Medal for 2020 is, in my view, a reminder of our tumultuous times, hit by COVID-19 and climate change and the need to make transformational changes in our world.

“The urgency of the climate change threat cannot be denied. Climate change is real; it is happening and it is making the poor in our world, even more marginalized and even more insecure. In an increasingly unequitable and climate-risked world poor people find that they cannot cope anymore. We do not have the luxury of time anymore. My generation has squandered the privilege away.

“So, we need to take transformational action; we need to do this in ways in which we will build the resilience of the poor and the economies of all; built not on discounting the cost of our consumption by discounting the cost of environmental

protection. This then is the agenda for real change.

“This is why the Medal today signifies that we must stand behind bold action; inconvenient as it may be.”

Amanda Tyndall, Creative and Festival Director at Edinburgh Science Festival said: “That we share one world, with all of its problems and opportunities, has never been more apparent. Pandemic aside, perhaps nothing is more important than that we act with urgency, on a global level, to address the climate crisis and to do so in a way that is sustainable for ALL. It is for her invaluable work as both an environmentalist and activist that Sunita Narain is the very worthy recipient of this year’s Edinburgh Medal.”

Edinburgh’s Lord Provost Frank Ross said: “The Edinburgh Medal is awarded to men and women of science and technology who have made significant contributions to humanity. Thus it is entirely appropriate that this year’s Medal is awarded to Sunita Narain who not only organises against environmental degradation and global warming but does so on behalf of those whose voice is rarely heard in the Boardrooms and Cabinet rooms of the world but which is vital if we are to succeed. Congratulations Sunita.”

Mark Murray, Senior Partner, Artemis Investment Management LLP said: “Artemis is delighted to sponsor the Edinburgh Medal, awarded to the men and women of science whose professional achievements are judged to have made a significant contribution to the understanding and wellbeing of humanity. Many congratulations to this year’s award winner, Sunita Narain.”

Audiences will be able to tune into this free event on Edinburgh Science’s YouTube channel at 2.30pm on Wednesday, 18 November.

Edinburgh Science Festival 2020 was cancelled due to the global pandemic of Covid-19. Stay up to date with Edinburgh

Science projects by subscribing to the newsletter at [www.sciencefestival.co.uk/](http://www.sciencefestival.co.uk/).