

Doha makes a 'green stride'



DOHA: Qatar has become the first country in the GCC to join the World Bank's Global Gas Flaring Reduction partnership (GGFR) with the signing of an agreement yesterday with the World Bank to reduce the flaring of gas associated with oil production.

The Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and Industry H E Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, yesterday signed the agreement on behalf of the State of Qatar with Somit Varma, Director of the World Bank's Oil, Gas, Mining and Chemicals Department.

The Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and Industry H E Abdullah bin Hamad Al Attiyah and Somit Varma exchange documents after signing the agreement in Doha yesterday.

The GGFR partnership estimates, the amount of gas flared annually in the Middle East alone stands at about 30 billion cubic metres (bcm). This amount could feed a 20 million tonnes liquefied natural gas plant. Globally at least 150 bcm of gas are flared or wasted every year, adding about 400 million tonnes of greenhouse gases in annual emissions.

Al Attiyah told reporters Qatar has set a target of zero gas flaring by 2010 and utilise the gas currently being flared on economically beneficial way.

"Qatar is committed to achieving its zero-flaring target and I believe that by joining the GGFR, we would be able to achieve our goals and thereby maintain and preserve our environment for our people and for our future generations," he said.

"It is indeed a matter of pride for Qatar that our country has become the first in the Arabian Gulf to join a World Bank programme to bring down the greenhouse gas emissions."

Varma said in remarks to reporters that countries worldwide are recognising that gas flaring is a huge waste of natural resources. "It is better to harness the gas otherwise flared both from the climate change perspective as well as from use of gas for the industry and people of the respective countries," he said.

He said the program initiated by World Bank's GGFR partnership is global and is targeting flaring regions across the globe, especially the Middle East being a large oil and gas producer. "We are working with the Middle East countries to reduce gas flaring and Qatar has shown its leadership by being the first country in the GCC to join this partnership," Varma said.

So far, besides Qatar, the only Middle Eastern country which is part of the gas flaring reduction initiative is Iraq. Oman, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are also expected to join the World Bank-led efforts.

Bent Svensson, GGFR Programme Manager said: "Through the GGFR partnership, we will assist in bringing best practices from around the world, bringing experience from country to another so that countries can implement their programmes smoothly and in a rational manner."

"We are looking forward to start implementing these projects that have been on the table for a while in Qatar so that it can meet its target."

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