

EWS-WWF and Abu Dhabi Water and Electric Authority unite to distribute energy-saving light bulbs

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Up to 40,000 energy-saving light bulbs are being handed out in Abu Dhabi as part of a new outreach initiative by 'Heroes of the UAE', the inspirational campaign developed to tackle the UAE's ecological footprint, climate change and rising energy demand.

Organized by the Emirates Wildlife Society in association with the World Wide Fund for Nature (EWS-WWF), the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi (EAD) and Abu Dhabi Electricity and Water Authority (ADWEA), the mass promotion will take place in Marina Mall, Abu Dhabi, over consecutive weekends, 7th - 8th and 14th - 15th August, 2009.

The aim of the initiative is to encourage sustainable living, urging local residents to take direct action at home by installing energy-saving light bulbs as a first step to reducing their own household carbon footprint. Remarkably, if all 40,000 energy-saving light bulbs replace existing traditional light bulbs, the potential carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions savings resulting from the promotion will be equivalent to taking 2000 cars off the road, Razan al Mubarak, Managing Director, EWS-WWF explains:

'Households alone are responsible for over 50% of the UAE's carbon footprint, consuming huge amounts of energy on a daily basis with lighting an important contributor. We hope as many people as possible will come visit our volunteers at the 'Heroes of the UAE' stand at Marina Mall and take away energy-saving light bulbs to install within their own home. It's just one very simple action where we can all join in the fight against climate change, and know that we are making a real difference.'

Lighting accounts for almost 10% of household energy consumption. By switching to energy-saving light bulbs the average two-bedroom apartment could save up to Dhs800 per year off their electricity bill. In addition to being more efficient, energy-saving light bulbs last up to 10 times longer than traditional versions- giving yet another reason why every household should make the switch.

As H.E. Majid Al Mansouri, Secretary-General of EAD emphasised, the scale of the problem requires action beyond lighting in the home;

'EAD believes in partnerships that contribute greatly towards conserving natural resources, protecting wildlife and enhancing environmental awareness. We need to continue instilling in our children, the next generation, as well as citizens and residents of the UAE a sense of responsibility towards the environment. Each one of us can make a positive contribution by implementing some very simple changes in our lifestyles. Only when each home adopts positive habits, will we be able to reduce our country's carbon footprint.'

H.E. Abdulla Saif Al Nuaimi, Director of Privatization for the Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority (ADWEA), stated;

'We are delighted to sponsor the 'Heroes of the UAE' campaign and supply the energy-saving light bulbs being distributed freely to the people of Abu Dhabi. This is a fantastic way to engage with local people, showing them how they can help protect the UAE environment while also substantially reducing their utility bills. As a result of visiting the stand and learning more about the campaign, hopefully people will be more responsible with their energy usage, helping them recognise that some current habits are simply not sustainable.'

The UAE is the fifth highest per capita consumer of energy in the world - 7 times the global average. Furthermore, a potential risk exists within the UAE that energy demand could outstrip supply. Equally the UAE also has one of the highest per capita Ecological Footprints in the world, with over 80% of this footprint related to CO2 emissions, largely due to fossil fuel-based energy consumption. Global temperatures are likely to rise alongside these rising CO2 emissions. And as a result, the UAE is predicted to face hotter summers, rising sea levels, coastal erosion, biodiversity loss, scarcer freshwater, more extreme storms and economic impacts.

During the promotion, campaign volunteers will be on hand to distribute the 'Heroes' energy-saving light bulbs, provide useful information and energy conservation tips to visitors of Marina Mall, encourage visitors to take a personal pledge to reduce their household energy consumption. Stationed on the ground floor of Marina Mall by the main entrance, the promotion will take place on the weekends of the 7th and 8th, 14th and 15th of August from 2pm to 10pm on Fridays and 10 am to 6pm on Saturdays.

As part of an ongoing commitment across all levels of UAE society, the initiative will be launching a schools engagement phase as well as initiatives tackling the private sector and government institutions in coming months. The campaign was developed in association with the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi and has been endorsed by the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Energy, and sponsored by the ADWEA, Masdar and the Abu Dhabi Media Company.

(AME Info)