

Environmental bodies in Dubai sign 'Greenomics' pact

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Dubai: A 'Greenomics Protocol' was signed by a number of environmental bodies in Dubai on Saturday.

The new guideline on business sustainability was signed by the Ministry of Environment, the United Nations University International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), the Arab Media Group and LG Electronics.

The summit, which sought possible solutions to some of the challenges facing industries in creating sustainable business models, featured a number of government agencies, environmental experts and international and regional private sector companies.

Dr Rashid Ahmad Bin Fahd, Minister of Environment and Water, said: "The UAE is well aware of the issue of climate change. We are taking big steps ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen later this year. But it's what happens after Copenhagen that is really important. We are doing our part but the world's developed countries must vow to cut their emissions.

"Masdar City is a model for future cities; it can be replicated across the world. The global community has already recognised the UAE's commitment to tackling climate change by naming Abu Dhabi as the host city of the International Renewable Energy Agency (Irena). There are a lot of challenges to come in the years ahead but we are already putting plans into action as well as working with the Ministry of Education to raise awareness of this key issue.

"The government has a duty of care for the nation. We must ensure we preserve our way of life in a sustainable manner; we must ensure future generations are able to live and thrive in the environment we leave for them. We stand at an environmental crossroads; we are in danger of taking a path of climate mismanagement that will have an impact on generations to come."

The conference also included panels that led discussions on clean and efficient eco-technologies and renewable energy.

Ki Wan Kim, Chief Executive of LG Electronics Middle East and Africa Company, said: "This [environmental sustainability] is no longer a 'fringe' addition to a company's CSR (corporate social responsibility) programme. It is no longer trendy to be green. Companies have realised there are significant benefits to their bottom line when they invest in reducing their impact on the environment."

Zafar Adeel, Director at UNU-INWEH, said: "Today's business world is getting increasingly dominated by impacts caused by environmental processes - both positive and negative. On the one side, the global dialogue on climate change and how to introduce 'green' economic measures has dominated the international agenda. "On the other side, ecosystem degradation, over-exploitation of natural resources and extreme climactic events are causing adverse impacts on national economies; the food crisis of 2008 is a case in point."

Masdar City: UAE is 'leading the way'

A leading figure behind the UAE's Masdar City believes the initiative will "influence policy and decision-makers across the world".

Dr Nawal Al Hosany, Associate Director of Sustainability at Masdar City, said the UAE was tapping into a new era by providing an opportunity for green living.

The headquarters of the International Renewable Energy Agency (Irena) will be located in Abu Dhabi's Masdar City, which is currently under construction. It will be the world's first carbon-neutral, zero-waste city completely powered by renewable energy.

Dr Nawal said: "It [Irena] is a lot of responsibility and we need to show we are serious about our commitment to the environment. "Masdar will influence policy and decision-makers across the world.

"People often ask why the UAE is undertaking such an extensive environmental initiative. The answer is that Masdar integrates the full technological lifestyle and places the UAE in a leading position. We cannot keep living the way we are just now; Masdar is the future."

(Gulf News)