

Sharjah Chamber hosts symposium on role of sustainability in addressing global challenges

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The Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) has today hosted a symposium titled 'Sustainability: Why? And How?' at the Conference Room of the Chamber's new building.

Held in cooperation with International Business Solutions (IBS) and sponsored by Khatib and Alami Consolidated Engineering Co., the event focused on the growing global relevance of sustainable practices in light of soaring energy demand, high inflation, and the prolonged global financial crisis.

The symposium complemented SCCI projects and initiatives aimed at adopting new concepts and practices which enhance business productivity and support sustainable development across the emirate. It sought to improve awareness on the social, economic and environmental influences of sustainable development. The sustainability concept has emerged as an effective tool for promoting innovation and creativity; developing human resources; creating new market opportunities that address poverty; and protecting sources of renewable and decentralized energy. It has also highlighted the corporate consequences of food security and the changing patterns of production and consumption.

The SCCI activity assessed Sharjah's energy and water conditions and options for profiting from waste water and energy. Among the topics covered were waste systems and water management; the creation of a database for industries and the waste-generation of establishments; and the use of highly effective handling technologies for hazardous wastes and materials. The benefits of integrated building management solutions and compliance with sustainability standards were also discussed.

H.E. Ahmad Mohammad Al Midfaa, Chairman, SCCI, said:

'This initiative supports the vision of H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the UAE and Ruler of Sharjah, who advocates the widespread adoption of sustainable business practices. A sustainable approach to work advances Sharjah's aim of developing a creative, competitive, and highly productive workforce, which aligns with the competitiveness goals of the UAE.'

'Today's business sector is rapidly evolving, especially in terms of performance and excellence standards. This trend is creating major challenges, particularly in the areas of investment, project management, and commercial partnerships. We believe that sustainability is an important factor for corporate success. We are thus eager to cooperate on the realization of balanced and responsible development across all sectors in collaboration with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). We invite the business community to join BCSD-UAE, the local arm of WBCSD, so that we can all cooperate on the development and implementation of effective sustainability programs,' added Al Midfaa.

During the symposium, Dr. Salah Thair Al Haj, Director General of Sharjah Municipality, delivered a presentation on Sharjah's energy and water status and the efforts of his group to recycle wastes and other undesirable materials.

Mr. Fritz Becker, Managing Director of IBS, discussed a working paper titled 'Transformation of Wasted Water and Energy to Profit'. Eng. Wassim Al Azzeh, Design Support Manager of Khatib & Alami, explained the advantages of sustainability standards, while Mr. David Tebb, Regional Manager, LAE, highlighted benefits of integrated building management solutions. Eng. Wellefram Civert, Project manager, IBS, concluded the conference with a presentation on wastes and water management.

Commenting on the symposium, Hussein Mohammad Al Mahmoudi, Director General, SCCI, said:

'Nowadays, sustainable practices are one of the most important strategies to address environmental and economic challenges. We are thus committed to organizing events and launching initiatives which promote awareness on this concept, and encourage the private sector to implement sustainability on a large scale in Sharjah in cooperation with the public.'

'This symposium is very significant because it has brought together two prominent companies who have agreed to collaborate closely on the adoption of sustainability principles in their corporate systems. We hope that this initiative will motivate the SCCI's members to identify and implement sustainable policies alongside Sharjah's key economic sectors,' concluded Al Mahmoudi.

Khatib and Alami Consolidated Engineering Co. provides consultancy services in Engineering; Environment; Planning and Landscaping; Project Management; and Geographic Information Systems. The company, which has been ranked among the world's top 100 design firms since 1984, is committed to adopting environmental sustainability practices and other critical concepts such as transparency, efficient governance, and quality work principles.

Khatib and Alami's Standard Design Practice, which incorporates sustainable principles and environmental responsibility, was developed based on the company's vast experience in local and regional projects. Khatib and Alami has worked extensively on meeting energy and environmental performance levels in compliance with international environmental rating systems such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). The company is a founding member of the Emirates Green Building Council (GBC), under which it upholds the Principles of Sustainability as part of its corporate identity policy.

International Business Solutions (IBS) was established in 2007 based on the principles of sustainable business development in order to ensure the long-term success of the decisions of its customers. The company provides engineering services and implementation support for energy demand and supply, covering renewable energy, ventilation, water treatment, waste management, and building automation and management. IBS maintains strong partnerships with well-established local companies such as Khatib & Alami and is an active member of the UAE-Business Council for Sustainable Development (UAE-BCSD).

The UAE-BCSD is the local arm of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. It was established by the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry to assist in the growth of the local business community through the recommendation and application of productive economic, environmental, and social practices. The Council is considered the first initiative of its kind in the Gulf region and is leading efforts to promote sustainable strategies and plans not only in Sharjah but throughout the UAE as well.

(AME Info)