

# UAE realty market dynamics get greener

October 9, 2009

Cityscape Green Day Conference urged developers to 'LEED' (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) by example.

Dubai: The closing message at Cityscape Green Day Conference urged developers to 'LEED' (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) by example as the private sector is lagging behind and needs a complete mindset change.

Sustainable construction standards should no longer be seen as a choice but the norm, delegates heard during the afternoon session of the first Green Day to be ever held at Cityscape Dubai, which concluded yesterday.

Habiba Al Marashi, Chairperson, Emirates Environmental Group and Board Member, UN Global Compact, said a 100 per cent mindset change was necessary to reduce carbon emissions and encourage best practices industrywide.

"It's not just political will, leadership should be taken by the private sector which is one of the sectors lagging behind," she said.

But Saeed Al Abbar, Mechanical Engineer, Halcrow International, recognised a mindset change has taken place in the UAE market.

"It was all develop-to-sell in the boom, the end user was so far removed that we all thought the customer was the developer. Thankfully, that paradigm has shifted, and we're seeing a develop-to-manage mentality and sustainability is coming more to the forefront."

"Apart from tougher regulatory standards, enlightened property owners will be key as well," said Chris Speller, Group Director, Cityscape.

## **Sustainability**

"For many property owners it is as much about managing running or operating costs as reducing their carbon emissions, but there is a sound business case for sustainability. During the boom, developers had no financial incentive to go green. However due to changing dynamics, developers now need a competitive edge. Adopting a sustainable design not only reduces carbon emissions, it can lower maintenance and utility costs as well as increase the lifecycle of the building," added Speller.

Dr Mohammad Dulaimi, Professor, The British University in Dubai, said enlightened companies saw environmental sustainability as a trigger for innovation. "Investing in a building now will enhance your competitiveness."

(Gulf News)