

Meet underscores urgency of going green

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DOHA: Speakers at the opening of the 'Doha Green 2009 Conference' yesterday were in one accord saying it requires concerted efforts from all sectors in the society to act on current environment concerns confronting the world.

"This conference brings together experts from the government, private, industrial and education sectors to present innovative ideas for the protection of the environment," said Dr Nesreen Al Hashimi, Friends of Environment Centre board member, as she welcomed over a hundred participants from Qatar and the region.

She underscored the urgency of going green during a time when ecological issues such as global warming and climate change are not mere speculations but challenging tasks.

Dr Benno Boer, Unesco Arab Region's ecological sciences adviser, said focusing on environment issues on the aspects of water and energy are vital for sustainability.

Emphasising on the need at looking into the issues on long-term basis, Dr Boer said there is a need to empower schools through programmes, which Unesco has been concentrating on.

"We should not just focus on encouraging awareness in the community about going green and sustainability but act as catalysts to inspire green building in Qatar," the Doha-based Unesco official said

On the part of private and industrial sectors, R Seetharaman, Doha Bank CEO delivered an address underscoring the 'eco-nomics' of the issue meaning the role of key players in industries toward the environment.

Seetharaman attacked the failure of developed nations in delivering the right values with regard to environment protection as he painted a grim picture of a world amid deforestation, rising sea levels and temperatures.

"There is a need for drastic transformation at every level," he said, adding: "Industries and corporations can help by coming together to redefine goals and redirect priorities towards the environment for the benefit of future generations."

He also suggested to making full use of technology for channeling much needed information to bring about change. The Doha Bank CEO lauded the Qatari government's efforts towards sustainability through Qatar Foundation and pioneering efforts towards carbon footprint reduction.

Citing the Bank's green initiatives such as its eco-friendly credit card and Doha Souq, he urged companies to initiate green projects to address problems such as reducing waste and electricity consumption.

On its fifth year, the two-day conference will tackle issues along the topics 'Sustainable Building Concepts in Qatar and the Gulf', 'Sustainable Water Management', and 'Renewable Energy and Recycling Strategies'.

By Raynald Rivera
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