

Urban planning seminar at Abu Dhabi University

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Abu Dhabi University recently held an urban planning seminar, titled 'Future of Urban Planning in Abu Dhabi for the year 2030'.

During the seminar, H.E. Falah Al Ahabbi, the General Manager of Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council (UPC), highlighted the determination of the country's wise leadership, represented by the ruler H.H. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, and H.H. General Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces and Chairman of the Executive Council of Abu Dhabi Government Strategy, to follow the latest international techniques and scientific methods in urban planning and linking the principles of the strategy to the UAE society in order to reflect its rich social identity, values, and traditions.

The seminar forms part of ADU's cultural season for the year 2009-2010. H.E. Falah Al Ahabbi was introduced by Dr. Aly Nazmi, the Dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Sciences. In attendance were H.E. Ali Saeed Bin Harmal Al Dhaheri, the ADU Chairman of the Executive Board, Dr. Nabil Ibrahim, the ADU Chancellor, college deans, faculty members, and students. Bin Harmal highlighted the significance of this seminar which sheds light on and presents the main strategic themes and implementation programs of one of the most dynamic strategic projects in the capital, i.e. urban planning for the year 2030; a process that has already begun.

Al Ahabbi stated that the aim of the Abu Dhabi 2030 plan is to create a sustainable city that enhances economic, social, cultural and environmental well being of current and future generations in order to achieve the leadership vision of transforming Abu Dhabi into a sustainable Arab capital.

In order to comprehensively achieve this objective, the UPC has introduced its sustainability initiative, Estidama, which abides by the four pillars of environmental, economic, social, and cultural sustainability. The key objective of Estidama initiative is to become the impetus that gives Abu Dhabi its edge as a sustainable capital while making a meaningful contribution towards global sustainable development, and to also become a benchmark for sustainable regulations internationally.

Al Ahabbi stated that the UPC operates through direct and continuous consultation with the leadership and communities via discussion and coordination with developers.

Al Ahabbi expressed that the capital district will reflect the image of the next generation's sustainable Arab capital and will be located between Mohammad Bin Zayed City and Abu Dhabi International Airport. It will serve as a second downtown for Abu Dhabi and will be home to 370,000 residents. This project was envisaged by the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan to guide the evolution of Abu Dhabi as a global capital city. The new Capital City District will focus on creating a livable and modern Arab city with cultural and community life, transit and pedestrian-oriented communities, a diverse and healthy economy, high-quality developmental opportunities, and a sustainable urban form.

Al Ahabbi further informed that the city district, which stretches over 4900 hectares, will also be a seat of power of the UAE Federal Government. The CBD will contain 1.5 million GFA

office spaces providing 150,000 jobs, a 65,000 seat national stadium to host the national football team's matches, Emirati neighborhoods to provide housing for 50,000 Emiratis, an educational hub with diverse university campuses including ADU, Zayed University, and Khalifa University, which will be connected with three levels of transit services.

Al Ahababi also highlighted UPC's another major urban planning initiative Al Ain 2030. Al Ain is considered to be the fourth largest city in the country, and the soul of Abu Dhabi.

Al Ahababi stated that Plan Al Ain 2030 has a special focus on the city's oases, keeping them at the heart of the community for generations to come. It also supports traditional Bedouin living based on 'Fareej', groups of dwellings situated around a shaded courtyard, creating a comprehensive network of protected areas and limiting urban sprawl. The Plan also proposes projects that exploit existing economic wealth to develop renewable energy production and reduce the consumption of non-renewable resources.

Al Ahababi concluded by mentioning that the UPC nurtures growth through greater cooperation and engagement between the public and private sectors, promotes sustainable and diversified economic development by improving Abu Dhabi's infrastructure and business environment, and ensures a vibrant mix of cultures while preserving the unique traditions and culture of the Emirates.

(AME Info)