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Oman

Wednesday, October 06, 2010

Green Days focuses on water conservation

A Staff Reporter

MUSCAT Muscat Green Days conference on education and networking for a sustainably built environment, jointly organised by the German University of Technology (GUTech) and Sesame Business Consultants, opened at the Grand Hyatt Hotel on Tuesday.

The two-day conference, held under the patronage of HE Sayyid Salim Bin Musallam Al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Administrative Development Affairs at the Ministry of Civil Services, brings together 16 experts from construction, energy, environment and research sector who will discuss and present ways on how to save energy with compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

A group of 18 GUTech students from the Department of Urban Planning and Architectural Design along with their professors are also attending the conference.

Making a presentation on "Internal Water Management Strategy in Oman", Dr Saif Bin Rashid Al Shaqsi from the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources, said: "Viewed against the backdrop of an average annual rainfall of 100mm, semi-arid and dry climate and the fact that 30 per cent of water resources is lost to the sea and the desert, the main challenge before us is to strike a balance between demand and renewable water resources.

"Besides this, other accompanying challenges include protection of water resources from both pollution and depletion, secure safe, potable water supply, increase collection and reuse of treated wastewater, secure industrial and commercial water demand according to available water resources and protect and save the accomplished investment in the water sector's infrastructure", he added.

Talking about solution to the existing problems, Dr Shaqsi said the proper implementation of the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) objective starting with the laying of a modern pipeline system for water, and optimal resource management.

Listing some of the benefits of IWRM, Dr Shaqsi said: "This will result in more crop per drop, would push back salt water intrusion from the sea, check rural migration and throw up sustainable planning options for best climate change adaptations to protect Oman's unique environment".

Richard Lisker, architect consultant at Hoehler and Partner, LLC, and Project director of the GUTech project in Halban, said: "Sustainable and green building practices go beyond energy and water conservation. They incorporate environmentally sensitive site planning, resource-efficient building materials and superior indoor environmental quality".

He added: "Sustainable building practices enhance comfort, health and productivity and lower electricity and water utility costs. They use environmentally effective building materials, they produce long-term economic returns and reduce the overall environmental impact".

Other notable local and international speakers at the

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conference include Mario Seneviratne, Managing Director of Green Technologies, Ahmad Al Jahdhani, Public Authority for Electricity and Water in Oman, Simon Buttery, regional MD, Carillon Alawi, Professor Awni Shaaban from SQU and Hamad Al Gharibi, head of planning, Ministry of Housing.

The two-day Muscat Green Conference is chaired by Dr Dieter Fuch, general manager of Fraunhofer Middle East and president of the World Association of Applied Research and Bradley Holiday, Senior Manager of Deloitte & Touche & Co LLC in Muscat. He is also a member of the Energy and Resources Group in the Middle East.

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