



PRESS RELEASE

Al Kindi reviews progress of data collection under Al Basama Al Beeiya

Steering Committee provides new thrust to Ecological Footprint Initiative

Dubai, 16 December 2007: H.E Dr. Mohammed Saeed Al Kindi, UAE Minister of Environment and Water (MoEW) today presided over the first meeting of the Steering Committee of Al Basama Al Beeiya (Ecological Footprint) Initiative, which was attended by senior officials.

The Steering Committee, which met at the Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai, was briefed by the Al Basama Al Beeiya team about the project's progress. The team also identified the key aspects of Al Basama Al Beeiya mission that would need ongoing involvement and attention of the Committee, which consists of project partners and senior government officials.

The project team identified three critical success factors for Al Basama Al Beeiya in its current phase: raise awareness about the project and its mission, facilitate research on vital footprint components and institutional capacity building across the UAE.

Expressing his satisfaction with the progress of the project, Al Kindi said "I am pleased to note that several milestones have been reached in the roll-out of the project and place on record my appreciation for the diligence and hard work of all those involved in the project. I also want to thank all the government and corporate organizations who have been extending all cooperation to our project team," he said.

H.E. Majid Al Mansouri, Secretary General of the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD) and AGEDI (Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative) and member of the steering committee, presented an overview of the project to participants. He stated that the project team is currently engaged in the complex and challenging task of sourcing data on Population and Energy, which have been identified as priority areas in the project's current phase.

Members of the steering committee who attended today's meeting included Dr. Salem Al Dhaheri, Director, FEA (Federal Environment





Agency), Mohamed Jawdar, General Coordinator, AGEDI (Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative), Razan Al Mubarak, Managing Director, EWS-WWF (Emirates Wildlife Society – Worldwide Fund for Nature), Dr. Frédéric Launay, Conservation Director of the EWS-WWF, and Dr. Meshgan Mohammed Al Awar, Secretary General of the Zayed International Prize for the Environment, Dr. Jassem Darwish, Secretary General of the Federation of UAE Municipalities, Saif Salim Al Shamsi, Deputy Director of Ajman Municipality and Dr. Saif Al Ghais, Executive Director of the Environmental Protection and Development Authority - Ras Al Khaimah. A representative from the Fujairah Municipality was also present at the meeting.

"I am pleased to note that the steering committee enjoys representation from every emirate in the UAE. This shows that we have commitment at the national level. It is absolutely important that we have the full support and cooperation of all the relevant bodies to make this national project a success," Al Kindi said.

The Al Basama Al Beeiya was launched on October 18 as a historic national effort to measure and understand the country's ecological footprint and develop important guidelines for a more resource-conscious and resource-efficient government and society.

Reiterating his Ministry's support to Al Basama Al Beeiya, Al Kindi pointed out that active contribution from multiple stakeholders was crucial to the success of the project. Emphasizing the key role of the committee members, the minister said each member had a responsibility to facilitate data collection, assist in overcoming bureaucratic or other obstacles and ensure active participation of their emirate and the organizations they represent in Al Basama Al Beeiya.

Al Kindi said after the meeting that the committee members have vowed their full support and cooperation to the project team to complete its urgent and complex tasks. He said an important mandate of the committee is to review progress and help the project team with its task of sourcing data on the immediate priority areas of Population and Energy.

In a bid to seek the support and obtain vital data on these sectors, the Al Basama Al Beeiya project team has over the last few weeks met with key players in these sectors including the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Federal National Council Affairs, the General Secretariat of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, the Executive Affairs Authority, Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar), Dolphin Energy, the Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing of the Government of





Dubai, Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority, Federal Customs Authority, and the Ministry of Economy. Meetings are also due to be held shortly with the Environmental Protection and Development Authority - Ras Al Khaimah and the Crescent Petroleum Company, Sharjah for Energy related data.

Al Basama Al Beeiya have targeted to complete the data collection and verification from the Population and Energy sectors by the end of this year.

The four core Al Basama Al Beeiya partners are: UAE Ministry of Environment and Water (MoEW), the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI), the Emirates Wildlife Society – World Wide Fund for Nature (EWS-WWF) and the Global Footprint Network (GFN),

Editors' Notes:

Al Basama Al Beeiya

The Al Basama Al Beeiya (Ecological Footprint) Initiative is the UAE's national effort to ensure a sustainable future by measuring and understanding the impact of our way of living on planet earth. It is a historic initiative to collect vital national data according to uniform and proven standards. Al Basama Al Beeiya will be a major tool for the government to make informed policy decisions and to uphold Sheikh Zayed's environmental legacy. The national partners in the Al Basama Al Beeiya believe that the initiative is the UAE's need of the hour, considering the country's rising consumption levels and the rapid pace of development.

Background

The Ecological Footprint is a sustainability indicator that measures the use of natural resources by the population of a country and is expressed by a unit of bio-productive land called 'global hectare' (gha). According to the Living Planet Report 2006, the UAE has the highest ecological footprint in the world with UAE residents averaging 11.9 gha (global hectares) per person. This translates to each UAE resident requiring 7 planets to support his / her current lifestyle.

However, a review and analysis of the sources of the data used to calculate the UAE's ecological footprint has indicated that there is a considerable gap between the knowledge and data that existed in the international records and the ground data collected by local organizations. The Al Basama Al Beeiya initiative will not only close that gap, but will provide the country's leadership and government with reliable and much needed *information* that will then be used as a policy-guiding tool.

Partners



United Arab Emirates
Ecological Footprint Initiative
"Al Basama al beeiya"



دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة
مبادرة البصمة البيئية

وزارة البيئة والمياه
Ministry of Environment & Water

MoEW: The Ministry of Environment and Water in the UAE is part of the federal government and oversees the country's environmental policies and programmes. The ministry's mission is to achieve balanced and sustainable development in the country.

AGEDI: AGEDI was launched in 2002, as the UAE's response to a direly felt need for a formal body in Abu Dhabi to provide comprehensive and relevant data that would improve environmental policies and their role in the decision-making process. AGEDI's efforts led to the publication of the first State of Environment (SoE) report for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in March this year.

EWS – WWF: The Emirates Wildlife Society (EWS) was established as a public interest society in February 2001 by a ministerial resolution under the Societies of Public Interest Law of 1974. The environmental NGO is registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs. Its mission is to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable living through education and conservation initiatives in the UAE. EWS works in partnership with the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature), one of the world's most well-known global conservation organizations.

GFN: Global Footprint Network is a charitable social-benefit organization with the mission of making ecological limits central to decision-making everywhere. Together with over 70 partner organizations around the world, GFN coordinates research, develops methodological standards, and promotes innovative applications to provide decision makers with tools that will help the human economy operate within the Earth's ecological limits. GFN serves as the steward for the National Footprint Accounts, which calculate the Ecological Footprint and bio-capacity of 150 nations from 1961 through the present. These accounts have helped the Ecological Footprint become one of the most globally successful and widely applied sustainability communication and education tools.

For further information:

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