



**PRESS RELEASE**

**Al Basama Al Beeiya (Ecological Footprint) Initiative**

# Initial focus on energy and population data

**- Energy contributes more than 75% of the UAE's Ecological Footprint -**

**Abu Dhabi, November 29 2007:** Energy and Population have been identified as the priority sectors for data research aimed at measuring and understanding the UAE's ecological footprint. The data is being collected under the Al Basama Al Beeiya (Ecological Footprint) Initiative launched by the UAE in October.

Speaking for Al Basama Al Beeiya, Razan Al Mubarak said: "Energy and population are the most important components of the footprint scale. It is estimated that energy consumption alone contributes 76.1 percent to UAE's Ecological Footprint as per the Living Planet Report 2006. As the national Ecological Footprint is measured by the impact of human consumption on a country's resources, it is essential to weigh the UAE's population factors early on."

Al Mubarak said the Al Basama Al Beeiya project team is currently initiating contacts with key players in the population and energy sectors of UAE to seek their support and obtain vital data. Al Basama Al Beeiya research teams will collate and analyse the data according to uniform and proven standards.

Al Basama Al Beeiya was launched on 18<sup>th</sup> October as a major UAE national effort to ensure a sustainable future by measuring and understanding the country's ecological footprint. The four core partners in the initiative 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), an international non-profit organization that promotes the Ecological Footprint as a sustainability





metric worldwide. The initiative involves multiple stakeholders across the UAE. .

To source and verify footprint-related data from the energy and population sectors, the Al Basama Al Beeiya team has met with several government ministries and authorities including the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Federal National Council Affairs. In addition, the team has also met with the General Secretariat of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council and the Executive Affairs Authority to seek their support for the project and its data collection efforts. The team will continue to meet with other public and private sector organizations to seek their cooperation.

"The data collection analysis exercise is very complex. For example, the population measure to assess UAE's ecological footprint needs to take into account not only the resident population, but temporary residents (tourists and business visitors) as well as those transiting through the country because every individual is a consumer of resources. In the case of energy, we need to source and analyze data related to production, import, export and domestic consumption of energy resources," Al Mubarak said.

At the time of its launch, Al Basama Al Beeiya leaders had said that the initiative would involve multiple stakeholders across the nation. They described the initiative as a historic effort to develop important guidelines for a more resource-conscious and resource-efficient government and society.

Following the launch of the Al Basama Al Beeiya Initiative last month, a technical workshop was organized for over 150 attendees from government, municipalities, corporate organizations, and NGOs, as well as researchers from educational institutions and staff from foreign embassies. The workshop conducted by Dr. Mathis Wackernagel, Executive Director of the Global Footprint Network and co-creator of the Ecological Footprint methodology, was meant to engage multiple stakeholders from across the country who would need to be directly involved in the development and success of the initiative.

Al Basama Al Beeiya will involve data collection, quantitative and qualitative analysis, re-assessment of UAE data currently used nationally and internationally, and research into the methodology of measuring the ecological footprint taking into consideration the country's climatic and regional resonance. Once the calculation of the UAE's footprint and analysis of the footprint are completed, Al Basama





Al Beeiya will make policy recommendations in two areas: natural resource use and data management.

### 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

**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



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



دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة  
مبادرة البصمة البيئية

وزارة البيئة والمياه  
Ministry of Environment & Water

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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