

## **Qatar Green Building Council Seminar Attracts over 50 Experts to Discuss Solutions to Qatar's Water Scarcity Challenges**

**Doha, 20 May 2014** – Focused on the pressing issue of water scarcity, Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, hosted a successful event that brought together public and private organisations to find positive solutions to water sustainability challenges in Qatar.

The 'Water: the Inconvenient Truth' seminar was held at Hamad bin Khalifa University's Student Centre within Qatar Foundation's Education City this evening, and attended by more than 50 sustainability and conservation technology experts.

Under the umbrella of QGBC's Water Interest Group, representatives from the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE), Arup, Parsons Brinkerhoff, Texas A&M University at Qatar, Kahramaa and Qatari Diar Vinci Construction (QDVC) gathered to rethink Qatar's water needs, share their respective organisation's insights into the matter, and propose ways to change the region's perceptions and behaviours towards water.

Eng Meshal Al Shamari, QGBC Director, welcomed those present and set out the seminar's aims and objectives. Speaking afterwards, Eng Al Shamari said: "Qatar Green Building Council is committed to bridging the gap between private sector industry professionals and public sector officials in government. Our awareness-raising programme includes holding interactive workshops like this, and offering the public the opportunity to listen, evaluate the solutions, and take part in the conversation with the experts."

"The discussions revealed the interest in this pressing regional challenge and depth of thinking in Qatar around the issue. QGBC will bring together the outcome of these discussions into papers which will be presented to Qatar's decision makers to assist with development of long-term solutions."

Presenting at the seminar, Jamila El Mir, Senior Consultant of Environment and Sustainability at Arup, said: “Qatar faces two main challenges in terms of water: the local climate and severe water scarcity that we cannot deal with easily, and the government’s ability to absorb all the costs of providing sufficient water resulting in Qatar having one of the highest water footprints per capita in the world.

“All other challenges such as network losses, inefficient building design and operation, and excessive irrigation in the public realm are not atypical challenges all around the world. They can be dealt with and are being dealt with in Qatar, one step at a time.”

El Mir called for public education and the importance of local solutions when tackling water scarcity in Qatar:

“Increasing awareness about the importance of water savings at an individual level is key to the process, but will take time,” she explained. “Meanwhile, local authorities can further increase the impact of their initiatives by making use of the local expertise in the private sector. This is one of the main points: how can the private sector support the government and contribute to optimising water conservation in Qatar?”

QGBC’s Water Interest Group was started in May 2011 by volunteer engineers, suppliers and senior level executives who are passionate about water and its conservation.

The chairperson of the group, Nikolaos Karavotas, Sustainable Development Manager at QDVC, attended the seminar and said: “QGBC’s Water Interest Group believes that Qatar’s water challenges cannot be solved easily by the government or the private sector alone. What is required is an integrated approach, clear policy and expertise.”

Adam Smith, Business Development Manager at Polypipe Gulf Qatar and co-chair of the group, added: “Awareness is key in the process and therefore, events such as these are vital in bringing members of various industries together to discuss the issues and brainstorm practical and expert solutions.”

In line with the sustainability pillars of the Qatar National Vision 2030, the seminar forms part of QGBC’s continued commitment to host educational workshops and events

highlighting sustainability issues, and provide a viable platform in which to discuss and exchange environmentally-friendly practices and policies.

During the event, QGBC facilitated five round table discussions with each focusing on a different response to addressing water scarcity in Qatar. Topics included Policy, Market Conditions, Education and Public Awareness, Design and Construction Practices, and Availability of Information.

Research papers will be developed from the information gathered at each round table discussion and in due course shared with state and private organisations as well as the the public as solutions to Qatar's water scarcity challenges.

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**About Qatar Green Building Council**

Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC) is a non-profit, membership-driven organization providing leadership and encouraging collaboration in conducting environmentally sustainable practices for green building design and development in Qatar. QGBC also aims to support the overall health and sustainability of the environment, the people, and economic security in Qatar for generations to come. The council, a member of Qatar Foundation, was formally established in 2009 by a decree signed by H.H. Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser and is helping Qatar on its journey to establish a post-hydrocarbon, knowledge economy and progressive society. Through QGBC, Qatar will join a network of 80 different countries that run active national green building councils under the umbrella of the World Green Building Council.

QGBC's members include, representatives from government, real estate developers, investors, facilities managers, consultants, constructors, manufacturers & suppliers, oil & gas, professional firms, financial services, telecom/technology, academia, NGOs & media.

QGBC is setting up operations from its HQ, organizing awareness events, knowledge seminars, training, forums, and networking sessions with the like-minded. To learn more visit [www.qatargbc.org](http://www.qatargbc.org).

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