

BEHAVIOUR SHIFT NEEDED TO DRIVE SUSTAINABILITY IN QATAR

Qatar Green Building Conference Underlines Need for Sustainability Education in Qatar

Doha, Qatar, 15 November 2016: Among a multitude of sustainability and green building related topics, the Qatar Green Building Conference 2016 has addressed society's understanding of, and attitudes towards, sustainability and how they are key to advancing Qatar's long-term 'green' agenda.

The various sessions have served as a salient reminder of the need for the wider community to be informed and educated about the many sustainability challenges currently facing Qatar and the wider region. Delegates comprising environmentalists, experts, academics and industry practitioners noted that the success of Qatar's long-term sustainability strategy relies heavily on citizens having a sound understanding of the concept and the ability to adopt it within their lifestyles.

During his opening address on the second day of the conference, Engineer Meshal Al Shamari, QGBC Director, said: "The Qatar Green Building Conference and Qatar Sustainability Week are emphasising the importance of community engagement and education as being an integral part of the solution to the country's sustainability challenges. Sustainable education cannot be stressed enough. A shift in people's understanding and behaviour is required. If members of society are familiar with the challenges, they will then be able to constructively contribute to forming solutions in a bid to address the increasing effects of climate change."

Her Excellency Bahia Tahzib-Lie, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands to Qatar, also delivered a speech on the second day of the ceremony. "It's a delight to be speaking here at the Qatar Green Building Conference," Ms Bahia said. "I praise Qatar for the green and sustainable development initiatives that have been developed over the past few years in line with the goals set in the Qatar National Vision 2030. Qatar is on its way to becoming a more sustainable country as it has taken certain measures to ensure it is adopted within cities."

Ms Bahia continued: "In my country, the Netherlands, we have excellent public transport networks, electric vehicles, a cycling tradition and public bike lanes as examples of green urban areas. We can let our imagination become a green reality as in the Netherlands we have started to develop energy harvesting bike paths which stimulate healthy and green lifestyles and communities. One can be innovative and creative here. For example, we now have a solar bike plane modelled after Vincent van Gogh's painting Starry Night. It would be fascinating for Qatar to consider such themes using local artists and beautiful traditional calligraphy as a further step towards healthier and greener lifestyles and communities."

In another session entitled, ‘Impacts for behaviour change’, Dr Islam Obeidat from Yarmouk University in Jordan addressed the topic of ‘Environmental attitudes and behaviours in sustainability about water use in homes’, which explored the various factors affecting water consumption within homes. Dr Obeidat noted individuals’ knowledge and experience of sustainability, personality traits, and perceptions of water use as some of the factors impacting water consumption in homes. He added that “in order for water sustainability experts and policy-makers to devise effective water conservation and sustainability policies and programmes, it is imperative to identify the relevant factors affecting people’s behaviour.”

Presenting her abstract paper on ‘The common ground for sustainable urbanism in the case of Doha’, Ms Eman Abdel Sabour from Qatar University addressed the importance of sustainable urbanism to establishing green lifestyles in Doha. Ms Sabour added: “Sustainable urbanism cannot be reached if there is no standard definition agreed on among the different key players involved in the process. Having sustainable urban areas and other relevant facilities in a city, like Doha, count as major contributors to behavioural change for creating green lifestyles.”

Ms Eman Sabour also said: “There has been major progress towards sustainable urbanism in Qatar, but we still need to reach a consensus on a common definition for Doha, highlighting challenges of policy and implementation. By creating a shared definition we will be able to narrow the gap between implementation and strategy.”

QGBC, a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), this week launched a new national sustainability campaign, entitled ‘Green Life’, in an effort to raise awareness about sustainability and provide various educational opportunities for residents of Qatar. The campaign will be fully rolled out later this year featuring an array of interactive events and programmes open to residents, companies and institutions to participate. People can learn more about it by visiting: www.greenlifehero.com

Image Caption

Image 1: Engineer Meshal Al Shamari, QGBC Director, opens the second day of Qatar Green Building Conference 2016.

Image 2: Her Excellency Bahia Tahzib-Lie, Ambassador of Netherlands to Qatar, speaks at the second day of Qatar Green Building Conference 2016.

Image 3: Her Excellency Bahia Tahzib-Lie, Ambassador of Netherlands to Qatar, at the Qatar Green Building Conference 2016.

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About Qatar Green Building Council:

Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC) is a non-profit, membership-driven organisation 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 Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser and is helping Qatar on its journey to establish a post-hydrocarbon, knowledge economy and progressive society. Through QGBC, Qatar is part of a network of 80 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, organising awareness events, knowledge seminars, training, forums, and networking sessions with the like-minded. To learn more, please visit www.qatargbc.org.

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