



وزارة البيئة والمياه
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & WATER



المؤتمر الدولي الخامس لشبكة تقييم الألفية للنظم الإيكولوجية

26 - 28 أكتوبر 2014

دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة

5th SGA Network Meeting

26th - 28th October, 2014

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



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كلمة معالي وزير البيئة و المياه
الدكتور «**راشد بن فهد**»

Speech of His Excellency - Minister of Environment and Water

Dr. Rashid Ahmad bin Fahad

Delivered by his excellence **Mr Sultan Bin Alwan**



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Representative of the United Nations Environment Program,
Representative of the World Conservation Monitoring Center,
Representative of the Sub Global Assessment Network,

Excellences,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you all to the “Fifth Sub Global Assessment Network Meeting”, which gathers elite professionals and those interested in issues of assessment of ecosystems. I am pleased to extend my deep appreciation to the United Nations Environment Program, the World conservation Monitoring Centre and Secretariat of the Sub Global Assessment Network for their efforts in preparing for this meeting. I also thank you all for having responded to our invitation to participate in this meeting.



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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ecosystems and their associated services through the ages supported various needs of the mankind and contributed in the promotion of economic growth and increased levels of social well-being enjoyed by many communities today. However, natural and human pressures experienced by these systems, particularly since the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, led to widespread and substantial loss of biodiversity on the planet and the loss of large and important services provided by those systems.

The continuation of the pressures and their rapid pace in the past few decades created a broad global concern, especially where many ecosystems exposed to levels of deterioration that are very difficult to restore, which called for a rapid move to protect these systems to ensure continued services.



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The "Millennium Assessment" which was called upon by the Secretary General of the United Nations in 2000 was a milestone in this context. Over a period of five years, hundreds of scientists and experts from around the world, in a distinct effort, initiated efforts to assess the consequences of change in ecosystems and to identify the scientific base for the work required to increase conservation and optimal utilization of these systems and their contribution to human well-being and identifying future challenges and options for maintaining the sustainable use of those systems and their restoration and improvement.



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Although knowledge gaps were faced by the assessment, the findings had a profound effect to attract the attention of the world, especially policy and decision makers, to the situation of those systems and biodiversity, and to the risks posed by the loss of biodiversity for development, social welfare and balance the ecosystem and draw their attention to move rapidly to give maximum protection to them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the U.A.E., biodiversity was exposed to many pressures in the past four decades, in addition to natural stresses such as drought and climate change. The most important pressures are population and economic growth and change in land use patterns.



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In the face of these pressures to limit their effects , the UAE has pursued early policy aimed at achieving a balance between environment and development, established by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan (may his soul rest in peace) and followed after by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Head of State (May Allah p him), he worked on the application of the principles of integrated management of ecosystems and their ability to survive and adapt to the changes by strengthening the institutional and legislative frameworks, and pay attention to the environmental dimension in land use planning and habitat protection through expanding the establishment of terrestrial and marine protected areas, , the protection of endangered species, establishing breeding centers and combating illegal trade and the fight against invasive species.



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Our efforts in this field were not limited to national level but even exceeded to the global level through establishing funds to promote efforts to preserve biodiversity in other States, such as: the Mohamed Bin Zayed species conservation fund for Houbara, conservation centers to maintain the Houbara Bustards in UAE, Morocco and Kazakhstan, in addition to Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI),launched by the UAE during the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002, which formed an added- value in facilitating access to environmental and social data. These, and other efforts, have earned prestigious international prestige to the UAE, reflected recently in occupying the first rank globally in marine protected areas indicator (within the Environmental Performance Index (EPI)) in 2014.



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Ladies and gentlemen,

One of the important factors in the continued loss of ecosystems is the excessive use of the services and benefits provided by these systems and considering them as free and not running out, one of the numerous letters addressed by *Millennium Assessment*.

Although the "polluter pays principle" is an established principle in the field of environmental, many countries do not include the true value of most of the services provided by ecosystems in their national economic calculations, which contributes to the persistence of the phenomenon of excessive exploitation of these services and arriving to a state where the ecological capacity of the planet is over- exceeded.



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In light of our awareness of this fact, we adopted the Green Economy across the Emirates through the green development strategy launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and ruler of Dubai, in 2012 under the slogan "Green Economy for Sustainable Development", which is one of the important tools in the package that we count on in our efforts to preserve our natural and cultural heritage, and under which we could include the true economic value of goods and services of the ecosystems.

Despite the gloomy aspects of the scene, there are many bright aspects that can be built upon to halt the degradation of ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity, especially in light of the wide attention given to this issue at the national and the international level, the political will represented by the conclusion of several international conventions, notably the three Rio conventions: climate change, desertification and biological diversity, and the agreement on clear and specific goals such as the *Aichi* targets for biodiversity, which led to realizing important successes in many areas.



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There is no doubt that the scientific base of the *Millennium Assessment* and the unique and numerous other assessments conducted, have contributed to transfer the issue of ecosystems and ecological diversity to rank high on the agenda of the international community, through the provision of better and deeper understanding of the benefits of these ecosystems, the size of the pressure and response options available.

I would like in this connection to refer to the recent meeting held under the patronage of his Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and ruler of Dubai, which adopted several initiatives emerged from the "laboratory of innovation in Government" organized by the Ministry of Environment and Water, with the active participation of various national partners, that addressed many environmental issues.



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With regard to the conservation of natural resources, the participants adopted two initiatives , an initiative to create a national map of natural capital and an initiative on the national program for the sustainability of wildlife, which will contribute significantly in making progress towards conservation of our natural resources and implementation of the recently adopted national strategies on biological diversity , the sustainability of the marine and coastal environment and desertification combat. We look forward to working with you to take advantage of the knowledge available in this meeting to initiate national efforts to implement these initiatives.



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Ladies and gentlemen,

We have the honor to host this meeting which will highlight the progress and publicize the achievements and identify future vision and knowledge of the tools and concepts and emerging issues in the area of assessment of ecosystem services and the sharing of experience. We look forward to building new partnerships and strengthening existing partnerships between the various institutions involved in scientific assessment at global, regional and local levels and cooperating with policy makers, as well as capacity-building and training for the countries of the region in the field of methodologies for assessing ecosystems and their services and promoting the concept of The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity. I wish you all success in your life. May peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you.



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السيدة ممثلة المركز الدولي لمراقبة الصون التابع لبرنامج الأمم المتحدة
للبيئة

هيلاري اليسون

Representative of WCMC Speech

Hilary Allison



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كلمة السيدة ممثلة برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة (مكتب غرب اسيا)

ديان كليمي

Representative of (UNEP, ROWA) Speech

Diane Klaimi



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Video



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