



*eye on earth*

ABU DHABI 2011 SUMMIT

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## { Abu Dhabi CAPITAL OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Abu Dhabi is the largest and most populated of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates, with over 80% of its landmass and a population of over 1.6 million people (the UAE's is over eight million). In terms of per capita income, Abu Dhabi is one of the wealthiest states in the world, on a par with Luxembourg, Norway or Qatar.

Abu Dhabi is ruled by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE.

To date, 13% of the Abu Dhabi's territory has been designated as protected areas. Despite its arid climate, Abu Dhabi hosts between 450 and 500 terrestrial plant species and close to half the world's Arabian Oryx population.

Residents from a wide variety of nationalities are proud to call Abu Dhabi home and believe that our Emirate is a great place to live, work and visit. Abu Dhabi believes that it is the responsibility of all - Government, NGO's, private sector and individual citizens - to make sure that this uniqueness is preserved for future generations.





## ABU DHABI'S NATURAL HERITAGE

Abu Dhabi Emirate, has a rich natural heritage with an exciting mix of geology, habitats and species, both on land and in the sea. The varied geology of mountains (rising above 1200m in the East), sandy desert, wadis and salty flats ('Sabkha') create the conditions for a diverse range of habitats. Abu Dhabi is home to all types of land vertebrates - mammals, amphibians and reptiles. Two to three million birds also pass through the UAE every year on their migration from the heart of Asia southwards to Africa, or eastwards to India or beyond.

Abu Dhabi's marine habitats are home to the second largest population of dugongs in the world. Abu Dhabi's coastal waters are also home to the endangered hawksbill and green turtles, four globally-threatened species of shark, three threatened species of ray and around 240 species of fish.

From the rolling red dunes of the Rub' Al Khali ('Empty Quarter', the largest sand desert in the world) to the ruggedness of its mountain outcrops, and from its sandy beaches to the azure blue Gulf, Abu Dhabi is home to a variety of stunning contrasting landscapes teeming with unique fauna and flora.



## AMAZING BIODIVERSITY

Abu Dhabi is blessed with amazing biodiversity and natural resources. It has evolved from a traditional economy based on subsistence fisheries, pearling, oasis agriculture and grazing livestock to a fully urbanised country in less than two generations.

With the population predicted to more than double between now and 2030, there will be increased demand for land, energy, water, food and other products. Around 65% of Abu Dhabi's water comes from groundwater, the remainder being provided by desalination plants and water recycling. But in our arid environment groundwater renews itself slowly, causing the supply to diminish. The per capita consumption of goods and emissions of greenhouse gases in Abu Dhabi is currently amongst the highest in the world. Abu Dhabi will need to look to both policy changes and changes in individual habits to reduce consumption and emissions to acceptable levels.



## PROTECTING ABU DHABI'S FUTURE

A comprehensive policy, legal and governance framework for environmental sustainability, to be completed by the end of 2011, will be a critical component of the Government's Vision for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi for the next twenty years.

Made up of:

1. An assessment of the current state of the environment in Abu Dhabi Emirate and the development of future scenarios;
2. The development of a vision statement, policy framework, and action plan that will address priority environmental concerns, and;
3. A detailed analysis of the current institutional setting, including a gap analysis and recommendations for how best to address those gaps.

The vision for the environment will complement the Government's Economic and Social Visions. It is intended that this framework, along with the Economic and Social Visions, will provide a shared foundation for environmental decision-making across all sectors in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi for the next two decades.

