EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

2nd Anniversary Event

Transforming Our World Through Innovation And The Sustainable Development Goals

15 May 2017

Dubai
Business entities have increasingly been facing high expectations from various national and international communities to showcase their commitment towards sustainable performance of their organizations and their responsibility towards sustainable development.

Establishing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was one such universal call to action by the United Nations (UN) to the business entities to work towards addressing the existing issues and drive progress in a sustainable manner.

The United Nations Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative that encourages companies to embrace universal principles on sustainable development. UNGC has become an important platform for the UN to effectively engage with businesses across the world and help them establish strategies aligned with the UN goals.

UNGC hosts an event each year to celebrate its foundation in the UAE. The Dubai Land Department was declared as the local representative in the UAE for UNGC in 2015, for upholding the ten universally accepted principles under the categories of Human Rights, Labor Rights, Environment, and Anti-corruption as well as the objectives of other United Nations platforms including Women Empowerment Principles and Business for Peace.

The role of the Local Network is to facilitate the progress of participants in the implementation and development of these ten principles and also create platforms and provide opportunities for different organizations and stakeholders to engage and collaborate for generating collective impact.

Continuing with this tradition, the UAE local network hosted its second anniversary event in Dubai to showcase its ongoing commitment to sustainable development goals (SDGs). The theme of the event, “Transforming our world through innovation and the sustainable development goals,” further highlighted its focus on identifying and encouraging solutions to achieve the SDGs.

The event was supported by the Dubai Real Estate Institute (DREI), the educational arm of the Dubai Land Department. DREI has always supported and incorporated the ten principles in its business strategy and has been associated with the UN Global Compact local network to spread the vision of social responsibility and sustainability not just in the UAE but in the entire MENA region.

Event objectives:
1. Highlight innovative solutions addressing the SDGs
2. Share practical solutions to integrate the SDGs and the UNGC principles into organizations
3. Highlight new collaborations and partnerships formed by the UNGC UAE local network
4. Showcase UAE’s transition to a sustainable economy and ongoing efforts by entities to support the UAE Year of Giving
5. Encourage participation in the UN Global Compact UAE local network
The UAE National anthem was played to mark the beginning of the event with a sense of pride and belonging in all participants towards the opportunities that this nation has provided to them.

Following the anthem, Mr. Mahmoud AlBurai, Representative of the UNGC UAE Network and CEO of Dubai Real Estate Institute, set the pace of the event through a powerful and motivating opening speech.

He welcomed the guests and expressed his happiness on seeing such a huge participation from people belonging to such diverse fields and backgrounds and fields, exemplifying their commitment to sustainability and achieving the global goals set in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.
"We dream of a world where everyone lives in peace, a world with equal opportunities, a world where everyone lives in healthy conditions, a world free from wars and disasters, and a world where no one is left behind," said Mr Al Burai.

He further stated that the UNGC UAE network is the largest network in the MENA region and it continues to strive towards serving humanity and the globe. This, he said, is only possible through the invaluable support of all the collaborations that the local network has built since its establishment. He also reiterated the local network’s aim of bringing together more people, commitment and resources to create more value through the existing network, including support from more than one hundred ‘youth ambassadors for sustainability’, stressing youth are key for change and creating a sustainable tomorrow.

He then highlighted the support that the UAE UNGC network has been receiving from more than 100 ‘youth ambassadors for sustainability’. He emphasized on his belief in the youth to act as motivators and change-makers of the society and be the driving force in supporting the country’s efforts towards sustainability.

The ‘Youth for Sustainability’ Program was also launched at the event, a program by the Global Compact Network UAE that brings together 150 students from 7 UAE Universities.

The program aims at training the young generations in the field of sustainability and help them formulate their goals envisioning sustainable development for the world.

Mr. Al Burai also stated the pressing need for all organizations – public or private – to work in tandem to meet the targets set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He discussed how individuals and organizations can transform the world by finding innovative solutions and collaborating to achieve the SDGs.

While he highlighted the need to commit to the SDGs, he also highlighted UAE’s role as a global leader in adopting a philanthropic and humanitarian approach in all its actions and initiatives. He expressed his gratitude towards His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum for declaring 2017 as UAE’s ‘Year of Giving’. The declaration strengthens UAE’s vision and commitment of
and commitment of integrating sustainability as a part of all its activities, policies and development agendas, where ‘giving’ is not just limited to monetary donations but is measured in terms of the impact created in someone’s life or on the society at large.

Quoting Henry Ford - “To do more for the world than the world does for you – that is success” - Mr. Al Burai outlined some of the collaborations and initiatives that the UNGC UAE local network has in the pipeline, highlighting their commitment towards achieving the SDGs:

- **UAE SDG pioneer awards** – to encourage private entities to integrate sustainability in their corporate strategies
- **Global opportunity network** – to provide solutions to the SDG challenges (to be launched in 2018)
- **UNGC UAE youth program** – to inspire youth to become ‘change factors’
- **Partnership with the global sustainability network** – to award the UAE’s social enterprise leaders
- **Collaboration with KPMG** – to develop a white paper on the ‘Year of Giving’
- **‘Youth for Sustainability’ program with AIESEC** – to encourage youth to work towards sustainability and encourage innovative solutions towards achieving the SDGs
- **Collaboration with the Capital Club** – to strengthen and enhance the awareness about the work being done by the Local Network, thereby increasing the momentum towards achieving the SDGs

With the announcement of these initiatives, Mr. Al Burai ended his speech with these stirring words:

“Let’s create impact, let’s create change, let’s be the movers and shakers, let’s be the candles in the darkness!”
The keynote speeches during the event provided an overview of how different organizations and entities are working towards achieving the SDGs, managing the impacts of the changing global scenarios as well as the role of innovation and technology in achieving these goals.

The keynote speakers emphasized on how organizations should focus on shared responsibility towards achieving the sustainable development goals. They shared the practices that their organizations followed and their future plans and initiatives to achieve specific SDGs.

A. Key note Speaker 1: Mr. Giuseppe Saba, CEO, International Humanitarian City (IHC)

- Mr. Giuseppe Saba initiated his keynote address with an introduction to the ‘International Humanitarian City’ (IHC) – a non-profit, independent, free-zone authority created by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed to address challenges faced by the most vulnerable across the globe and make the authority a nucleus of the global humanitarian network.

- While he acknowledged that the SDGs are probably the most challenging goals at the moment, he also emphasized how these goals could be achieved if everyone - from all spheres of the society - commits to acting responsibly and working towards a sustainable future.

- Mr. Saba further explained the need for different entities to develop and build value-adding relations for achieving the sustainable development agenda - an approach that IHC has understood and adopted across its organizational strategy.

- He further highlighted the need to strengthen and revitalize the spirit of collaboration and partnership among all entities across the world. His keynote address underlined the importance of adopting the Goal 17 of the sustainable development goals - ‘Partnerships for the Goals’.

- He also highlighted how IHC has become a platform for partnerships, associations, memberships and collaborations and is constantly striving to build a momentum for entities to align themselves with the SDG goal of nurturing partnerships.

- Mr. Saba outlined IHC’s ‘Share the Meal’ initiative, launched in collaboration with the UN World Food Program, aligned with the “zero hunger” goal. Contributing an amount as little as 50 cents, through the initiative's mobile app, contributes towards feeding one child for one day.

- He also discussed IHC’s plans for contributing to the Year of Giving, including supporting underprivileged people in South Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and Nigeria and creating ‘Emergency Response Funds’ to provide aid to countries during natural and man-made crises.

- Mr. Saba emphasized the need for collaboration among different business entities and stakeholders to attain sustainable development for everyone. He explained the joint initiatives being undertaken at IHC to exemplify the same, with the humanitarian community, commercial companies, innovators, young entrepreneurs and researchers being linked together to achieve sustainability.
B. Key note Speaker 2: Mr. Osman Sultan, CEO, Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (du)

- Mr. Osman Sultan focused on the theme of ‘sustainability in times of disruption’, explaining changing global scenarios and corresponding changes in the way sustainability has been perceived over time.

- The initial ‘industrial wave’ focused on labor and mass production. This has gradually been surpassed by the ‘communication wave’ – an era where everyone is surrounded by technology, social media and internet technology.

- With increasing globalization and urbanization, we are moving towards a ‘digital wave’ – a combination of internet and mobility – with cloud content, mobile applications and online digital becoming increasingly prevalent. “Being connected today has become a basic human right and the SDGs should be aligned to ensure that this basic right is made available with proper equality and accessibility.”

- Mr. Sultan reflected on the ‘Abundance Model’, which has generated a tsunami of data and radically shifted existing business models, explaining why majority of the world’s most successful brands and businesses today are less than 10 years old. Despite owning no, or few, tangible assets, these businesses dominate markets and have disrupted the traditional business models through their sustainable and innovative approach to meet consumer demands. Uber, Facebook, FitBit, and AirBnB, among others, are excellent cases that exemplify the shift from physical and centralized to virtual and decentralized.

- These innovations and shifts will require people to approach conventional ideas in a new way and use newer insights to solve the new challenges that arise. Ideas will need to be brainstormed around how to accommodate them sustainably across different sections of society.

- Mr Sultan pointed out that, in the current “Smart Wave” era, the need for data has shifted to a need for information, which contributes to knowledge and which eventually leads to wisdom. Businesses need to understand that they exist in a ‘Youiverse’ - people need to be at the center of all decision-making processes. Unleashing the power of innovation and creativity through human intervention is a must to achieve universal sustainable development.

- He concluded his speech by highlighting the need to shift focus from ‘top’ to ‘everyone’, striking the right balance between openness, security, privacy and intellectual rights.
C. Key note Speaker 3: Mr. Mahmoud AlAsmawi, UNDP Representative

- Mr. Al Asmawi opened by applauding the ‘Year of Giving’ initiative and appreciating UAE’s efforts as a global leader in the field of humanity and philanthropy.
- He emphasized the importance of innovation in realizing the SDGs, saying organizations across the world need to identify newer methods and approaches to address existing challenges and maintain their existence in a sustainable manner.
- Furthermore, it has become increasingly important for all business entities to involve all stakeholders in their decision-making processes. He exemplified this point by explaining United Nations Development Program’s approach towards sustainability, wherein they engage citizens and other relevant stakeholders across all stages of decision-making and strategy-formation.
- Mr. Al Asmawi also discussed the role that United Nations plays in supporting anyone with a vision for attaining the goals stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for improving the quality of life for mankind in any manner possible.
- Participation from the diverse backgrounds at the event was a commendable step in itself and signified the efforts that each participant has been taking towards achieving the SDGs. He concluded his session on a positive and hopeful note of creating a society where everyone’s lives are empowered so as to inspire each other towards creating a sustainable tomorrow.
To stimulate the efforts of private entities in the UAE and sustain the momentum towards achieving the SDGs, the UNGC UAE local network launched the UAE SDGs pioneer awards during the event.

Aptly described by Ayla Bajwa, moderator for the session and senior advisor for the UNGC UAE Local Network, these awards will encourage businesses in the UAE to integrate sustainability into their decision-making processes and ultimately align their sustainability strategy with the overall business strategy.

These awards will play an important role in changing the thought-process of business entities and individuals across the UAE about the sustainable development goals.

• To participate in the awards, organizations will first have to select and commit to one or more goals defined in the global goals category, i.e., goals defined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which revolve around the theme of ‘people, planet, prosperity, peace’, or those defined under initiatives such as the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPS).

• The organizations will have to outline the measurable outcomes, quantitative and qualitative, attained by working towards these goals and describe the long-term impact of the projects undertaken.

• Participants will be evaluated on the basis of 4 key areas:
  1. Identifying goals
  2. Measuring outcomes
  3. Identifying and measuring projects’ long-term impacts
  4. Partnerships or alliances formed to achieve the organization’s objectives.

The last evaluation criteria is aligned with UNGC’s commitment towards SDG 17: fostering long-term collaborations and partnerships for sustainable development.

The deadline for submitting the nominations is 15 August.

The applications can be submitted through the website - http://ungcuae.org/

Winners will be announced by mid-October 2017. The best practices followed by the winners will be reported and shared with different UNGC stakeholders, as well as the general public, to help peers adapt to the same and start integrating sustainability into their decision-making processes.
3. A global alliance for a sustainable world

Erik Rasmussen, CEO of Sustainia, shared his thoughts on the need of a global collaborative platform to work towards achieving a sustainable future. He stated that our biggest mission today is not to explore the boundaries of the Universe but the boundaries of our own planet.

He stressed on the need to connect different business entities to achieve a sustainable tomorrow, as it is these business entities who can be game-changers in achieving these targets. He further described how Sustainia has tested business potential by mapping 4500 solutions deployed in 188 countries and through dialogues with 17,000+ business leaders and 16 opportunity panels.

While he welcomed the sustainability visions set out by various international and national charters and agendas, he also stated the immediate need to connect all entities...and develop a new mindset with increased acceptability towards a consolidated relationship between politics, science, people and business. A robust mechanism and holistic institution will help stakeholders understand how SDGs can transform human lives.

To further strengthen the finding of a feasibility study that states that the implementation of SDGs is indeed achievable, Mr. Rasmussen explained Sustainia’s approach. Global Opportunity Explorer – a platform offering direct access to innovative solutions and market opportunities – was launched in New Delhi recently at the UN Global Compact’s ‘Making global goals local business – India’ event. The platform provides over 300 innovative solutions across 10 sectors to help organizations address some of the biggest global challenges.

Next steps include presenting the business partners of the Global Opportunity Explorer platform to the world during the Global Summit 2020 in New York and further strengthening its presence at the Global Opportunity Expo in Dubai.

Mr. Rasmussen urged efforts to combine existing and new technologies to drive the most creative and innovative solutions supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
I. The UNGC UAE Local Network signed a collaboration agreement with Raza Jafar, Co-founder of GSN and CEO of Enshaa. The main aim of this collaboration is to recognize and award the social enterprises in the UAE who have been at forefront of creating positive value for society and have been working towards achieving the SDGs.

II. The UNGC UAE local network also announced a collaboration with KPMG in the Lower Gulf, a leading audit, tax and advisory consultancy firm. The UNGC UAE local network and KPMG will work together on a ‘Year of Giving’ whitepaper, highlighting the steps that UAE businesses need to take to improve social performance as well as the impacts of initiatives being announced under this declaration on the business entities.

The main aim of developing and publishing this white paper is to highlight the best practices with regards to sustainable development and sustainable performance for business entities. These leading examples would pave the way forward for business entities and organizations to align their strategies and organizational goals with the objectives set under the ‘Year of Giving’ declaration and also the sustainable development goals at the global level.

Raajeev B. Batra, Partner and Head of Consulting for KPMG Lower Gulf, elucidated further on the key considerations for the business entities under the ‘Year of Giving’ and how organizations would need to focus on further improving their social performance and enhance their corporate social responsibility. He expressed his gratitude to UNGC, as a parting note, for this opportunity and highlighted how KPMG’s experience and knowledge will help in making this a highly successful collaboration.
With the declaration of the year 2017 as the ‘Year of Giving’ for UAE, different entities are going to need to be pro-active to achieve the set targets. This panel included leaders from different business arenas, thereby resulting in a comprehensive discussion about different approaches for integrating sustainability into overall business strategies and decision-making processes. The panel agreed that the ‘Year of Giving’ declaration will play an important role in promoting the UAE’s spirit of volunteerism and its humanitarian approach and help the nation achieve global goals.

The moderator for the session, Alice Laugher, initiated the discussion by asking Ms. Larissa Miller about her efforts towards achieving the global goals and how her organization has been aligning with the Year of Giving’s vision. The ‘Beacon of Hope’ initiative, managed by Ms. Miller, focuses on providing solar lights to children in countries including Liberia, Iraq, Somalia and Yemen. The goal is to improve children’s educational opportunities. Such initiatives tie-up well with the Year of Giving’s vision of creating a positive impact on someone’s life or on the society in general.

While such community welfare and development initiatives are important to achieve sustainable development, business entities also have to align organizational goals with their sustainability strategies and commit to working towards achieving the global goals. In line with this thought, Mr. Jafar highlighted the importance of sustainable performance across the triple bottom line (environmental, social and economic performance of an organization). He explained how his organization has consistently been working constantly towards incorporating a humanitarian approach at work and eradicate issues such as forced labor and human trafficking at work-sites. He emphasized that sustainable business models are the key to creating a sustainable future.

Adding an advisory perspective towards achieving sustainable development, Mr. Raajeev Batra highlighted how the six tracks defined under the Year of Giving’s national strategy will ensure that all business entities – private and public – will have to consider sustainability as a mainstream topic when making decisions. He further discussed how the Year of Giving objectives will ensure that the organizations become increasingly aware of their environmental and social impacts on the society and form their future decisions and strategies after accounting for the value that they are generating for society. He highlighted the importance of embedding sustainability in the roots of any organization by citing the example of KPMG itself, where sustainability, integrity, ethical and responsible behavior and inclusivity form the key pillars of KPMG’s sustainability agenda.

Ms. Maria Chevalier underlined the importance of integrating sustainability in business goals and working towards achieving SDGs as they effectively address many of society’s current key challenges. She emphasized the need for organizations to choose the SDG(s) that best suit their operations and business practices and also mentioned about a simple yet holistic framework that her organization has developed to help companies identify the SDGs that they should commit to, based on their existing performance.
The panel discussion was followed by a highly engaging ‘audience interaction’ session and some of the noteworthy points based on the panelists’ responses to the audience’s questions include;

• Organizations should identify one or more goals from the 17 sustainable development goals, based on their current performance and on their belief in an existing societal challenge

• Individuals and organizations should dedicate efforts and resources to working towards achieving the identified goal/s by partnering or collaborating with other firms and organizations working towards addressing the related issues

• Continuous, consistent dialogue with stakeholders will help achieve identified goals.

• To perform sustainability, an organization has to work on the principle of ‘giving’ before ‘taking’ – by reducing negative impacts and focusing on creating positive value for society
Panel 2: Youth session

UN Global Compact has always believed in the power of youth to drive the change required in the society and create a sustainable tomorrow. The UNGC UAE Youth program is based on this belief, which is why the UAE local network collaborates with a number of youth organizations and creates youth ambassadors who will be the leaders of tomorrow – creating the change they want to see in the world.

Youth panels at the event showcased innovative solutions and new methods that the UNGC youth ambassadors have developed to achieve SDGs and create a better tomorrow for everyone.

A. AIESEC and UNGC partnership
Presenters: Mahmoud Adel, President of AIESEC, and Raghad Gomaa, National Director for Public Relations and Volunteering Projects

The session began with an introductory video on AIESEC and its global presence and how AIESEC as a youth organization has committed itself to achieving the SDGs. Mr. Mahmoud appreciated the role that the partnership with UNGC has played in helping AIESEC fulfill its SDG commitments.

Ms Gomaa explained how opportunities provided by AIESEC to the youth helped explore their potential and contribute towards creating a positive impact in the society through practical experiences in diverse environments. Both presenters emphasized the role of youth in contributing to sustainability and how business entities should take their opinions and innovative perspectives into consideration before making decisions.

B. UNGC UAE youth ambassador program
Presenters: UNGC UAE youth ambassadors from American University in Dubai, American University of Sharjah and Middlesex University, Dubai

The second youth session involved different youth ambassadors, representing three different educational institutions in the UAE, talking about the creativity and new ideas that young people can bring to business entities, helping them address the existing challenges in an innovative manner. All three youth ambassadors suggested ways in which the young generation can help transform traditional business models into sustainable models and help achieve goals set under international development charters such as the UNGC Principles and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
C. UNGC UAE and Global sustainability youth network panel

Moderator: Barzan Jaffer, Head of Global Sustainability Network

Panelists:  
- Jordan Imahori - Evaporating Cooling Vests  
- Malav Sanghavi - Life Cradle  
- Khalid Ahmed - Multi-faith Pods  
- Brittany Fried - Teaching for Empowerment

This panel showcased innovative solutions developed by UNGC youth program ambassadors to achieve sustainability across different sections of society. The role played by the UNGC UAE local network in mentoring these youth ambassadors to create an atmosphere of social entrepreneurship was highlighted through a video.

- Mr. Malav Sanghavi explained how his low-cost cardboard-based incubators have helped pre-mature infants to survive. His ultimate aim is to reduce the rate of infant mortality in middle- and low-income countries, where these rates are at their peak owing to the lack of accessibility to healthcare facilities, lack of awareness and education as well as economic constraints.

- Ms. Brittany Fried’s ‘Empowerment Handbook’ provides an eight-module learning program that helps increase awareness and empowers students to fight against social evils such as bondage, forced and child labor and slavery. Her ultimate target is to ensure that each child is provided with the basic right to education, and has already implemented this idea in China and Hong Kong.

- Mr. Jordan Imahori’s ‘evaporating cooling vests’ reduce heat stress for construction and other site-workers who work in high temperature surroundings. The vests are designed so as to decrease the impact of heat, which adversely affects health and productivity, on workers.

- Mr. Khalid Ahmed’s ‘multi-faith pods’ are aimed at creating neutral spaces where young individuals from different sections and faiths can come together and collaborate to implement SDGs, improving inter-faith relations.

The discussion concluded with Mr. Barzan Jaffer, the moderator for the session, summarizing the session as highlighting the importance of involving youth in the decision-making process, taking their perspective and opinions about achieving sustainable performance into account. The youth innovators impressed the audience with the level of innovation, zest and creativity displayed in trying to develop a sustainable approach towards addressing issues and challenges.
Panel 3: Gender equality

Moderator: Nicole Malick, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, NRS International

Panelists:
- Rana A. Khamis, UNDP program associate and gender and youth expert
- Nadin Halabi, Manager, Dubai Business Women Council
- Richard Soundarjee, CEO, Société General
- Deepika Mehta, Director, Corporate Communications and CSR, 7Cs Group
- Helen McGuire, CEO, HopScotch
- Dr. Elham Seyedsayamdost, Chair of Department of International and Middle Eastern Studies and Assistant Professor of International Studies

This session focused on one of the most pertinent issues in the present times – gender equality, beginning with a presentation explaining the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and the corresponding sustainable development goal – SDG 5 - on gender equality.

The panelists shared their views on the importance of integrating WEPs with business strategy and the link between WEPs and the SDGs. Ms. Deepika Mehta explained how her organization has been striving to incorporate WEPs in its business practices, including a code of conduct that needs to be followed by everyone across their value chain. She further elaborated on why all organizations across the globe should work towards achieving gender equality.

An interesting point brought out by Mr. Richard Soundarjee during this session was whether the aim was ‘gender equality’ or gender balance. A majority of the audience agreed that women shouldn’t need special reservations at any stage of life as organizations should seek ‘balance’ between genders. Women empowerment is the long-term goal and everyone should be equally responsible for it.

Adding to that point, Ms. Rana Khamis pointed out the role that public institutions and civil society organizations can play in setting benchmarks for private entities in terms of women empowerment and gender balance. Ms. Helen McGuire described her experience and the reasons for developing a platform specifically for women to directly interact with employers. Her organization has already trained 400 women, offering women flexible working conditions and ensuring women are given equal respect and opportunities in the society.

The panel concluded with Dr. Seyedsayamdost echoing the thoughts of all panel members that women empowerment is a global challenge. Solutions such as regulations to end violence against women, equal pay and rights at the work-place, and changing mindsets on women rights and their involvement at different stages of decision-making will all make a difference.
6. Concluding remarks

The 2nd Anniversary Event of the UNGC UAE Local Network brought together people from diverse fields and backgrounds, offering an opportunity to understand what others have been doing towards achieving their sustainability goals. The event featured a wide range of speakers from different professional domains, highlighting the challenges they and their organizations face, giving them a chance to explore peer practices and offering ways to further improve upon current levels of sustainability performance.

The UNGC UAE local network expressed its gratitude to all the attendees and also thanked the different organizations and groups that they collaborated with to make this anniversary event such a huge success. The local network concluded the event by inviting all the speakers, panel members, youth ambassadors and all the Steering Committee members of the UNGC UAE Local Network on to the stage and felicitating them with a ‘UNGC’ memento, appreciating their efforts towards ensuring that each participant leaves with at least one important and useful learning lesson from the discussions.

The UNGC UAE local network hopes to see even more participation next year, with more sustainability success stories to be shared by individuals and organizations.

Key Insights

• Highlighting UNGC UAE’s efforts towards “mobilizing a global movement of sustainable companies and stakeholders to create the world we want”

• Stimulate participation of private entities, government, youth and the community in implementing the SDGs through various initiatives, collaborations and partnerships

• Commitment to Goal 17 of the SDGs – ‘Partnerships for the Goals’ by announcing a number of collaborations and partnerships during the event

• Launch of the UAE Sustainable Development Goals Pioneers awards to motivate the private sector in UAE to participate in responsible business practices

• Initiatives such as the ‘Global Opportunity Explorer’, ‘Share the Meal’, ‘Youth Ambassador Program’, ‘Youth for Sustainability’ and ‘Year of Giving’ were discussed to disseminate knowledge about global and local efforts towards achieving sustainable development

• Innovative solutions such as ‘Cradle of Life’, ‘Evaporating cooling vest’, ‘Teaching for Empowerment’ and ‘Multi-faith pods’ to address existing societal challenges were showcased by the youth ambassadors.

• Highlighting the importance of gender equality and Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and the need to incorporate SDG 5 – ‘Gender Equality’ within organizations.
Networking Sessions

300 people from diverse fields, with representation from multinational companies, government agencies, family-run business groups, small and medium enterprises, civil society organizations, academic entities as well as sustainability consulting organizations, attended the anniversary event at the Jumeirah Emirates Towers in Dubai.

The event provided the participants a number of networking opportunities, allowing them to interact and understand ongoing efforts and commitments by different organizations and entities in the UAE towards achieving sustainable development.

The networking sessions at the event also included a ‘WEPs Booth’, a platform for the participants to gain an understanding about the ‘Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs). WEP is the result of the partnership between UN Global Compact and UN Women to enable businesses to empower women in the workplace and in the society at large.

The WEPs booth at the Anniversary Event also helped the participants understand the ways in which they can become a part of this initiative and align their existing organizational strategies pertaining to women empowerment with these principles.
An interesting initiative taken by the UNGC UAE local network, as a part of the event, to increase interaction and participation from the attendees was setting up an “SDG board.” The white board encouraged interaction among participants and offered them the opportunity to write their targets and objectives towards achieving the SDGs.
About this report

This report was prepared by our team at KPMG Lower Gulf as the Knowledge Partner for this event and to help the UNGC UAE Local Network increase their outreach through the same.

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