

EEG CORP NEWS

Together for a Better Environment®



مجموعة عمل الإمارات للبيئة
EMIRATES ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP



April 2021
Issue 04



Upcoming Events

Your phones can restore Nature!

Join EEG's Green Call Project
21st March - 21st April 2021
Help our Environment by recycling your old mobile phones.

Exchange old Mobile Phones, Ipad or Tablets for an opportunity to plant a tree sapling in December.

Students	Companies	Academia
15 pcs	50 pcs	65 pcs

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OROC
21st Jan - 21st May 2021
ONE ROOT. ONE COMMUNITY-TREE

Linking the diverse Waste Management Programme with, "For Our Emirates We Plant"

Waste	Quantity	Waste	Quantity
Paper	500 kg	Paper	2,000 kg
Plastic	100 kg	Plastic	200 kg
Aluminium Cans	25 kg	Aluminium Cans	75 kg
Iron Cans	10 kg	Iron Cans	30 kg
Mobile Phones	30 pcs	Mobile Phones	75 pcs

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BRING YOUR RECYCLABLES:

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Villa No. JMR. 68, Jumeirah 1, Between old Dubai Zoo & Beach Centre.
For more info, call EEG at 04 344 8622, or email ee@emirates.net.ae - www.eeg-uae.org



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Habiba Al Mar'ashi

Hello EEG members, followers and readers,

We have completed one quarter of 2021 and I pray that all of you are in good health. In March, we witnessed a flurry of activities at the Emirates Environmental Group and that is a very good sign that both the economy and the society in the UAE are doing well.

At the start of the month, the EEG celebrated its 30th years anniversary. During the course of this time, we have been able to recycle more than 23,000 tonnes of paper, aluminum cans, glass and plastic, plant more than 2 million trees, and much more - all with the help of nearly a million students and more than a million members of the society. Our engagement with corporate members, federal and local government agencies, universities, colleges and schools runs in thousands as well. We are well positioned and we continue to play an active role with regional and international institutions.

We became in March a member of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter. This global partnership aims to bring together actors working on marine litter prevention and reduction to share knowledge and experience and to work together to address this pressing global challenge.

We launched a month-long programme; known as "Project Green Call", during the month to encourage the community to partake in collecting electronic waste such as mobile phones, tablets, laptops and iPads to contribute to the national efforts of achieving circular economy.

On the educational front we concluded the "Environmental Drawing Competition" which covered three important topics "Your Vision of Biodiversity for 2030", "Dubai Expo and the Future of Sustainability" and "Sustainable Recovery after the Pandemic". It engaged more than 100,000 students from all over the UAE. As for the interschool environmental public speaking competition, the registrations are still going strong at the time of sending this newsletter. It will take place virtually on the **21-22 April**. We will share with you details of the outcome in Next month's newsletter.

During the month, we participated and shared our insights in myriad of platforms, such as the i) International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Webinar, ii) High-Level Dialogue on Plastic Governance iii) Let's meet in the middle: How the central stages of the food value chain shape the way we produce and consume and more (details in inside pages). We were part of a series of high profile meetings with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification where we discussed how the pandemic has highlighted that human health is inseparable from the health of the planet. I was delighted to moderate

a panel discussion at the 2021 Middle East & Africa Green Building Congress Forum to discuss how we can bring net zero buildings upfront through retrofitting.

During the month, I attended a virtual meeting and a roundtable session of the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) alliance. In both meetings we discussed firstly how to deliver solutions to unlock long-term finance and investment for sustainable development; secondly, to mobilise additional resources for countries and sectors most in need; and thirdly, to align business operations and practices with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We also attended the Committee of permanent representatives of the United Nations Environmental Programme and in the UNEA CPR subcommittee where it was highlighted that the current trajectory of the world would lead to an increase of temperature by 3 to 4 degrees by the end of the century.

Related to our discussions on climate, we participated in a workshop organised by the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change. The goal of this workshop was for countries to share their experiences in combating climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and other environmental issues to contribute to a greener future (read more on page 7).

We celebrated International Women's Day by attending a virtual panel discussion by the University of Birmingham, whereby I was a panel speaker on 'How I Choose to Challenge: Celebrating women's achievements across the UAE'. I was also invited as a guest of honour for the launch of the book, 'A Parallel World' by the CEO of Holiday Inn Hotel - Al Barsha (read more on page 4).

We also attended the launch of the 'Target Gender Equality', an accelerator programme for participating companies of the UN Global Compact. At the event, the UN Secretary General, H.E António Guterres emphasized on the reinforcement of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP's) into business practices of committed companies.

Finally, we organised a Paper Walk campaign per excellence for corporate, academic and individual members to encourage them to collect hundreds of kilograms of paper to recycle as part of the Earth hour activity (more on page 9).

That's all for March 2021! I hope you were able to follow us and our activities on our social media channels. We hope to stay actively connected with all of you in the coming months.



Chief Scientist of Food and Agriculture Organisation delivers a Keynote Speech at EEG's Annual Corporate Gala Dinner

Emirates Environmental Group (EEG) hosted its 24th Annual Corporate Gala Dinner under the patronage and in the presence of H.E. Eng. Sheikh Salem bin Sultan bin Saqr Al Qassimi, Chairman of the Ras Al Khaimah Civil Aviation Department, Member of the Executive Council of Ras Al Khaimah Government and Honorary Member of EEG. Dr. Ismahane Elouafi - Chief Scientist of Food and Agriculture Organisation graced the event as a guest of honour and a keynote speaker. The dinner took place on 3rd March at the Terrace of JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai.

The 24th annual gala dinner was a by invitation only event and limited to an elite list comprising of VIP guests, ambassadors, consul generals, high profile government officials, EEG members, partners and sponsors. EEG conducted the dinner with all safety and social distancing measures in place as per the guidelines of Dubai Tourism and the Government of Dubai. The gala event also marked the conclusion of the 30 years of EEG, it was held under the theme of "30 Years of Success".

Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Chairperson of EEG, welcomed the guests of the evening and said, "EEG has been blessed to have had very good and reliable partners throughout this journey. Our sponsors have not just supported us financially; they have done so with people and expertise. They have supported us by believing in our vision and making environmentally friendly changes in their own business operations. EEG's partners and sponsors have always made decisions that have helped EEG and the UAE's natural environment."

Dr. Ismahane Elouafi - Chief Scientist at Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), delivered the keynote address at the Gala Dinner. Her Keynote message stated "There is no doubt that we need to adopt a holistic, coordinated approach to work collectively and build back better. We have the opportunity to "build back better" after COVID-19. We need to make our food systems more sustainable, more resilient and more inclusive. This transformation of the agri-food systems is an integral part of the solution to achieve the Global Development Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals we all committed to." She further commended EEG's perseverance and pioneering work in the field of sustainability to achieve success in the past 30 years.

The Gala Dinner enjoyed the support of Special Sponsor wasl Properties, Platinum Sponsor McDonald's UAE, Silver Sponsor Adeeb Group & Chalhoub Group and Sustainability partner the Arabia CSR Network. The awards for the evening were placed for each entity on their pre-determined tables and the attendees were requested to take the crystal on stage once their name was announced by the Emcees. H.E. Sheikh Salem bin Sultan Al Saqr Al Qassimi - Chairman of the Department of Civil Aviation - RAK and Honorary Member of EEG, Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi - Chairperson of EEG, Mr. Abdul Aziz Al Midfa'a - Vice Chair of EEG and H.E. Mr. Abdullah Al Saleh - Undersecretary of Ministry of Economy, stood on stage to acknowledge the entities for their relentless support and efforts to EEG throughout the year 2020. As many as 39 organisations, from both the public and the private sector were recognised for their outstanding collaboration with EEG during the year 2020.

Furthermore EEG conferred Honorary Memberships of the Group to the following individuals for playing an important and integral role in the journey of EEG and sustainability:

- H.E. Abdulla Al Saleh - Undersecretary - Ministry of Economy - UAE
- Dr. Ismahane El Ouafi - Chief Scientist - FAO
- Mr. Sunil John - President - Middle East - Asda'a BCW

In demonstrating EEG's deep commitment with regards to practicing the values that it advocates, the Gala Dinner was conducted as a Carbon Neutral Event which has made a sustainable contribution to CER credits by offsetting 2.40 tonnes of CO₂ Emissions, which is equivalent to 2.40 Credits as certified by our sustainability partner Farnek. The evening concluded with a delectable set menu being served to the attendees.

A Snapshot of 24th Annual Corporate Gala Dinner held on 3rd March



UNEP Engagements

In the month of March, EEG attended several UNEP engagements:

1) Subcommittee Meeting of the CPR

On 4th March, the Committee of permanent representatives of the United Nations Environmental Programme held a subcommittee meeting virtually from its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. EEG attended the meeting, discussed were the main findings of the UNEP Emission Gap Report and Adaptation Gap Report and the draft for the input of UNEA on the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable Development which will take place in July. Both Gap reports showed that we are far away from the goal of limiting global warming to 2 degrees, let alone 1.5 degrees Celsius. No country is on track yet to reduce their GHG emissions by the required amounts. Even if all the zero-emission pledges are met, we will still face a temperature rise of 2.5 degrees. The pandemic has mobilised an unprecedented fiscal response but only a small percentage is directed to sustainable and nature based solutions. The input for the High-Level Political Forum from UNEA includes the call for action and also details on which actions are necessary. This first draft was generally well received and will be worked on in the following subcommittee meetings.

2) 2nd Subcommittee Meeting of the CPR

On 11th March, EEG attended the UNEA CPR subcommittee second meeting to discuss their input in the High Level Political Forum scheduled to take place later this year. As part of the meeting the members were presented the Synthesis report “Making peace with nature”. The report made it clear that the current trajectory of the world will lead to an increase of temperature by 3 to 4 degrees by the end of the century. In the next decade we would have to decrease the greenhouse emissions by 45% and carbon neutrality by 2050 to achieve the desired 1.5 degrees Celsius warming as laid out in the Paris agreement. The situation is dire but the report also lists a number of possibilities for the transformation to a sustainable world. In fact during the meeting it was called “the most important document worldwide”. All attendees agreed on the urgent need to change drastically. This also showed itself in the discussion on the draft for the input for the High Level Political Forum. Only small changes were proposed during the meeting that does not fundamentally change the message of the document.

3) Consultative Process for Resolution 73/333

EEG submitted on 11th March 2021, its recommendations to the roadmap for the implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/333, entitled “Follow-up to the report of the ad hoc open- ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277”. EEG provided specific substantive recommendations with regards to public financing and the role of multilateral agreements including Our Common Future “the Brundtland Report”, the World Charter for Nature and the Stockholm Declaration. EEG was also invited to answer some guiding questions concerning the preparatory process for UNEA as well as the commemoration event in 2022 as UNEP celebrates 50 years of being a catalyst, advocate and educator to promote a sustainable relationship between people and the planet.

4) UNEP's Eco-Labeling Webinar

On 23rd March, EEG attended a webinar titled - ‘Eco-labels: How can they be scaled up, streamlined and used to drive sustainable consumption and production?’ organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Green Growth Knowledge Partnership (GGKP). The webinar focused on how eco-labelling can be improved across the board to support a more sustainable future.

Some of the important issues discussed during the webinar included:

- The current scenario of eco-labelling in scaling up sustainable consumption and production
- Challenges for governments in an increasingly complex eco-certification landscape
- Strengthening collaboration and knowledge exchange for global coordination on eco-certification
- Promoting eco-labelling and its benefits to consumers

This webinar was organised as part of the framework of United Nations Development Account project ‘Enhancing sustainable public procurement for the regional transition to inclusive green economy in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia’.

3rd March Nature-based Solutions for recovery efforts - Ministerial panel events

EEG attended on 3rd March the International Union for the Conservation of Nature’s Webinar covering the topic of nature-based solutions for recovery efforts. The pandemic has reminded us of the consequences of our treatment of nature; most states agreed that recovery needs to focus on rebuilding better, more resilient and more sustainable. The Webinar allowed representatives of state members to share their experiences in nature-based tools and mechanism to avoid not only future pandemics but also help combat climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The Challenges of implementation often come in competing with traditional ways of thinking and engineering solutions. There are many success stories of nature-based solutions on a small scale but the problem often lies in scaling them up and mainstreaming them. To do this, it is important to acquire the proper finances, we need to change the way of thinking to a more holistic and long-term. With the right investment, nature-based solutions can be a potent tool in recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic.

7th March A Parallel World

EEG chairperson attended on 7th March, as a guest of honour the launch of the book, ‘A Parallel World’ by the CEO of Holiday Inn Hotel - Al Barsha in commemoration of International Women’s Day. The book manifests both worlds of art and poetry. The poems were written out of the poet’s labour of love as she sewed together her experiences in life and the lessons derived from them. These poems expose genres of Epic, Soliloquy, Allegory and Ode as they aim to explore the philosophy and spirituality via human experience. To understand and indulge with the poems even further, they are accompanied with breathtaking illustration works by artists across continents.



The chairperson gave the opening speech and talked particularly about two poems that had caught her attention, 'The Ultimate Design' and 'Beyond Shonya'. Both poems have delved into significant matters that one tends to miss such as reminiscing on the beauty of Allah's (SWT) creations and blessings as well as reflecting and re-establishing the pain, needs and wants that roam through our minds.

8th March *Energy efficiency provides new bilateral opportunities for Germany and UAE*

EEG on 8th March took part in the Symposium for Energy Efficiency, organised by the German Emirati Joint Council for Industry & Commerce (AHK). German companies and academic institutions provided an overview of their solutions to reduce energy consumption in order to achieve a more sustainable industry. These solutions ranged from engineering solutions such as using excess heat to produce energy over the installation of LED-lights to the use of AI to optimise energy usage. UAE companies like Emirate Global Aluminium and Mubadala also presented their efforts with regards to saving on energy consumption. The symposium showed that only through reducing energy needs, energy demand and energy supplies will the goals of the Paris Agreement be reachable. The good news is that this has been recognised by most companies and also provides economic benefits. The change is coming gradually.

11th March *High-Level Dialogue on Plastic Governance*

On the 11th of March 2020, EEG was delighted to get the opportunity to attend a High-Level Dialogue on Plastic Governance as part of the Geneva Beat Plastic Dialogue sessions organised by the Geneva Environment Network. Other partners of these sessions include the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Center for International Environmental Law, the Global Governance Centre at the Graduate Institute, Norway, and Switzerland. This high-level dialogue considered the outcomes of these past sessions and explored the way forward to UNEA 5.2, scheduled to take place in February 2022. The highlight of this session was the inclusion of high-profile speakers from UNEP, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, the Rwanda Environment Management Authority, Portuguese Environment Agency and WWF International. Some of the key actions as suggested by UNEP in beating plastic pollution through good governance included:

1. Promoting environmentally sound waste management
2. Promoting responsible design & production/sustainable consumption
3. Increase materials recycling

It was established that regional action plans and conventions play a key role in facilitating and coordinating actions across the globe. Currently, there are 11 Regional Action Plans on Marine Litter, 4 Draft Regional Action Plans, 1 Assessment underway, 5-6 Regional Nodes (Global Partnership on Marine Litter) and several ongoing national level inventory pilots in place. Representatives from the governments of Norway, Switzerland, Peru and Rwanda also provided their dialogues and perspectives on what actions are underway in their countries as well as an efficient way forward. For example: In Peru, the National Plan for Competitiveness and Productivity (2019 - 2030) relates to the transition to a circular and eco-efficient economy as a priority.

GISD Engagements

EEG participated couple of engagements with GISD:

1) GISD Alliance on Key Deliverable 4

EEG Chairperson attended on 11th March, a virtual GISD alliance meeting to discuss the GISD Key Deliverable 4. The aim of the Alliance is threefold: Firstly, to deliver solutions to unlock long-term finance and investment for sustainable development; secondly, to mobilise additional resources for countries and sectors most in need; and thirdly, to align business operations and practices with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The GISD Alliance Key Deliverable 4 plans to coordinate its actions with the G20, the G7 and major financial system bodies to ensure that its recommendations and work is included in their priorities. Leads on how to advance the implementation of KD4, including learning from the Task Team Co-Leads on which topics may require support from the members and how GISD Members can contribute was discussed during the meeting.

2) GISD Roundtable

EEG attended on 18th March, the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Sustainable Reporting Roundtable. Sustainability reporting is a key enabler of sustainable finance and sustainable economy. GISD, in partnership with the World Bank Group organised a roundtable on the consultation initiated by the IFRS Foundation, the global financial reporting standard setter, to determine the need for global sustainability standards and its role in creating such standards. Recent global socio-economic and environmental trends, not the least of which is the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasised the role of sustainability reporting in transitioning to a more sustainable economy. Convergence among sustainability standard-setters is needed to support this transition. Lack of universally adopted, harmonised sustainability disclosures and standards has been hindering capital markets' capacity to react at scale to these developments and caused calls for convergence and development of global corporate sustainable reporting standards. By organising this roundtable, GISD hopes to achieve the following:

- Establish a common perspective on the consolidation process centered on the IFRS Foundation and a greater understanding on the direction IFRS intends to take;



- Become a consultative partner for the IFRS Foundation trustees and other standard setters, with the alliance representing its diverse membership;
- Define a roadmap for continued engagement of the IFRS Foundation, other standard setters, and other stakeholders in the consolidation of sustainable reporting standards.

The roundtable was moderated by Head of Sustainable Finance, UBS (USA). Speakers included IFRS Foundation Trustee, Chief Executive of the Impact Management Project, Head of Enterprise Branch of UNCTAD and EFRAG Board Member.

15th - 19th March *EEG Attends High-Profile UNCCD Meetings*

From the 15th to 19th of March 2021, EEG attended the 19th session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 19) via webinar. The meetings were held in six United Nations languages. The Executive Secretary kickstarted the meeting by stressing that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of the Convention as human health is inseparable from the health of the planet. CRIC 19 reviewed several important matters including:

1. The effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional levels
2. Updates on the voluntary land degradation neutrality target setting process
3. Operationalisation of the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Fund
4. Implementation of the Drought Initiative

In February 2021, state parties from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the North Mediterranean and Central Europe and the East held preparatory meetings for CRIC-19, forming links to the Conference's regional enforcement. Representatives from these regions spoke at length at CRIC 19 to establish how the Convention was being implemented in their regions and the countries it involved. Another highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the interim report by the Intergovernmental Working Group on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought. In this regard, several Parties supported the importance of capacity-building, knowledge hubs, sharing of best practices and enhancement of indigenous knowledge. As a precursor to this high-profile meeting, EEG also attended the preparatory meeting for CRIC 19 on 10th March. The goal of the meeting was to produce a note by CSO members that could be presented at CRIC 19. A few salient points from the CSO statement at the meeting were:

1. It is important to fix gaps between policies, commitments and concrete actions on land and communities at the local level to reach LDN and address desertification
2. Civil society must be supported throughout the decision-making processes regarding LDN and National Drought Plans
3. Recognise the importance of agroecology and community-led initiatives to achieve goals

Representatives from the governments of Norway, Switzerland, Peru and Rwanda also provided their dialogues and perspectives on what actions are underway in their countries as well as an efficient way forward. For example: In Peru, the National Plan for Competitiveness and Productivity (2019 - 2030) relates to the transition to a circular and eco-efficient economy as a priority.

16th March *EEG becoming an Official Member of GPML*

EEG, on 16th March, officially became a member of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML), a multi-stakeholder partnership which brings together all the actors working on marine litter prevention and reduction by providing a unique global platform to share knowledge and experience to work together to create and advance solutions to this pressing global issue. GPML is led by a Steering Committee and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides secretariat services.

The partnership possesses a revelatory mission to protect the global marine environment, human well-being and animal welfare by addressing the global problem of marine litter by means of:

- Providing a platform for cooperation and coordination; sharing ideas, knowledge and experiences; identifying gaps and emerging issues.
- Harnessing the expertise, resources and enthusiasm of all stakeholders.
- Making a significant contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG target 14.1.

GPML has set its eyes on several objectives to fulfill their mission which encompasses serving as a global platform for all stakeholders on the issue of marine litter, supporting the implementation of relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, communicating information and guidance on authentic scientific knowledge and more. EEG looks forward to participate in GPML programmes to protect the blues of the planet.

16th March *Target Gender Equality Live*

EEG attended the live programme launch of the Target Gender Equality, a gender equality accelerator programme for participating companies of the UN Global Compact on 16th March, it served as an introduction and call for action through a wide panel of speakers discussing what the programme has to offer and why organisations should join. The programme offers participating companies an instructive framework of performance analysis, capacity building workshops, peer-to-peer learning and multi-stakeholder dialogue at country-level. The 12 hour event was an interactive session where participants had the opportunity to attend talks by prominent figures in the industry, join mentorship segments for career insights and network with professionals across the globe. The event was addressed by the UN Secretary General who emphasized on the reinforcement of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP's) into robust business practice of committed companies. The idea that the need to take a holistic approach in finding solutions for global issues was predominantly highlighted by speakers well versed in this domain. While, this programme primarily focuses on gender equality, the speakers also touched on topics of inclusive for disabled individuals and under resourced youth. The event successfully concluded having highlighted the significance of adopting inclusive workplace behaviour and the benefits a company could reap by having more women in senior management positions.



16th March *Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation*

EEG was honoured and delighted to attend a virtual ceremony of the Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation founded by H.H. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan - President of the UAE, on 16th March in its 12th & 13th sessions. H.E. Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al Nahyan expressed his sincere gratitude and utmost appreciation to the founder of the Award, H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE's Armed Forces, for his ongoing support to the Awards. H.E. also extended his sincere greetings and appreciation to all the Award winners for their efforts in achieving effectiveness in the fields of agriculture, food security and sustainable development. H.E. Q. Dongyu - the President of FAO then emphasized that FAO is onboard to support the UAE and all their members in their efforts to transform agri-food systems making them more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable via scientific evidence, technical support and global initiatives.

The Award honoured personalities and international award winners for 2020 and 2021 and national award winners for 2020. H.E. Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al Nahyan extended his blessings on signing a number of MOUs between the Award's General Secretariat and several entities including Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Company and Ministry of Agriculture in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The Awards report was presented as a closure to the event to enlighten the audience on Circular Economy. The report titled 'Bridging boundaries: how can bio-regional collaboration convert the date palm industry into a successful model of the bio-circular economy?' is a memorialisation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and follows the objectives laid out by the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which are People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships. The report aims to serve as a call for action to industry experts and governing bodies on the topic of date palm industry and the bio-circular economy along with devising good agricultural strategies and stimulating scientific research. The significance of the environmental impact generated by the residue of date palm cultivation and processing which has created an immediate need to find solutions and kick start sustainability projects is highlighted in the Khalifa Award Report.

The Report profoundly explains 5 categories which give the readers a clear idea of the implantation of bio-circular economy in the date palm industry:

- Date Palm Oasis Ecosystem Services.
- Date Palm Cultural Heritage and Urban Integration.
- Bio-Circular Economy Potential.
- Adaptation of Technology.
- Bio-Regional Collaboration.

The report concluded on a hopeful note urging fruitful discussions and providing recommendations on the topic. EEG chairperson feels honoured and delighted to have contributed in this esteemed publication that recognises regional issues and proposes sustainable ways to tackle them.

[Click for more](#)

16th - 18th March *UNFCCC workshop - Lessons learned from the NDCs*

EEG participated in a workshop on 16th - 18th March which was organised by the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change. The goal was for countries to share their experience on the process of updating their National Determined Contributions (NDC). The NDCs are statements and commitments by countries on how they intend to combat climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and other environmental issues to contribute to a greener future. After the Paris Agreement the NDCs had to be updated, but this process proved to be very challenging and hindered especially during last year due to the pandemic. Throughout the workshop it became clear, that the main challenge was and still is the lack of awareness and the urgency of climate change and the lack of information on the tools provided by international organisations and countries, especially finance. Education, raising awareness and forming stronger and easier access to cooperation methods as well as provide quick and easy access to funding were the main solutions proposed. Additionally it was made clear, that only a holistic and society wide approach with participation on every level will make the Paris goals achievable. Many countries are yet to finalise their NDCs but for those who already did, they face the challenge of turning their statements and commitments into actual policies which will be a long and difficult process.

22nd March *DEWA's Sustainability Leadership Conference (CEO Forum)*

As part of the virtual sustainability week, Dubai Electricity & Water Authority (DEWA) held a Leadership webinar on 22nd March which EEG attended. In order to discuss the role that businesses have to play in transitioning into a more sustainable future, DEWA invited CEOs of large companies and experts from the Cambridge University and beyond. It was made clear that businesses have to change their mind-set. While in the past, financial gain and shareholder value was seen as the only metric businesses had to be measured, the economy is now changing and those who see the sign and adapt early will be the winners.

The pandemic marks the end of a development cycle and it was predicted, that digitalisation will dramatically change the current course of globalisation. The sustainable development goals are the best guidelines for a better future and businesses have to realise that they are in fact their business. Consumers increasingly demand more responsibility from businesses and businesses have to realise that their value generation is dependent on a healthy environment and society. The webinar showed the changes in the foundations of the private sector and how changing businesses and system takes time, but once underway it will gain steam and grow exponentially.



22nd March *How central stages of the food value chain shape the way we produce and consume*

Following the release of the report “Catalysing science-based policy action on sustainable consumption and production: the value-chain approach and its application to food, construction and textiles” by the One Planet network and the International Resource Panel Task Group, a series of consultations are going to take place across all three sectors highlighted in the report. On 22nd March, EEG attended a webinar that identified innovative business and policy solutions in the Food sector, undertaken through expert workshops each focusing on specific stages of the value chain. One of the key messages to come out of this report, regarding the food value chain, is that whereas the most significant resource use and environmental impacts are taking place at the production stage, it is the structurally powerful and concentrated middle stages of the value chain which shape to a large degree what farmers produce and sell, and what consumers buy and eat. The webinar aimed to set the stage for the upcoming consultations by illustrating the message through innovative examples from across the One Planet network and beyond. Examples from the public and private sector demonstrated how actions at the central stages of the food value chain - transport, processing, distribution, retail - can have significant impact on the production practices at one end, and consumption habits at the other. The presentations explored how these ripple effects from actions taken at the central stages of the value chain reduced environmental impacts and natural resource use.

[Click for more](#)

23rd March *Sustainable Water Use Platform (SWUP)*

EEG Chairperson participated in a productive and fruitful discussion with other stakeholders from various industries at Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Sustainable Water Use Platform (SWUP) on 23rd March.

Water scarcity and quality, particularly in the MENA region, are aggravated by factors like urbanisation and rapid economic development. The multi-stakeholder platform was established with the aim of addressing and resolving the UAE's and the MENA region's numerous water challenges. The UN SDGs No. 6 and No. 17 were highlighted during the discussion. State, corporate, academic and civil society representatives were among those who were invited. The objectives of SWUP are to:

1. Exchange knowledge
2. Engage in a dialogue on various water sustainability related matters such as international standards and more
3. Stimulate learning from each other's experience

The aim of the meeting was to discuss updates and progress on Water Stewardship and Brainstorming on next steps for the SWUP.

23rd March *World Water Day Webinar*

EEG attended a virtual seminar titled ‘Let's Value Water’ organised by Dubai Municipality in commemoration of World Water Day under the slogan ‘Valuing the importance of groundwater’ on 23rd March. The webinar aims to present and monitor the most prominent experiences in the field of groundwater and how to benefit from it and develop it to overcome challenges and achieve success. During the webinar, a delegate from Dubai Municipality's Environment Department outlined the Municipality's most significant accomplishments in terms of groundwater projects and how to protect them. Moreover, fruitful topics such as ‘Valuing Groundwater’, ‘UAE Water Platform’, ‘Educating Youth through Water Youth Ambassador Programme’, ‘Soil, Agriculture and Water’, ‘Symbolic and Ecological Importance of Ghaf’ and ‘Valuing Water: A Necessity in the Arab Region’ were presented by various invited entities. The webinar ended with a series of recommendations that will be developed in favour of efforts to conserve groundwater, as well as strategies for introducing initiatives to rationalise the use of groundwater supplies in farms, which leads to improving the economy's productivity and efficient usage of natural resources, as well as spreading environmental awareness and preserving the environmental legacy for future generations, and the embodiment of Dubai Municipality's vision of building a sustainable and happy city.

23rd March *How can retrofitting bring net zero buildings upfront?*

EEG Chairperson moderated a panel discussion on 23rd March under the title, ‘How can retrofitting bring net zero buildings upfront?’ at the 2021 Middle East & Africa Green Building Congress Forum. The virtual business forum was a platform to share best practices and regional case studies on how the world can collectively respond to the climate and social challenges facing the region. EEG Chairperson stressed in her opening remarks on the importance of buildings towards the path to decarbonisation that has been seen through the Net Zero Carbon Buildings calling upon businesses, organisations, cities, states and region to reach Net Zero operating emissions in their portfolios by 2030.

The stimulus behind the need for transition is the Arab region's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. Not only have buildings in the Middle East and Africa contributed higher than 39% of global GHG emissions. The concern skyrockets as the UN projected that 68% of the world's population will be living in urban areas, particularly within the region by 2050. The issues covered during the panel discussion included insights into the future of the retrofitting market within the region, how do retrofits impact the local residents, the main barriers across the different markets for progressing building efficiencies and retrofits and the possibility to achieve net zero through these retrofits. The Chairperson concluded that there is no one-size-fits-all solution that can solve all the problems. Integrated solutions must be developed and delivered starting with the needs of each city. All of this will necessitate unprecedented cooperation between the government, industry, non-governmental organisations and the general public.



24th Meeting with the delegation led by South African Consul General

March

EEG Chairperson welcomed a delegation from the South African Consulate General led by the Consul General - H.E. Mogobo David Magabe. The meeting took place at EEG's office on 24th March. EEG Chairperson gave the attendees a comprehensive presentation on the scope of work done by EEG and provided them with an insight into EEG's focus areas and the methodology that EEG adopts in carrying out its responsibilities. The chairperson emphasised the importance of forging effective partnership to deliver and fulfill on both national strategies and international commitments. Both parties further discussed possible synergies and future areas for collaboration to effectively engage the South African Community and companies in the UAE in EEG's programmes and activities and also connect with NGO's on the ground in South Africa.

24th UN DESA: Building Food and Water security in an Era of Climate Shocks

March

EEG attended on 24th March a webinar organised by the UN DESA on Building Food and Water Security in an Era of Climate Shocks. Entrepreneurs, representatives of international organisations and experts were invited to give insights into the problems the world's food systems are currently facing of which possible solutions are available and already implemented. 2020 was a particular devastating year, not only due to the pandemic but it was also one of the hottest years on record and saw a multitude of climate catastrophes. Small and local farmers were hit the hardest and are the most vulnerable. Over 1 billion people suffer from food insecurity while over 4 billion face issues of water scarcity. 70% of irrigated land is under water stress and agriculture is by far the highest consumer of fresh water and will need fundamental change. The meeting presented ideas of intercropping, solar powered water pumps, focus on indigenous plants, digitalisation and measuring productivity by efficiency as starting points to combat the crisis.

27th Paper-Walk Campaign

March

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has witnessed the dire need of robust waste management and recycling methods. These unprecedented times call for us to be more cautious and proactive in "working together for the environment". The Earth Hour is an annual event where people across the world switch off lights for an hour from 8.30pm - 9.30pm local time on 27th March as an initiative to reduce their ecological footprint. Since its inception in 2007, Earth Hour has been widely celebrated as an environmental awareness event that has garnered much attention by advocates and world leaders leading to policy reform and global conversations.

This year EEG rolled out its Paper-Walk Campaign as is the practice in celebration of the Earth Hour, an improvised activity aiming to limit the spread of the coronavirus while also working for the environment. The Paper-Walk campaign was open to EEG's corporate, academic and individual members to deposit up to 500kg, 250kg, and 150kg of paper respectively on 27th March at the EEG office. Along with this, EEG urged its members and wider community to traditionally celebrate the Earth Hour by switching off lights for an hour from 8.30pm - 9.30pm. As many as 89 participants deposited their collection and handed over a total of 15,948 kg of paper, which included newspapers, cardboards, books etc.



28th Meeting with Dubai Chamber and Confindustria Cisambiente (Italy)

March

EEG Chairperson was delighted to attend a special invite on 28th March which was attended by representatives from Dubai Chamber which included their President & CEO, Vice President for International Relations, and the Senior Manager for Centre for Responsible Business. Italian Delegates from Confindustria Cisambiente (Italy) and the Italian Ambassador to the UAE were also present during the meeting. Confindustria Cisambiente is the Association of the Environment and Ecology sector (which affects and also includes the varied world of by-products and renewable energy from waste and recovery) which was established in 2016 within Confindustria Italy. The companies that make up the associative panorama of Confindustria Cisambiente are equally distributed throughout the national territory - including the islands. The Association was strongly supported by a group of entrepreneurs in the environment and renewable energy sector. A reality that was set up to protect and enhance those companies that have always shown a great effort in the sectors of urban and special waste management.

The delegation was headed by the President of Ambientthesis SPA and Founder, President & CEO of EFG Consulting. The delegation comprises of diverse Italian companies working in the circular economy and environmental businesses. The meeting revolved in the discussion of Waste Management, Renewable Energy, Circular Economy, and Consultancy services that EEG works on.



29th March Addressing Marine Litter in the Northwest Pacific Region

One of the most widespread problem affecting the marine environment is Plastic Pollution. According to IUCN, At least 8 million tons of plastic end up in our oceans every year. Floating plastic debris are currently the most abundant items of marine litter. Waste plastic makes up 80% of all marine debris from surface waters to deep-sea sediments. The most visible and disturbing impacts of marine plastics are the ingestion, suffocation and entanglement of hundreds of marine species.

EEG attended on 29th March a webinar hosted by GPML and Northwest Pacific (NOWPAP) Regional Node on, 'Addressing Marine Litter in the Northwest Pacific Region' to support the regional action plan on marine litter. "The wise use, development and management of the coastal and marine environment are to obtain the utmost long-term benefits for the human populations of the region, while protecting human health, ecological integrity and the region's sustainability for future generations." The webinar also provided an update on the proof of concept for the GPML Digital Platform Data Hub that builds on existing initiatives and discusses future actions.

Ongoing Event

Project Green Call

EEG launched its annual Project known as the "Green Call" on 21st March and it will run till 21st April. The project engages the community including individuals, student members, corporate entities and academic institutions to partake in collecting electronic waste such as mobile phones, tablets, laptops and iPads to contribute to the national efforts of achieving a circular economy in the UAE. It is a clear, undeniable truth that: our actions, far more than our thoughts and words, define us. Today, as we deal with global crises such as pollution and climate change, it is crucial that we all do our part to help. To combat the threat of e-waste and promote circular economy, the UAE Government according to the National Agenda of the UAE 2021, has developed an Integrated Waste Management System with the aim of diverting 75% of total urban solid waste (including e-waste) away from landfills by 2025. In alignment with the country's goal, EEG initiated, promoted and managed e-waste recycling project since 2001. Recycling reduces environmental implications emphasizing the value of circular economy. Participants who commit to meeting the defined set targets for 2021 within the time frame will be entitled to plant a native tree in their name on 21.12.21 and will also receive a certificate of participation upon completion.



Corps News

Nestle: Championing Circular Economy

Nestle continues to lead the way toward a circular economy by committing to the following goals:

1. 100% zero waste factors (2020)
2. 100% packaging recyclable or reusable by 2025
3. Plastic neutrality: Collect as many bottles as produced by 2030.
4. Increase the use of recycled content in our bottles.

Over the years, Nestlé Waters have acquired a unique and diversified experience in water resource protection and management throughout the world. Whatever the operating conditions, Nestlé Waters' interest and duty has always been to strive to ensure the water resource's sustainability - and to protect the ecosystem. Nestlé Waters' goal for this year is to gain AWS certification for three of its locations, including one in Abu Dhabi. The factory staff shared the checklist with the corporate team before they began gathering results. Furthermore, the AWS team in Edinburg has given clarity, specifically on catchment delineation. They enlisted the help of a third-party data processing contractor to complete the checklist. Main points are water related infrastructure, potential source of pollution, water governance, important water related areas, shared water challenges, water stewardship plan and more. EEG is proud to watch its corporate member striving on a path to achieving circular economy for a more sustainable environment.

CONGRATULATIONS TRISTAR GROUP LLC

EEG would like to congratulate its corporate member, TRISTAR GROUP LLC, for winning in the following categories: Energy Supply Chain and Corporate Social Responsibility of the Year at the Logistics Middle East Awards on 16th March. TRISTAR GROUP LLC is a fully integrated Energy Logistics business serving the downstream oil and gas industry.



With a proven track record of safety performance and service excellence, TRISTAR GROUP LLC is a partner of choice for most national and international oil majors. The company is centered on a vision to be a globally recognised energy Logistics Company offering best in class services, without compromising on core values and commitment to manage their business to the highest health, safety and environmental standards. TRISTAR GROUP LLC has a global presence in 21 countries across the Middle East, Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Americas with a mission to develop and retain a qualified workforce to offer pre-eminent customer service, grow shareholder value and to place being a business for purpose on equal priority as being a business for profit.

UN News

International Day of Forests 2021 theme of 'Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being'

The UN Secretary General on 15th March emphasized the role forests must play in building a better, healthier and more equitable world as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. He uncovered that tree mortality in some forests has doubled in recent decades as a result of a drying climate and chronic anthropogenic disturbance. He spoke about innovations and initiatives that have been implemented to restore ecosystems including forests, linking stability and peace to land degradation neutrality and turn the economic catastrophe of the COVID-19 pandemic into a healthier and more equitable world. He stressed that this year we must reaffirm our will to act to restore our planet's health owing to all our futures.

[Click for more](#)


UNEP – Food System Impacts on Biodiversity Loss

UNEP NEWS

The loss of Biodiversity through agricultural land use is an ever increasing concern in environmental protection. The United Nations Environment Programme recently held a special session on the Chatham House report, 'Food System Impacts on Biodiversity Loss'. The report suggested three levers to combat this issue. First, a change in global dietary patterns to more plant based diets as meat production is one of the main contributors. Second, protect more and larger areas of land and conserve them in their natural state. Third, a change in agricultural practices to a more biodiversity friendly and sustainable way. These interdependent solutions were discussed by a panel consisting of the Director of Ecosystem Division at UNEP, the Research Director-Emerging Risks at Chatham House, the Global CEO of Compassion in World Farming and the Founder of the Jane Goodall Institute. The implementation requires international decision-makers to improve the coherence between global agreements and national-level action as well as breaking thinking patterns. Only with a holistic approach can these issues be tackled properly. This is the start of a year with many opportunities to focus on the food systems and biodiversity for the UN. It will also see the world's first UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) along with many more events.

EEG MEMBERS' UPDATE

EEG Welcomed 2 new corporate members & 8 renewed corporate members,
1 Individual member in the month of March 2021

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

ASGC Construction LLC	New	Accenture Middle East BV Dubai	Renewal
Client Concept General Trading	New	Asda'a Advertising FZ-LLC	Renewal
		Dubai Cable Company Private Limited	Renewal
		Dubai Duty Free	Renewal
		Emirates Fast Food Company LLC - McDonald's UAE	Renewal
		Nestle Middle East FZE	Renewal
		Tristar Transport LLC	Renewal
		WS Atkins & Partners Overseas	Renewal

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Adil Khan	New
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The collection of materials for recycling in the month of March resulted in the following benefits:

- » GHG Reduction 342 (MTCO₂)
- » Saving of 2,308 Million BTU of Energy
- » Saving of 553 m³ of Landfill Space
- » Saving of 1,823 trees from being felled
- » Saving of 1,755 Gallons of Gasoline



PAPER COLLECTION CAMPAIGN	Companies	Quantity (kg)	Individuals	Quantity (kg)
EEG has collected 84,362 kg of Paper from 268 participants during the month of March 2021, an increase of 75% compared to February 2021. We urge our participants to be actively involved in our Campaigns in the year 2021 to enable us to achieve our targets. The Top Collectors were:	Serco Middle East- Qusais	7,569	Vidyuth Balaji	1,989
	GHD Abu Dhabi	4,193	Lacksana Karthikeyan	1,390
	AG MELCO Elevator Co. LLC Dubai	3,080	Tehsin Shaik	1,362
CAN COLLECTION CAMPAIGN	Companies	Quantity (kg)	Individuals	Quantity (kg)
EEG collected 172 kg of Aluminum Cans from 29 participants during the month of March 2021, a decrease of 89% compared to February 2021. The top collectors for the month were:	W Abu Dhabi Yas Island	19	Dhanvi Nikhilkumar Sayani	27
	Le Meridian Abu Dhabi	14	Trisha Nikhilkumar Sayani	26
	-	-	Madhav Manoj Vachali	10
PLASTIC COLLECTION CAMPAIGN	Companies	Quantity (kg)	Individuals	Quantity (kg)
EEG has collected 6,046 kg of Plastic from 136 participants during the month of March 2021 an increase of 22% compared to February 2021. We encourage our participants to reduce the amount of plastic ending in landfills by increasing their collections in the year 2021. The top collectors for the month were:	The Oberoi Beach Resort Al Zorah	455	Fatima Abdullah Mohammed Abdulla Al Dhanhani	120
	Wasl Properties - Hudaiba	357	Maryam Bin Hammad & Nia Tony (Tie)	110
	Damac Maison Mall Street	295	Sri Parthiv Kanishk Gutti	100
TONER COLLECTION CAMPAIGN	Companies	Quantity (kg)	Individuals	Quantity (kg)
EEG collected 299 pcs of Toners from 8 participants during the month of March 2021, an increase of 32% compared to February 2021. We encourage our participants to be more active in the year 2021. The Top collectors were:	Sharjah Electricity & Water Authority	180	Malavika Rajeev	13
	Verger Delporte	58	-	-
	-	-	-	-
MOBILE COLLECTION CAMPAIGN	Companies	Quantity (Kg)	Individuals	Quantity (Kg)
EEG collected 474 pcs of Mobile Phones from 7 participants during the month of March 2021, a decrease of 10% compared to February 2021. We urge our participants to support us and be active in the collection of this valuable material in the year 2021.	Dubai Public Prosecution	396	Qazi Noman	25
	-	-	Vidyuth Balaji	18
			Tanishkha	13
GLASS COLLECTION CAMPAIGN	Companies	Quantity (Kg)	Individuals	Quantity (Kg)
EEG has collected 10,111 kg of Glass Bottles from 48 participants during the month of March 2021, an increase of 212% compared to February 2021. We thank our participants and encourage them to continue collecting in the year 2021. The Top collectors were:	Indoguna Dubai LLC	4,560	Aashika Singh	150
	Al Maha a Luxury Collection Desert Resort and Spa	1,500	Dave C Pais	68
	Monviso Trading	1,320	Mana Al Suwaidi	50
EEG invites all its members & participants to intensify efforts for the year 2021 to contribute significantly to the betterment of our environment and achieve the set targets for the above campaigns.				

