'Eye on Earth' Summit begins

ABU DHABI, UAE, Oct 5: Sustainability thought leaders, members of the United Nations and global experts in environmental and information networking will convene in Abu Dhabi on Oct 6 for Eye on Earth Summit 2015. Held under the patronage of United Arab Emirates President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the three-day Summit aims to promote dialogue and drive international action that revolutionises the way we collect, access, share and use data and information for sustainable development. Eye on Earth Summit 2015, taking place from Oct 6-8 in Abu Dhabi, is the first international gathering of sustainability stakeholders to follow the adoption of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development by the UN Heads of State. With the theme of "Informed Decision-Making for Sustainable Development", the Summit will highlight the role that governments, technology, the scientific community and citizen participation play in enhancing access to quality data about the state of the world's resources.

The Environment Agency — Abu Dhabi (EAD), the environmental regulator for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, is a founding Eye on Earth Alliance Partner. HE Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Secretary General at EAD said: "As the first international summit following the release of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Eye on Earth Summit 2015 will be the world's foremost event dedicated to identifying solutions for greater access to and sharing of environmental, social and economic data. Equipping decision makers with the necessary data and information to make informed decisions is crucial as we all work towards delivering on the post-2015 development agenda to safeguard the future of the planet and humanity, and we hope that the Summit will allow us to agree on the right roadmap to achieve goals outlined in the agenda."

More than 150 prominent international speakers will explore the supply, demand and enabling conditions of environmental-related data and information, and the crucial role this plays in creating a healthier planet. The launch of several major Eye on Earth projects also form part of the Summit programme. These cover the Special Initiatives focus areas of equal access, linked networks, education, biodiversity, community sustainability and resiliency, disaster management, water security, oceans and blue carbon.

Focus

The Summit will open with a focus on policy maker demand for environmental-related data, taking a look at the challenges faced in finding data and information required to make evidence-based decisions. Topics include: difficulties in sharing data and information across countries and regions; resistance from governments and other institutions to making data freely open and accessible; responding to commercial imperatives from the private sector; and the need for data to sustain communities in upheaval. Featured speakers include:

■ Dr Anwar Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and Minister for State for Federal National Council Affairs
■ Dr Rashid Ahmad Bin Fahad, Minister of Environment and Water
■ Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Undersecretary General of the UN as keynote
■ Dr Thani Al Zeyoudi, Director of Energy & Climate Change at UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs
■ Robbie Schingler, Co-Founder and President of Planet Labs
■ Felix Dodds, Senior Fellow at the Global Research Institute of the University of North Carolina and an Associate Fellow at the Tellus Institute
■ Dr Fernando R. Echavarria, Foreign Affairs Officer at the US Department of State's Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science (OES)

Day two of the Summit will address the problems impeding the availability of and access to environmental-related data, including the logarithmic data explosion, both in terms of volume and sources. It will also explore the undiscovered potential of new resources and technologies to support the world's transition to a sustainable future. Speakers include:

■ Barbara Ryan, Secretariat Director of the Group on Earth Observations as keynote
■ H.E. Dr Mohammed Nasser Al Ahbabi, Director General of the UAE Space Agency
■ Philemon Mjwara, Director General of the South African Ministry of Science and Technology
■ Muki Haklay, Professor of Geographic Information Science at University College London (UCL) and director of its Extreme n Citizen Science group
■ Louis Liebenberg, Executive Director of Cyber Tracker Conservation NPC and an Associate of Human Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University
■ Ed Parsons, the Geospatial Technologist at Google

The Summit will conclude with a focus on the necessary conditions to support effective synergies between data users and data providers. Policy arenas, funding commitments and capacity building are some of the topics to be covered by speakers such as:

■ Inger Anderson, Director General of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) as keynote
■ Professor Enrico Giovannini, Italian economist and statistician who was also the co-chair of the "Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development", established by the Secretary General of the United Nations

New financial admin system set

Bid to curtail administrative expenditure

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 5, (Agencies): Ministry of Finance will start implementing a new financial administration system in all governmental authorities beginning the new fiscal year, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily quoting sources added the implementation of the new system will curtail administrative expenditure and extra benefits for officials in the ministries and other public establishments, as part of measures in dealing with the falling oil prices and its effect on state revenue.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Finance issued a circular directing the ministries and other public authorities to activate the new system starting from fiscal year 2015/2016.

Sources added the ministry faces a major difficulty in the issuance of bonds to cover budget deficit, as the step requires legislation from the parliament. The ministry is currently studying a temporary solution regarding the issuance of bonds for government authorities having excess liquidity to invest.

Sector Minister Anas Al-Saleh has since directed the ministries and public institutions to respect the rules while preparing general budgets and supervising their implementation. The letter prevents the public authorities from requesting the Council of Ministers for approval of decisions or laws that may cause financial burdens, unless they seek prior opinion from the Ministry of Finance.

In other news, a Kuwaiti official on Sunday underscored the country's support to joint Arab action, especially in the field of housing and construction. Deputy Director of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare for control affairs Mohammad Abdullah Al-Senidah is leading Kuwait's delegation to the 61th session of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Arab Ministerial Council of Housing and Construction that started at the Arab League in Cairo today.

In a statement to KUNA on the sidelines of the session, Al-Senidah emphasized Kuwait's eagerness to carry out the resolutions of the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit on housing and construction as well as providing proper homes.

eContent Award 2015

KFAS selects seven to represent Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 5: The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) has announced selection of seven projects to represent Kuwait in the international competition for World Summit Award (WSA) for the year 2015, which will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan during the current month. Secretary General of the Kuwait eContent Award, Engineer Manar Alhashash, stated that the international competition for the eContent is held once every two years. Various countries compete for the award in eight different categories, similar to the categories of Kuwait eContent Awards, which are recognized by the World Summit Award (WSA). Each country is eligible to nominate one e-product for each category with a maximum of eight products. The last international qualifying competition was held in Tallinn, capital of the Republic of Estonia in 2013. The winners in the World Summit Award (WSA) will be announced in October 2015.

Engineer Alhashash reiterated that Kuwait eContent Award serves as the local qualifier for the international competition, where winners are chosen in each category to represent Kuwait internationally. Eng Alhashash added that the criteria for the project selection for Kuwait eContent Award are compatible with the global standards applied by the international eContent competition. The local jury selects the projects that are deemed to potentially have the best chance of winning in the international competition representing the State of Kuwait.

List of projects nominated to represent Kuwait:

Category	Project Name	Project Type	Project owner
e-Government	Well surveillance Management System	Information system with Mobile application	Kuwait Oil Company
e-Culture	Kuwait Heritage	Website	Hasan Jassim Abbas Ashkanani
e-Science	Snowball master control unit	Website and robot pieces and devices	1. Ahmad Abdulwahab Ahmad AlSaleh 2. NaserHayawiNaserJasem
e-Inclusion	The Comprehensive Muslim eLibrary website www.muslim-library.com	Website	Al Najat Charitable Society Al-Da'wah electronic committee
e-Entertainment	Bubble Rumble	Video games	Abdullah Esam Abdullah AlOsaimi
e-Health	AbiDoc	Website www.abidoc.com	Gulf Technical Solutions
e- Business	FishFishme website	Website www.fishfishme.com	Abdullah Ehsan Muneeb AlShalabi

The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences launched the Kuwait eContent Award in 2008 under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber al-Sabah, Chairman of the Board of Directors. The annual award is the Kuwaiti version of the international e-Content & creativity award — World Summit Award (WSA). KFAS is associated with the international e-content award through a cooperation agreement. The agreement states that Kuwait eContent Award shall follow the general policies and provisions, while projects are classified under the same electronic projects' categories of the e-content competition of the World Summit Award.

Additionally, it shall apply the same international evaluation criteria and arbitration measures for the selection process. Winning projects in the local competition will represent Kuwait in the international eContent award held every two years. Kuwait eContent Award, organized by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, is considered the only award of its kind in the State of Kuwait governed by a cooperation agreement with an international organization, which qualifies Kuwait to participate in the international competition of the World Summit Award (WSA).

Engineer Manar Alhashash concluded her statement by congratulating contestants of the nominated projects which will represent Kuwait in the international event. She added that all projects have unique qualities as confirmed by local arbitrators, and will certainly reflect a positive image of the level of eContent in Kuwait before the International jury. KFAS extended its congratulations to the nominees and thanked them for their efforts in developing their projects. KFAS wishes all participants best of luck in winning at the international level in the 2015 competition.