

Sustainable Development In UAE

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Sustainability and Development Priorities in the United Arab Emirates

Sustainability refers to the ability to sustain and support the environment as well as preserve natural resources. Several countries have adopted sustainability projects that aim to improve natural, economic, and social stability. United Arab Emirates (UAE) has also been taking national and regional initiatives to improve the sustainability of the country (Shihab, 2001). For the sustainable future of the country, the UAE has envisioned a 2030 economic vision, which aims at sustainable development. In the next 20 years, the country aims to build a sustainable, diverse, and high-value economy by providing opportunities for the citizens of the country.

The focus will be on all possible sectors, such as construction, finance, retail, tourism, health, and trade. The three main pillars of sustainability are economic development, social development, and environmental protection. Environmental protection is the baseline on which sustainable social developments occur, and if both pillars work fine then, then economic development will automatically occur. In layman's terms, without environmental protection, social and economic development is not feasible. Tourism is an essential aspect of Abu Dhabi, and the country needs tourism for diversity and sustainable development. Sustainability is important because if the primary focus of tourism is on revenue generation, then it will negatively impact the country's resources and local culture. The Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority (TCA) is working on the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

To achieve the environmentally sustaining, enhanced economic growth, and the social needs of the tourism industry, clear aims with logistics are defined. For economic growth, the department will ensure that the tourism industry is rewarding and developed in a way that would make this industry a long-term growth contributor to the country (Abu Dhabi Council for Economic Development, 2014). It will also provide economic benefits to all the stakeholders. To meet the social needs and protect cultural heritage, the department will involve the local Emirati people in the sector of tourism, engage the local community in the industry, as well as follow all the regulations (Abu Dhabi Council for Economic Development, 2014). For the sustainability of environmental resources, the sector will showcase natural beauty to tourists while protecting the natural environment and resources. All these aspects are interconnected and interdependent, as one cannot separate economic growth from the natural environment or social sustainability.

Green Economy, Water Scarcity, and Resource Management

A greener economy is a broad concept in which the economy of a country is aimed at reducing environmental risk and resource scarcity for sustainable development. UAE has moved towards the concept of a greener economy, and the first example is the solar-powered flight in 2015. This solar-powered flight can fly without fuel. This shows that the UAE is the third most advanced country in concentrated solar power (CSP). UAE is also continuously working toward more sources of renewable energy generation for the safe energy process. Even though the UAE has the largest resources of hydrocarbons, the government of UAE is looking into future and sustainable development because safe energy is the heart of sustainable development (Abu Dhabi Council for Economic Development, 2014). This will also prevent the states from being fully dependent on hydrocarbon resources (Nader, 2009). The solar energy process is more common because the region has the sun as the vital energy source. Therefore, for all the domestic consumption of energy, the UAE has planned to rely more on solar power, which will benefit both the country and the environment. Another big step for the purpose of the green economy is green print, which is about cities dealing with the rapid urbanization processes, which will also impact natural resources such as energy and water (Shihab, 2001).

Water crises are one of the main energy source crises, and 8 Arab countries have the lowest water availability, and the water usage is growing every year. However, even when the users cut down on their water, another issue remains, which is the salinated water. The demand for desalination will increase, and it is estimated that it will double in the next 15 years. According to a consultancy firm, 15 percent of CO₂ emissions in Abu Dhabi can be attributed to desalination (Abu Dhabi Council for Economic Development, 2014). The country has already made efforts to desalinate water using renewable energy resources. For the long term, the country is planning to use the nuclear reactor for the desalination process. The private sector and the management of several hotels also play their role in water conservation and in providing an environmentally friendly way to desalinate water.

Renewable Energy and the Future of Sustainable Growth

The concept of sustainable economic development and green economy is related as economic development significantly depends on the natural resources a country has. A green economy can drive economic growth, poverty eradication, and increased employment, and all these elements are part of the sustainable economic development of a country. Along with economic benefits, a green economy also balances the functioning of the ecosystem and increases natural resources. UAE has launched a national initiative to bring sustainable development to the country through a green economy. Renewable energy resources and managing natural resources are the ways in which the country is aiming to achieve the goal of the initiative. Environmental Agency Abu-Dhabi (EAD) is in the

process of developing the legal and technical framework for the country, which will lead to enhanced economic growth along with the preservation and conservation of natural resources (Abu Dhabi Council for Economic Development, 2014).

Even though the country is aiming for renewable energies and resources to achieve sustainable economic development, the focus on developing eco-friendly resources will also require new resources, but if the shift occurs to recycle most of the products as well as reduce the waste produced in all departments, then this initiative will help achieve sustainability in the long term. Eco-sustainable waste management would lead to sustainable economic growth for the country. The resources are not increasing, but the quantity of waste is increasing every day (Lenkiewicz, 2016). Therefore, sustainable development goals cannot be achieved until and unless waste management is implemented properly. For example, using nuclear reactors or renewable energy resources, the country might be able to clean the water, but if the waste is not handled, it can mix in the clear water, leading to more health issues and environmental issues. As a result, the economy will be disturbed.

To conclude, the UAE has been making efforts to improve the sustainability of the country along with growth. Having great hydrocarbon resources, the country is still planning to use renewable resources for environmental protection and economic sustainability. Social and economic development greatly depends on environmental sustainability, and the government of UAE and private sectors are playing their role in helping the country achieve its economic vision for 2030.

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