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# Society & Environment

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creating green communities for a better tomorrow



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UAE leads global commitment at UN Sustainable Development Forum

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Zayed International Prize for the Environment



Together for a green century





## Chairman's Message



**Prof. Mohammed  
bin Fahad**  
Executive Editor

The date palm is a vital part of Emirati heritage, providing sustenance and resources for generations. As the nation observes the Year of Community, the numerous date festivals held across the country, including the prominent Liwa Date Festival in Abu Dhabi and the second edition of 'Dubai for Dates', highlight the ongoing cultural and economic importance of dates.

Reflecting the enduring legacy of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and embodying his vision of preserving national identity and authentic Emirati values, these events also demonstrate the UAE leadership's clear commitment to preserving cultural heritage and strengthening community ties.

Historically, the date palm was essential for survival in the Arabian Peninsula. Its fruit provided food and its fronds offered materials for shelter and crafts. Cultivating, harvesting, and sharing dates are central to the UAE's traditions of hospitality and community - values that are at the core of Emirati society even today. Dates can be dried and stored for long periods, and in many African countries, they are vital for food security during the long periods of drought that may cause famines or hunger outbreaks.

The UAE is a global producer and exporter of dates. This sector supports local farmers, many of whom have inherited generations of palm cultivation knowledge. Organising annual date festivals and exhibitions drives the economy, creates markets for local produce, supports small businesses, and attracts agri-tourism. The numerous competitions that recognize the best dates and most skilled farmers not only encourage high-quality production and innovation but also foster pride, preserve native varieties, and ensure that sustainable agricultural knowledge continues.

As crucial platforms for agricultural innovation and food security, these festivals facilitate knowledge exchange among farmers, researchers, and industry experts, promoting best practices in cultivation and sustainable water management. This forward-thinking approach safeguards a vital food source for future generations. By blending deep-rooted traditions with modern agricultural science, the UAE is not just honoring its past but actively supporting heritage preservation and agricultural advancement.



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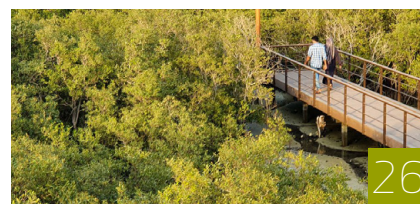
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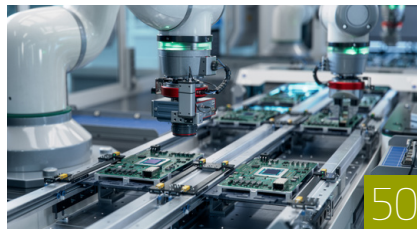


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## **21st Liwa Date Festival celebrates enduring palm heritage, reinforces food security and agricultural sustainability**

The 11-day festival celebrates one of the UAE's most enduring cultural and agricultural traditions

The 21st Liwa Date Festival, a vibrant celebration of Emirati heritage, agricultural innovation, and community spirit, has successfully concluded its highly anticipated run in the Al Dhafra Region. Held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Presidential Court, and organised by the Abu Dhabi Heritage Authority, the festival affirms the UAE leadership's



commitment to preserving national heritage and supporting related sectors.

The 2025 edition of the festival, which captivated over 50,000 visitors in its first five days alone, concluded on July 27, 2025, in Liwa City, Al Dhafra Region, leaving a lasting impression of cultural pride and economic vitality. Coinciding with the UAE's annual date harvest, the festival highlighted the central role of palm trees and their produce in Emirati society, recognising them as a cornerstone of the nation's cultural identity.

It also promotes the sustainability of the heritage and agricultural sectors, raises awareness of the importance of farming in the UAE, and encourages local date and crop producers. In addition, the festival supports food security efforts and reflects Abu Dhabi's commitment to advancing modern agricultural practices.

The 11-day festival featured 24 competitions with a total of 308 prizes valued at AED8.735 million, in addition to stage competitions designed for visitors.

### **Cultural and agricultural significance**

The festival's profound significance was underscored by a visit by H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler's Representative in Al Dhafra Region and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD). He praised the festival's role in showcasing the cultural and agricultural significance of the palm tree as a symbol of national identity and in supporting local communities in Abu Dhabi, in line with the aspirations of the UAE Year of Community.

H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan also emphasised the festival's importance in empowering the local community, supporting farmers, and encouraging the cultivation of palm trees as a pillar of food security and a key component of the UAE's heritage. He also commended the active participation of government and private entities, producers, manufacturers, and traditional craftswomen, highlighting Emirati traditions and promoting palm-related products.

He toured the festival pavilions, reviewed entries in various competitions, met with judging committees for both the date and fruit competitions, and visited sections featuring heritage crafts, palm saplings, agricultural tools, a fresh dates market, the traditional souq, and





displays from government and private sector organisations.

### **Advancing food security and sustainable agriculture**

Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, visited the activities and competitions of the 21st edition of the Liwa Date Festival.

During his tour, Sheikh Nahyan reviewed the festival's daily activities and competitions held for farmers and visitors, including wide participation from government and private entities, date vendors, palm sapling nurseries, agricultural supply stores, and booths for

productive families in the traditional market.

Sheikh Nahyan affirmed that the Liwa Date Festival encourages farmers to invest more in their farms, diversify crops by growing palm and fruit trees, and contribute to advancing food security and sustainable agriculture in the UAE.

This focus on palm cultivation stems from the legacy established by the founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who placed agriculture—particularly palm cultivation—at the heart of the country's development.

He prioritised supporting farmers and empowering them with the tools of production as



# The date palm is deeply rooted in the Emirati people's culture and identity



a strategic pillar for environmental preservation and achieving food self-sufficiency.

Sheikh Nahyan was accompanied by Major General Faris Khalaf Al Mazrouei, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Heritage Authority, along with several officials and dignitaries.

## **24 competitions, AED8.735 million in prizes for 308 winners**

The 24 competitions organised at the 21st Liwa Date Festival included 12 date mazayna contests covering categories such as Dabbas, Khalas, Fard,

Khenaizi, Buma'an, Shishi, Zamli, the Largest Date Bunch, the Al Dhafra and Liwa Elite Dates competitions, and the Al Ain Fard and Khalas contests. It also included seven fruit competitions for various local and mixed varieties of lemons, mangoes, red and yellow figs, and the Local Fruits Basket contest.

The festival featured three Model Farm competitions across the Western and Eastern Mahadir (agricultural farms) and Al Dhafra cities, as well as contests for the Most Beautiful Palm Frond Basket and artistic creations made from palm trunks.

Bringing together farmers, experts, industry leaders, companies, and research centres, the festival served as a collaborative hub to support the agricultural sector and promote its long-term sustainability.

The festival served as a key platform for supporting the local community through its traditional market, which included stalls selling fresh dates and date-based products, mobile cafés, agricultural factories, plant nurseries, and more. Daily stage activities included interactive quizzes with prizes, live folkloric performances, lectures, seminars, and a variety of cultural evenings.

## **AED1 million grant for participants of 'Dubai Dates' exhibition**

During his visit to the 'Dubai Dates' exhibition, which was held from 25 July to 1 August, H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and Chairman of





Dubai Executive Council, toured several pavilions and issued directives sanctioning a grant of AED1 million for exhibition participants in recognition of their efforts to preserve and promote the UAE's rich cultural heritage.

H.H. Sheikh Hamdan was accompanied during the tour by Abdullah Hamdan bin Dalmook, CEO of the Hamdan Bin Mohammed Heritage Center, and departmental directors from the Center. H.H. Sheikh Hamdan was updated on key facets of the festival, including various sections dedicated to promoting date palms and their cultural and social significance.

Organised by the Hamdan Bin Mohammed Heritage Center, the Dubai Dates festival was held at Qalaat Al Remaal on Dubai-Al Ain Road. The meaningful festival celebrates the palm tree not only as a vital agricultural product but also as a powerful national and cultural symbol.

Visitors to the festival could explore a wide range of date varieties, learn about traditional harvesting and cultivation practices and enjoy

family-friendly activities rooted in Emirati heritage.

With its focus on community, sustainability and pride in the UAE's agricultural legacy, the festival brought together farmers, artisans and culture lovers for a week of authentic experiences.

### **9th Al Dhaid Date Festival records AED 2million in sales**

The 9th edition of the Al Dhaid Date Festival concluded at Expo Al Dhaid with exceptional success, having attracted over 30,000 visitors—a 25 percent increase from the previous edition—generated more than AED2 million in sales, and awarded 110 participants across various date competitions, solidifying the festival's reputation as one of the leading agricultural and trade events in the region.

This year's festival saw wide participation from major date producers, palm farmers across the UAE, and over 15 agricultural companies showcasing sustainable farming technologies.



In line with the UAE's 'Year of Community,' this edition spotlighted home-based businesses and productive families offering handmade crafts and authentic Emirati dishes. Exhibits included palm frond products, traditional foods, local honey, spice blends, and Arabic coffee.

This year featured new and expanded competitions for date varieties like Khneizi, Khalas, and Shishi, as well as elite categories for regional farmers. Special contests targeted women and children, along with red fig and local lemon categories.

The SCCI introduced the "Busharat Al-Qeith" initiative to recognise pioneering farmers with early harvests, aligning with the festival's goal of encouraging excellence and innovation in agriculture.

A series of expert-led workshops and seminars offered training in best practices and emerging technologies for palm care, reinforcing the festival's role in both heritage preservation and agricultural advancement.

## **Liwa Ajman Dates & Honey Festival 2025**

H.H. Sheikh Ammar bin Humaid Al Nuaimi, Crown Prince of Ajman and Chairman of Ajman Executive Council, opened the 10th edition of the Liwa Ajman Dates and Honey Festival held at the Emirates Hospitality Centre from July 30 to August 3, 2025.

This year's edition of the festival featured 61 exhibitors nationwide, including farmers, beekeepers, entrepreneurs, and small business owners, alongside representatives from various government and private entities.

The 2025 edition also included GCC and Arab participation, notably from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Jordan, and Egypt, where participants celebrated agricultural and heritage-based production. Set within a vibrant and heritage-inspired atmosphere, the event raised awareness of Ajman's cultural legacy, enhancing its reputation as a leading cultural and tourism destination both regionally and globally.



# UAE showcases global leadership at UN Sustainable Development Forum

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development is the UN's leading platform for SDG review and progress



The UAE reiterated its strong commitment to global sustainable development at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development 2025 in New York, emphasising international partnerships and placing human progress at the centre of its vision for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and beyond.

The message capped an active UAE presence at the forum, organised at the UN headquarters by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and attended by global leaders and organisations.

The UAE delegation comprised senior officials

from key ministries, national committees, and leading organisations, including the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Investment, Government Experience Exchange Programme (GEEP), General Secretariat of the National Committee on SDGs, the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD), Noor Dubai Foundation, and Dubai Chambers.

Abdulla Nasser Lootah, Assistant Minister of Cabinet Affairs for Competitiveness and Experience Exchange and Chair of the National Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, highlighted the UAE's innovative approach to international development cooperation.



He said, “We presented models and initiatives that showcase pioneering national development initiatives and reflect the importance of strategic partnerships in accelerating SDG achievement. These included the 2045 XDGs Report that envisions development prospects for the next two decades, and GEEP. We held meetings that focused on continually enhancing multilateral collaborative action to support finding innovative solutions to challenges in health, economic growth, the future of work, biodiversity, and international stability.”

He confirmed the start of intensive preparations for the 2026 Voluntary National Review (VNR), to monitor and assess progress toward the 2030 SDGs. This reflects the UAE's unwavering commitment to transparency and accountability, comprehensive analysis of challenges and opportunities, and identifying future development priorities with participation from government, private sector, and civil society to ensure effort integration and vision unification, based on the UAE's ambitious vision for building a sustainable and inclusive future based on innovation, sustainability, and human development.

Lootah noted that preparations are underway for the UAE's 2026 Voluntary National Review, underlining the nation's commitment to transparency, cross-sector collaboration, and a sustainable, inclusive future. The UAE is also preparing to host the UN Water Conference in December 2026, advancing global water sustainability.

The UAE reaffirmed its commitment to international cooperation and knowledge exchange, spotlighting initiatives that drive

climate action, economic growth, and human development. Through high-profile events – including the “Shaping Tomorrow: UAE Leadership for a Sustainable Future” exhibition – the delegation showcased innovative models and fostered dialogue with global partners. A special session by GEEP expanded the UAE's partnership network to nearly 50 countries and six international organisations, reinforcing its leadership in collaborative action.

The launch of the 2045 XDGs Report, which outlines global development priorities beyond 2030 and builds on the momentum of the SDGs to address emerging challenges and opportunities, along with findings from a global survey, further underscored the UAE's active role in shaping sustainable







development with forward-looking recommendations for the next two decades.

The UAE delegation, in partnership with the UAE Consulate General in New York, showcased national leadership in advancing the SDGs through innovation and collaboration. The pivotal role of the Global Councils for SDGs – launched at the World Government Summit – was highlighted as a platform uniting leaders from government, international organizations, academia, and the private sector to accelerate progress through shared expertise.

Sessions organised by the General Secretariat of the National Committee on SDGs focused on promoting gender balance and child welfare, addressing the digital gender gap, and

strengthening women's leadership as essential drivers of sustainable growth beyond 2030.

The UAE also hosted a roundtable on reimagining economic growth for people and the planet, and led discussions on economic diplomacy and integrating social and economic objectives for global stability.

Additionally, the Ministry of Interior presented successful cross-border environmental initiatives, such as the Green Shield Operation, which aims to protect biodiversity in the Amazon Basin. Throughout the forum, the UAE strengthened international cooperation by holding 48 bilateral meetings and participating in high-impact Science Day activities.

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## ‘DUBAI REEF’ supports marine life, ecosystem growth in Dubai's waters

**D**UBAI REEF, a pioneering purpose-built reef development and one of the largest in the world, is demonstrating significant progress in enhancing marine ecosystems within Dubai's waters.

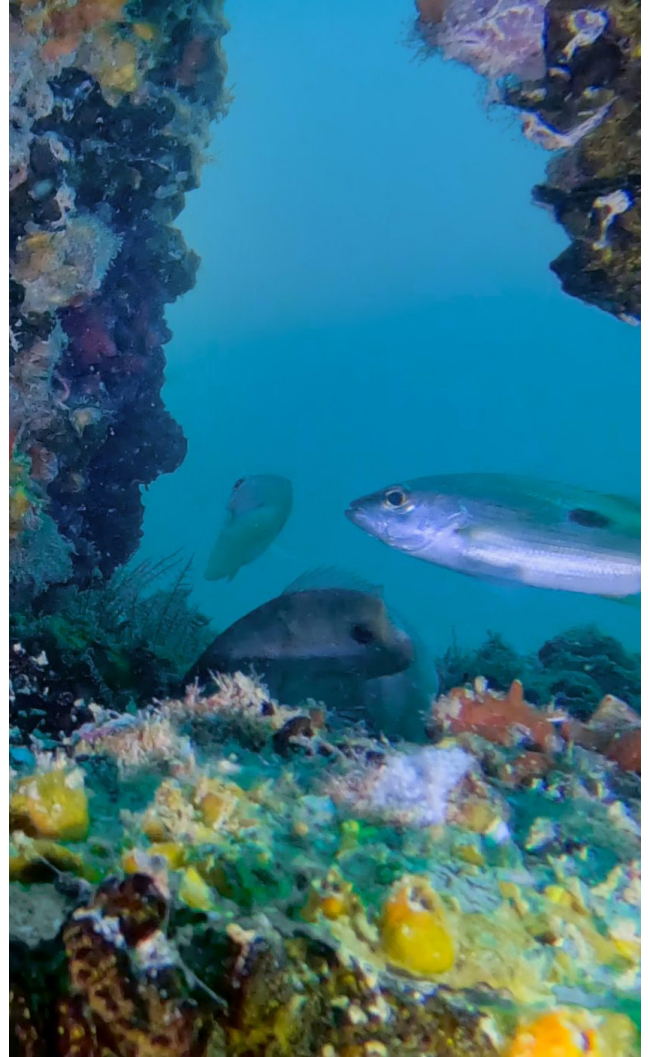
New underwater footage from the initiative's proof-of-concept site showcases a thriving marine environment, with abundant fish populations and habitats developing around the reef modules.

Surveys at the site indicate a substantial increase in fish populations across 15 native species, including snappers, groupers, and barracuda. Early data suggests a potential 10 percent increase in marine biodiversity, accompanied by an eightfold increase in fish biomass - clear indicators of the initiative's positive impact on the local ecosystem.

DUBAI REEF's first pillar, Marine Habitat Restoration, will see the fabrication and deployment of 20,000 modules across 600 sq km of the emirate's waters by 2027, establishing ideal conditions for marine ecosystems to thrive in the years ahead. Since its launch in 2024, 39 percent of the total reef modules have been fabricated, with 3,660 modules already deployed.

The initiative also includes two additional pillars - Marine Life Rehabilitation and Marine Conservation Research - each contributing to the broader vision of marine conservation and sustainability.

A sustainability initiative by Dubai Can, DUBAI



REEF was launched under the directive of H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai.

The initiative is driven by a collaboration of strategic public and private partners, including Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET); Dubai Environment and Climate Change Authority (DECCA), DP World; Dubai Chambers; Nakheel, a member of Dubai Holding Real Estate; Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation (PCFC); and Emirates.

Together, they are advancing Dubai's shared sustainability objectives and supporting several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 17- Partnerships.



## WGES 2025 to explore role of technology, innovation in advancing climate security

The 11th World Green Economy Summit will be held under the theme 'Innovating for Impact: Accelerating the Future of the Green Economy'



The World Green Economy Summit (WGES), held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has consolidated its position as a catalyst for global climate action and a strategic platform to empower societies most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This is achieved by addressing viable, practical solutions to enhance climate security.

Organised by the Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) and the World Green Economy Organisation (WGEO), the 11th edition of the summit will take place on 1-2 October 2025 at the Dubai World Trade Centre under the theme 'Innovating for Impact: Accelerating the Future of the Green Economy'.

This year, the summit will explore the role of modern technologies in supporting developing societies and enhancing their ability to adapt to climate challenges. These topics will be organised around seven thematic pillars:

**Technology and Innovation:** Sessions will explore how cutting-edge technology is driving climate resilience and sustainability, with a particular focus on artificial intelligence (AI) and smart innovations. Discussions will highlight how the Internet of Things (IoT) and AI-powered solutions optimise renewable energy integration, enhance predictive analytics for environmental risk mitigation and improve carbon emissions monitoring. Additionally, the role of energy storage innovation and public-private collaboration in advancing green technologies will be examined, showcasing real-world AI-driven projects that align with long-term sustainability goals.

**Clean and Renewable Energy Technologies:** As global energy demands surge, particularly with

*WGES 2025 supports global efforts to accelerate the transition towards a sustainable green economy*



the rise of AI-driven data centres, this pillar explores innovative solutions to meet sustainability goals. Discussions will cover the role of peaceful nuclear energy in supporting round-the-clock clean power commitments and the viability and challenges of scaling up the green hydrogen economy. With a focus on ethical sourcing, investment acceleration and technological advancements, these sessions will examine the pathway to a resilient and sustainable energy future.

**Policy and Regulation:** These sessions will explore the dynamic shifts in climate policy and regulations, examining how competing priorities such as energy security, industrial policy and





global competitiveness shape decision-making in key markets like the EU and the US. With a focus on policy alignment, private sector engagement and governance reforms, these sessions will assess the future of climate policy in driving sustainable economic growth.

**Finance:** These sessions will explore the financial mechanisms driving the green transition, addressing key challenges in scaling up renewable energy deployment, financing climate solutions and ensuring credibility in carbon markets. Discussions will examine innovative strategies for overcoming barriers to renewable energy deployment, the evolving role of voluntary carbon markets in achieving net-zero goals, and how private sector investment aligns with international climate commitments. By highlighting case studies, regulatory considerations and emerging financial instruments, these sessions will provide a road map for mobilising capital towards a resilient and sustainable global economy.

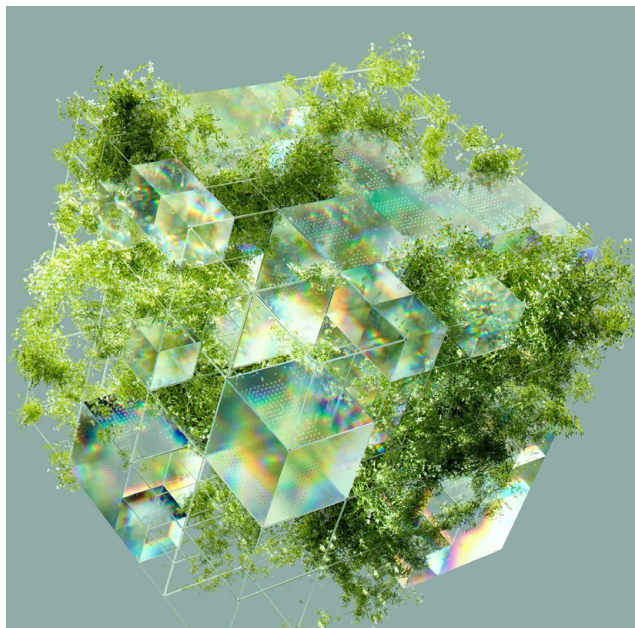
**Climate Equity:** These sessions will focus on the disproportionate effects of climate change on

vulnerable communities, particularly in the areas of health, food security and water access. Speakers will examine the increasing risks posed by extreme heat, air pollution and resource scarcity, while highlighting innovative solutions such as AI-driven smart farming, agrivoltaics and advanced water management technologies. These sessions will explore strategies to ensure equitable access to essential resources in a changing climate.

**Climate Adaptation and Resilience:** These sessions will explore strategies to help societies adapt to the escalating effects of climate change while ensuring a just and equitable transition. Conversations will address the complexities of loss and damage, highlighting recovery efforts through nature-based solutions, early warning systems and resilience metrics. Additionally, the role of climate justice in securing energy affordability, protecting vulnerable communities and balancing economic development with sustainability will be examined.

**Youth in Climate Action:** These sessions will explore the role of youth in driving climate

*WGES 2025 will prioritise energy transition, mitigation, adaptation, finance and innovation, organised around seven thematic pillars*



solutions through technology, entrepreneurship and activism. Discussions will also address the growing demand for conscious and sustainable capitalism, highlighting the influence of younger generations in shaping a greener future.

Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, Vice Chairman of the Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, MD and CEO of DEWA, and Chairman of WGEO, emphasised that organising WGES in Dubai reflects the UAE's leading role in advancing global climate action by providing a platform for discussing innovative solutions that accelerate the transition towards a green economy.

"Climate change represents a major threat to developing societies, which often lack the infrastructure and resources to cope with extreme weather conditions. Ensuring climate security for these societies requires integrating efforts and leveraging Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies in a just and inclusive

manner," said Al Tayer.

"From this standpoint, the World Green Economy Summit underscores the importance of empowering these communities with appropriate technologies. This is the most effective way to ensure climate security for the world's most vulnerable societies. The summit also seeks to encourage responsible innovation, enhance international co-operation and mobilise the necessary funding to implement practical solutions that help address the impact of climate change," he added.

WGES 2025 will focus on accelerating the transfer of technology and knowledge to empower developing societies, enhancing their ability to adapt to the effects of climate change. It will advocate a resilient regulatory and legislative environment that promotes the adoption and expansion of emerging technologies, particularly in less prepared countries.

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## Masdar City trials next-generation autonomous vehicles

Level 4 automation enables a vehicle to operate on its own within a geofenced zone



Masdar City has begun testing level 4 autonomous vehicles (AV) in the city, in partnership with smart mobility provider Solutions+, a Mubadala company.

The initiative, overseen by the Integrated Transport Centre (ITC), involves the registration, testing, and operational approval of autonomous vehicles, ensuring safety, compliance and alignment with Abu Dhabi's broader vision for smart mobility.

The project demonstrates the emirate's commitment to driving innovation and shaping the future through cutting-edge technology and underlines the role of Masdar City, a global hub for clean technology and home to the Smart Autonomous Vehicles Industry (SAVI) cluster, in further advancing autonomous transport.

Level 4 automation is a significant leap in AV technology as it enables the vehicle to operate entirely on its own within a specific geofenced zone. Masdar City is offering a real-world

testbed for advanced sustainable mobility by inviting global manufacturers to test their level 4 AVs in its integrated urban ecosystem.

Ahmed Baghoum, CEO of Masdar City, said, “The announcement of level 4 testing marks a substantial leap forward in AV capabilities. The initiative aligns perfectly with our vision to shape the cities of the future through innovation, digital integration, and environmental responsibility.”

Dr. Abdulla Hamad AlGhfeli, Acting Director-General of the ITC, said, “This initiative reaffirms our commitment to providing an integrated regulatory environment that accelerates the adoption of smart mobility solutions. This sustainable and flexible transport model will enhance the emirate’s competitiveness, supporting its ambition to become a global hub for smart cities and sustainable mobility.”

The proof-of-concept phase is an opportunity to monitor the technology’s performance amid the real-world infrastructure and specific climatic conditions of the UAE, delivering invaluable insights for the global development of autonomous transportation.

The vehicles are following a comprehensive 2.4km test route that links several important locations, such as the Siemens building, North Car Park, My City Centre Masdar mall and Central Park, navigating past prominent landmarks including the International Renewable Energy Agency headquarters, MC2 and The Link.

The AVs initially have safety officers onboard but will transition to fully autonomous operation from a centralised remote control room as the programme progresses.

The testing will enable AVs to be modified in line with the UAE’s requirements and operational infrastructure. Masdar City will assess performance, safety and adaptability during

*The initiative highlights Masdar City’s growing role as a clean-tech and smart mobility leader*



testing before considering wider deployment in line with Abu Dhabi Government regulations.

By serving as a testbed for cutting-edge technologies, Masdar City is helping to shape the future of sustainable urban transportation and positioning itself as a key enabler of clean-tech advancements. The trials are the latest milestone in the urban sustainability hub’s commitment to the development of AVs, with the introduction of the first generation of vehicles in 2010.



# UAE-led operation coordinates major crackdown on environmental crime in the Amazon



Operation Green Shield, a two-week campaign led by the UAE Ministry of Interior's International Initiative of Law Enforcement for Climate (I2LEC), resulted in 94 arrests and the seizure of illegal assets worth over US\$64 million

In a major breakthrough for international environmental law enforcement, Operation Green Shield, led by the UAE Ministry of Interior through the International Initiative of Law Enforcement for Climate (I2LEC), succeeded in dismantling major criminal networks operating across the Amazon Basin.

The operation resulted in the arrest of 94 individuals and the seizure of illicit assets worth over US\$64 million.

Over a two-week period, the operation – codenamed “Green Shield” – carried out more than 350 field operations with the participation of over 1,500 officers in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

The campaign was coordinated from a central command centre in Bogotá and overseen strategically by the UAE Ministry of Interior.

The operation builds on the success of “Operation Green Justice” in 2024, achieving deeper cooperation and real-time intelligence sharing, which enabled participating countries to secure even stronger results this year.

Key outcomes included the seizure of over 310 tonnes of illegally extracted raw minerals, 61 tonnes of calcium oxide, and 3,800 cubic metres of illegally harvested timber, in addition to more than 39,000 gallons of smuggled fuel.

The operation also struck a significant blow to wildlife trafficking, with the rescue of over 2,100

live animals and the confiscation of 6,350 deceased specimens (including birds, lizards, and mammals). Authorities also seized 530 units of heavy equipment used in criminal activities, including bulldozers, trucks, and crushers.

Among the most notable successes, Peruvian police dismantled the “Los Depredadores del Oriente” gang involved in wildlife trafficking and rescued 1,400 live animals. Meanwhile, authorities in Colombia dismantled three organised crime groups and a cell linked to the Clan del Golfo, one of the country's most powerful criminal syndicates.

Lieutenant Colonel Dana Humaid Al Marzouqi, Director-General of the International Affairs Bureau at the UAE Ministry of Interior and Coordinator of the I2LEC Centre, praised the results and reaffirmed the UAE's commitment to leading climate-related law enforcement globally. She stated that Operation Green Shield stands as a landmark achievement in climate-focused international enforcement.

She added, “The scale and speed of the outcomes reflect not only the strength of regional cooperation but also the growing determination of governments to treat environmental crimes as a top security issue. From rescuing thousands of animals to disrupting illicit economies worth tens of millions of dollars, the outcomes of Operation Green Shield send a clear message about the power of coordinated enforcement. I2LEC remains committed to enabling countries to act, share intelligence, and achieve meaningful gains





for our environment and future generations.”

The operation also demonstrated the critical role of advanced technology, with Esri’s ArcGIS Mission tool enabling real-time location tracking and communication between teams in remote areas – strengthening field operations and supporting ongoing investigations and prosecutions.

The I2LEC Centre played a pivotal role in the success of the operation by coordinating the entire campaign, harmonising procedures between national forces, collecting and analysing field data, and providing essential technology and equipment to facilitate real-time information sharing and synchronised action.

Following the successful campaign, I2LEC and its partners are analysing the collected data to develop long-term strategies to dismantle criminal networks and strengthen environmental governance in the region. Further seizures and arrests are expected as investigations continue in coordination with the operation’s participants.

Senior officials from partner countries praised the operation. Colonel Jorge Andrés Bernal Granada, Director of the Carabineers and Environmental Protection Directorate of Colombia’s National Police, highlighted his country’s leadership in environmental law enforcement and said, “We have made tangible progress in combating illegal mining, fuel theft, and wildlife trafficking. Colombia is proud to be



part of this international front to safeguard the integrity of the Amazon's ecosystems."

He added that this effort forms part of a broader strategy that enhances both environmental security and international cooperation against common threats, calling on allied nations, including the UAE, to continue fostering cooperation to protect the Amazon as a natural heritage for humanity.

Fausto Patricio Iñiguez Sotomayor, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Ecuador's National Police, stated that Ecuador's first participation in an I2LEC-led initiative marks a pivotal step in combatting environmental crimes. He said, "Thanks to the UAE's support through I2LEC, we successfully dismantled cross-border criminal groups profiting from environmental destruction."

General Manuel Elias Lozada Morales, Director of the Environment Division of Peru's National Police, expressed pride in participating for the second consecutive year in Operation Green Shield and extended his thanks to the UAE for its steadfast commitment to defending the Amazon rainforest.

He affirmed that this international cooperation demonstrates how unity and joint action can

effectively protect one of the world's most vital ecosystems and ensure its preservation for future generations.

Renato Madsen Arruda, General Coordinator for the Protection of the Amazon, Environment, and Historical and Cultural Heritage at Brazil's Federal Police, said this collaboration reflects Brazil's long-standing commitment to protecting its natural resources. He expressed pride in the country's efforts to disrupt criminal operations, particularly illegal gold mining, in remote areas of the Amazon.

Operation Green Shield is the latest in a series of international enforcement campaigns led by I2LEC, a platform launched by the UAE Ministry of Interior in 2023 in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

I2LEC aims to enhance global law enforcement capabilities, promote international cooperation, and support climate objectives by targeting criminal economies that drive environmental degradation.

Since launch, I2LEC has trained over 2,000 officers, facilitated global operations, and catalysed and unified law enforcement agencies around a shared mission to protect the planet.







## Abu Dhabi unveils 25-year climate change adaptation plan

The plan supports Abu Dhabi's broader vision for sustainable resource management and biodiversity conservation

Abu Dhabi has taken a significant step toward climate resilience with the launch of its first-ever Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the Environment Sector (2025-2050). The comprehensive and science-based roadmap designed to protect the emirate's natural resources and systems from the increasing and inevitable impacts of climate change was launched by the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD).

This pioneering plan – the emirate's first – was created as part of the Abu Dhabi Climate Change Strategy 2023-2027. The plan is also aligned with the UAE National Climate Change Plan 2017-2050 and the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, established at COP28, which provides time-bound targets for adaptation planning across key sectors.

Dr. Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri, Secretary-General of the EAD, said, "The launch of the Abu Dhabi Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the environment sector marks a defining moment for the environmental future of the emirate. We



are moving beyond foresight to decisive actions, preparing for climate realities with unwavering commitment to safeguarding our natural heritage."

She added that this plan will enhance the resilience of natural resources, safeguard biodiversity and strive to ensure water and food security.

"This achievement reflects our commitment to foreseeing a future based on adaptation to current and future climate impacts. It strengthens our efforts to achieve the UAE's national climate objectives and Sustainable Development Goals by reducing environmental vulnerabilities, safeguarding ecosystems. This plan firmly places the emirate at the forefront of adaptation

*The Environment Sector Adaptation Plan focuses on three highly vulnerable environmental systems: groundwater, soil and biodiversity*

planning in the region," Al Dhaheri noted.

The Environment Sector Adaptation Plan focuses on three highly vulnerable environmental systems: groundwater, soil and biodiversity. These are critical to Abu Dhabi's human health, long-term water security, agricultural productivity and overall ecosystem health.

Through robust risk assessments, the plan identifies a wide array of climate-induced threats and outlines 142 adaptation actions to be implemented by 2050, including 86 high-priority projects identified for implementation over the next five years. These actions span a range of technical, institutional and nature-based solutions.

Over the long term, the plan supports Abu Dhabi's strategic ambition to preserve and enhance its natural capital. It contributes to national efforts to increase food self-sufficiency, effect a shift toward more sustainable land and water management systems and enhance the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Sheikha Al Mazrouei, Executive Director of the Integrated Environment Policy and Planning Sector, stated, "Designed to be adaptive and forward-looking, the plan integrates the latest data, evolving climate projections, and policy alignment to ensure our responses remain effective over time. As part of a broader national and emirate-wide strategy, it reinforces our long-







## Al Ain Zoo celebrates International Tiger Day

Al Ain Zoo celebrated International Tiger Day, observed annually on 29th July, to highlight its ongoing role in protecting endangered species and to promote greater public awareness about conserving biodiversity.

As part of its educational and engaging programming, the Zoo invited visitors to its latest Amur tiger experience, held every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at 10:00 AM.

These sessions offer a rare opportunity for visitors to listen to the animal care team share insights into the unique traits and behaviours of the Amur tiger and explore the newly opened Amur Tiger Habitat, modelled after the Amur tigers' native habitat.

Designed to meet the highest standards of animal welfare, the exhibit has shaded resting areas, cooling platforms, water ponds, and a cave-like shelter to ensure the tigers' comfort and wellbeing. A chilled pond and misting systems further enhance the animals' environment while offering guests a deeper understanding of modern zoological care.

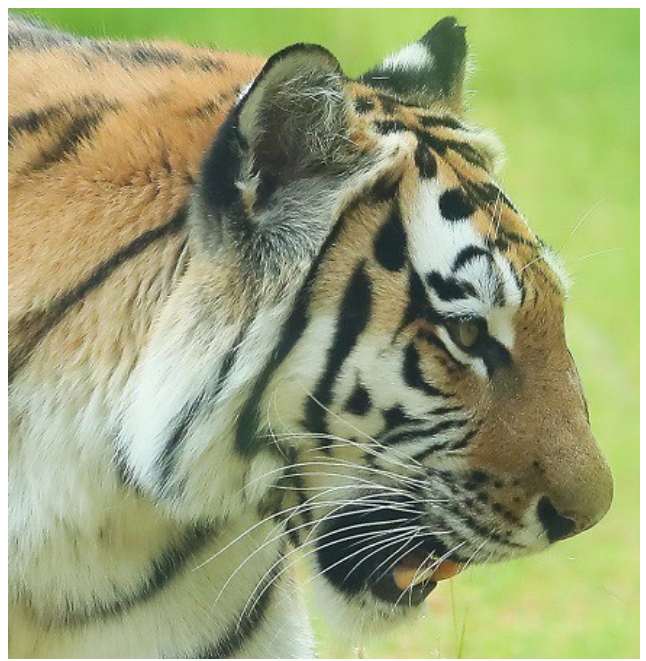
Al Ain Zoo is home to several endangered big cats, including the Amur tiger, Bengal tiger, Arabian leopard, and Jaguar.

term vision to protect ecosystems, sustain natural resources, and secure the well-being of future generations.”

The development of the plan was a collaborative process, led by EAD and involved more than 40 government, semi-government, academic, civil society entities and youth.

The plan is designed to be dynamic and forward-looking, with built-in mechanisms for periodic review, stakeholder engagement and integration of new scientific findings and climate projections. Alongside the UAE National Climate Change Plan 2017-2050, it also complements the National Biodiversity Strategy and other international commitments.

The Abu Dhabi Climate Change Adaptation Plan – Environment Sector is one of four sectoral plans being rolled out under a broader emirate-wide adaptation strategy.



## UAE attends 47th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in Milan

The UAE participated for the first time in the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM), attending the 47th session held in Milan, Italy, following its accession to the Antarctic Treaty in December 2024.

The UAE delegation was led by Abdulla Balalaa, Deputy Chair of the Emirates Polar Programme (EPP) Steering Committee and Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Energy and Sustainability, and attended by representatives from EPP.

The ATCM serves as the principal forum for international collaboration on Antarctica-related issues. Convened annually, the meeting brings together consultative and non-consultative parties to exchange information, explore areas of common interest, and recommend measures to advance the Treaty's objectives.

This year's session saw the participation of over 400 delegations, representing 29 consultative parties, 28 non-consultative parties, as well as observers and experts.

At the UAE's inaugural participation, Balalaa said, "This milestone participation reflects our nation's unwavering commitment to global cooperation and environmental stewardship. The UAE is dedicated to being proactive in preserving the cryosphere through science, innovation, and collaboration."

Underpinned by national initiatives such as the Emirates Polar Programme, the UAE continues to champion scientific advancement and multilateral collaboration, reinforcing its role as a constructive



and responsible actor in addressing global environmental challenges.

During the meeting, the UAE actively engaged in bilateral discussions with other countries and stakeholders, exploring opportunities for cooperation in polar research. Informal dialogues were also held to discuss collaborative approaches to advancing scientific knowledge and protecting the environment in the region.

As the principal forum for Antarctic governance, the ATCM enables parties to coordinate efforts, strengthen environmental protection, and support peaceful scientific cooperation. This year's discussions addressed key themes including environmental preservation, science collaboration, operational safety, and responsible tourism in the region.

The UAE's participation reflects its growing role in global environmental diplomacy and its commitment to multilateral processes that safeguard fragile ecosystems.

Looking ahead, the UAE will continue its engagement in the Antarctic Treaty System, with the signing of the Environmental Protocol – a key instrument to protect Antarctica's ecosystems and promote responsible use – representing the next milestone in its contribution to preserving the continent for future generations.



## Dubai Municipality completes AED190 million landscaping projects in H1 2025

The landscaping projects cover more than three million square meters across major intersections and roadways in Dubai

Dubai Municipality has completed a series of landscaping and afforestation projects valued at AED190 million and covering more than three million square metres across major intersections and roadways in the emirate during the first half of 2025.

These projects form part of the Municipality's broader strategy to green and beautify Dubai, support the objectives of the Green Dubai initiative, and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors in line with the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan.

The landscaping works spanned several strategic locations, including the intersection of Al Khail Road with Latifa bint Hamdan Street; the intersection of Sheikh Zayed bin Hamdan Street with Tripoli Street; Sheikh Rashid Street from the junction with Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Street





to Al Mina Road; Sheikh Zayed Road from the 7th Interchange (entry point to Dubai from Abu Dhabi); and Al Khawaneej Street at the intersection with Al Amardi Street.

In total, the Municipality planted more than 300,000 trees and seedlings, along with 222,500 square metres of ground covers and flowers. The projects incorporated smart, sustainable irrigation systems featuring underground pump designs to optimise surface space. These systems are connected to remote-control networks supported by Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, enabling real-time monitoring and water-use efficiency to ensure sustainable irrigation practices.

Marwan Ahmed bin Ghalita, Director General of Dubai Municipality, said the new landscaping projects form part of the Municipality's ongoing efforts to enhance the urban and aesthetic appeal of Dubai and increase the sustainability and attractiveness of public spaces.

The initiatives are aligned with the highest standards of innovative and sustainable landscaping practices and support the urban environment pillar of Dubai's Quality of Life Strategy 2033.

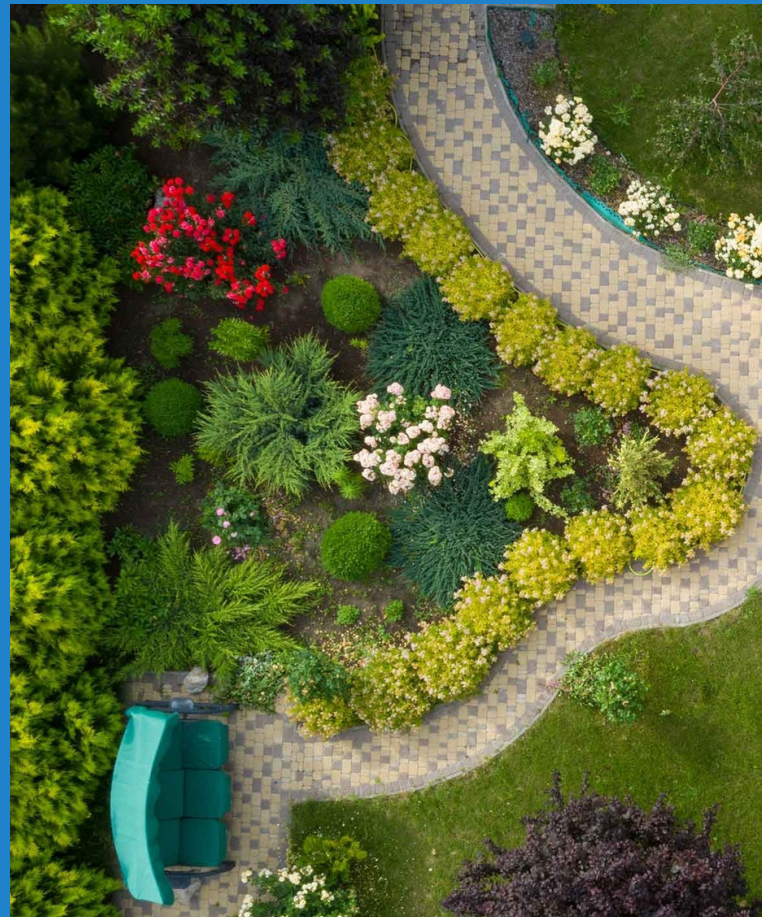
He added, "Our aim is to reinforce Dubai's distinctive urban and aesthetic identity and solidify its position as a leading sustainable global city. We seek to offer a vibrant and healthy living environment that upholds the highest standards of quality of life for residents and visitors, while maintaining a harmonious balance between the urban, architectural, and environmental landscape."

The projects incorporated the planting of native trees such as sidr, ghaf, and neem, alongside ornamental varieties including chorisia, washingtonia, royal poinciana, millingtonia,

*The landscape projects, completed during the first half of 2025, are part of Dubai's broader strategy to enhance the city's green spaces and overall urban environment*

albizia, and bougainvillea.

By the end of Q1 2025, Dubai Municipality was managing more than 5.5 million trees and seedlings, 8.7 million sqm of green areas, 2 million sqm of seasonal flowers, 6.3 million sqm of ground covers, and 1.3 million linear metres of plant fencing. In 2024 alone, the Municipality planted 216,500 trees—an average of 600 new trees per day. The total area of green space increased to 391.5 hectares in 2024, up from 234 hectares in 2023.





## UAE releases 81 falcons into the wilds of Kazakhstan

**Sheikh Zayed Falcon Release Program hits 30-year milestone with latest release, returning 2,355 falcons to the wild since inception in 1995**

With the release of 81 falcons in the Republic of Kazakhstan in May 2025, the Sheikh Zayed Falcon Release Programme has now entered its fourth decade. Since the program's inception in 1995, a total of 2,355 falcons—both Saker and Peregrine species—have been reintroduced into their natural habitats.

The programme aims to increase falcon populations and protect them from a range of threats contributing to their endangered status, such as expanding human activities that encroach on natural habitats, unsustainable breeding practices and climate change.

For the ninth consecutive year, the programme saw 53 Peregrine falcons and 28 Saker falcons released in Kazakhstan—marking the initiative's fourth decade of operation since it was established in 1995.

The falcons' natural migratory range includes parts of Kazakhstan, Russia, China, Mongolia and neighbouring countries in a region



characterised by rugged mountains and vast plains that offer ideal habitats rich in prey.

Prior to their release, all falcons underwent comprehensive veterinary checks, intensive training and were fitted with identification leg bands and implanted with electronic microchips.

Ten falcons (five of each species) were equipped with solar-powered satellite-tracking devices to

***The initiative aims to strengthen falcon populations and protect them from threats such as habitat loss, unsustainable breeding, and climate change***



monitor survival rates, dispersion and migration routes. The data collected will be used to support the ongoing development of rehabilitation, training and release methods.

Mohammed Ahmed Al Bowardi, Vice Chairman of EAD Board of Directors, and Vice Chairman of the International Fund for Houbara Conservation, extended his sincere gratitude to H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler's Representative in Al Dhafra Region and Chairman of EAD Board of Directors, for his patronage and continuous support of the Sheikh Zayed Falcon Release Programme.

He emphasised that the programme has become one of the world's leading initiatives for the restoration of endangered wildlife species. It stands as a continuation of the legacy of the UAE's Founding Father and a testament to Abu Dhabi's and the UAE's global leadership in nature conservation and the protection of biodiversity, which is essential for the wellbeing of both the environment and humanity.

Al Bowardi commended the successful partnerships that have contributed to the programme's achievements. In addition to the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, key partners include the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, the Mohamed bin Zayed Raptor Conservation Fund, the International Fund for Houbara Conservation, and the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital.

He expressed his sincere appreciation to the Committee on Forestry and Wildlife of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the relevant Kazakhstani authorities for facilitating the work of the joint team in implementing this programme.

As the falcon release programme continues its vital mission to protect and restore falcon populations across Central Asia, it exemplifies Abu Dhabi's commitment to biodiversity, environmental sustainability, and global conservation leadership.



## UAE launches first EPR pilot to tackle electronic, packaging waste

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MoCCA) is collaborating with Tadweer Group to launch a pilot project for managing targeted product waste

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tadweer Group to implement a pilot project for managing targeted product waste under the UAE's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) initiative. The EPR is one of the key initiatives within the UAE Integrated Waste Management Agenda 2023-2026.

The signing took place during an event in Dubai, attended by Dr. Amna bint Abdullah Al Dahak, Minister of Climate Change and Environment; and Engineer Ali Al Dhaheri, Managing Director and CEO of Tadweer Group. Several senior officials from both entities were also present.

The MoU forms part of the UAE's broader efforts to advance environmental sustainability, strengthen integrated waste management, address pressing environmental challenges, and support the transition towards a circular



economy and sustainable economic growth.

MOCCAE and Tadweer Group are collaborating on a pilot project to manage targeted product waste, specifically electrical and electronic equipment, batteries, and packaging. This project will be temporarily implemented and operated as a pilot in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, with Tadweer Group as the Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO).

## Six-month project in Abu Dhabi and Dubai focuses on producer responsibility



Dr. Amna bint Abdullah Al Dahak highlighted the UAE's partnership-driven approach to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, designed to deliver sustainable environmental solutions, particularly in waste management.

Dr. Al Dahak added: "We are pleased to continue our collaboration with Tadweer Group to support our goals for integrated management and safe

disposal of waste, while also ensuring waste is reused optimally within the UAE's advanced circular economy framework. The EPR initiative constitutes a key pillar of this framework, engaging all stakeholders, including manufacturers, suppliers, and consumers, in the waste management process in line with international best practices."

Eng. Ali Al Dhaheeri, Managing Director and CEO of Tadweer Group, said: "This initiative will play a key role in the waste journey, by holding manufacturers accountable for their role in waste creation. By piloting an EPR model, we are laying the foundation for a more accountable and resource-efficient waste management system. In addition, we will explore invaluable learnings that will inform future strategies focused on EPR, ensuring a seamless transition to a model that benefits the environment, businesses, and our community."

The MoU includes measures to boost regulatory readiness by improving understanding of the requirements for implementing EPR monitoring, its key influencing factors, and documenting the lessons learned and challenges encountered during the pilot phase. Additionally, the MoU supports the objectives of the circular economy by promoting private sector participation and investment in sustainable waste management, developing a roadmap for policy development and implementation mechanisms, and assessing the effectiveness of the EPR initiative.



## Citroën C5 Aircross: Sharp styling, Electrified performance



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ELECTRIC MOBILITY

Citroën has unveiled the second-generation C5 Aircross, which takes advantage of the new Stellantis STLA Medium platform to offer increased freedom and peace of mind

**W**ith the launch of the new C5 Aircross, Citroën is taking on a new dimension in the C-SUV market. This spectacular new model fulfils all the promises of the C5 Aircross Concept unveiled in autumn 2024 at the Paris Motor Show. Its design is powerful and muscular, yet slender and full of aerodynamic tricks.

Its comfort sets a new benchmark among C-SUVs, with the comfort-class feel of a cabin that offers immense space in row 2 and a generous boot volume that remains identical whatever the energy level.

On board, it delivers the impression of travelling in a high-tech cocoon, with suspension with progressive hydraulic cushions, innovative Advanced Comfort seats, dashboard design featuring a large, easy-to-use Waterfall touchscreen, and more.

*The new C5 Aircross stands out for its powerful and assertive design, aerodynamics that promote efficiency and an interior space that encourages well-being*



making it ideal for both hybrid and all-electric vehicles. Its intelligent design means that it can accommodate a range of batteries without losing any space in the passenger compartment.

### **The gateway to electrification**

The Hybrid 48V technology combines great ease of use - no recharging, generous range of more than 950km combined WLTP mixt cycle - with the ability to significantly reduce CO2 emissions and fuel consumption and thus running costs. In town, the new C5 Aircross Hybrid 145 can be driven up to 50% of the time in electric mode.

This technology combines a new-generation 136 bhp (100 kW) 3-cylinder 1.2 litre turbo engine, developed for hybridisation, with a 12 bhp (9 kW - peak 28 bhp / 21 kW) permanent magnet synchronous electric motor powered by a 0.9 kWh battery located under the driver's seat. The

The New C5 Aircross offers greater peace of mind by incorporating driving aids that make life easier – such as the Citroën Matrix Leds or Pack drive Assist 2.0 – and by offering a choice of several electrified energies to suit different needs, setting new standards in terms of freedom of movement: more than 100 km in electric mode in the plug-in hybrid version for everyday journeys in town, up to 680 km in the electric version, and more than 950 km in the hybrid version.

Most of the gains made by the new C5 Aircross are based on the Stellantis STLA-Medium platform, which it introduces to Citroën. This platform offers great flexibility both in terms of dimensions - in this case with a longer wheelbase to enhance passenger space - and powertrains,







electric motor is directly integrated into the new 6-speed eDCS dual-clutch automatic gearbox

Management of the two motors is fully automatic and transparent to the driver. During low-speed acceleration, the electric motor supports the combustion engine. At steady speeds, the two motors work together to optimise fuel consumption. In town and when manoeuvring, the new C5 Aircross Hybrid 145 can operate in electric mode if the battery charge level allows. The battery recharges automatically during deceleration.

Thanks to these qualities, the new C5 Aircross Hybrid 145 limits its fuel consumption to around 15% less than a non-hybrid petrol model and, thanks also to its meticulous aerodynamics, 4% less than the previous generation C5 Aircross Hybrid 145

### **Increased electric and hybrid range**

Rechargeable hybrid technology takes the new C5 Aircross to the next level, making it a benchmark in its segment for ease of use. It offers an electric range of 86 km on average\* - 33% more than the previous C5 Aircross - and over 100 km in town! Its large 55-litre fuel tank - an increase of 28% - gives it a total range of 650 km on motorway.

The plug-in hybrid technology of the new C5 Aircross combines a 150 bhp (110 kW) 4-cylinder 1.6 litre turbo engine with a 92 kW (125 bhp) electric motor, powered by a 21 kWh battery located under the floor in the centre of the vehicle, for a combined output of 195 bhp (143 kW). The electric motor is integrated into the new 7-speed eDCS dual-clutch automatic gearbox.

*The popular new C5 Aircross adapts to customers' needs by offering them the freedom to choose from a range of electrified powertrains: hybrid, plug-in hybrid or electric*



The two engines can operate together or separately, depending on driving conditions and the driver's needs. The driver can choose between three driving modes: Hybrid – the default mode – which automatically manages the operation of both engines, giving preference to electric power whenever possible to reduce fuel consumption and emissions; Electric, for electric operation as long as the battery charge allows and up to 135 km/h; and Sport, where the electric motor supports the combustion engine for maximum performance, enhanced by specific settings for the accelerator, transmission and steering.

The new Citroën C5 Aircross Hybrid Rechargeable 195 offers the best of both worlds: range and performance that guarantee total peace of mind

on long journeys, and zero-emission mobility in everyday life. With over 100 km of electric range in town, many users won't need to recharge their battery every day. And recharging is fast: 5 hours 15 minutes to recharge from 0 to 100% on a 7.4 kW wallbox with the standard 3.7 kW on-board charger, and just 2 hours 55 minutes with the optional 7.4 kW on-board charger.

### **Citroën ë-C5 Aircross: up to 680 km electric range**

The flexibility of the STLA Medium platform enables Citroën to offer a range of electric powertrains that meet the diverse needs of customers for key criteria such as performance, range, recharging speed, and acquisition and running costs.

The new ë-C5 Aircross is available with two 100% electric engines:

- Up to 520 km of autonomy with 210 bhp: a well-balanced and accessible range, with a 210 bhp / 157 kW engine combined with a 73 kWh battery offering a range of 520 km.
- Up to 680 Km of autonomy with 230 bhp: a range adapted to long-distance journeys, with an exceptional range of 680 km, a 230 bhp/170 kW engine and a 97 kWh battery.





# Ghent, Belgium: Prioritising deep-rooted sustainability

From its zero-waste cafés to city farms and renewable energy initiatives, Ghent has serious green credentials

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GREEN CITY

**W**ith its medieval spires, cobbled side streets, and meandering waterways, Ghent, Belgium, is undeniably a charming historic city. Located in the industrial heart of Europe, the city's status as a vibrant university hub attracts a dynamic youth population, fuelling its progressive approach to sustainable living. From pioneering zero-waste cafés to thriving city farms and ambitious renewable energy initiatives, the city is a living laboratory for green innovation.

Now, as cities worldwide grapple with the mounting challenges of climate change, Ghent stands out as a shining example of foresight and determination, aiming to be climate proof by 2030. Through its transformative 'Urban Green Ghent' initiative, the city powerfully demonstrates how urban areas can not only adapt to increasing climate risks but also significantly enhance liveability and biodiversity for all.

## **Turning pavement into opportunity**

A cornerstone of Ghent's strategy is its ambitious plan to replace 15% of the city's pavement with green spaces. This bold move addresses pressing climate challenges such as heatwaves, droughts, and recurrent flooding. Removing hard surfaces in public squares, parks, gardens, and streets enables rainwater to naturally infiltrate the soil. This sponge-like effect mitigates the impact of heavy rainfall, helping to protect the city from flash floods. Whenever a street is redeveloped, the combined sewage system is replaced by separate systems for wastewater and rainwater.

## **Watercourses and façade gardens**

Ghent's commitment to a more climate-resilient urban environment extends beyond de-paving. The city has reopened its watercourses, allowing natural waterways



# To make the city more resilient to climate change, Ghent is heavily investing in pavement removal and greening



to flow freely once again, improving water management and offering various ecological, recreational and economic advantages.

In addition, space on and near water can perform different functions at the same time, especially in built-up areas such as transport, recreation, experiencing the outdoors, a habitat for plants and animals, ecology, housing, and more.

In addition, the promotion of façade gardens encourages residents to transform walls and small spaces into vibrant pockets of greenery. Apart from a cooling effect, these also provide birds and insects with food and insulate and protect facades. This community-driven approach fosters engagement and underscores the vital role citizens play in creating a sustainable city.

## Green climate axes

Eight axes constitute a green network connecting the inner city to the rest of Ghent. These green climate axes form a permanent link between the city centre and the surrounding rural areas and are located along watercourses. Other axes are reinforced by planting trees around them and creating space for water. By reducing the number of parked cars, the city has created a continuous and wide cycling and walking network.

## Green poles

Local residents can relax in five green poles located within a stone's throw of the inner city. With a surface area of at least 200 hectares each, these five green poles make sure that each inhabitant of Ghent has a place within cycling distance where they can cool down, play, exercise, picnic, hike and enjoy the outdoors.

The City of Ghent has developed these green poles in partnership with nature conservation associations, neighbouring municipalities and the Flemish government. In addition, plans are underway to enhance neighbourhood parks and ensure that each inhabitant finds an area of at least 100 sq m where they can relax, meet neighbours and get a breath of fresh air.

Ghent is also working with Flanders to create





more space for nature in the city. The 'Nature-incorporation' project aims to make buildings and houses more climate-proof and thus more attractive to plants and animals. The project will run until 31 August 2026.

## Green roofs

Ghent encourages its inhabitants to put plants in front of, next to, against and on top of their homes. Green roofs increase the biodiversity, improve the visual aspect and buffer rainwater. The City of Ghent subsidises green roofs and the stability study of the roof for private individuals, social housing associations, schools, associations and companies.

## Adapting to Climate Risks

The initiatives under “Urban Green Ghent” are designed to tackle the growing risks of climate

change. Heatwaves are mitigated through the cooling effect of increased vegetation, while green spaces enhance air quality and provide shaded areas, making the city more comfortable for residents and visitors. During periods of heavy rain, green infrastructure helps absorb excess water, reducing the strain on urban drainage systems.

## Collaboration on ReGreenation

Ghent is one of the 9 European cities collaborating under the ReGreenation project to reimagine densely populated neighbourhoods. The goal is to revitalise deprived, polluted or car-oriented neighbourhoods into green and accessible neighbourhoods.

Under this initiative, the city of Ghent has focused on the revaluation of the industrial FNO site and the greening of the Muide-Meulestede district.



The City of Ghent aims to provide everyone with a green pole within 5 kms from their home and to have at least 100 m<sup>2</sup> of green poles per inhabitant



For both these projects, Ghent is applying the experiences of Paris and Barcelona.

### **Enhancing liveability and biodiversity**

Beyond its climate benefits, Ghent's green transition transforms the city into a more enjoyable and healthier place to live. Greening efforts create attractive outdoor spaces, improve biodiversity, and foster a stronger connection between residents and their natural environment.

### **A model for other municipalities**

Ghent's comprehensive approach to urban greening offers valuable lessons for cities worldwide. Its success demonstrates the power



of local government to lead in climate adaptation and resilience. By investing in sustainable infrastructure and engaging the community, Ghent is charting a path toward a future where urban areas are better equipped to face the realities of climate change.





# Hunger declines globally, but rises in Africa and western Asia: UN report

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REPORT

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report for 2025 underscores the need to act urgently for the world's youngest and most vulnerable children, as rising food prices could deepen nutrition insecurity for millions of families



*Roughly 8.2 percent of the world's population — about 673 million people — suffered from hunger in 2024*

An estimated 8.2 percent of the global population, or about 673 million people, experienced hunger in 2024, down from 8.5 percent in 2023 and 8.7 percent in 2022. However, progress was not consistent across the globe, as hunger continued to rise in most subregions of Africa and western Asia, according to this year's *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI 2025)* report published by five specialized agencies of the United Nations.

Launched during the Second UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4) in Addis Ababa, SOFI 2025 indicates that between 638 and 720 million people faced hunger in 2024. Based on the point estimate of 673 million, this represents a decrease of 15 million people from 2023 and of 22 million from 2022.

While the decline is welcome, the latest estimates remain above pre-pandemic levels, with the high food inflation of recent years contributing to the slow recovery in food security.

Notable improvements are seen in southern Asia and Latin America. The prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) in Asia fell from 7.9 percent in 2022 to 6.7 percent, or 323 million people, in 2024. Additionally, Latin America and the Caribbean as a region saw the PoU fall to 5.1 percent, or 34 million people, in 2024, down from a peak of 6.1 percent in 2020.

Unfortunately, this positive trend contrasts sharply with the steady rise in hunger across Africa and western Asia, including in many countries affected by prolonged food crises. The

proportion of the population facing hunger in Africa surpassed 20 percent in 2024, affecting 307 million people, while in western Asia an estimated 12.7 percent of the population, or more than 39 million people, may have faced hunger in 2024.

Meanwhile, the global prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity — an assessment registering the experience of constraints on access to adequate food during part of the year — decreased slightly, from 28.4 in 2023 to 28.0 percent in 2024, accounting for 2.3 billion people. This is 335 million more than in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and 683 million more than in 2015, when the Sustainable Development Agenda was adopted.

It is projected that 512 million people could be chronically undernourished by 2030. Almost 60 percent of those will be in Africa. This highlights the immense challenge of achieving SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), warned the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Agency for Children, the UN World Food Programme, and the World Health Organization.

### **Tracking nutrition targets**

- Among the indicators of child nutrition, the prevalence of stunting in children under five declined from 26.4 percent in 2012 to 23.2 percent in 2024, reflecting global progress
- The prevalence of child overweight (5.3 percent in 2012 and 5.5 percent in 2024), and in child wasting (7.4 percent in 2012 and 6.6 percent in 2024) remains largely unchanged





- The percentage of infants under six months exclusively breastfed increased significantly, from 37.0 percent in 2012 to 47.8 percent in 2023, reflecting growing recognition of its health benefits
- The prevalence of adult obesity rose from 12.1 percent in 2012 to 15.8 percent in 2022
- New data show an increase in the global prevalence of anaemia among women aged 15 to 49, from 27.6 percent in 2012 to 30.7 percent in 2023
- Estimates for a new SDG indicator introduced in the report reveal that about one-third of children aged 6 to 23 months and two-thirds of women aged 15 to 49 years met minimum dietary diversity.

## Food inflation

SOFI 2025 also examines the causes and consequences of the 2021-2023 food price surge and its impact on food security and nutrition.

The report highlights that the global policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic — characterized by extensive fiscal and monetary interventions — combined with the impacts of the war in Ukraine and extreme weather events, contributed to recent inflationary pressures.

This food price inflation has hindered the post-pandemic recovery in food security and nutrition. Since 2020, global food price inflation has consistently outpaced headline inflation. The gap peaked in January 2023, with food inflation reaching 13.6 percent, 5.1 percentage points above the headline rate of 8.5 percent.

Low-income countries have been particularly hit hard by rising food prices. While median global food price inflation increased from 2.3 percent in December 2020 to 13.6 percent in early 2023, it climbed even higher in low-income countries, peaking at 30 percent in May 2023.

Despite rising global food prices, the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet fell from 2.76 billion in 2019 to 2.60 billion in 2024. However, the improvement was uneven.

In low-income countries, where the cost of a healthy diet rose more sharply than in higher-income countries, the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet increased from 464 million in 2019 to 545 million in 2024. In lower-middle-income countries (excluding India), the number rose from 791 million in 2019 to 869 million over the same period.

The report recommends a combination of policy responses to food price inflation. They include targeted and time-bound fiscal measures, such as social protection programs, to safeguard vulnerable households; credible and transparent monetary policies to contain inflationary pressures; and strategic investments in agrifood R&D, transport and production infrastructure, and market information systems to improve productivity and resilience.

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## ADAFSA's cloud computing shift to boost agri-food sector

In a strategic step to advance its digital transformation, the Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA) is transitioning its services and infrastructure to cloud computing. This step aligns with the Abu Dhabi government's vision, spearheaded by the Department of Government Enablement (DGE), to enable a fully AI-native government by 2027.

Through this strategic move, ADAFSA seeks to harness the advanced features of cloud platforms to simplify operations, optimise resource utilisation, and drive innovation across Abu Dhabi's agriculture and food safety sectors.

Furthermore, ADAFSA's adoption of cloud computing underscores its steadfast dedication to boosting operational efficiency, agility, and service accessibility for all stakeholders in the agriculture and food sectors, such as farmers, food producers, and the wider community.

This initiative is a key pillar of Abu Dhabi's digital strategy, which aims to integrate the digital infrastructure of over 40 government entities into a centralised, hybrid, multi-cloud environment. In this context, the DGE serves as the driving force behind this transition, offering expert guidance and support to entities like ADAFSA, helping them overcome the challenges of cloud migration.

This move is projected to significantly establish a more efficient, transparent, and innovative agricultural and food system, bringing substantial benefits to ADAFSA and its partners. The migration to cloud-based services will offer



improved accessibility and greater flexibility for users, thus strengthening digital portals, mobile apps, and other online services.

The cloud infrastructure will contribute to boosting efficiency by automating processes, reducing manual workloads, and optimising IT resource management. Moreover, cloud platforms will also bolster data governance and security through robust security features and advanced capabilities, ensuring the integrity and confidentiality of sensitive information.

The cloud's innate ability to scale up will enable ADAFSA to rapidly adapt to evolving requirements and roll out new services at a faster pace, while also laying a solid foundation for a future-ready infrastructure capable of integrating advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning. In turn, this move will facilitate more intelligent inspections, predictive analysis, and enhanced decision-making.



## **‘Urgent need to accelerate the agrifood systems transformation’**

FAO Director-General QU Dongyu highlights youth, innovation, and rights-based policies as engines of change

The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), QU Dongyu, called for bold action, scaled-up investment, and stronger partnerships to accelerate global agrifood systems transformation at the UN Food Systems Summit +4 (UNFSS+4) Stocktaking Moment.

Addressing world leaders, ministers, and delegates gathered in Addis Ababa, Qu emphasized that agrifood systems are central to addressing interconnected global challenges – from food insecurity and climate issues to environmental degradation and inequality.

“Transformation is not a distant ambition. It is already happening,” he said. “But the pace, scale, and coordination of our collective action will determine whether we succeed. The challenge now is not only action, but acceleration.”

Reflecting on progress since the first UN Food





Systems Summit in 2021, convened by the UN Secretary-General as part of the Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Director-General noted that many countries have moved from commitment to implementation through policy reform, investment shifts, and integrated planning. He cited Ethiopia as one of the leading examples, where FAO-supported efforts have reduced post-harvest grain losses by up to 40 percent in some areas, directly improving food security and rural livelihoods.

### **Priority areas for transformation**

In his address, the Director-General outlined three major areas to drive transformation.

First, the Director-General emphasized the importance of empowering youth as a driving force in transforming agrifood systems. Referencing FAO's first global assessment on *Youth in Agrifood Systems*, he called for urgent action to close gaps in education, employment, and leadership opportunities for young people, especially young women. Unlocking this potential, he noted, could add up to USD1.5 trillion to global GDP, with agrifood systems contributing nearly half of that impact.

Second, he stressed that scaling innovation and technology is essential for overcoming systemic barriers. He highlighted the role of the World Food Forum, with its three pillars – Hand-in-Hand Investment, Science and Innovation, and Youth and Women's Empowerment – as a key platform for accelerating solutions.

Third, Qu underscored the importance of grounding transformation in the Right to Food – a foundation for transparency, participation, accountability, and inclusion. In this regard, he emphasized FAO's role in hosting the support mechanism for the Global Alliance Against Poverty and Hunger, launched under the G20 Brazil Presidency, which serves as a platform for

*FAO-supported efforts in Ethiopia have reduced post-harvest grain losses by up to 40 percent in some areas, directly improving food security and rural livelihoods*

coordinated financing and technical support aligned with national priorities.

“We are making systems transformation the new normal — hand in hand with governments, investors, academia, civil society, and the private sector,” Qu said. “Let us use this Stocktake to reflect and act boldly, and to strengthen our partnerships to turn vision into action.”

The UN Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktaking Moment, co-hosted by the Governments of Ethiopia and Italy, provides a global platform to assess progress since the 2021 Summit and renew collective efforts to transform agrifood systems in support of the 2030 Agenda.







## 91% of new renewable projects are now cheaper than fossil fuel alternatives: IRENA

New IRENA report confirms cost-competitiveness of renewables; warns of mounting grid integration and financing challenges, notably in emerging and capital-constrained markets

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RENEWABLES

Renewables maintain their cost leadership in global power markets, IRENA's new report on *Renewable Power Generation Costs in 2024* confirms. The report confirms that renewables maintained their price advantage over fossil fuels, with cost declines driven by technological innovation, competitive supply chains, and economies of scale.

In 2024, solar photovoltaics (PV) were, on average, 41% cheaper than the lowest-cost fossil fuel alternatives, while onshore wind projects were 53% cheaper. Onshore wind remained the most affordable source of new renewable electricity at USD 0.034/kWh, followed by solar PV at USD 0.043/kWh.

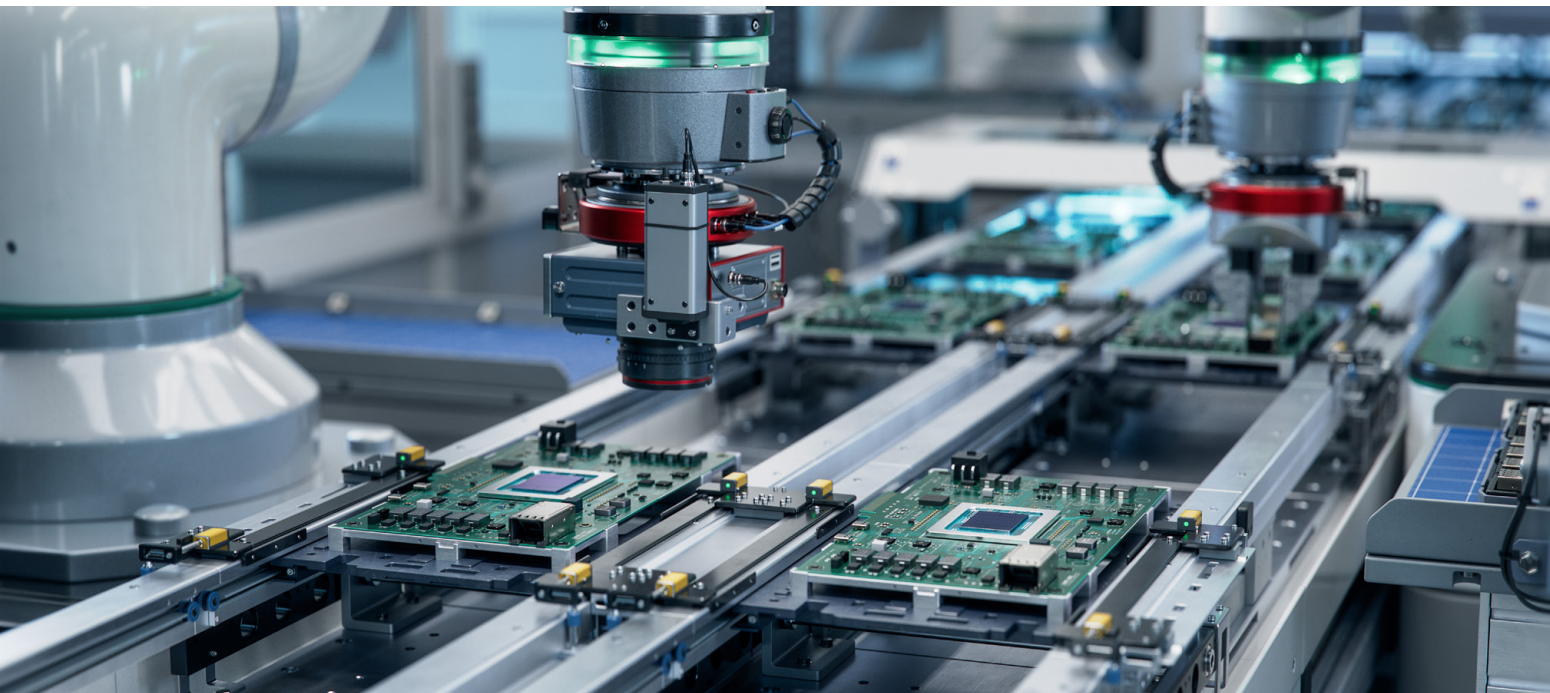
The addition of 582 gigawatts of renewable capacity in 2024 led to significant cost savings, avoiding fossil fuel use valued at about USD 57 billion. Notably, 91% of new renewable power projects commissioned last year were more cost-effective than any new fossil fuel alternatives.

Renewables are not only cost-competitive vis-à-vis fossil fuels but are advantageous by limiting dependence on international fuel markets and improving energy security. The business case for

renewables is now stronger than ever.

While continued cost reductions are expected as technologies mature and supply chains strengthen, short-term challenges remain. Geopolitical shifts, including trade tariffs, raw material bottlenecks, and evolving manufacturing dynamics, particularly in China, pose risks that could temporarily raise costs.

*Mitigating financing risk is central to scaling renewables in both mature and emerging markets*



Higher costs are likely to persist mainly in Europe and North America, driven by structural challenges such as permitting delays, limited grid capacity, and higher balance-of-system expenses. In contrast, regions like Asia, Africa, and South America, with stronger learning rates and high renewable potential, could see pronounced cost declines.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said: “Clean energy is smart economics – and the world is following the money. Renewables are rising, the fossil fuel age is

crumbling, but leaders must unblock barriers, build confidence, and unleash finance and investment. Renewables are lighting the way to a world of affordable, abundant, and secure power.”

IRENA Director-General Francesco La Camera added: “New renewable power outcompetes fossil fuels on cost, offering a clear path to affordable, secure, and sustainable energy. This achievement is the result of years of innovation, policy direction, and growing markets. However, this progress is not guaranteed. Rising geopolitical tensions, trade tariffs, and material





supply constraints threaten to slow the momentum and drive costs. To safeguard the gains of the energy transition, we must reinforce international cooperation, secure open and resilient supply chains, and create stable policy and investment frameworks—especially in the Global South. The transition to renewables is irreversible, but its pace and fairness depend on the choices we make today.”

IRENA's 2024 report also explores the structural cost drivers and market conditions shaping renewable investment. It concludes that stable and predictable revenue frameworks are essential to reduce investment risk and attract capital. Mitigating financing risk is central to scaling renewables in both mature and emerging markets. Instruments such as power purchase agreements (PPAs) play a pivotal role in accessing affordable finance, while inconsistent policy environments and opaque procurement

processes undermine investor confidence.

Particularly, integration costs are emerging as a new constraint on the deployment of renewables. Increasingly, wind and solar projects are delayed due to grid connection bottlenecks, slow permitting and costly local supply chains. This is acute in G20 and emerging markets, where grid investment must keep pace with rising electricity demand and the expansion of renewables.

Furthermore, financing costs remain a decisive factor in determining project viability. In many developing countries of the Global South, high capital costs, influenced by macroeconomic conditions and perceived investment risks, significantly inflate the levelized cost of electricity (LCOE) of renewables.

For example, IRENA found that while onshore wind generation costs were similar in Europe and Africa with around USD 0.052/kWh in 2024, the cost structures varied significantly. European projects were capital-expenditure driven, while African projects bore a much higher share of financing costs. IRENA's assumed cost of capital ranged from 3.8% in Europe to 12% in Africa, reflecting differing perceived risk profiles.

Finally, technological advances beyond generation are also improving the economics of renewables. The cost of battery energy storage systems (BESS) has declined by 93% since 2010, reaching USD 192/kWh for utility-scale systems in 2024. This reduction is attributed to manufacturing scale-up, improved materials and optimised production techniques.

Battery storage, hybrid systems, combining solar, wind and BESS as well as digital technologies are increasingly vital for integrating variable renewable energy. Artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled digital tools are enhancing asset performance and grid responsiveness. However, digital infrastructure, flexibility, and grid expansion and modernisation remain pressing challenges, including in emerging markets, where the full potential of renewables cannot be realised without further investment.

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## UAE allows air taxis, helicopters to use the same infrastructure under new regulation

UAE NEWS

**T**he General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) has issued the world's first regulatory framework for hybrid operations, enabling both electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing aircraft (eVTOLs) and conventional helicopters to operate interchangeably on the same infrastructure.

This innovative regulatory framework represents a significant leap in integrating Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) solutions into existing aviation systems. It offers a cost-effective model for infrastructure development, accelerates operational readiness, and aligns with the UAE government's directives to implement high-efficiency, non-bureaucratic solutions across various sectors.

Saif Mohammed Al Suwaidi, Director-General of the GCAA, said, "The UAE has always been at the forefront of excellence in aviation.

This pioneering regulatory framework does not

merely enable new technology; it redefines how aviation evolves.

It reflects our commitment to innovation in developing a supportive ecosystem for the growth of this vital sector and a future where advanced air mobility is seamlessly integrated into our national infrastructure."

The hybrid operations framework results from close collaboration with international partners in the advanced air mobility sector and is fully aligned with the UAE's national vision for sustainability, smart mobility, and optimized infrastructure use.

By enabling dual-use between conventional helicopter pads and electric vertical takeoff and landing pads, this initiative helps accelerate implementation timelines, optimises infrastructure utilisation, and cements the UAE's position as a leader in fostering an integrated ecosystem supporting the future of aviation.



# Word Scramble

LNAD EATWS

DOOFLS IAGRNFM  
SETSOFR

TIVNRP EROSAE  
FANUA

TOVDIRBEYISI  
OGRUHD T

54

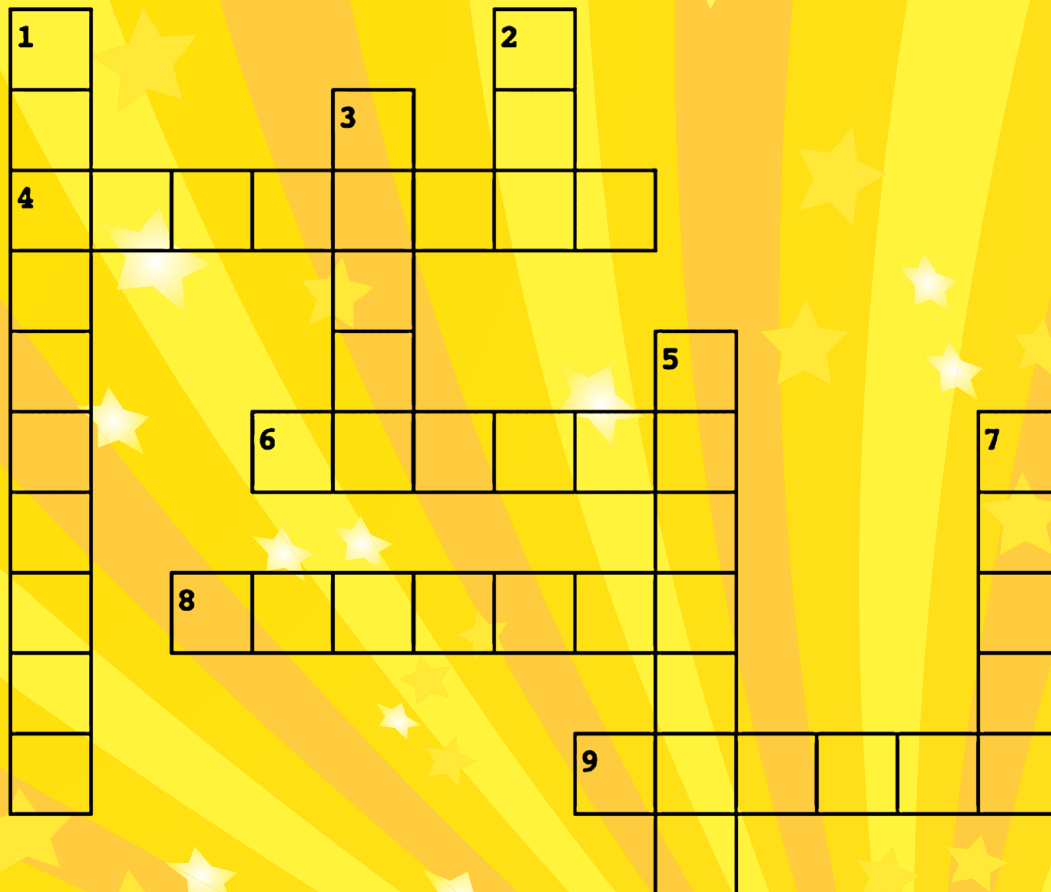
ANSWERS: 1) FORESTS 2) BIODIVERSITY 3) FLOODS 4) DROUGHT 5) FARMING 6) PRESERVATION 7) WASTELAND 8) FAUNA

# Word Search

I	I	N	S	U	S	T	A	I	N	A	B	L	E
N	Y	T	I	R	A	H	C	E	S	C	L	O	E
D	S	C	S	E	P	R	O	D	U	C	E	R	C
U	R	Y	I	C	R	N	R	T	P	Y	U	E	E
S	O	S	V	L	E	E	R	D	D	P	I	U	E
T	D	A	R	P	R	I	S	I	B	O	E	S	O
R	M	S	I	N	A	G	E	V	C	L	E	E	O
I	N	A	R	C	T	I	C	E	E	I	C	E	D
E	S	E	Y	D	E	A	G	R	A	C	E	D	O
S	Y	C	I	S	T	N	R	S	N	Y	E	I	S
E	S	Y	R	P	R	R	E	C	Y	C	L	E	
E	E	E	S	U	U	O	C	E	A	N	S	O	I
E	L	U	S	C	U	D	B	C	Y	O	A	Y	L
R	R	E	T	O	O	I	E	E	C	U	D	E	R

OCEANS  
INDUSTRIES  
CHARITY  
RECYCLE  
VEGANISM  
PRODUCE  
REDUCE  
REUSE  
DIVERSE  
SUSTAINABLE  
POLICY  
ARCTIC

# Crossword Puzzle



## Across

4. The branch of medical science that studies viruses and viral diseases
6. A severe shortage of food resulting in violent hunger and starvation
8. A shortage of rainfall
9. Recovery or preservation from loss or danger

## Down

1. The system or form by which a community or other political unit is governed
2. An atmosphere in which visibility is reduced because of a cloud of some substance
3. The plants of a particular region or geological era
5. Atmospheric conditions
7. Any materials unused and rejected as worthless or unwanted

ANSWERS: 1) GOVERNMENT 2) FOG 3) FLORA 4) VIROLOGY 5) WEATHER 6) FAMINE 7) WASTE 8) DROUGHT 9) RESCUE





## WORD OF THE DAY:

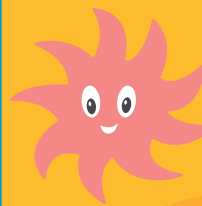
### COMPOSTING

Composting is the natural process of recycling organic matter, such as leaves and food scraps, into a valuable fertilizer that can enrich soil and plants. Anything that grows decomposes eventually; composting simply speeds up the process by providing an ideal environment for bacteria, fungi, and other decomposing organisms (such as worms, sowbugs, and nematodes) to do their work. The resulting decomposed matter, which often ends up looking like fertile garden soil, is called compost. Fondly referred to by farmers as “black gold,” compost is rich in nutrients and can be used for gardening, horticulture, and agriculture.

Composting is a great way to recycle the organic waste we generate at home. Not only is food waste a significant burden on the environment, but processing it is costly. Composting at home allows us to divert some of that waste from landfills and turn it into something practical for our yards.

Compost is an essential tool for improving large-scale agricultural systems. Compost contains three primary nutrients needed by garden crops: nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. It also includes traces of other essential elements like calcium, magnesium, iron, and zinc. Compost also increases soil's water retention capacity, productivity, and resiliency.

Typically when organic matter decomposes, it undergoes aerobic decomposition, meaning that it's broken down by microorganisms that require oxygen. In a landfill, compostable waste gets buried under trash, cutting off a regular supply of oxygen. The waste then undergoes anaerobic decomposition, and is broken down by organisms that can live without free-flowing oxygen. During anaerobic decomposition, biogas is created as a by-product. This biogas is roughly 50 percent methane and 50 percent carbon dioxide, both of which are potent greenhouse gases, with methane being 28 to 36 times more effective than CO<sub>2</sub> at trapping heat in the atmosphere over a century – this is where composting can be a helpful alternate to diverting waste.



## INTERNATIONAL OWL AWARENESS DAY - AUG 14

Owls are nocturnal—or night-time hunting—birds of prey. They typically have large heads, stocky bodies, and short tails. There are over 200 species of owl found worldwide. Some of these species, such as the barn owl, have populations spanning several continents!

Owls have long captivated us with their mystery and perceived wisdom, but their representation in pop culture media, folklore, and material possessions does not always do these magical creatures justice.

Despite their prominence in diverse international cultures, we often unintentionally harm our beloved owls. American Bird Conservancy and Partners in Flight (PIF) suggests that a third or more of our native owl species are in decline. International Owl Awareness Day not only celebrates the humble owl, but it also educates our community on how they can join us in conserving and protecting these fantastic beasts.

There are two families of owls – barn owls

(Tytonidae) and typical owls (Strigidae) which can be found on every continent except Antarctica. Typical owls have large heads with round faces, whereas barn owls' faces are heart shaped.

Of the 16 species of barn owl, four are considered Vulnerable, one Endangered, and one Data Deficient, meaning there isn't enough information to determine its risk of extinction. There are 227 species of typical owls, 24 of which are Vulnerable, 13 Endangered, and three Critically Endangered. Threats to their survival include the loss and fragmentation of their forest habitat, hunting, and Climate change.

AUG  
10

## WORLD LION DAY

Lions are a keystone species, meaning their presence has a disproportionately large impact on the ecosystem. This significant role makes it crucial to protect and conserve their populations, as their presence maintains vital balance in their environments.

World Lion Day raises awareness about the importance of protecting lions and their habitats. For 28 years, lions have been listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List for Endangered Species, and World Lion Day seeks to inspire global action to ensure their survival.

The loss of a keystone species sets off a chain reaction which alters the structure and biodiversity of their habitat. In just two decades, lion populations across Africa have plummeted by 43%. On average, 600 lions are killed a year by people.

The threats lions face include:

- **Habitat destruction:** Change in land use through human pressure is leaving lion populations isolated and driving away their natural prey at the same time as destroying their home. Which leads to...



- **Human-wildlife conflict:** Pushed into closer proximity with humans, lions compete for resources and potentially prey on livestock, resulting in retaliatory killings.
- **Poaching:** As demand for tigers becomes more and more unsustainable, the bones and organs of lions (which are almost identical) are taking their place.

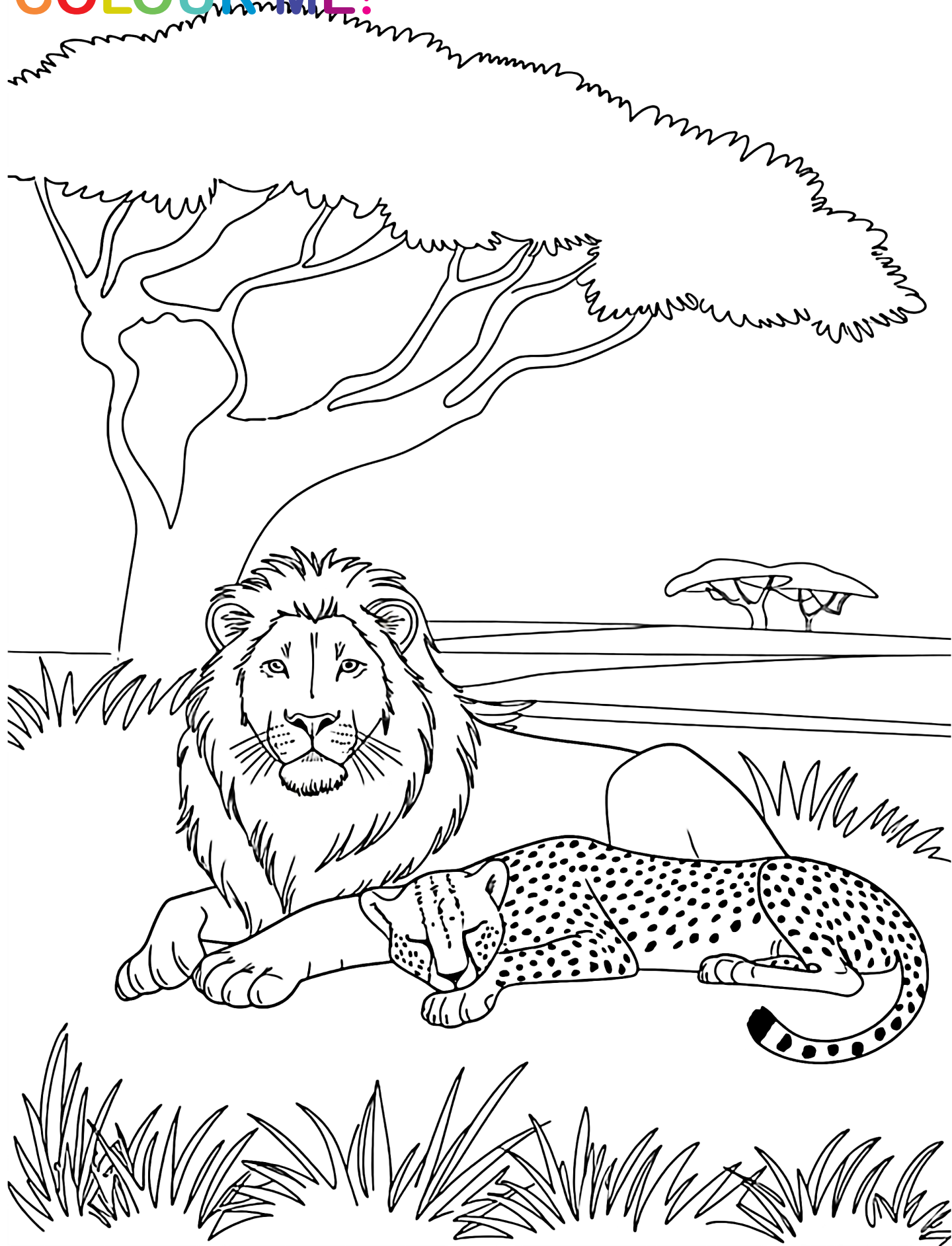
## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

### Things to Do...

- ☒ Use both sides of a sheet of paper! \_\_\_\_\_
- ☒ Use less tissues! \_\_\_\_\_
- ☒ Take public transport \_\_\_\_\_
- ☒ Carry a water bottle around! \_\_\_\_\_
- ☒ Switch off all plugs when not in use \_\_\_\_\_



COLOUR ME!





## Air quality initiative launched in Dibba Al-Hisn

UAE NEWS

**D**ibba Al-Hisn Municipality has launched an environmental initiative in cooperation with Sharjah Municipality to measure outdoor air quality in various residential, agricultural, and industrial areas of the city. The initiative uses a mobile air quality monitoring vehicle and aligns with the municipality's ongoing efforts to promote public health in the city.

This initiative supports Dibba Al-Hisn's vision to become a leading city in health and environmental standards as part of the 'Sharjah Healthy City' programme. The municipality's efforts focus on key criteria such as water quality, sewage system efficiency, food safety, and air pollution reduction — all of which contribute to the city's status as a sustainable and healthy environment.

The initiative reflects Dibba Al-Hisn Municipality's commitment to best environmental practices and institutional cooperation in sustainable development. The mobile unit will assess air quality at key locations across the city, including

residential and agricultural areas and public facilities. This step is part of the municipality's strategy to regularly monitor environmental indicators and gather accurate data to enhance quality of life. Results from the air quality assessments will be used to improve agricultural and landscaping plans, ensuring they meet the highest environmental standards.

Talib Abdullah Al Yahyai, Director of Dibba Al-Hisn Municipality, said the initiative is expected to raise public environmental awareness and provide accurate data to support decision-making in environmental and public health planning — such as identifying suitable tree-planting sites, improving infrastructure in high-pollution areas, and directing awareness campaigns. The measurements will help monitor environmental changes year-round and link them to health indicators, in collaboration with relevant entities in Sharjah, to enhance safety and quality of life in Dibba Al-Hisn.





## New US\$7 million initiative aims to protect coasts from climate change

Madagascar's coastal ecosystems are under growing pressure from deforestation, overfishing, and a changing climate

Madagascar has officially launched a landmark initiative aimed at enhancing climate resilience by restoring critical coastal ecosystems and improving livelihoods across vulnerable regions. Nearly 100,000 people are expected to benefit directly across four key coastal regions—Boeny, Menabe, Diana, and Atsimo Atsinanana—where climate impacts are already threatening both livelihoods and biodiversity.

The project, *Scaling Up Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Coastal Areas in Madagascar*, will be executed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development with a USD 7.1 million grant from the Global Environment Facility and a cofinancing of USD 27 million.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) assisted the government with developing the project and will act as the implementing agency, as a continuation of a long-standing partnership on resilience-building and strengthened environmental stewardship.

Madagascar's coastal ecosystems—mangroves, coral reefs, and coastal forests—serve as natural buffers against rising seas, intensifying cyclones, and coastal erosion. Yet these ecosystems are under growing pressure from deforestation, overfishing, and a changing climate. Coastal zones support more than 75% of the local population by providing, for example, marine species for fisheries or valuable non-timber forest products.

The new project aims to enhance the resilience of both ecosystems and communities through nature-based solutions, conventionally referred to as ecosystem-based adaptation.

In close coordination with the Regional Directorates for Environment and Sustainable Development, the project will support integrated coastal zone management structures, enhance national and local adaptation coordination, and provide revised tools and plans to integrate EbA at the regional and municipal levels.

The initiative will restore 3,000 hectares of mangroves and coastal forests and rehabilitate 2,000 hectares of degraded watersheds using community-based approaches. Over the course of the project, almost 100,000 people are expected to benefit directly from ecosystem-based adaptation interventions.

It will also support the creation of 20 ecosystem-based businesses, with a focus on empowering women and youth through access to training, technical support, and equipment. These businesses will span climate-resilient sectors such as sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, beekeeping, ecotourism, and rainfed agriculture.

At the official high-level launch ceremony held on 15 July, the acting Secretary General of Environment and Sustainable Development Hahitantsoa Tokinirina Razafimahefa, said: "Restoring mangroves means protecting the coastline, supporting sustainable small-scale

**Coastal zones support more than 75% of Madagascar's local population by providing, for example, marine species for fisheries or valuable non-timber forest products**



fishing, creating natural carbon sinks, and preserving nesting sites for rare species. In other words, it means acting on adaptation, mitigation, food security, and biodiversity conservation—all at once."

Paz Lopez-Rey, UNEP's Programme Management Officer for the new project, said: "The project will strengthen local governance for integrated coastal zone management, while ensuring the integration of ecosystem-based adaptation into key regional and municipal planning tools. But it will go further than that; it will lead to a national strategy to scale up ecosystem-based adaptation in other vulnerable coastal areas of the country."



## Renewables boom highlights growing regional divide

Over 70% of renewable energy capacity growth occurred in Asia, while other regions, particularly Africa, lagged behind, according to new IRENA data

The *Renewable Energy Statistics 2025*, released by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) shows that despite renewables capacity growing by over 15% in 2024, the growth gap widens across regions.

Asia has kept its leading position since the past few years, accounting for 71% of new renewables capacity in 2024, followed by Europe and North America (respectively contributed 12.3% and 7.8% to the addition), leaving a huge gap with Africa, Eurasia, Central America and the Caribbean which together only accounted for 2.8% of total renewables capacity addition. Despite its massive economic and development opportunities, Africa only increased its renewables capacity by 7.2%.

Commenting on the data update, IRENA Director-General Francesco La Camera said: “The renewable energy boom is transforming global energy markets, driving economies and creating vast investment opportunities. However, the growing regional divide highlights that not everyone is benefiting equally from this transition. Countries and regions that attract substantial investment in renewables are seeing enhanced energy security, increased industrial activity, and new jobs, fueling broader socioeconomic development.”







La Camera added: "Bridging the divide and closing the investment gap between countries and regions is critical. It requires targeted policies, international financing, and partnerships that unlock capital and technology where they are needed most."

By aligning investment flows with policy frameworks, we can ensure that the green transition becomes a powerful engine for resilience and sustainable economic growth worldwide."

The report states that although the 582 GW of renewable capacity added in 2024 represented a record annual increase, it still falls short of the pace required to reach the global tripling target of 11.2 TW by 2030.

If the same annual growth rate continues, the world will only reach 10.3 TW of renewables capacity, missing the target by 0.9 TW. Achieving the target by 2030 would require renewable capacity to expand even faster at 16.6% annually in less than the remaining five years.

The renewables capacity trend also reveals the dominance of solar and wind power. Both have jointly accounted for 97.5% of all net renewables additions in 2024, with solar increasing by 453 GW. This proves the economic competitiveness of solar energy; providing business opportunities and energy security quickly and sustainably.

Wind energy is following behind with 114 GW of total renewables capacity addition. With renewables now catching up with fossil fuels in the share of installed capacity (46.2% of renewables vs 47.3% of fossil fuels), the case of renewables being a smart investment that creates jobs and drives sustainable growth has become stronger.

The report also shows the continuous growth of renewable power generation, driven by solar and wind energy. Renewable electricity grew by 5.6% in 2023 compared to 2022. Meanwhile, non-renewable power grew by only 1.2% in 2023 compared to 2022.

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## EAD gets LEED Gold for eco-friendly Plant Genetic Resources Centre in Al Ain

In a significant advancement of environmental stewardship, the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) has been awarded the prestigious LEED Gold certificate for sustainable buildings for its outstanding efforts in implementing energy efficiency systems, environmental stewardship and its strong commitment to sustainability in the management of the Plant Genetic Resources Centre building in Al Ain.

Awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), the world's most widely used green building rating system, EAD received this award by meeting all the necessary certification criteria, including a 75.1% reduction in energy consumption, a 53.49% decrease in water usage and a 75.1% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the Plant Genetic Resources Centre building relies on renewable energy by generating 581,077 kilowatt-hours annually through on-site photovoltaic solar panels.

Commenting on the achievement, Dr. Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri, Secretary General of the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, said: "Winning the LEED Gold certificate for the management of the Plant Genetic Resources Centre building in Al Ain is a pivotal achievement that affirms Abu Dhabi's unwavering commitment to spearhead global environmental leadership. Guided by our strategy rooted in responsible practices, we are committed to establishing a new benchmark by transforming our assets and facilities into highly efficient, sustainable ecosystems, ensuring a more prosperous future for generations to come."

This Certificate further reinforces the role of the Plant Genetic Resources Centre, established by



the Agency in Al Ain, to document the genetic resources of the UAE's local plant species for research and preservation purposes. The Centre also conserves the seeds and tissues of all native wild plants and agriculturally significant local species in the UAE, thereby safeguarding biodiversity and accelerating innovation.

Winning the LEED certification reflects EAD's dedication to integrating sustainability efforts to achieve energy efficiency and optimal resource management across its facilities.

## ‘UAE is a global leader in cultural heritage preservation’: UNESCO

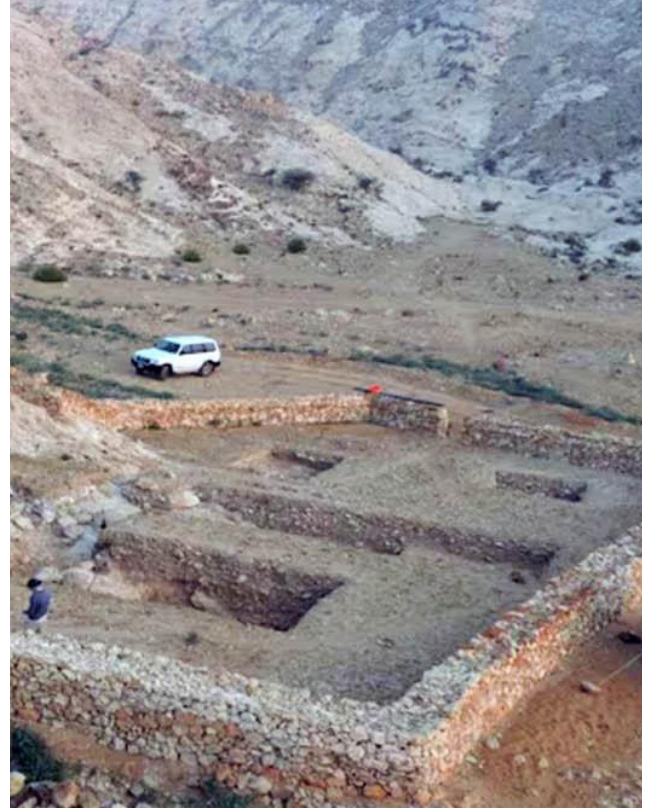
**S**imona-Mirela Miculescu, President of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), commended the pioneering role played by the UAE in protecting and preserving cultural and natural heritage both nationally and globally.

In an interview with the Emirates News Agency in Paris, Miculescu expressed her appreciation for the UAE's recent success in inscribing the Faya Palaeolandscape in Sharjah on the UNESCO World Heritage List. She described this achievement as a powerful message reflecting the UAE's deep commitment to preserving shared human memory and recognising the value of heritage sites as bridges for dialogue and understanding between peoples.

She noted that the UAE is among UNESCO's principal partners, having provided clear support for major international initiatives, including the rehabilitation of heritage sites damaged by conflict, particularly in the Arab region.

Regarding the exceptional value of the Faya archaeological site, Miculescu explained: “Faya is not merely an archaeological site. It stands as evidence of early stages in human development and illustrates human interaction with the natural environment in an area of exceptional geological and cultural significance.”

She highlighted that what makes the site distinctive is its direct connection to the first human migrations from Africa to Asia—a critical phase in human history that continues to be the



subject of intense academic study. The documented discoveries at the site, she added, offer rich material for researchers and anthropologists.

The UNESCO official added: “Its inscription on the World Heritage List is a highly significant step, made possible by meticulous scientific work and long-term efforts by the UAE in collaboration with international experts.”

She also applauded the UAE's approach to integrating heritage preservation with sustainable development plans, emphasizing that the country sets an example of how heritage sites can serve as a foundation for both cultural and economic development. This is achieved through investment in sustainable tourism and by involving local communities in the management and protection of these sites. She described the UAE's experience as a model for other countries in the region and around the world.

Miculescu concluded: “The UAE is a progressive model, combining modernity with respect for its cultural roots. The UAE's commitment to heritage protection sends a message of hope that progress can go hand in hand with preserving identity.”





**Dr. Eisa M. Abdellatif**  
Chief Technical Advisor  
Zayed International Foundation  
for the Environment

## Marine nanoplastic pollution: An invisible but massive ocean threat

66

GREEN FLASH

Nanoplastics, plastic fragments smaller than one micrometer, are now recognized as a pervasive and underestimated form of marine pollution. A new study published in *Nature* reveals that the North Atlantic Ocean alone contains at least 27 million tons of these tiny particles, greater than the mass of all wild and land mammals combined.

Research conducted by the Helmholtz Center for Environmental Research (UFZ), Utrecht University, and the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research presents a detailed assessment of nanoplastic distribution in oceans. Using advanced detection techniques aboard the research vessel RV Pelagia in 2020, scientists collected samples from 12 locations between the European continental shelf and the subtropical North Atlantic Gyre. Measurements were taken at three depths: surface waters (10m), mid-waters (~1,000m), and just above the seabed (~4,500m).

The results revealed the presence of nanoplastics at every depth and site. The highest concentrations occurred in the upper ocean layers, particularly near coastlines, due to atmospheric deposition and river inflows. Materials widely used in bottles, cups, films, and cutlery dominated the samples. Polyethylene (PET) particles were also prevalent in deeper waters, likely originating from synthetic clothing fibers and other sources.

Lead author, Dr. Dušan Materić, emphasized that nanoplastics represent a dominant fraction of marine

plastic pollution, yet they have been largely excluded from current pollution assessments. Their minute size allows them to pass through the intestinal walls of marine organisms and enter the bloodstream, posing severe risks to marine life and potentially to human health through seafood consumption. While the harmful impacts of macroplastics and microplastics have been well documented — from entanglement to gut blockages — nanoplastics present additional dangers because they may interact with biological systems at the cellular or molecular level.

The researchers estimate that the nanoplastic mass in the North Atlantic's upper 200 meters is comparable to the total mass of macro- and microplastics previously recorded for the entire Atlantic Ocean. This finding challenges earlier assumptions that questioned the existence of nanoplastics in nature.

With mounting evidence of the presence of these particles everywhere, the study underscores the urgent need to include nanoplastics in global marine pollution monitoring and policy frameworks. The invisible scale of this pollution means that addressing it will require both innovative detection methods and proactive measures to reduce plastic production and waste leakage into the oceans.

Let us join hands to ban single-use plastics and reduce both the production and use of plastics worldwide.

*Ref: July 10, 2025, article in Eco Watch by Cristen Hemingway Jaynes and edited by Chris McDermott.*

# Emirates Appreciation Award For The Environment

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green home





THE FUTURE OF OUR WORLD  
IS IN OUR HANDS.

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