



KEYNOTE SPEECH
H.E Razan Al Mubarak, Secretary General
Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi
March 30, 2011 at World Ports and Trade Summit

Your Excellencies and Honored Guests,

On behalf of the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, it is an honor to address you today.

Our Emirate of Abu Dhabi is blessed with rich biodiversity and natural resources. It has evolved from a traditional economy based on subsistence fisheries, pearling, oasis agriculture and grazing livestock to a fully urbanised country in just 39 years.

However, with the population predicted to more than double between now and 2030, we know that there will be increased demand for land to build on, as well as energy, water, food and other products. Our growing economy will bring with it a greater demand for energy, water and other raw materials. Much of this raw material will have to be imported, increasing the environmental impacts associated with sea and land transport. Therefore, we will need to understand those threats and consequences as well as instate and implement policy to mitigate those trends.

This is the mandate of Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi. Our strategy is to work on this mandate in partnership with government, NGO's, academia and the private sector. As a regulator, our role is to ensure that industry and other entities minimise their impact on the environment. We use environmental impact assessments to help us set the environmental parameters for projects. We enforce these by issuing permits, which contain emissions limits, and by inspecting industrial processes.

Our approach has always been and will continue to remain to ensure that economic growth provides the desired benefits without damaging Abu Dhabi's natural heritage and long-term future prospects. Only in this way, can we achieve a prosperous society in a sustainable environment.

Khalifa Port and Industrial Zone Project here in Abu Dhabi are good examples of how a balance between economic development and environmental protection can be achieved. The project involved the construction of an offshore port and an industrial area composed of heavy industries in an area between Dubai and Abu Dhabi. A Strategic Environmental Assessment report was prepared and

submitted covering the master planning and design of the port and the industrial zone. We made use of this assessment to persuade decision makers to change their plans in order to protect the environment.

These changes include:

- Moving the location and orientation of the port to avoid the loss of coral reef habitat located north of the proposed project area.
- Modifying the design to include a permanent break-water to protect the coral reef from construction and operational impacts.
- Based on the hydrodynamic modeling major changes were made in the design and location of the industrial area effluent outfall; and
- A stringent continuous monitoring program was set up to ensure minimal impact of the project on the water quality in the region.

This was a very positive outcome. Not only did the mitigation measures significantly reduce the environmental impact of the project, but this example also illustrates the willingness of the industries to take difficult decisions in order to protect our environment.

Once again, thank you and I wish you all a pleasant stay in Abu Dhabi.

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