

Abu Dhabi University Kicks-off the First International Sustainability Leaders Meeting

Abu Dhabi, 26 February 2025: With the participation of over 250 attendees from across 40 countries, Abu Dhabi University (ADU) kicked off the First International Sustainability Leaders Meeting (ISLM), in collaboration with UI GreenMetric, World University Ranking at ADU's main campus. The event is in line with the UAE's Green Agenda 2030, which aims to contribute to the UAE's GDP by four to five percent through optimizing sustainability initiatives in the academic sector.

The ISLM brought together national and global sustainability leaders, experts, and higher education institutions, as well as representatives from the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), over ten international universities, industries, and global ranking organizations.

During the inaugural ISLM, under the theme “Doing Sustainable Development Goals in Higher Education: The Story of Our Institution and Society,” Professor Ghassan Aouad, Chancellor of ADU, alongside H.E. Husin Bagis, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the UAE and Prof. Riri Fitri Sari, Chairperson, UI GreenMetric World University Rankings, welcomed all attendees consisting of prominent global sustainability leaders, experts and higher education institutions. Participants engaged in in-depth strategic discussions on integrating the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the academic institutions to drive global sustainability efforts.

Professor Ghassan Aouad, Chancellor of Abu Dhabi University (ADU), said: “Abu Dhabi University is proud to have hosted the First International Sustainability Leaders Meeting (ISLM) alongside our esteemed partner UI GreenMetric. As the global conversation on sustainability continues to grow, this gathering facilitates meaningful collaborations that empower and equip universities with the necessary tools and strategies to drive real change across the globe. Through fostering innovation and transformative action, we are addressing today's critical environmental challenges and shaping a more sustainable future for generations to come.”

Professor Riri Fitri Sari, Chairperson, UI GreenMetric World University Rankings, emphasized the significance of this meeting by stating: “This collaboration is crucial in bringing together university leaders to share their sustainability efforts and discuss how we can advance sustainable practices not only in higher education but across communities worldwide. The UAE, and Abu Dhabi in particular, have set a remarkable example for other nations with their strong commitment to sustainability, showcasing the power of innovation and leadership in creating a greener future.”

Professor Sherine Farouk, Associate Provost for Academic Projects and Internationalization, Member of the Sustainability Strategic Committee at ADU, and Lead of the Communal Activation Pillar in the UAE Universities Climate Network (UCN), said: “At ADU, we remain committed to equipping our students and community with the knowledge and platforms such as the inaugural International Sustainability Leaders Meeting to engage in critical conversations on sustainability. By raising awareness and providing opportunities for practical application of sustainable practices, we aim to enable our students to drive meaningful change towards a more sustainable future.”

Furthermore, the meeting featured key speakers such as H.E. Ahmed Baharoon, Executive Director of Environmental Information Science and Outreach Management (EISOM) at the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), Dr. Ashwin Fernandes, Executive Director (AMESA) at QS and Professor Sherine Farouk, Associate Provost, Member of the Sustainability Strategic Committee at ADU and Lead of Communal Activation Pillar in the UAE Universities Climate Network (UCN).

ISLM hosted a series of high-impact keynote sessions, interactive forums and expert panel discussions addressing key sustainability topics. These sessions explored Abu Dhabi's journey as a global leader in sustainable urban development, the evolving role of universities in achieving carbon neutrality and fostering green economies and strategies for implementing the vision of the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings Network (UIGWURN). In addition to the critical need to establishing sustainability offices in universities in integrating sustainable practices to equipping students and faculty with the knowledge and tools to actively contribute to a greener more sustainability future.

The event is a testament to ADU's strong performance in the 2024 UI GreenMetric World University Rankings, where it ranked 344th out of 1,477 institutions worldwide and 2nd in the UAE – a 15-place improvement from the previous year.

Organized by ADU, the event was launched in cooperation with the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), the National Pingtung University of Science and Technology (NPUST), University of Szeged, Universitas Diponegoro – The Excellence Research University (UNDIP), Università degli Studi dell'Aquila (UNIVAQ), Times Higher Education World University Rankings and Universidade de Sao Paulo, as well as the Association of Arab Universities, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings, Tzu Chi University and the American University of Cairo (AUC).

-ENDS-