

Hundreds expected to attend smart city event in Doha next week

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The Middle East's most anticipated smart city event taking place at the St. Regis Doha on 22-23 April has attracted high-profile city leaders, urban planners, developers, sustainability experts and investors, along with the world's largest technology firms eager to tap into the region's dynamic smart city market.

According to JoAnn Jain, Director at Expotrade Global, over 500 senior-level city stakeholders have registered to attend the Arab Future Cities Summit, and some of the biggest names in smart city technology including IBM, Philips, Thales, Schneider Electric, Microsoft, SAP and Barwa Bank will be showcasing their cutting-edge technologies and solutions.

"With increasing urbanization and a greater commitment to sustainability, visionary leaders in the Middle East are now employing technology as a driving force behind societal and commercial growth", said Jain.

"It is important that there are platforms for the public and private sector to discuss the strategies and challenges involved in developing smart grids, integrated transport systems, sustainable buildings and ICT infrastructure".

His Excellency Sheikh Abdul Rahman Bin Khalifa Al Thani will be opening the Summit and keynote speakers including His Excellency Mohammed Ahmed Al Sayed, Director General of Doha Municipality, Manel Sanroma, CIO of Barcelona City Council, and Jeddah's Vice Mayor for Strategic Planning & Chief Planner Dr. Abdulgader Othman Amir will be presenting strategies and identifying best practices for developing smart cities across the Middle East.

The event is being held under the patronage of the Qatar's Ministry for Municipality and Urban Planning which has earmarked more than US\$140 billion for mega projects across the energy, transport, education, health and tourism sectors, many of which are expected to be completed in time for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Dr. Alex Amato, Head of Sustainability at Qatar Green Building Council believes that Qatar's commitment to sustainable growth calls for a balance between development needs and protecting the environment.

"In order to achieve this vision, both government and industry need to be involved, so that green and sustainable building and design are incorporated into urban development and redevelopment plans across the board", said Amato.

Qatar Green Building Council's Director Eng. Meshal Al-Shamari will be presenting at the Summit on the affordability of sustainable buildings. Other key speakers include Dr. Mohammad Imad Rouf Al Naimi of Kahramaa, Christopher Sorensen of Masdar, Sunil Gomes of Doha International Airport, Yousef Al Emadi of Ashghal, and Volker Schaffler of Vienna's TINA VIENNA Urban Technologies & Strategies.

The Arab Future Cities Summit will consist of more than 20 sessions over two days including keynote presentations from local and international smart city experts, case-studies of successful sustainability initiatives, and roundtable sessions where delegates think-up solutions to some of the challenges facing Arab cities today.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to discover cutting-edge technologies at the Future Cities Lounge, where sponsors will be showcasing their smart city solutions. Included in this display will be the BMW 6 Series Gran Coupé and video presentations featuring the ongoing development and breadth of BMW i8, a fuel efficient plug-in Hybrid which is expected to hit the Middle East market in 2014.

"BMW is officially the world's most sustainable automotive manufacturer. We therefore feel extremely proud to support the Arab Future Cities Summit 2013 as its Smart Automotive Partner", said Mohamed Kandeel, General Manager of Alfardan Automobiles.

"It presents the perfect platform for us to communicate the Group's leadership as a trailblazer in the area of sustainability and clean production while showcasing its unrivalled capabilities and future plans for electric mobility".

Other sponsors of the event include Blackberry, Coca-Cola, Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies, Unisafe, Tirschwell & Co. and Qatar Airways. Expotrade, a global conference and event organiser, has produced the Arab Future Cities Summit. For almost 10 years Expotrade has developed an array of top quality events in the Middle East and Australia, delivering some of the largest conferences and summits in the infrastructure, banking and finance, information technology, construction, sustainability, lighting and energy sectors.

Expotrade are the organiser of this year's summit under the patronage of Municipality and Urban Planning, State of Qatar. A global conference and event organiser Expotrade has delivered some of the largest, most successful B2B industry conferences and events.

For more information on the Arab Future Cities Summit visit www.arabfuturecities.com

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