



إكسبو 2020
دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



Bureau
International
des Expositions

المجلس العالمي EXPO 2020 DUBAI WORLD MAJLIS

Sustainability through new eyes

Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi
14 May 2018 | 16:30 - 18:30

World Expos and global conversations

Since the first Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, World Expos have connected people and provided special spaces to spark dialogue amongst those who are curious about the future. With its mix of art and science, imagination and analysis, machines and ideas, nations and people, the Expo is a special place for convening inquisitive minds interested to ask questions about the future and, in so doing, learn more about each other. Expos have always been a mirror of their times.



Conversations that matter

Conversations can be a powerful force in creating the future, yet in our digital age we may have lost the art of conversation.

The founders of the United Arab Emirates met in the desert and, in the shade of their tent, they shared coffee and talked to one another with hope and respect as they envisaged the future of their nation.

Let us sit together and let the spark of conversation connect us for a better tomorrow.

The World Majlis

The World Majlis is deeply rooted in the traditional majlis of the UAE, a highly valued space to listen and learn about different perspectives. A place where people meet to hear informed opinions and shape decisions on subjects that matter to the community.

The World Majlis is an original format for open, informed and measured conversations between diverse thought leaders and change-makers with the objective of helping us to explore and better understand areas of great significance for society from multiple points of view. The goal of these conversations is to generate new perspectives and incubate meaningful connections between people and new ideas.

The World Majlis will take place in the UAE and internationally in the lead-up to and during Expo 2020, with the goal of opening new horizons around the theme and the subthemes. Hosted in culturally significant locations, these conversations are committed to an inclusive and constructive dialogue of the highest quality in an environment that reflects the UAE's tradition of welcome and respect... the Majlis.



“Future generations will be living in a world that is very different from that to which we are accustomed. It is essential that we prepare ourselves and our children for that new world.”

His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Founding Father and President of the UAE



The Conversation

Sustainability through new eyes

His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan created a profound and lasting global impact during his lifetime. In particular, Sheikh Zayed’s majlis helped shape the future of the UAE.

His focus on human connections and dialogue, together with his international outlook, demonstrated that connecting with others to have conversations that matter was – and continues to be – as important as the content of the conversations themselves.

When Sheikh Zayed laid the foundations for the UAE’s future, he may not have used the word ‘sustainability’ but his work was unmistakably focused on building sustainable communities. Agriculture, water, education, health, infrastructure, peace, love for the environment, economic development, and an understanding of the importance of advanced science and technology are all essential for building a sustainable future.

In this World Majlis, we will reflect on Sheikh Zayed’s lessons and values, and explore how Expo 2020 Dubai can create a legacy of sustainability that will inspire progress in the UAE for the next 50 years and beyond.

Framing the conversation

One of today's biggest challenges is to reconcile the need to expand opportunities for a growing population while ensuring that humanity continues to thrive on a healthy planet.

Debates about sustainability can sometimes feel divisive and disheartening. While conveying the scale, scope and urgency of the solutions needed, we often focus more on the existential threats to humanity than on ways to shape a happier and healthier world. What we are asked to give up often overshadows what we stand to gain. But it does not need to be this way.

The UAE was built from an outpost in the desert, so rather than worrying about what they would have to give up, its Founding Fathers' positive mindset was focused on what they could achieve. What if we brought this same perspective to the way we look at sustainability? What would sustainability look like today, through the eyes and values of Sheikh Zayed and the UAE's other Founding Fathers?

Sustainability through new eyes

The use of the word sustainability is increasing, yet determining the best path to a sustainable future remains a challenge. Through Expo 2020 we wish to help shape an understanding of sustainability that focuses on opportunity, connects views across sectors and generations, and challenges common habits, expectations and perspectives. As a step towards achieving this, the next World Majlis will address three important questions:

- *Can we maintain economic growth and technological progress, and secure environmental well-being?*
- *Can we create new ways to consume that also benefit the planet?*
- *How can storytelling, art and culture give new energy to sustainability?*



Can we maintain economic growth and technological progress, and secure environmental well-being?

Industrial development is key to economic development. However, it is often considered at odds with environmental well-being. In every sector, we see technological advancements that not only improve efficiency, reliability and safety but also can generate benefits for the environment. What are some of the areas where technologies are key to future environmental solutions? From accessing future water resources, to opening new possibilities through space, what are the fields that offer the greatest potential for positive change?

Can we create new ways to consume that also benefit the planet?

While consumption has long been at the heart of economic growth, it is now viewed as one of the primary enemies of the environment. Curbing current levels of consumption is among the most difficult tasks we face. What if this conversation was less about 'giving up' and more about how the worlds of consumer goods and mass production can help drive new modes of consumption? Can the products that clothe us, feed us and help us communicate facilitate sustainable growth? Can we transform consumers into responsible citizens?

How can storytelling, art and culture give new energy to sustainability?

Science is the backbone of knowledge and should therefore act as the foundation for solutions to our problems. Nevertheless, people are more likely to be influenced by their emotions than by dispassionate facts and figures. When it comes to sustainability, how can we connect the kinds of storytelling and emotions found in literature, art and culture to the fields of science and business? How can we use this powerful language to shift the focus of conversations from 'loss' to 'opportunity'? How can we identify heroes to inspire us and help accelerate our transition to a sustainable future?



The way forward

We hope the ideas that emerge from the World Majlis open up new avenues of thought, inform future conversations in the UAE and other parts of the world, and help generate robust content for Expo 2020 Dubai and beyond.

Each conversation will be an opportunity to add relevant context to the Expo 2020 theme and sub-themes. The goal is to hear different voices, reach greater understanding and connect people who may not otherwise have had the opportunity to engage with each another. The discussion will serve to enlighten the participants – and the audience – with a new and different perspective and, hopefully, generate some actionable solutions to the issue at hand.

