

Hamdan bin Mohammed launches ‘Dubai Can’ – an innovative citywide sustainability initiative to empower communities to reduce the use of single-use plastic bottles

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His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Crown Prince and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai, today launched ‘Dubai Can’, a citywide sustainability movement designed to inspire people to make a difference through a series of sustainability-focused initiatives.

This initiative, which will be implemented by Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism, will encourage UAE residents to turn the tide on plastic and inspire mass action to actively reduce the use of single-use plastic bottles. ‘Dubai Can’ seeks to motivate communities across the city to undertake simple changes such as using refillable water bottles and public water stations and installing water filters in their homes, offices and schools.

His Excellency Helal Saeed Al Marri, Director General of Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism said: “The ‘Dubai Can’ initiative is one of the innovative ideas that we are implementing to create a vibrant new green economy that will offer the world a unique model for sustainable development. The initiative is aligned with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and the directives of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, to transform the emirate into a leading sustainable destination and the best city in the world to live, work and visit. Our objective is to inspire current and future generations to play their part in protecting the environment and conserving our natural resources.”

“The initiative seeks to encourage citizens, residents and visitors to be active players in building a more sustainable future, and to contribute in saving wildlife and the marine environment. We hope Dubai Can will set in motion a new environmental movement across our city and the wider UAE, transforming the mindsets of people so that we can achieve positive change for a more sustainable future,” Al Marri said.

The Government of Dubai Media Office organised a virtual media briefing today to promote the “Dubai Can’ initiative. The briefing was attended by Her Excellency Mona Ghanem Al Marri, Director General of the Government of Dubai Media Office; Yousuf Lootah, Executive Director - Development & Investments of Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism; and Issam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing.

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Yousuf Lootah highlighted the media’s instrumental role in the success of Dubai Government’s initiatives to promote positive change for a more sustainable future. Emphasising the importance of reducing plastic waste, he said a typical resident in the country uses 450 plastic water bottles on an average in a year, which translates into a total of 4 billion plastic bottles being used annually in the UAE. A single plastic bottle requires 400 years to decompose naturally, posing risks to environmental sustainability. Furthermore, plastic waste is responsible of the deaths of 1.1 million marine creatures globally, he noted.

With the ambitious goal of significantly reducing single-use plastic bottles, ‘Dubai Can’ will empower communities to take action, which will further bolster Dubai’s drive to become one of the world’s most sustainable cities, in line with the Dubai 2040 Urban Masterplan. The initiative also supports Dubai’s commitment to meeting the UAE’s UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) and achieving UAE NetZero 2050 initiative.

The ‘Dubai Can’ initiative also complements the policy recently approved by The Executive Council of Dubai to limit single-use bags. As per the policy, a tariff of 25 fils will be imposed on single-use bags used for carrying goods, starting from July 1, 2022. The policy will be evaluated over several stages until single-use carrier bags are completely banned within a span of two years.

According to Emirates Nature WWF1, the average person in the UAE consumes 94 kg of plastic per year, of which a significant amount comprises single use bottles. Plastic waste has a devastating effect on marine mammals and sea birds and impacts local populations of dolphins, sea turtles and birdlife. With Dubai 2040 Urban Masterplan set to increase the length of public beaches by as much as 400 per cent and Dubai’s nature reserves and natural areas to be boosted to 60 per cent of the Emirate 2, the ‘Dubai Can’ initiative will help lay the groundwork for positive change and support sustainable communities for generations to come.

Residents and visitors to Dubai will have access to more than 30 water stations across the city as part of this initiative, with prime public locations including beaches, parks, malls and major attractions. The drinking water from the stations will be kept cool at a temperature of 10°C offering people a refreshing, clean and safe alternative, whilst also driving a ‘refill culture’.

All water stations across the city will provide the highest standards of hygiene and maintain strict adherence to municipal, healthcare and federal regulations. This includes providing clean and safe drinking water, which will be tested in accordance with Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), GCC and World Health Organization (WHO) standards.