



His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President of Dubai Civil Aviation and Chairman of Emirates Airlines, meets Jeroen van der Veer of the Committee of Managing Directors of the Royal Dutch/Shell Group shortly before Sheikh Ahmed inaugurated ECO-ARABIA '99



Members of the Oil Industry Panel, who discussed ways in which their companies could work together in partnership to protect the marine and coastal environment of the Middle East.

**Panel members from left:**

- Floris Ansingh, President and Chief Executive of Shell Overseas Services Ltd, Saudi Arabia, who convened the panel session,
- Ahmed Al Minhali of ADMA-OPCO, Majid Al Mansouri of ADNOC, Ghuloom Al-Ansari of Bahrain Petroleum Company, Captain Awad Ahmad Saad Saeed of Kuwait Oil Company, Joppe Cramwinckel of Petroleum Development Oman, and Khalid R. Al-Hajri of Qatar General Petroleum Company.

# ECO-ARABIA '99

AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE AND COASTAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST

## CONFERENCE DELEGATES AGREE TO ACTION...

### ...and Shell commits to ECO-ARABIA 2000

**E**CO-ARABIA '99, the two-day conference for the protection of the marine and coastal environment of the Middle East, was declared a resounding success by many of the eminent delegates who attended the event, which took place in

Dubai on 20th and 21st April. The event, which was held under the patronage of His Highness General Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and UAE Minister of Defence, and inaugurated by His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum,

President of Dubai Civil Aviation and Chairman of Emirates Airlines, was sponsored by Shell Dubai, backed by the Federal Environmental Agency (FEA) and organised by the Institute for International Research (IIR). Over 150 delegates attended the conference, the majority of whom

voiced their full support of the event, and of the decision announced at the conference by David Weston, Chief Executive of Shell Companies in Dubai, to sponsor an ECO-ARABIA 2000 and to continue to support a platform for the environmental debate to develop.

The distinguished speaker panel at ECO-ARABIA '99 included some of the world's leading environmental experts and many of the region's in-the-field environmentalists.

Dr Adel Khalifa, Abu Dhabi-based Coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme, chaired the conference.

Jeroen van der Veer, of the Committee of Managing Directors of the Royal Dutch/Shell Group of Companies, gave the keynote address, entitled 'Beyond 2000 – The Role of Industry in Global Sustainable Development', during which he explained why the Shell Group sees environmental

protection as an important part of a broader commitment to sustainable development.

**“ECO-ARABIA '99 is not about Shell nor just about oil companies. We all enjoy clean beaches and clear water to swim in... and we all want future generations to reap the benefits from the steps we take now...”**

In his welcoming address, David Weston stressed that, “ECO-ARABIA '99 is not about Shell nor just about oil companies. We all enjoy clean beaches and clear water to swim in. We all want the region's marine wildlife to flourish and we all want future generations to reap the benefits from the steps we take now to promote and sustain a healthy marine environment in the Middle East.”

During the morning of the first day of the conference, Michael Julian, Chairman of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (IMO), UK, and Dr Saad Al Numairy, of the FEA, talked about enforcing international and regional regulations for the protection of the marine environment. Michael Julian said that, in his opinion, “It is not the lack of regulations already in place that poses a serious threat to the seas and shores of Arabia, but the lack of infrastructure yet in place to enforce them...”

Also during the morning of the conference, Colonel Sulieman bin Mohammed Al-Busaidi, Superintendent General of the Pollution Control Operations Centre at the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Environment in Oman, spoke about the illegal discharging of tankers and its impact on Oman's marine environment.

During the afternoon, Dr Saif Al Ghais, Secretary General of the Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency (ERWDA), UAE, talked about using new technology to protect marine wildlife. Dr Sian Pullen, Head of the Marine Programme at the World Wide Fund (WWF) for Nature, UK, gave an international perspective on the protection of marine environments. Mrs Habiba Al-Marashi, Chairperson of the Emirates Environmental Group, then talked about the importance of involving young people in local environmental initiatives.

Also included on the speaker panel of the first day of the conference were: Michael Voogel, from the Paris Memo of Understanding on Port State Control; Dr Brian Dicks, of The International Tank Owners Pollution Federation, UK; Peter Taylor of the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, UK; Simon Martin and Kevin Hyland, of the Wildlife Protection Office, Dubai; and UAE bird recorder Colin Richardson.

A panel session was held on the second day of the conference which featured senior representatives from many of the major oil companies operating in the region, who discussed ways in which their companies

## DELEGATES' VIEWS



**LEFT: Dr Abdullatif Youssef, Director of the Marine Research Institute, Tishreen University, Syria,** said, "I was pleased to have been given the chance to meet people from so many different Middle East countries and to examine ways in which we could all co-operate to minimise pollution in our coastal areas which are so vulnerable to oil pollution. I would like to see more co-operation between oil companies and research institutes, and I am very pleased that Shell has taken this initiative..."

**RIGHT: Salem Ghandourah, Marine Safety Superintendent with the United Arab Shipping Company in Kuwait,** said, "It was a good opportunity to discuss common issues. I was the Kuwaiti representative for the International Maritime Organisation [IMO] and would like to see the IMO playing a more positive role in the region. I would also like to have seen more senior participants from regional governments at the conference, and I hope that will be the case at ECO-ARABIA 2000..."



**LEFT: Mamdouh Khayat, General Manager, Lubricants, TIJAN Petroleum Company Ltd, KSA,** said, "I am very much looking forward to ECO-ARABIA 2000 and to continuing and developing the debate. I found the address on bioremediation by Dr Nabil Fayad, of King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in Saudi Arabia, particularly interesting, and a demonstration of how we can do something very positive for the future..."



**RIGHT: Asma Zaidi, a Teacher in Dubai,** said, "It was the first time that I have attended an international conference on the environment, and I thought that the information that was made available was fantastic. It was certainly not the sort of information that you could find easily in magazines and books. I think it has been a very worthwhile two days..."



## ECO-ARABIA '99

← could work together in partnership to protect the region's seas and shorelines.

Following the panel discussion, addresses were made on the second day of the conference by senior executives from: Det Norske Veritas; Oceans Fisheries and Oceans Canada - Government of Canada; The Regional Organisation for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA); and the Meteorology and Environmental Protection Administration (MEPA), KSA.

The morning session ended with an address from Dr Nabil Fayad, of King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, KSA, who talked about the recent developments in the treatment of marine pollution.

Coastal mapping was then the focus of the afternoon, with representatives from Oil Spill Response Ltd, UK, and Maps Geosystems, UAE, taking the stand.

In summing up the many clear recommendations made by the speakers - and by delegates - during the conference, it was stated that the region's oil companies should take environmental initiatives and not wait until there is an environmental problem. It was agreed that an informal committee should be set up in the GCC countries to follow up on the recommendations generated at the conference.

The recommendations also included more national legislation to be drafted in compliance with already existing international regulations and stringent enforcement of such regulations. The setting up of a port State control system to eliminate sub-standard shipping. The reinforcement of co-operation between neighbouring states as oil spills know no boundaries, and more transparency from oil operating companies in their registering of hazardous wastes and discharges - with public access to this data.

It was also agreed that companies should consider going through ISO 14001 certification in order to show the public that their environmental standards meet the highest international expectations. Furthermore, there was a call for

GCC countries to adopt Western European legislation on the reduction of emissions of poly-aromatic hydrocarbons.



**David Weston, Chief Executive of Shell Companies in Dubai:** "Shell cannot set itself up as a latter-day crusader, imposing its view of the world... but Shell can encourage the debate... and act on the lessons that we learn."

In his closing comments at ECO-ARABIA '99, David Weston said, "We have heard from a tremendous variety of experienced and committed experts... and the question on all our minds is: 'where do we go from here?'"

"I cannot speak for all the interests represented here today. Neither can Shell set itself up as a latter-day crusader, imposing its view of the world. Indeed, we feel that we have much to learn, and recognise that some of the world's best practices in the environmental field are to be found here in the Middle East.

"What we can do is encourage the debate and act on the lessons that we learn. We will support an ECO-ARABIA 2000... and we will increase our transparency, recognising that it is deeds, not words, which will earn the trust of the public..."

## DELEGATES' VIEWS

**Nasser Al Mughairbi, Operations Superintendent at Abu Dhabi Gas Industries' BAB Field,** said, "I thought it was an excellent forum for oil and gas companies to meet with Non Government Organisations and other environmental groups to exchange ideas. Oil and gas companies in the UAE are very proactive in preserving the environment and eco-system, and it was clear that the public doesn't know what we are doing and we all need to get our messages across..."



**Adulwahab Dakkak, Director General of the Environment at the Meteorology and Environmental Protection Administration (MEPA), KSA,** said, "The conference covered a wide range of subjects and emphasised the lack of information and communications that exists amongst all those of us who are involved in the protection of the environment in this region..."



**Sally Murray, Freelance Film-maker and Photographer, UK,** said, "It was interesting to hear how both national and international oil companies in the region are so involved in the protection of the environment. The address made by Richard Carson from the Government of Canada showed that Governments can make a real impact. I also found Colonel Al-Busaidi of the Pollution Control Operations Centre in Oman interesting. Oman has taken a serious look at the the real issues and is trying to implement very effective legislation..."



**Major Mohammad Al-Saeedi, Head of Environment Protection with the UAE Coastguard,** said, "I would like to have seen more Government officials at the event from all over the region who are actively involved in the protection of the environment - for example, from port authorities and municipalities and those at real decision-making levels..."

