

Heroes of UAE on Energy Saving Mission

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ABU DHABI — “UAE is almost the largest consumer of energy per person in the world — seven times the global average”, says Tarek, the MegaWatt Boy.

“If you leave your computer or TV on standby overnight, it uses as much electricity as it does when it’s switched on. Just turn it off”, warns Mariam, the Electra Efficient girl.

They were both joined by several other schoolchildren, who opened the Energy Sustainability Campaign yesterday, an environmental awareness programme, done jointly by Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) and Emirates Wildlife Society (EWS).

With plenty of tips on how to save money and reduce ecological footprint, the children delivered an emotional – and theatrical – message to the UAE residents.

Titled “Heroes of the UAE”, this first phase of the two-year long campaign targets the general public of Abu Dhabi emirate, later on being extended to the entire country and including businesses, industry and government offices.

The main tool of the campaign is the easy-to-navigate web site, www.herosoftheuae.ae, featuring information on energy saving, whereby any individual can make a pledge to reduce energy consumption.

A carbon calculator is provided to show the energy and financial savings through measures such as turning up the air conditioning by a few degrees, using energy saving light bulbs and turning off household appliances.

Specifically developed for UAE households, the calculator demonstrates that such savings could reduce the annual bills for the average two-bedroom apartment by up to Dh2,200.

“No matter where we are from, we can all be heroes of the UAE — taking action against climate change in our everyday lives is important, as it will affect countries all over the world. Today I am pledging to reduce my energy consumption, and hope that everyone living in this country will also do their bit to protect the planet,” said Mohammed Al Bowardi, managing director of EAD and chairman of EWS.

In the past 10 years, Abu Dhabi’s electricity demand has surged from 1766 MW (megawatt) to 4320 MW, making the country one of the largest energy consumer in the world. With many old, inefficient appliances and poor building insulation, air conditioners specially are considered the largest portion of average household energy consumers.

“In 2008, our annual Environmental Awareness and Behaviour Survey, showed that although our society is aware of energy conservation, it rarely and inconsistently takes action,” said Majid Al Mansouri, secretary general of EAD.

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