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Will the UAE Make the Switch?

THELife

The UAE tops the list of the world's most wasteful countries, but new initiatives promise to bring about a change.

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The UAE is the worst country in the world for its per capita environmental footprint, says a recent report produced by the World Wide Fund for Nature along with the Global Footprint Network and the Zoological Society of London.

According to recent reports, the total electricity demand in the UAE is expected to rise from approximately 15,000 megawatts to 42,000 megawatts by 2020.

The government says it is taking up several green initiatives to improve the ecological condition in the country; Abu Dhabi has launched Masdar, what it claims is the world's first carbon-neutral city; and both Abu Dhabi and Dubai are preparing green building codes that are expected to start being implemented next year and better recycling facilities.

Meanwhile, a local company in the region, Ecobolity, has launched an initiative called 'Make the Switch', through which it aims to sell one million energy efficient light bulbs called 'illume' in the UAE. These bulbs reportedly consume less than a quarter of the power compared to incandescent bulbs and also last 10 times longer than standard bulbs. They also cost five times the price of an ordinary bulb.

Here are some of the other interesting statistics the company has provided Kipp—

If one million energy efficient bulbs were used in the UAE:

- The country will save over 100 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year;
- The UAE will save about AED20 million in electricity costs every year;
- Over 60,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions will be prevented, which is be equivalent to taking approximately 12,000 cars off the road.

While the idea sounds beneficial, convincing families to spend five times more on a bulb will be difficult. The challenge will be to market the product and influence not only families, but also companies (who are cutting down costs), to make the switch. But the company's already thought of that: Nakheel has subsidized the cost of the bulbs, which means they only cost a fraction of the price. You can find them at Emarat gas stations throughout the UAE.

The only problem now is convincing families to care about the environment...the UAE population is a tough crowd. Good luck. — AN

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