

KFUPM hosts inaugural sustainability conference featuring climate change experts from across the globe who say the scientific community will transform the climate crisis.

The King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals organized its first-ever sustainability conference, “The Green Sustainable Future in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (GiKS)” on Tuesday, January 30. The two-day conference attracted over 700 participants, including 40 university teams from across Saudi Arabia, poster presentations, and 23 globally-recognized keynote speakers in the field of climate change.



As part of KFUPM’s transformation, reflecting the nation’s Vision 2030 goals, GiKS opened with a message that it is science that will save humanity.

“We are plotting together a journey for the future in a manner that ensures economic responsibility,” says KFUPM president Dr. Muhammad Al-Saggaf. “Our contribution to Vision 2030 is that we are going to be guardians of sustainability inside and outside of the Kingdom.”

The conference represents a culmination of many significant transformations at the university in recent years, says Dr. Saggaf. This includes the introduction of artificial intelligence programming ahead of most academic institutions; offering nearly 100 new academic programs – many that focus on future-oriented subjects, such as climate change and adaptation; welcoming international students from 66 countries; and, within 3 years of opening campus to female students, becoming the only university worldwide boasting 50 per cent female engineering program intake.

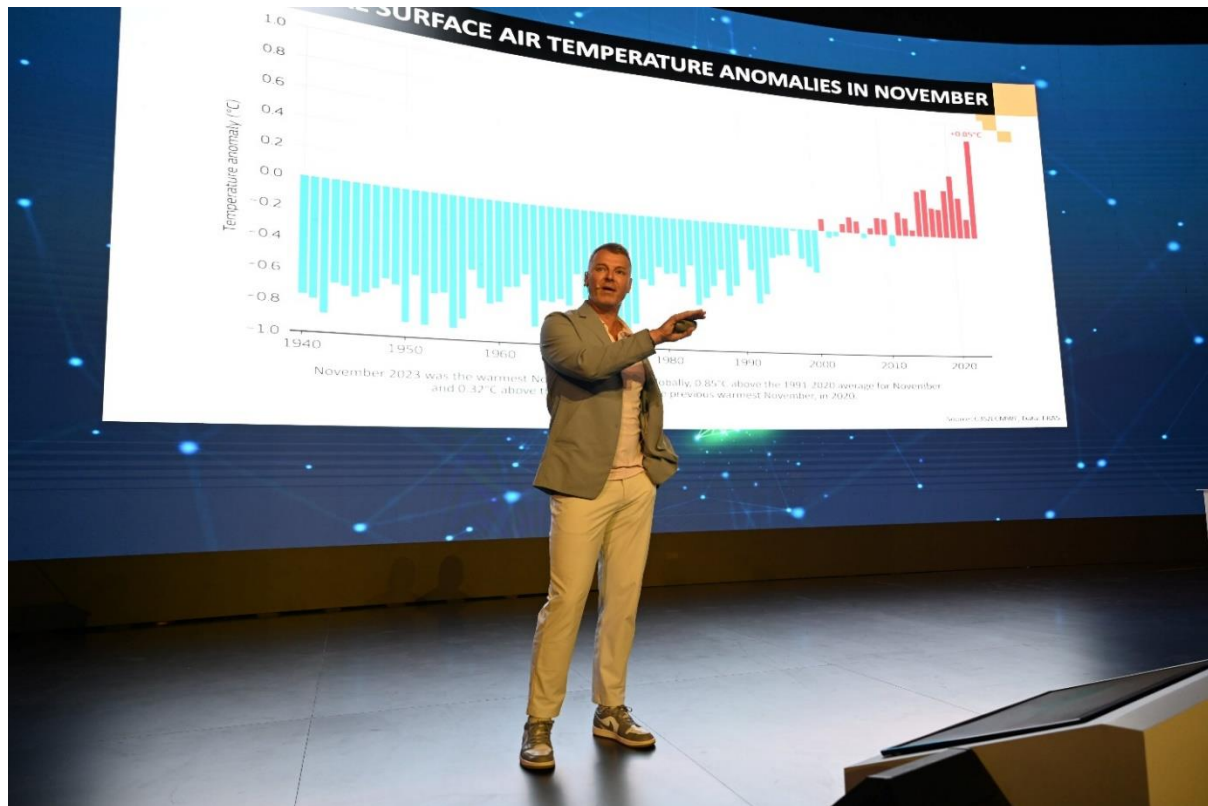
In line with Vision 2030, the conference is exploring energy transformations, new ways to protect and preserve natural environments, creating sustainable



and livable cities, smart city innovations, to name a few. It was noted that 50 – 60 per cent of the scientific innovations needed to meet the 2050 net zero carbon emissions goal are yet to be invented. Gatherings such as GiKS brings together the scientific community to bring the world these future innovations.

The event was hosted by KFUPM’s Applied Research Center for Environment and Marine Studies. The conference’s goal is to bring experienced speakers from around the world to offer insight based on current research on climate-related activities and raise awareness of the value of sustainability practices and the potential return-on-investment in research and innovation.

GiKS is the first step in increasing global cooperation between Saudi Arabia and climate change experts. “We are creating a greener future,” says Dr. Al-Saggaf. “It is not enough that research be published, research must make an improvement to the human condition. We are researching for humanity with humanity.”





The conference promotes cooperation, exchanges ground-breaking concepts, and highlights creative solutions that will help the Kingdom have a greener, more sustainable future.

Keynote speakers included Professor Benjamin Horton, Director of the Earth Observatory of Singapore. He is a professor in Earth Science at the Asian School of the Environment, Nanyang Technological University. Dr. Horton shared his experience last year when visiting Antarctica and his shock over how rising global temperatures had vastly changed the landscape from his visit 25 years earlier.

Dr. Horton noted that since the world has acknowledged the threat of global warming, both governments and people have not made the necessary changes to mitigate the climate crisis.

“We have to rely on the scientific community to make innovative solutions because we can’t rely on government and we can’t rely on people.”

Additional speakers included the Director for Environmental Technologies at the National Center for Environmental Compliance, KSA, Eng. Adnan Abdulrahman Alalyani; Vice President of Wildlife and Natural Heritage at the Royal Commission for AlUla, Dr. Stephen Browne; Professor Rabi H. Mohtar, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, Texas A&M University; Professor Arild Folkvord, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Bergen, Norway; Dr. Roxy Mathew Koll, Climate Scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology; Dr. Fayza Al-Yamani, Executive Director of Environment and Life Sciences Research Center, Kuwait; Professor Burton Jones, Red Sea Research Center, KAUST; Professor Edison Roi D. Macusi, Davao Oriental University, Philippines.

The conference was divided into four themes: Strategies for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in GCC; Stewardship of Semi-arid Terrestrial Ecosystems; Ecosystem-based Management of Marine Resources; Smart Technologies in Environmental Monitoring. The conference goals are to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration; research and technology



Advancements; International Collaboration; and youth engagement and education.

For more information: [GIKS](#)