

UAE sets up World Happiness Council

Mohammad Bin Rashid launches World Happiness Council

Dubai: The World Happiness Council launched by the UAE yesterday will receive an administrative support from the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and will convene twice every year.

The first meeting will be held during the Global Dialogue for Happiness as part of the World Government Summit while the second will be held during the meetings of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The council was announced yesterday by His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to mark the International Day of Happiness, which falls on March 20 every year.

The council will have the responsibility of launching a yearly Global Happiness Report during the World Government Summit, to shed light on the best international practices being applied in the adoption of happiness and to celebrate the top government achievements made in this field. The council will be chaired by Jeffrey D. Sachs, Professor of Sustainable Development and Professor of Health Policy and Management at Columbia University.

The launch of the council, Shaikh Mohammad added, emanates from our values and recognition of the necessity of achieving happiness for people. "Our country has been founded based on pillars of happiness, charity, development, and positive openness to other cultures and peoples and we have succeeded in making happiness and positivity a lifestyle and a social culture. We want to join the international community in its sustained efforts to make the world a better place", Shaikh Mohammad underlined.

The council will include 12 members namely Irina Bokova, Director-General of Unesco, Alexander Stubb, Finnish ex-prime minister, Professor Lord Layard, Director of the Wellbeing Programme at the LSE's Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics, Prof John Helliwell, Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of British Columbia, Edward Diener, professor of psychology at the Universities of Utah and Virginia and senior scientist with the Gallup Organisation, Prof Martin Seligman, Director of the Penn Positive Psychology Centre, Zellerbach Family Professor of Psychology in the Penn Department of Psychology, and Director of the Penn Master of Applied Positive Psychology programme (MAPP), Dr Aisha Bin Bishr, Director General of the Smart Dubai Office, Ahmad Al Shugairi, prominent media figure, Sonja Lyubomirsky, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Riverside and author of the famous book "How of Happiness", Shawn Achor, leading expert in the Science of Happiness and Author of The Happiness Advantage, Martine Durand, Director of Statistics and Chief Statistician at the OECD and Jan-Emmanuel De Neve Associate Professor of Economics and Strategy at Saïd Business School, University of Oxford .

Six sub-councils will fall under the umbrella of the council:

- 1.The Council of Happiness and Health, to be chaired by Professor Lord Richard Layard
- 2.The Council of Happiness and Education, to be chaired Professor Dr Martin Seligman
- 3.The Council of Personal Happiness, to be chaired by Professor Edward Diener
- 4.The Council of Happiness in Work Environment, to be chaired by Professor Jan-Emmanuel De Neve

5.The Council of Happiness Measurement, to be chaired by Martine Durand

6.The Council of Happy cities, to be chaired by Dr. Aisha Bin Bishr