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## Burj Khalifa is an outstanding example of sustainable architecture

Expert says it is a fully integrated building that is a destination

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Shaikh Maktoum Bin Mohammad discusses with Mona Al Merri, chief executive officer of Brand Dubai, during the forum. Image Credit: Oliver Clarke/Gulf News

Dubai: The Burj Khalifa is a good example of a sustainable high rise, according to Walter Berukoff, chairman of Red Lion Management, a Canadian private holding company.

Berukoff made the statement at a discussion of architecture for sustainable societies at the Dubai Forum, which was held on Tuesday.

Leading architects, media critics, architectural historians and developers from 15 countries gathered for the day-long conference.

"It is a fully integrated building that is a destination, not just a home," Berukoff said. "High rise buildings are very efficient but it really depends on the quality of life inside.

"If you're going to build an apartment building you have to have the ability to provide something that people want to live, work and play in. The inside climate should be

welcoming, so the resident feels like they are part of that space."

The event was held under the patronage of Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. Shaikh Maktoum Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, paid a visit to the event for the official opening.

Watch a video of the Burj Khalifa opening ceremony

Organisers and participants emphasised the UAE's ability to create sustainable communities.

"Sustainability is the key to a better future," said Dr Ayeb A. Kamali, vice-chancellor of Higher Colleges of Technology.

"We need to learn more about diversities in the architectural sector and discover ways in which industry professionals can implement [these] learnings," he added.

### **Deeper meaning**

"Sustainable architecture means creating designs that become buildings and objects whose values will also have meaning in the future," explained Sasha Ivanovich, director of Singapore Institute of Architects.

When speaking of the reason behind the popularity of high-rise buildings in the UAE and around the world, Ivanovich said that there's true value in tall buildings because they take up less space and therefore would be more environmentally sustainable.

"If you've got many people in a [tall] building you will probably have one system to maintain it and that's all good," he said.

Ivanovich also pointed out that tall buildings have become more popular as developers seek higher returns per building and look to entice their tenants with better views and high-rise exclusivity. In many cases tall buildings represent a better status, he said.

"If I build a tall building, I have a better status than if I build short building and people do it for that reason as well."

A sustainable building has to be justified econ-omically, said Dr Sabah Al Rayes, the founder and managing partner of Pan Arab Consulting Engineers (Pace).

### **'Positives'**

"I definitely think a lot of buildings built in a boom will not last and there are positive things we could learn from the downturn," Al Rayes said.

According to Al Rayes, only 5-10 per cent of buildings standing in the region are worth keeping, while many are not even fit enough to be on the ground.

Another hot topic that was raised was the speed at which tall buildings were being constructed.

"Because of the speed and lack of coordination, quality is sometimes lost," said Dr. Nadim Karam, a Lebanese architect. "However, Burj Khalifa showed the professionalism and quality Dubai has been capable of."