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WGS 2018: Opening Session Highlights Importance of Embracing Smart Living to Enhance Quality of Life

Tuesday, February 13, 2018/ Editor -

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Heads of du and the Foundation for Futuristic Cities outline opportunities and challenges of living in an increasingly digital age

Dubai-UAE: 13 February, 2018 – At one of the opening sessions of the second day of World Government Summit 2018 (WGS 2018), experts outlined how technology in the digital era can enhance quality of life, if effectively managed. Chief Executive Officer of du, a leading UAE telecoms company, Osman Sultan took to the stage with Karuna Gopal, founder and President of Indian think tank the Foundation for Futuristic Cities, debating the opportunities and challenges associated with an ever-increasing digital world.

The session, entitled 'Technology and The Future of Smart Living', focused on how advancements in technology have created a double-edged sword. While connectivity brings significant benefits, the speakers asserted how governments must continue to talk to each other and collaborate to collectively enhance digitalization and smart living for its citizens.

Osman Sultan said: "In today's digital environment, nations need to talk to each other as technology issues become increasingly generalized in a hyper-connected global world. We need to ask the right questions and seek to find the right answers in a world full of uncertainty. If governments and the private sector properly embrace this uncertainty through dialogue and collaboration, we can turn it into digital opportunities for all through smart technologies and ultimately enhanced quality of living."

Karuna Gopal said: "Smart living started more than a decade ago and things have advanced at a tremendous level in recent times. Today, what is needed is extreme collaboration, even more than just protocols achieved through memorandums of understanding. To maximize future opportunities that have been introduced through smart technologies, we need to ensure governments collectively engage in dialogue and focus on collaboration to achieve results."

Gopal was a member of the speaker delegation representing the Union Ministry of Urban Development at COP21-United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Paris 2015. In the past, she has served as an Urban Expert for the World Bank, DFID (Department for International Development, UK), USAID (United States Agency for International Development), BMGF (Bill and

Melinda Gates Foundation) & ADB (Asian Development Bank). She was one of the urban experts engaged by ADB to carry out a mid-course evaluation of the National Mission Program 'SWACHH BHARAT ABHIYAN'.

Osman Sultan is a veteran of the telecom sector and one of its most well-recognised and influential leaders. He is credited with leading du as its CEO- one of the region's most vibrant success stories, with his vision of creating a telecommunications company that would transform the UAE's telecom sector, while adhering to its values and delivering on its promise. Under his dynamic leadership, du has grown exponentially to become the Middle East's fastest growing telecom company with a market share of nearly 50% in mobile subscribers in less than five years and reaching profitability in just two years of its operations.

Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the World Government Summit 2018 runs from February 11 to 13 at the Madinat Jumeirah in Dubai. The landmark event convenes more than 4,000 participants from 140 countries, including heads of state and governments, as well as top-tier representatives of 16 international organizations.

Hosting more than 130 speakers across 120 interactive sessions, WGS 2018 features six distinct forums that examine the challenges of vital sectors for the future with a view to finding the best resolutions for the greater global good. Furthermore, over 20 specialized global reports spanning key sectors and topics of the summit are being launched during the event.

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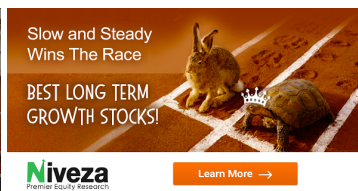
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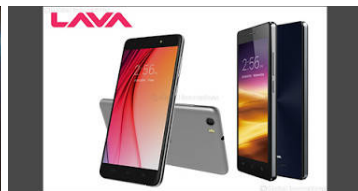
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