

# Dubai is 'epicentre for tall buildings'

DUBAI **Adrian Murphy**

The world's leading expert on skyscrapers said yesterday Dubai was the planet's epicentre for tall buildings.

Antony Wood, director of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH), which sets the criteria for tall buildings, said Burj Dubai, set to become the world's tallest building when completed, and Dubai's commitment to become a sustainable city was a match made in heaven.

"There are two epicentres in the world in regard to tall buildings - China and the Middle East and Dubai in particular," he said. "We are focusing on sustainability and this is something Dubai is hoping to achieve." Wood said he was staggered by the proportions of Burj Dubai, which now stands at more than 560m.

"I know this project well and I have never experienced anything like this. The slenderness of the structure makes it look like a needle," he said.

"We have visited Shanghai where the world's second

tallest building, the Shanghai World Financial Centre (492m), is almost completed. But this pales into insignificance when compared with the height of the Burj Dubai."

He is in the UAE to drum up support for the organisation's eighth World Congress to be held in Dubai in March.

Keynote speakers confirmed include Adrian Smith, chief designer of Burj Dubai, 'starchitect' Rem Koolhaas, and Richard Daly, the mayor of Chicago, a city said to have been implementing sustainability for the past 20 years.

"This is gearing up to be a massive event and we have already had 300 requests from international parties and we now want to generate local interest," Wood said. "The fact that the mayor of Chicago is going to speak is a big deal and we want a political figure from Dubai to equal this."

This is the first time Dubai will hold the organisation's world conference, which takes place every four to five years, and is a huge compliment to the city's architectural prowess.



SECOND TO NONE Shanghai World Financial Centre pales into insignificance when compared with Burj Dubai AFP