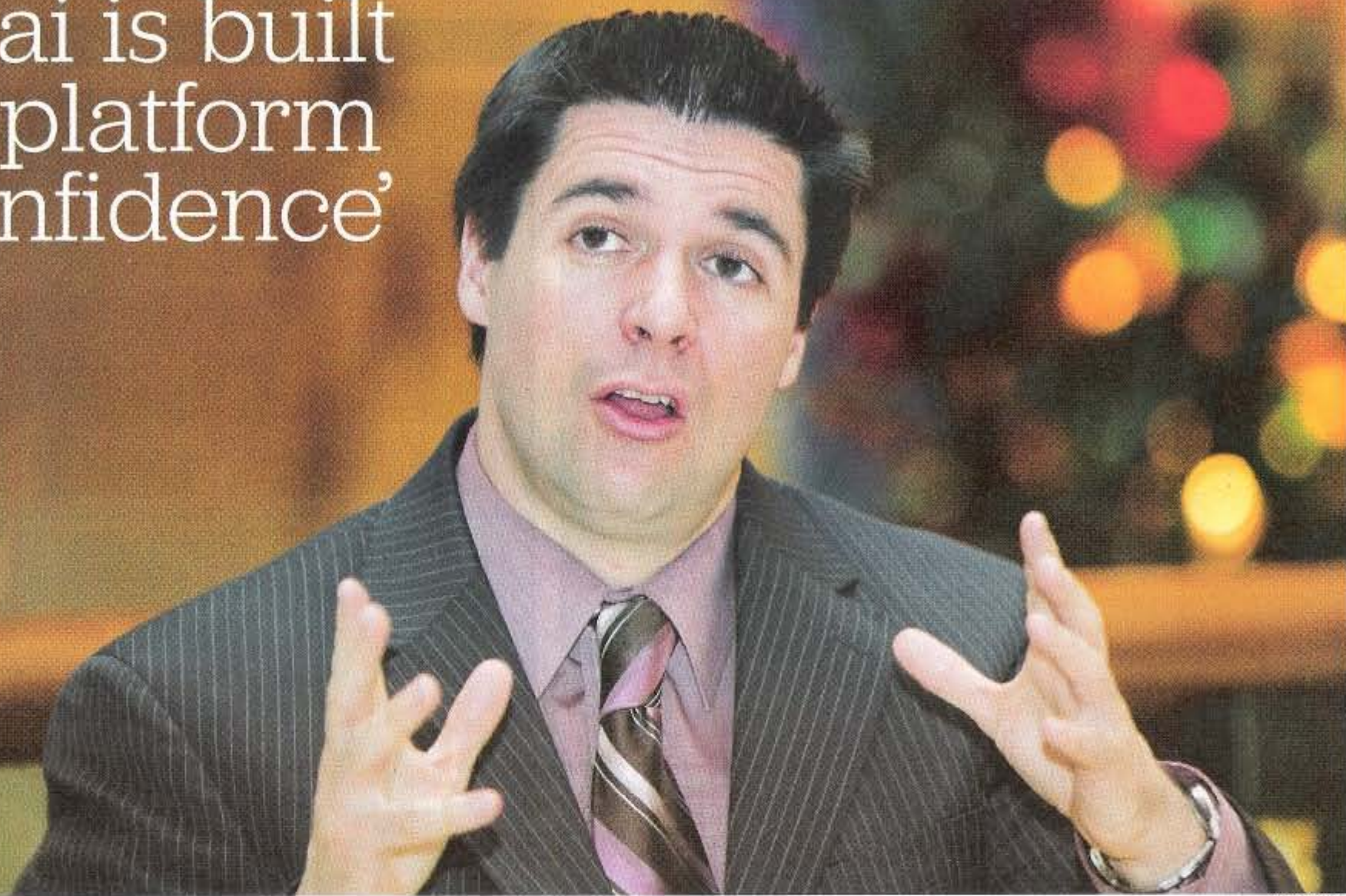


‘Dubai is built on a platform of confidence’



MUSTAFA KASIM

Dubai must seize the chance to become an example to the rest of the planet. **Tall buildings could be the answer... you have the chance to build urban cities in the sky.** There is every indication people will take Sheikh Mohammed's green ethos seriously. **World experts will be in the emirate**

**W**ood is passionate about tall buildings. Next year's congress is titled **Tall and Green: Typology for a Sustainable Urban Future** and we ask him whether Dubai's future will be a green one.

—Do you think Dubai has what it takes to create more green buildings and be a beacon for sustainability?  
 —Dubai has the correct philosophy and must seize the chance to become an example to the rest of the planet when it comes to green tall buildings. It has the nerve to do this. It has always provided — where other people talk about it, Dubai does it. There needs to be new superlatives, such as ‘the world's most sustainable building or development’, ‘the largest application of wind turbines or use of solar panels in a building’ and the best energy-saving in a tall building’.  
 —The UAE is currently one of the world's largest contributors to global emissions and Dubai has been criticised widely for using more energy to run its buildings than other countries. Is this fair?  
 —There are many people who want to

knock Dubai for its building boom. However, if you look at tall buildings across the world, I would say 90 per cent are not sustainable so you cannot just point the finger at Dubai. But I am very positive about plans by High Highness Sheikh Mohammed [bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai] and there is every indication that people will take his green ethos seriously. That's why I think there is an excellent opportunity here to be at the forefront of green tall buildings.  
 —Dubai is building at a phenomenal rate, but will all these buildings be occupied and sold?  
 —Dubai is in a unique situation. You cannot equate it to what is happening in cities such as Mumbai and Shanghai. They have the urban need through the rapid urban population boom from rural to city life. That's not happening to Dubai. A lot of detractors say it's unsustainable because there is not that urban need but these people would not be building if they did not see the demand.  
 —What do you think about Dubai's progress in term of its growth considering its first tall building, the World Trade Centre, was built in 1979?  
 —Dubai is built on a platform of confidence and ‘do-able’ projects — the Ruler of Dubai analysed the situation

**Antony Wood**  
*Executive Director,  
 Council for Tall  
 Buildings and Urban  
 Habitat*

Wood works for the organisation that sets the global criteria for skyscrapers. The 37-year-old Briton's field of speciality is the design, and in particular the sustainable design, of tall buildings. Based at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), in the United States, he is also a teaching faculty member in the College of Architecture there. Prior to becoming an academic at the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom, in 2001, and IIT in 2006, Wood worked in architectural practices in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta.  
 Wood recently visited Dubai to drum up support for CTBUH's 8th World Congress to take place in the emirate from March 3 to 5, 2008.

years ago and found the future was not going to be oil but in attracting businesses and tourists to Dubai. At this moment in time you have to conclude that this was the right thing to do.  
 —You recently said that Dubai was an epicentre for tall buildings. Is having so many skyscrapers in one city the answer to sustainability or the problem?  
 —Tall buildings could be the answer for two reasons. Firstly, because with most tall buildings there is a lot of investment put into them so this could be used to make them more energy efficient and incorporate sustainable technologies. Secondly, on an urban level it's good as you are using less land and have the chance in the future to build urban cities in the sky, with schools, offices and medical centres.  
 —What will the CTBUH's congress offer to those attending it and what will its aims be?  
 —We will bring the world's experts to Dubai who will talk on the latest in sustainability for tall buildings. There are two ways Dubai can respond to this. The first is to take it as an information exchange and the second, which I think will be the case, is that it will be the catalyst for Dubai to lead the way. What we want to encourage is a sharing of knowledge and also a system where places monitor their progress over periods of at least five years.  
 —What do you think of Burj Dubai?  
 —Burj Dubai is simply staggering and will be one of the congress tours. It is such an elegant building and is something I have never experienced before.