



POLITECNICO
DI TORINO



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI TORINO

PRESS RELEASE

POLITECNICO DI TORINO AND UNIVERSITÀ DI TORINO CONFER THE HONORARY PHD DEGREE ON SHARJAH SHEIKH DR. SULTAN BIN MUHAMMAD AL QASIMI

His Highness has been conferred the Honorary Degree in Urban and Regional Development for his proactive role in the urban development of Sharjah City of the Emirate of Sharjah, through the promotion of the integration of sustainable architectures and technologies in a context respectful of local cultural traditions.

Turin, May 3 2019 – the Emirate of Sharjah – as the third largest Emirate of the United Arab Emirates - is characterised by a deep religious tolerance and artistic and cultural identity which led to Sharjah being declared by UNESCO as the “Capital of Arab Culture 1998”; “Capital of Islamic Culture 2014” by Organisation of Islamic Cooperation; and more recently as “UNESCO’s World Book Capital 2019”.

In last 50 years the emirate of Sharjah has been experiencing an extraordinary urban, artistic, economic and social development. With more than one million inhabitants, it hosts several museums, libraries and art foundations of great value, prestigious buildings with distinctive architectural characteristics and famous universities such as the University of Sharjah, the American University of Sharjah and Al Qasimia University. Since its establishment in 2006, the Sharjah Urban Planning Council has been orienting the policies on the urban and regional developments focussing the attention on environmental safeguard, as well as on the balance between cultural diversity and Islamic tradition.

For his proactive role in the urban development of Sharjah City of the Emirate of Sharjah, through the promotion of the integration of sustainable architectures and technologies in a context respectful of local cultural traditions, **Politecnico di Torino** and **Università degli Studi di Torino** has conferred on **His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi** the joint Honorary PhD Degree in *Urban and Regional Development*.

As member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Sharjah since 1972, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Al Qasimi is involved in the dissemination of culture and the strengthening of the role for the universities in the Arab World. He is also a scholar: he graduated in Agricultural Engineering at Cairo University in 1971 and obtained two PhD degrees (in 1985 in History at the Exeter University, UK and in 1999 in Political geography, at the Durham University, UK).

He is the author of 34 books/works, published in several languages between 1986 and 2017, on the historical evolution and the geographical characterization of the Middle East, as well as on the urban and territorial development policies in the Arab Emirates. During his career, he received 19 Honoris Causa PhDs from both Arab and Western universities and held numerous academic and political positions, as the Coordinator of the PhD programme in *Urban and Regional Development* Professor **Umberto Janin Rivolin** recalled in his *Laudatio* and as the Director of the Doctorate School of Politecnico di Torino, Professor **Eugenio Brusa** stressed while expressing the reasons for the conferment of Honorary Degree.

"Our University", commented Guido Saracco, Rector of Politecnico di Torino, "has internationally recognized expertise on urban development subjects; in particular, the Persian Gulf and the Emirates areas constitute an interesting "laboratory" for the most advanced technologies and ways to build and inhabit the cities of the future. Therefore, we express our sincere admiration towards Sheikh Dr. Sultan al Qasimi's farsighted vision and we are certain that this renewed partnership with the Emirate of Sharjah will bring new cooperation opportunities for Politecnico di Torino in that area.