مجلس الغرف السعودية
Council of Saudi Chambers

SAUDI BRITISH
JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL

SBJBC BIANNUAL MEETING, 8 JULY 2020: INFORMAL SUMMARY

Welcome by Baroness Symons and Dr Emad El-Dukair, SBJBC Co-Chairs

- Welcome all 90 members and guests to SBJBC's first virtual biannual meeting
- COVID-19 makes it all the more important for UK and Saudi to maximise cooperation
- Need for SBJBC and the Private Sector Groups to agree actionable deliverables including investment roundtable, fintech mission, Saudi/UK Tech Hub and education/healthcare

Tariq Alhaidary, Deputy Chairman, Council of Saudi Chambers

- UK/Saudi partnership has grown stronger in strategic sectors including: manufacturing / tourism / education / finance / technology. SBJBC is playing a positive role

Lord Gerry Grimstone, Minister for Investment at Department for International Trade and Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

- Saudi Arabia is a central pivot of the global economy and a regional 'engine of growth'
- Unprecedented times for global fiscal policy. Contraction of global trade and FDI
- The UK and Saudi must work together to kickstart the global economy and reactivate trade and investment. G20 led by Saudi Arabia is playing a constructive role
- Both UK/Saudi are close partners and resilient countries which are open for business
- UK is a global champion of free trade and determined to reform and strengthen WTO
- UK putting in place a network of Foreign Trade Agreements post-Brexit
- GCC accounts for £45bil of UK trade and is a vital partner. UK/Saudi trade was £12bil in 2019
- The investor must be brought into the heart of policymaking to understand their needs. UK launching joint study with GCC on investment barriers and would welcome business views
- Opportunity to enhance G2G2B dialogue and reactivate cooperation frameworks through SBJBC and the Private Sector Groups
- Public Investment Fund has invested over $10 bil in UK since 2016. LSEG cooperating with Tadawul
- Appreciate SBJBC role in developing renewable energy/fintech/venture capital partnerships
- Look forward to attending Future Investment Initiative in October and renewing dialogue with Minister Kassabi
- Pressure to do more on climate change opens up global investment opportunities, and huge rewards for those who adapt and commit to building a better / cleaner world

Khaled Tash, Deputy Minister (Marketing & Communication), Ministry of Investment, Saudi Arabia

- Acknowledge deep UK/Saudi relationship
- Invest Saudi increasing business awareness of investment opportunities
- 57% of 400 pro-reform initiatives have been implemented, new sectors opened up and new procurement and visa schemes introduced to facilitate international investment
- Saudi has made significant progress in World Bank's ease of doing business rankings. It was the top reformer in 2019, climbing over 30 places
- Need for a clear understanding of investor challenges to design the right policies
- Committed to private sector growth. MISA provided equal support to local and foreign investors during the pandemic. Hope to welcome back visitors shortly
- The first 3 months of 2020 was the strongest sector for inward investment recorded in Saudi Arabia with 348 licenses issued. Indication of long-term trajectory
- UK among the leading investors with 47 UK new licenses issued in first quarter of 2020, and some 100 in 2019

Dr. Abdulwahab Al-Sadoun, B20 Sherpa and Secretary General of the Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association

- Saudi Arabia is hosting the B20 and G20 Summits in Oct/Nov with some 700 representatives. A global crisis demands a global response
- Specific focus on climate, environment, investment, education and women in business and two cross-cutting themes: SMEs and sustainable development
- Saudi committed to empowering women in leadership. 43% of B20 executive committee members are women, including a number Taskforce Chairs
- B20 has issued a roadmap to jumpstart the economy post-COVID 19. Themes include: health resilience, safeguarding human capital, digitalisation and reform of the WTO

Alderman William Russell, Lord Mayor of the City of London

- Saudi is becoming increasingly international in outlook, and a confident and secure regional leader catalysed by Vision 2030
- Capital markets are stabilising and there was no market breakdown due to COVID-19
- Particular areas for UK/Saudi collaboration include:

1. **FINTECH:** UK is a global fintech hub employing over 76,000 and has a strong and supportive regulatory framework. Fintech generated £6.6 bil revenue in London in 2019. London also a global centre for venture capital
2. **GREEN FINANCE:** importance of climate change. UK has made significant investments in sustainable infrastructure and will be hosting two day 'Green Horizons' event in November on the contribution financial services can make to sustainability

- Investment can be *sustainable* through green finance and *smart* through fintech.
- Opportunity for UK/Saudi Investment Roundtable to share experience and take forward cooperation in these sectors

Rayan Fayez, Managing Director and CEO, Banque Saudi Fransi

- Business support packages in Saudi post COVID-19, included fee waivers and tax holidays. Little disruption and strong and well capitalised bank liquidity maintained
- NCB/SAMBA talks started before crisis and merger will further reinforce stability
- London an undisputed fintech hub and source of innovation and talent, but Saudi also investing heavily in fintech and technology parks
- Increased focus on ESG is needed, not just environmentally but in relation to social governance. Saudi banks keen to do more on this
- Need to bridge the Saudi talent gap in fintech and encourage more partnerships and co-investment with UK

Prof Abdulrahman M. Alsultan, Dean of College of Business Administration at Dar Al Uloom University

- Online university programmes are on the rise. Provides an opportunity for investment and collaboration between the UK and Saudi
- If courses can be delivered online, it will become more difficult for local universities to compete with international universities
- A lot of uncertainty around education post COVID-19 but sector is opening up

Matthew Anderson, Director, TVET UK

- TVET UK pursuing new vocational training opportunities in Saudi
- Opportunity for private sector investment to develop a higher quality of e-learning

Dr Emad El-Dukair, SBJBC Co-chair

- COVID-19 highlights the need to re-look at the way healthcare is being delivered eg in modular design of hospitals for quick adaptation to unforeseen circumstances
- This requires investment: PPPs and government partnerships are needed to help deliver these resources and services

John Davie, Chairman, Altra Capital & SBJBC UK Board Member

- Private finance should be brought into training and capacity building
- A number of projects are underway to deliver primary healthcare to a wider proportion of the Saudi population. NHS and UK advisers helping
- Focus should be on research and development based manufacturing, not just local production of pharmaceutical products
- Opportunities for co-operation between scientists in healthcare and healthcare delivery

Chris Innes-Hopkins, UK Executive Director, SBJBC

- UK / Saudi smart cities visit in March 2020 provided an opportunity for knowledge exchange in key technology sectors. Focus on commercialisation of research and development of a supportive innovation ecosystem
- UK / Saudi Fintech week in June 2020 to be followed by UK fintech mission to Saudi. PIF has already invested $1.8bil into UK fintechs but smaller growth companies need help to connect
- Saudi / UK Tech-hub proposal will provide a common framework to connect entrepreneurs and investors but needs co-funding and support. Detailed project proposal available on request

Jan Ward, SBJBC UK Board Member & CEO Corrotherm International

- *Technology* is present in every sector. This is where the opportunities lie. Need to connect and bridge gaps in Saudi / UK over tech
- Opportunities include: Big data, VR, AI, cyber security and block-chain
- A Tech-hub is the way forward, but finance and resources are required to facilitate this. Hope both governments will support

Hashim Alawadi, CEO Tech Invest Com and Co-Chair Innovation & Technology PSG

- New technologies in energy and water conservation are particularly important to Saudi.
- The Tech-hub proposal is crucial. It does not have to be a physical entity, and could start through virtual linkages
- Again, resources and support are needed to facilitate this

Baroness Symons

- Thanks to Dr Emad El Dukair and all members and guests for their support
- Look forward to further exchanges and hopefully the opportunity to meet in person again in the autumn

SBJBC UK
London, 12 July 2020