SAUDI BRITISH
JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL

Summary of SBJBC Biannual Meeting, Riyadh, 30th November 2016

1. Sheikh Nasser AlMutawa (co-chair) welcomed participants and sent best wishes to Baroness Symons. John Davie (acting co-chair) welcomed the new Saudi SBJBC executive committee.

Vision 2030 and opportunities for SBJBC inputs in key sectors

2. Majid Mneymneh (Pearson) had identified twelve NTP education related initiatives they could partner with, including adult literacy, distance learning, vocational training and women's participation in the workforce.
3. Dr Abdullah Almojel (Global Dimension for Education and Training) referred to the expansion of vocational training through TVTC and the Colleges of Excellence programme. Private education was also opening up and there were good opportunities for higher education partnerships.
4. Sheikh Nasser referred to teething problems with the Colleges of Excellence programme, and suggested that two or three members get together to address these.
5. Hashim Alawadi (deputy co-chair) said funding was now more limited for training abroad. So the emphasis was on continuous education and training the trainers. There were good opportunities in healthcare, particularly with nurse and technical training. He noted a recent visit by Cardiff University to King Saud Medical City to discuss joint training programmes.
6. Roger Cruickshank (Atkins) noted the need for prioritisation of infrastructure projects between Ministries, and opportunities for training and knowledge transfer. It was agreed that we should prepare a submission to Saudi Ministers on the Infrastructure Workshop outcomes.
7. Martin Jacobs (PWC) noted the relevance of professional services to act as a catalyst for economic reform and privatisation.
8. Hashim Alawadi referred to the recent Saudi British Hackathon and the opportunities for ICT to act as an enabler for all sectors. The new SME Authority had a budget of SR 4 billion, some of which would be invested in new technology partnerships. The PIF/SoftBank Techfund to be established in London would also help.
9. Abdulaziz Jazzar (Malaz Capital) said SME development was a priority under Vision 2030, and this should be a good area for Saudi/UK collaboration.
10. Sheikh Nasser referred to the importance of the tourism sector, and the meeting later that day with HRH Prince Sultan Bin Salman, Minister of Tourism and National Heritage.

Prospects for enhanced UK/Saudi trade following Brexit

11. Sheikh Nasser said the Saudi Minister of Commerce was keen for the SBJBC to play a role in identifying opportunities in the context of a possible GCC/UK free trade agreement. This would no doubt be on the agenda of the UK Prime Minister's visit to Bahrain for the GCC Summit, and a Saudi visit by Dr Liam Fox.
12. Abdualziz Jazzar said it was very important for the private sector to play a role particularly since governments could not yet talk formally about a possible FTA until after the UK left the EU.
13. Chris Innes-Hopkins suggested the formation of a small working group of interested members to analyse current trade flows in goods and services, and identify both

opportunities and obstacles. He referred to the recent welcome reversal of the 400% increase in Saudi visa fees for UK business visitors, and the increased duration of Saudi multiple entry visas which would help. We might also coordinate with the UAE/UK Business Council on this.

14. Sheikh Nasser said he would be visiting Abu Dhabi shortly, and would be pleased to compare notes with the UAE/UK Business Council. Chris Innes-Hopkins agreed to facilitate this.
15. Sheikh Nasser said a priority was to encourage larger UK manufacturers not yet present in the market (e.g military aerospace) to consider local manufacture. We might also learn from the recent experience of JLR who had considered an automotive sector investment.

Conclusions of SBJBC's Infrastructure Workshop

16. Chris Innes-Hopkins presented conclusions of the Infrastructure Workshop on 28th November (see separate summary). John Davie said we should set the bar high on this, and volunteers would be needed to help prepare a PPP lessons learned paper, as well as to update a Saudi PPP readiness paper.
17. Hashim Alawadi noted the need for a framework to achieve progress, and the opportunity for a hands-on exercise in the next workshop, which might focus on key stages of PPP project design and implementation.

Plans for a second SBJBC SME Partnership Forum

18. Chris Innes-Hopkins and Hashim Alawadi suggested that this take place in Eastern Province on 21st March 2017 to focus on energy sector technologies, followed by field visits e.g to the Royal Commission in Jubail. We would cooperate with the Asharqia Chamber of Commerce and the British Trade Office in Al Khobar who were planning a Saudi British energy week at the same time.
19. Dr Nasser Bin Kadasah (NSK Consultants) noted the availability of support from the Saudi Industrial Development Fund and opportunities for technology transfer.

Other proposals for joint activity

20. Chris Innes-Hopkins referred to his recent visit to Sheffield and the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre. A Saudi SBJBC visit to Sheffield and the Northern Powerhouse would be very welcome.
21. Ahmed M. Alhatti (Cayan Group) referred to the importance of Saudi investments in the UK. His company has just invested £800 million in a new residential project in Limehouse, and this been facilitated by the recent fall in value of sterling. His company was also keen to work with UK surveyors and consultants.

Closing remarks

22. Abdul-Karim Yaquob suggested that the next biannual meeting in the UK might best take place in late April, following Easter and before Ramadan. It could be combined with a visit to Sheffield or other Northern cities. He also suggested that the next biannual meeting in Riyadh in October/November 2017 could include a high level CEO dialogue meeting for Saudi based UK companies.
23. John Davie thanked Saudi colleagues for their hospitality. We would liaise with Baroness Symons and try to agree 2017 dates as soon as possible.