

Minutes of the OBFA meeting held at SAS residence on Wednesday 8th January 2014 at 4:30 pm.

Present: Maqbool A Sultan -Chairman) OBFA **MAS**
HMA Jamie Bowden **JB**
HE Sh. Abdulaziz Al Hinai (Omani Ambassador to the UK) **Sh. AH**
Sh. Aflah Ar Rawahy (Member on Executive Committee) **Sh. AR**
Saleh Talib Zakwani (Member on Executive Committee) **STZ**
Hamza A Al Asfoor – Member (Attorney) **HA**
Kiren Asher – Member (Al Ansar Trading) **KA**
Qais M M Al Yousef – Member (Al Yousef Intl. Enterprises) **QA**
Yousef Y Al Harthy – Member (Mazoun Establishmen) **YA**
Salem aid S Al Wahaiby – Member (Assarain Group) **SA**
John Blascos – Member (Shell Development) **JB**
Chris Breeze – Member (Shell Development) **CB**
David Graham – Member (Oman Sail) **DG**
Mohammed H G Habib – Member (Al Mustaqbal Group) **MH**
Pankaj Khimji – Member (Khimji Ramdas) **PK**
Khalil Lashko – Member (Oman Industrial Gas Co) **KL**
Nicholas Pattison – Member (Pattison Consultants) **NP**
Hassan Ali J Salman – Member (United Securities) **HAS**
Paul Sheridan – Member (DentonWildeSept) **PS**
Mohammed Ali Sultan – Member (W J Towell) **MS**
Abdulredha M A Sultan – Member (Mustafa Sultan Ent.) **AMS**
Shawqi A Sultan – Secretary General OBFA **SAS**

SAS opened the meeting by welcoming all members and introducing MAS as the new Chairman of OBFA appointed by approval of His Majesty in October. He also thanked Yahya Nasib (YN) the past President, who because of ill health had decided in March to withdraw from the position. SAS then requested MAS to chair the session.

MAS thanked all for attending and then informed the gathering that he had been to see YN to thank him for all he had done for OBFA.

MAS explained that whereas in Oman OBFA is a well structured entity, in the UK it is not and so he decided that amongst his first tasks was to visit London and talk to the various people connected with Oman. He requested SAS to join him and they went from the 17th to the 21st of December. They met the following people:

Alan Duncan: Minister of state for international development. Alan would be happy to suggest names for the chairman from the British side.

Kate Hoey: labour M.P. Chairperson of the Oman committee in the parliament and Lord Balfe, member of the Committee. Kate suggested that an Oman day be organized in the parliament sometimes end June and she could book a room in the parliament building. She had discussed this idea with the Anglo Omani society but had not received any reply. Decision has to be made by mid January.

Richard Muir: Ex chairman of the Anglo Omani society and member on the Board of Trustees.

Richard will speak to Kate about Oman day, which he prefers to be in October.

We discussed the cooperation between OBFA and the Society and have in principle agreed that OBFA could use the society's premises and the secretarial services and both could organize joint functions.

Martin Amison: Chairman of OBFA – UK. He was very keen to retire citing a very busy schedule compounded with lots of travel as reasons. He was also keen to find a replacement for Ron Hollis, the UK Secretary General, who had over the past 3 years not been keeping well and has therefore not attended any of the meetings.

Sir David John, ex CEO of Inchcape, Ex Chairman of BOC Group and Chairman of BSI

Dr. Tim Evans: An economic analyst who agreed to put forward a proposal for OBFA's Business Development for 2014. (Proposal already received)

Michael Boyd: UKTI

Michael will suggest names for the role of the chairman and will also speak to his colleague about the patron. He will call Jamie Bowden after the holidays.

Edward Oakden: head of the Middle-east department foreign office.

Peter O'Kane: chairman D group

D group could arrange lunches for 30 people. The invitees would include top decision makers of some of their member companies and a known speaker. This would cost about £ 6000/.

Mark Kendall: M.D. Charles Kendall.

Robert Alston, who had just returned from Oman after a successful launch of his and Stuart Laing's combined book "Unshook till the end of time".

MAS then said that he had been requested by Sayyed Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Al Busaidi to register OBFA at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. SAS said that OBFA was initially registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and that about 3 years ago MFA took charge of such entities.

MAS also added that membership should be increased and that he would request all members to voice their opinion on their suggestion to new members.

MAS then invited those present to comment.

Sh. AH thanked MAS and also YN for his past contribution. He said that it was important that the two Ambassadors make their support to OBFA visible and both governments should be kept informed of the Association's activities.

PK said that there would always be ambiguity in quantifying what OBFA will achieve. He also felt that regional Chamber of Commerce should get involved.

QA said that first he would like to thank YN for his contribution and suggested that an appropriate farewell gift at a function would be a good idea. MAS concurred and said that he was planning for such a function. QA also suggested that a business plan be prepared. He also felt that there could very well be questions asked by potential new members as to why they should join? More firms should be encouraged to sponsor Omani graduates to work as interns in the UK to gain experience as well as see for themselves the work environment outside Oman. There should also be interactive workshops.

HAS said that in order for OBFA to grow it is important to find finances. The question of subscription will be looked at carefully.

Both JB and DG said that British Businessmen pay a large amount for promotion of their business and almost always pay for their own visits.

Sh. AH said it is important to prepare a budget, though it may be an issue to begin with but not a major one.

NP said that OBFA should map out a relationship with UKTI and various regional Chamber of Commerce in the UK.

MAS said that if OBFA brings the initiatives to the government then he was sure they will participate and pay. The very large companies in Oman should also help.

MAS thanked everyone present and looked forward to a good and amiable working relationship.