

## **Minutes of the Second OBFA Board meeting held at the residence of Shawqi A Sultan on October 12<sup>th</sup> 2014 at 4:30 pm**

### **Present:**

Maqbool A Sultan (MAS) – Chairman  
Shawqi A Sultan (SAS) – Secretary General  
Khalil Khonji (KK) – Member  
Saleh Taleb Zakwani (STZ) – Member  
Chris Breeze (CB) – Member  
Andrew Long (AL) - Member  
Ahmed Al Araimi (AA) - Member  
Pankaj Khimji (PK) - Member  
Nick Pattison (NP) - Member

### *1. Status of Subscriptions*

So far OMR 13,500 has been received from 27 members. Some paid directly into the bank and are temporarily unidentified. Of the original membership, two have resigned giving a total membership of 51.

It was decided to send reminders to those who have not paid asking them to forward their subscriptions by the end of this month.

#### **Actions:**

- a. AL to send details of who have paid into the HSBC OBFA account to SAS.
- b. SAS to write out to all who have not paid their dues.

### *2. Ideas on progressing OBFA*

NP presented a paper on one possible approach to bringing UK businesses into Oman. It involved the identification of global growth industries, providing free zone type incentives and concentrating on capital intensive, export driven industries. These businesses could employ anyone they wished to but would have to spend a proportion of their turn-over on training Omanis and offer employment to those Omanis once trained. Members of OBFA could work with PAIPED and Chambers of Commerce and other bodies in the UK.

There was a long discussion and at the end it was agreed that fast growing global business would need to be identified and that they, as well as Tourism and HRD opportunities should be developed.

#### **A number of specific points were made:**

- i. Oman needs to brand itself more strongly. For example, British Airways should carry a relevant short film to show on its flights. (Board volunteer needed to progress)
- ii. We need to introduce technology into construction. This would make a major impact on the numbers of expats employed in the country which currently increases at the rate of 20,000 - 50,000 for every percentage increase in GDP. OBFA will seek the aid of a UK company to advise. (Board volunteer requested to find a suitable company)
- iii. MAS has discussed with His Excellency Dr. Rumhy about the possibility of involving OBFA in identifying the opportunities for SME's in the context of ICV. OBFA can then progress with UK firms.(MAS to follow up)

- iv. Need to check the availability for offsets in terms of funding some studies which could help setting up JVs between Omani and British SMEs . (NP to follow up)
- v. Talk to discuss role of OBFA vis-à-vis PAIPED.(MAS)
- vi. A summary paper relating to the above, needs to be written and discussed with PAIPED (NP to draft)
- vii. Peter Leech of the Campden Family Business Council will be here next month (MAS to liaise)
- viii. Talk to British Council about how to encourage Education and Training companies to come into Oman
- ix. Paper on trade barriers to be prepared in conjunction with the British Business Group and solutions given before presented to various government bodies.
- x. Form a Venture Capital Fund in order to put seed money in projects and studies – MAS has spoken to both HSBC and BAE Systems.

Could everyone please identify at least one relevant global growth sector which they believe meets the earlier criteria and send their thoughts to MAS and SAS.

### *3. February 2015 Conference*

MAS will find out through Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles when the Lord Mayor of London is coming to Oman and time the February Conference accordingly. Having decided on the sectors/businesses which we believe we could encourage to invest in Oman, we should ask the Lord Mayor whether they could be included in his entourage. (S C-C)

### *4. AOB*

1. Hold a General Assembly of members in November. Only those with paid-up subscriptions may attend.
2. OBFA or PAIPED should attend the World Travel and Tourism exhibition and conference in March at Olympia in London.

There being no other business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 5:45pm.