

**Minutes of the OBFA Board Meeting held at the residence of Maqbool Sultan on  
December 31st 2017 at 4:30 pm**

Present:

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

**AGENDA**

1. OBFA Talks
2. Summer 2018 Programme
3. Next Members' Meeting
4. AOB

**1. OBFA Talks:**

MAS opened the meeting by thanking all those present for coming and said that Pankaj Khimji had called him as had Ahmed Al Aرامي to SAS, both to apologise for their absence as they were out of the country. He said the second talk that took place at Muscat University on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017 was a resounding success and wanted to thank Professor Yusra, the 2 main speakers Maj. Gen. Albert Whitley and Mr. Mark Evans and KK for their support. The attendance at around 75 was good for a Thursday.

The question now is how to follow up? There was a lot of discussion around this, which could be summarized as follows:

Prepare press releases. Though the Week, thanks to STZ, covered the event, however, more is required; perhaps through social media directly by OBFA.

Send invitations to those who left their business cards to become OBFA members.

Communicate more with HE Sayyed Badr bin Hamad at The Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Arrange a meeting with HE Mohammed Al Zubair and HE Khamis Al Jabri

It was suggested that as had happened in the past, OBFA could prepare a paper, with the help of speakers Mark Evans, Maj. Gen. Albert Whitley and also perhaps with the participation of some large British & Local companies on the challenges that face the youth and discuss this with the government. HR Development is one of the biggest problem Oman faces. Whereas Rafad, trains on the academic side, it is Outward Bound and Oman Sail that train the character.

AL suggested that it may be difficult to justify going to British Companies by asking them to invest more than they have done so far as they have been penalized recently by increasing Omanisation thus resulting in increased costs. MAS responded that what we should do is emphasise the quality of training and development of the Omani.

## **2. Summer 2018 Programme:**

MAS suggested a brain storming session with the CEOs of not only the British Companies operating in Oman, but also those who may be thinking of setting up or investing in Oman, to be held sometime late June/early July and to be organized by Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles Chair of OBBG in the UK. In preparation for that it was agreed that HMA Hamish Cowell would be requested by SAS to arrange for the Board to meet the British Ambassador's Business group (BABG).

Before then it was suggested that the next OBFA Talks should be held sometime in March to discuss TOURISM. A Speaker from DIT in the UK could be requested to speak to the attendees on various subjects affecting tourists like Activities that they would like to see and do, the barriers that SMEs are facing in that Industry, the barriers that International companies are facing in Investing in this Industry etc. Perhaps someone like Stuart Ingram a Tourist Expert from OMRAN could be asked to help OBFA Board before the Talk. SAS to request Stuart to attend a meeting.

## **3. Next Members' Meeting:**

Members will be requested to attend the next AGM on Monday January the 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018 at SAS residence at 4:30 pm.

## **4. AOB:**

SAS requested AL for a meeting to discuss some difficulties OBFA was having with HSBC. AL agreed to arrange that.

With no other business the meeting was called to a close at 6:00 pm.