

SUSTAIN AN OPEN AND HONEST DIALOGUE



A call to “sustain an open and honest dialogue” between the young people of the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia was made by the second Saudi-British Youth Forum in January.

The week-long forum took place in Jeddah and Riyadh and brought together 48 young men and women from the UK and Saudi Arabia to discuss the common challenges that young people face in the two countries. They discussed the important role that youth groups play in society and their responsibility to promote understanding and tolerance.

The Forum allowed the two groups of young people to share their hopes, dreams and frustrations. Daniel Smith, who along with Deepak Naik led the UK group, said, “It was really satisfying and encouraging to witness the trust and faith these participants have for each other. This needs to be multiplied into our

community to enhance inter-culture dialogue. The event has opened a window of new ideas. Confronting a different culture in a positive way is what these participants have learned here.”

The Forum also called on the British and Saudi governments to support youth projects as a way to promote intercultural dialogue and youth participation.

The organisers on the Saudi side were led by Omar Bahlaiwa, Secretary-General of the Council of Saudi Chambers. The prominent Saudi columnist Samar Fatany and her husband Khaled Al Maena also played a prominent role in ensuring the success of this initiative.

Almaeena told the visiting British participants “not to believe what they read in newspapers about Saudi Arabia. There is no replacement for human relationships. We aspire to build people-to-people

