



**HH** Prince Abdullah bin Faisal bin Turki, Governor of the Saudi Arabia General Investment Authority (SAGIA) kindly agreed to join members of the RGBB and the British Embassy at a lunch held at the Riyadh Inter-Continental Hotel Golf Club in November.

With the focus on the Middle East both politically and economically at the moment this was a major opportunity for the local British business community to discuss a wide range of current and future issues affecting the Saudi Arabian market.

Prince Abdullah was introduced to the Group by David Hodgkinson, Managing Director of the Saudi British Bank and RGBB Board Member for Internal Relations. The Prince's close relationship with Britain, dating from his school days, was highlighted. Prince Abdullah's presentation on "Developments and Issues relating to Investment in Saudi Arabia" was both entertaining and informative.

After Prince Abdullah's speech Graham Turner, Chairman of the RGBB's Business Development Committee, presented the Prince with a summary of the concerns raised by members through their Special Interest Groups. This focused on the important local issue of Saudiisation and covered Skills and Training, local Labour laws, free Competition and the role of Women in the workplace.

The floor was then opened for a Question and Answer session and the Prince was open and forthright with members on a wide range of subjects.

During the Lunch the Prince agreed to the formation of a regular working group between the General Investment Authority and the RGBB to follow up on the points raised and to assist members in their day to day activities as well as to discuss issues relating to long term Investment in Saudi Arabia. In closing, Paul Dugan, Chairman of the RGBB, expressed the group's thanks to Prince Abdullah for his openness and the positive approach the GIA was taking towards encouraging greater Investment and relations with UK Industry.

Continuing the momentum of that meeting with SAGIA an evening meeting was held on 26th November, again at the Riyadh Inter Continental Hotel.

This meeting was chaired and hosted by His Highness, Prince Abdullah Bin Faisal Bin Turki Al Saud. Senior representatives of the General Manpower Council, Ministry for Labour Affairs and the manpower Development fund attended and gave brief presentations on the roles of their departments to a selected group of representatives from the RGBB/SIGs and the American Businessman's Group as well as delegates from the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce.

Within the format of a question and answer session a lively discussion then followed in which both the long and short-term issues affecting the business community were frankly and openly discussed. Major issues covered included the skills training of Saudis, especially English language, Work disciplines, recruitment, Implementation of regulations, Termination of non-performers, rules governing awarding of government tenders, extension of probation periods and training grants etc.

During the meeting advance notice of some Governmental initiatives were announced including the grant system for training and employing young Saudis, a programme announced officially in early January.

The need for an ongoing dialogue between Government agencies and the business community was considered the main priority by all the participants. With this in mind a series of small working groups were established to cover all the main subjects on a practical day-to-day basis. The relevant Government bodies committed to this and the formation of these groups is now actively being followed up.

The initiatives shown by RGBB Board members Mick Brown and David Hodgkinson and by Prince Abdullah in setting these meeting up are greatly appreciated. Continuing these discussions in a practical way is very much in the interests of all RGBB members and are a good example of the real benefits of the RGBB working as a collective group in tackling issues that face all of us in our day to day work.

Work has now started on setting up a similar forum with the Ministry of Finance.



## COVER STORY RGBB AND SAGIA

Pictures:

Top Left: HH Prince Abdullah bin Faisal bin Turki addresses the Group.

Top Right: Paul Dugan and AFT seem to be enjoying the occasion.

Bottom Left: HMA Sir Derek Plumbly, Graham Turner, Chairman of the BDC and David Hodgkinson, RGBB Executive Board Member chat with AFT following lunch at the

Inter-Continental Golf Club in November

Below: A slightly better view of David than in the main picture!

