

In the last edition of the RGBB newsletter I reflected on the healthy state of play of the bilateral trade relationship.

I am pleased to report that the first half of 2007 saw an unprecedented period of activity by the UKTI network across Saudi Arabia. And, as folks head off for the summer vacation, this is in the full knowledge that we'll be hitting the ground running in September with a busy programme of activity already in the calendar. With undoubtedly more to come...

Highlights from recent months included a visit by HRH the Duke of York in his capacity as the UK's Special Representative for Trade & Investment. He visited Riyadh and Eastern Province, meeting with Ministers and senior Saudi business representatives and promoting UK business interests.



SRAK CEO Patrick Allman Ward (centre) looks on as HRH Duke of York and Andrew Turner, DHM in Riyadh, are given a briefing on the Joint Venture

April saw a first in Eastern Province, when Terry Evans and her team at the British Trade Office organised a "British Week" to coincide with their Queen's Birthday Party.

As well as hosting 5 UK trade delegations, there was a programme of activities that included a conference on the theme of "Business Development through Training Solutions" and a lively "Women in Business" day that attracted over 80 Saudi businesswomen from the Eastern Province. The icing on the cake, if you'll excuse the pun, was a "British Food Week" in conjunction with Le Gulf Meridien where two chefs from the UK provided a taster of the best of British cooking.

The Saudi British Joint Business Council (SBJBC) met in Riyadh on 1 May, chaired on the UK-side by Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean. The SBJBC is a bilateral business council whose membership is made up of senior business representatives from the UK and Saudi. It meets twice a year to discuss ways in which to strengthen the bilateral business relationship and how to address barriers to trade.



UKTI Chief Exec, Andrew Cahn with Fouad Bahrawi during a visit to Jeddah

May also saw the first visit to the Gulf region by UK Trade & Investment's Chief Executive, Andrew Cahn. As well as taking time to meet the teams in Riyadh, Jeddah and Al Khobar, he had productive meetings with the Minister of Water & Electricity and the two Deputy Ministers of Commerce and met movers and shakers from the UK and Saudi business communities across the Kingdom. He returned to the UK clearly enthused by the huge business potential in Saudi and fully persuaded of the country's strategic importance as a priority market for UKplc.

In addition to the above the UKTI team took delegations to the NAIDEX and IFSEC exhibitions and are attending a Mass Transport Infrastructure meet-the-buyer event in the UK in July. There were over 40 UK universities at MEETES in Jeddah and we have been struck by the steady increase of British business visitors passing through the three Posts. Long may this continue.

I was pleased that a number of the RGBB members took up my invitation to chat to the Embassy about their business activities. It is always immensely useful to us to be able to fully understand what is happening on the ground. Please continue to consult our monthly calendar of events and do engage with us if there are activities taking place relevant to your business interests.



Below: HMA visited the Eastern Province Chamber of Commerce exhibition during British Week



## UK TRADE & INVESTMENT IN SAUDI ARABIA



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