

OPPORTUNITY ARABIA

The Middle East Association held a very successful and well-attended one day Seminar 'Opportunity Arabia 2' at the Institution of Civil Engineers in London on 15 September. Sir Alan Munro KCMG, a former British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, was in the Chair and Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean, former Minister of Trade and Investment, gave the opening address in her capacity as Chair of the Saudi-British Joint Business Council. She reminded delegates that Saudi Arabia is the UK's largest single trading partner in the Middle East and spoke warmly of the bilateral relationship.



Director of UK Trade and Investment, Carma Elliot, described the various aspects of official support available to British companies new to the market.

Two hundred delegates attended the Seminar which was a strong indication of genuine interest in the huge potential of the Saudi market and a change in perception of a country which is now firmly in control of its dissident elements.



Keynote speakers were Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, HM Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and Saudi Deputy Head of Mission in London, Ambassador Ferej Said Al Owedi, who covered political, economic and security issues and endorsed Baroness Symons' clear message that there were enormous business opportunities in the Saudi market place for British exporters of goods and services. They both stressed that Saudi Arabia is a safe place for British companies to conduct their business in.



Brian and Sandie Hawley together with John White also attended the event on behalf of the Jeddah BBG and were available for 'one-to-one' discussions in between the various speeches. The event was sponsored by the British Offset Office, Innovene, National Commercial Bank, Saudi Aramco, bmi, Saudia, The Saudi British Bank and four leading Saudi private sector trading houses – further endorsement that the Kingdom is a place in which to seek and conduct serious business.

Pictures-Top to Bottom:

Sir Alan Munro with Paul Dugan & Luke Bowen who both gave presentations

HMA talking to James Lawday, Director General of the MEA.

Sandie Hawley talking with a UK delegate

John Carter & John Lawton take questions from the floor.

Carma Eliot and Mike Hurley gave a joint presentation on opportunities in the Eastern Province



Dr Said Al Shaikh, Chief Economist at Saudi National Commercial Bank and Mr Azzam Shalabi, Director of New Business Evaluation at Saudi Aramco, both emphasised the strength of the Saudi economy and the scale of oil, gas and infrastructure projects over the next 20 years.

Other speakers, including Luke Bowen, Paul Dugan, Colin Clarke, John Carter and John Lawton, highlighted the opportunities in all major sectors across the board: oil and gas, education and training; water; power, construction; and agriculture. The

