

## Chamber Outlines Services and Activities

**The Arab-British Chamber of Commerce unveiled an extensive programme of forthcoming activities and services at a briefing on 27 March for members of the Arabic press in London.**

The press conference held at the Chamber's premises was jointly hosted by the organisation's Chairman Sir Roger Tomkys and its Acting Chief Executive George Asseily. Also participating were senior staff members involved in the provision of a range of services that the Chamber provides to the Arab and UK business communities who make up its membership base. The Chamber was not just concerned with the stamping of export documents, it was stressed, although this remains one of its important functions.



Sir Roger expressed the strong belief that the Chamber in its accessible new premises could now be developed into a major focus for the promotion of Arab-British interests. Apart from introducing the exciting programme of events and publishing schedule planned for the coming months, the briefing was also designed to highlight to the media some of the less known activities undertaken by the Chamber. These include the independently run Charitable Trust, which, as Mr Asseily pointed out, has distributed around £3 million since 1980 in financial assistance enabling Arab students to study in the UK. The good work of the Trust is continuing.

Layla Derraz outlined the services provided in terms of events, of which more detail can be found below, highlighting in particular the Regional Roadshow taking place in June and a new series of high-level Strategic Forums which the Chamber is preparing in cooperation with events organiser Lace Live.

Abdeslam El Idrissi, Director of Trade Services, described the activities of the Chamber regarding documentation and the new services that the Chamber is developing such as the partnership with SGS UK Ltd to offer conformity assessment services. Mr El Idrissi further introduced the three titles that the Chamber at present publishes and which are

all well established within the industry. He also indicated the new publishing ventures that were currently being prepared.

### **Events Package**

In total the Chamber plans to organise 17 events for the remainder of the financial year, these events consist of more Arab-British Export Club briefings; countries that are at present due to be covered include Libya, which will be on 25 April, followed by Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Tunisia and the UAE. The Chamber will also continue to organise its members' networking events with five more planned.

### **Regional Roadshow**

The Chamber's major event for 2007 is the launch of a new initiative designed to assist SMEs in breaking into the lucrative Gulf market. The Arab-British Regional Roadshow will be taking place in June this year in three of the UK's key industrial and commercial locations: Birmingham, Bristol and Stansted.

#### **Strategic Forums**

The press conference was informed that the Chamber was planning to stage a series of events in London over the next 12 months under the banner of Strategic Forums. In order to deliver these events the Chamber had reached a partnership contract with specialist events agency Lace Live.

The events, following a broadly-established format, will be tailored to address the wide-ranging business and investment opportunities that exist between the UK and the Arab region.

The Strategic Forums will take the form of a one-day event combining presentations, discussions and high-level networking. The night prior to each Forum will see a private dinner held for speakers, sponsors, international guests and supporting organisations.

It is intended that the Forums will be attended by senior business representatives of major national and multinational corporations with an interest in pursuing exceptional opportunities for joint ventures, strategic partnerships and investment projects, as well as government officials and the heads of key organisations who collectively control access to given industries or market sectors in the Arab world.

Each Strategic Forum will focus on a specific business topic or industry sector and will be approached from a regional perspective. Funded through sponsorship, delegates will attend by invitation only and will not be charged a fee.

Each event provides the occasion for an in-depth discussion of a specific area of business and/or a current topic of interest to the Region and to the UK.

Ministers and government organisations will be invited to set the scene and introduce the topic from their perspective. The business community will then be given an opportunity to respond from its point of view.

**The Forums will take place in central London locations at venues accommodating between 200 and 400 delegates, with private areas where delegates can network during refreshment breaks and lunch. Full details will be announced in the coming weeks.**

The Forums will be supported by a bespoke, user-focused Website, designed by Lace Live, which will provide delegates, speakers and sponsors as well as the Forum management team with a central communications and information hub before during and after the event.

### **Chamber Publications**

The Chamber's Publications Unit produces three titles:

- Arab-British Business, fortnightly members' bulletin;
- The annual Arab-British Trade Directory; and
- The quarterly Economic Focus

Plans are under way to add to the portfolio. The three publications, all recently re-launched, have rapidly made their mark on the market and are becoming well established within the industry.

### **Trade Services and Documentation**

In addition to the usual documentation services, the Chamber is developing the following new services:

- A-BCC - SGS UK Ltd recently launched a range of Conformity Assessment services which are available to Exporting and Importing Businesses as well as Government Organisations involved with their respective trading markets
- Proposed Halal certification programme: A-BCC is currently in discussion with SGS to enable us to offer this service to businesses involved within the food industry.
- A Proposed EUR1 Service

*A-BCC is currently surveying its members to ascertain if such a service would be beneficial to them.*

### **Export related training**

A-BCC is developing a comprehensive range of training services, focused primarily on international trade, but also intended to offer a variety of other relevant training programmes.

- **Arab-British Export Club:** Successfully launched in September last year, with future quarterly club events planned for 2007.
- **Revenue and Customs:** A service that will offer a one-stop shop solution for the customer's ever changing customs, import, export and logistics requirements.