

Minutes Cross Party Group On the Middle East and South Asia

12.30pm 17th April 2013, Room TG 20-21, Scottish Parliament

MSPs Present:

Hanzala Malik MSP (Convener)
Mary Fee MSP
Jamie McGrigor MSP
Anne McTaggart MSP

All Others Present:

Umbreen Khalid - (Secretary)
Thomas Lea – Alwaleed Centre, University of Edinburgh
Faten Hameed – Scottish Iraqi Society
Bob Haddow – UK Filter
Ed Payne – Scottish Development International
Catherine Cairns – Scottish Enterprise
Katarina Vojtovicova – Kurdistan Regional Government
Goran Zangana - Individual
Harry Chamberlin - Individual

Apologies:

Michael McMahon MSP
Joseph Feinmann – Individual
Mohammed Razaq – West of Scotland Regional Equality Council
Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman – Kurdistan Regional Government High Representative
Dr Crispin Bates – Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Edinburgh

1. Matter arising from previous minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on 24th October 2012 were approved with no amendments.

Matter arising from the previous minutes were:

- Pakistan cycle challenge and visit – The Pakistan cycle challenge and visit were both planned for October recess 2013. The Muslim celebration of Eid Al-Adha will take place in the middle of that period, which gives much less time for both projects. Hanzala Malik stated that he has had discussions with the Pakistan Consulate in Glasgow and they have recommended that the Glasgow and Lahore Cycle Challenge should be postponed until February 2013. However, the friendship visit to Lahore could be accommodated in either October 2013 or February 2014. Hanzala Malik asked for the group's authorisation to continue discussions and to provide dates for both projects by the end of May.

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Action: Hanzala Malik MSP to provide dates for Pakistan Friendship Visit and Glasgow-Lahore Cycle Challenge to the Group by the end of May.

- Bank account (see section 2)

2. AGM/ election of office bearers

The group approved the results of the electronic election of office bearers. All the office bearers are as in the previous year with the addition of a treasurer, Mr Mohammed Razaq. The group gave the authorisation for the treasurer to look into the collection of a fee to cover the costs of refreshments at CPG meetings and the possibility of opening a bank account.

3. Presentation by Scottish Enterprise and SDI

The Representatives from Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development International (SDI) gave a brief presentation on their organisations and how they operate on the ground in Scotland and the Middle East.

Scottish Enterprise role – supporting businesses in Scotland, part funder of SDI.

SDI Role – preparing companies for export, develop export action plans and taking companies abroad.

SDI Dubai Office is the regional office for the Middle East. It was opened in 2010 and the Middle East purchases approximately £1 billion of Scotland's exports (5% of exports) and nearly half of that is to the UAE.

SDI support organisations who state which markets they are interested in. There are very few requests for support to export to either Pakistan or the Kurdistan region. However, SDI can play a role in highlighting opportunities which the CPG can explore further.

Bob Haddow, a Scottish businessman operating in Iraqi Kurdistan, strongly expressed his belief that he had not been supported by SDI when setting up in the region despite approaching them on a number of occasions. The CPG noted his comments that he felt that having a separate UKTI (UK Trade & Investment) office in Glasgow a needless duplication.

Actions

Ed Payne/SDI to send the CPG secretary copies of relevant SDI strategy documents that cover the Middle East and South Asia.

Umbreen to circulate contact details of Scottish Enterprise and SDI representatives to the group.

CPG to have a further, informal meeting with SDI and Scottish Enterprise to discuss highlighting opportunities in the Middle East and South Asia and to Scottish Businesses and Entrepreneurs.

4. Subgroups

The group agreed to create the following sub groups:

Kurdistan Region of Iraq – Secretary Goran Zangana

Women – Secretary Anne McTaggart MSP

AOB

Arrangement of next meeting and sub group meetings:

Action: Umbreen to contact the British Council about giving a presentation at the next CPG.

Umbreen to circulate dates of next meeting and sub group meetings as soon as possible.