

NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE BIRMINGHAM COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION – TRADE AND BUSINESS FOCUS GROUP

Thursday 19th February, 2014

MILLS AND REEVE 78 COLMORE ROW, BIRMINGHAM

FOCUS: India - India's growth will start to outpace China's within three to five years and hence will become the fastest large economy with 9-10 per cent growth over the next 20-25 years (Morgan Stanley).

Attendees

Ammo Talwar MBE	Punch Records CEO
Beverly Lindsay OBE	Diamond Travel
Mr Niraj Dhokia Business Relationship Manager	ICICI Bank UK Plc
Mr Arpit Bhargava Branch Manager	ICICI Bank UK Plc
Martin Levermore MBE Chief Executive	MDTi
Darren Lister Business Development Director	Natural Wellbeing Ltd
Orlando McDonald Principle Consultant	HESA Net Works
Indi Deol	Aidem Digital
Mark Jones Head of Family Business Advisory Services	BDO
Dr Julia Brown Head of External Relations	Aston University School of Life & Health Sciences
Mr B C Pradhan	Acting Consul General-India
Paul Brown	Ernst and Young
Mandy Haque Business Development Manager	Birmingham Airport
Stefanie Bowes	Birmingham Airport
Vishwanath Panyam Station Manager	Air India
Keith Stokes Smith	Honorary Consul for Lithuania
Peter McLintock	Chair of CW Trade and Business Group
Heather Law	Birmingham City Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

Peter McLintock/ Keith Stokes-Smith:

- Welcomed attendees
- Gave background to the CW Association and link to Distinctly Birmingham Strategy
- Invited group to make suggestions regarding the topics of future meetings
- The strategic plan of the CW Secretariat runs to 2017 and is consistent with our aims. There is a focus on 'inclusive growth, sustainable development and connectivity'. This offers us an opportunity to expand trade and business.

Next meeting:

- Next meeting will focus on S. Africa, 30th April, 8.30 for 9am start. There is £9.6 billion of bi-lateral yearly trade between UK/S.Africa and this is likely to increase to £300 billion over the next 15 years. The meeting will also include a presentation on HS2.

Commonwealth Day 9th March 2015

- Commonwealth Citizenship ceremony at the Register Office where 30 CW citizens will be given UK citizenship.
- CW Dinner to be held at UCB with Sir Albert Bore in attendance. Up to 50 people to attend.
- Press releases have been sent to Birmingham media outlets

Publicity opportunity

- Heather Law gave update on the www.distinctlybirmingham.com website and invited attendees to send any events/news to distinctly@birmingham.gov.uk to put up on the site.

2. Trading with India, UKTI, Ajay Desai, UKTI

See presentation on www.distinctlybirmingham.gov.uk which looks at the Indian market, its key industries, pitfalls, opportunities and how UKTI can provide support and the legal framework

Financial support for participants on UKTI trade missions are:

£550 for each company to most destinations

£750 for each company to China

Preparation for the visit is very thorough and begins at least 7 months prior to the visit.

India Consul General Mr Pradham

Gave an informative intervention on emerging opportunities in India including: the Digital India programme; Smart Cities programme and 100% FDI is allowed under the automatic route in all sectors/activities except in few areas, which require prior approval of the Government.

- Change in political leadership last year, now Mr Narendra Damodardas Modi is the 15th and current Prime Minister of India, in office since 26 May 2014. Modi, a leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party. It is the first time in 25 years that a single party has gained power.
- More than 50% inward investment from India goes to Britain than the rest of the EU.

Need to get the date of the 'Back in India event'

3. Air India – Vishwanath Panyam

Gave a presentation on air routes to India (Birmingham – Delhi and Amritsar, daily service leaving at 20:30hrs from Birmingham and arriving at 09:55 in Delhi – Boeing 787 Dreamliner)

Raised the importance of gaining corporate Birmingham's support for the service – there are 18 business class seats.

We have 350,000 people of Indian heritage in Birmingham, this is the largest community outside London.

Stefanie Bowes (Stefanie.bowes@birminghamairport.co.uk) is happy to help with any cargo queries. Stefanie is also happy to lobby for other routes.

4. General points raised

- Interest in building a consortia amongst the group, especially in relation to the health sector.
- Interest in finding out about the Healthy Living and Active Ageing KIC
- Would like Marketing Birmingham to participate