

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne. IBBC president welcome speech.

British-Iraq Trade Fair- Sunday 14 May 2023

I'd like to welcome you to this first magnificent British – Iraq trade exhibition and to extend my deep thanks to Al Burhan, to our distinguished govt guests; the senior aviation advisor to the Prime minister Mr Naser Al-Asadi and Mr Kamil Al Awadhi, regional Vice president MENA at international Air transport Association (IATA) to all the exhibitors, most of whom are IBBC members, and to you all for coming.

After this presentation we will be opening the first IATA licensed regional training centre and cutting the ribbon and in attendance with Mr Naser Al Asadi from the Prime minister's office and Mr Kamil Al Awadi from IATA to celebrate this momentous event and the first in Iraq.

British business is celebrated for its capability, transparency, and best international practice, so we are delighted to see so many attendees here today, thanks to the generous Al Burhan group initiative and hospitality.

Iraq is now on the brink a golden phase, with both political, economic stability and rising incomes. Government income has soared since the oil price increases, and this enables them to action numerous infrastructure projects, such as oil refineries, electricity production and new infrastructure investments in ports, airports, sustainable energy, institutional buildings, and the dry canal project to name a few.

All this investment develops and diversifies the economy. Diversification from oil and gas dependency is essential to the modern economy and Iraq is making good progress and growth in various sectors, which our members stand ready to support. Likewise, the Government of Iraq is stable and making good decisions for diversification and diplomatic relations with neighbouring countries, notably Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Kuwait, in addition to brokering relations between Iran, Saudi and the Gulf states.

Finally, internal stability is almost returning to normal, as we saw the Gulf Cup competition peacefully and successfully conducted across Iraq.

In Westminster Abbey on 6 May last week. I witnessed at the Coronation, King Charles III committing himself and his family to the service of his people, the Country, and wider world. Service is the key underpinning of all of our work, for our families, customers, colleagues, and the wider world.

May I extend this message to our Trade fair today as an example of the service British companies brings to Iraq... Of Al Burhan's service to IBBC today... to the wider international and Iraqi business community ...and to the people and country of Iraq through investing in this magnificent centre, for organising this trade fair, sharing their efforts and resources for the benefit of all of us and Iraq in particular.

And may I thank all of the British and Iraqi companies exhibiting here today for your service, for the time and effort in coming here, for your service as professional companies operating in Iraq and the benefits and jobs you bring to the economy and people of Iraq. And, the local Iraqi companies bringing British products, such as Al-Uroush MINI Auto, and other consumer companies supporting today's event like Al Omran Group, Nasr Paint and New beginnings.

13 years ago, we founded IBBC to serve the people of Iraq, and then we had the support of a small number of high-volume members, such as Al Burhan and the major oil and engineering companies. Their service in developing the organisation has been remarkable, and today we see through IBBC's a purposeful and robust business network throughout Iraq that is diversifying its membership supporting the diversification of the Iraqi economy, many of whom are here; experts in Travel, Education, Recruitment, Training, Aviation, Fertilizers, Automotive, Paint, Insurance and Renewable energy, Tech and Banking/ Finance and more.

I urge you all to engage with and meet representatives of all companies and find out what they have to offer you and your businesses. Discover how they and you can be of service to the development of Iraq and the wonderful, resilient, and resourceful people of Iraq, and for us all enjoy this wonderful Al Burhan facility and hospitality.

Second day speech Monday 15 May 2023

I would like to welcome you to this magnificent trade exhibition and to extend my deep thanks to Al Burhan, to our distinguished govt to all the exhibitors, most of whom are IBBC members, and to you all for coming.

I am also inviting you to visit and view the new AL Burhan IATA training centre, the first of its kind in Iraq and one that will provide essential skills and qualification for the travel and tourist industry in Iraq.

If you were here yesterday, you will know Iraq is on the brink of golden phase, both economically and politically. The Prime Minister, Mr Al-Sudani is leading a well organised and confident government, with surplus income, that is actioning infrastructure projects designed to develop and diversify Iraq's economy. Not only that, but he is pursuing diplomatic relations with neighbours in the region, especially Saudi Arabia, while travelling the globe to secure investment and good will for Iraq.

The resilient people of Iraq, after a long period of conflict is now seeing rising incomes and expansion in more consumer facing sectors and services.

This Trade Fair very much reflects the changing nature of the economy.

Yesterday I spent time meeting the exhibitors, companies and officials at the event and I have to say how impressed I am with the quality and dedication of those present and the changing economy. We see the expansion of Air travel with companies like Serco, London Sky, Alburhan, Fly Baghdad and Menzies and a presentation from IATA, access to the best automobiles with Saardar group's JLR and Toyota ranges, Al Ourush's mini, and consumer household products from Al Omran Group, Nasr paint, recruitment and training from M Select, fertilizers from AAA holdings and insurance from Al Maseer.

It was wonderful to see so many IBBC members here, supported by Al Burhan, to show their service and support for Iraq. We have a purposeful and robust business network delivering international best practice throughout Iraq that is diversifying its membership and supporting the diversification of the Iraqi economy, and service to its people.

Al Burhan are a shining example of this professional, best in class attitude and I commend their services and facilities to you all.