



A panel discussion in progress to examine challenges, opportunities, and strategies for business success in Qatar. PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam

Forum examines strategies for business success in Qatar

Leaders from top global companies convened on Tuesday for a joint discussion to examine challenges, opportunities, and strategies for business success in Qatar.

The forum, hosted by the American Chamber of Commerce in Qatar (AmCham Qatar) and the German Business Council Qatar (GBCQ), aims to give business leaders in Qatar insights and information to support the development and diversification of Qatar's private sector.

Moderated by Bethel Group founder and director of PRO-Partnership and COO John Forde, the forum gathered 100 decision makers who discussed topics of critical importance to Qatar's business community, including procurement policy

and strategy, talent recruitment, and payment systems.

The session was also attended by Bethel Group chairman Sheikh Abdulrahman Hassan al-Thani and Qatar Chamber deputy general manager Saleh Hamad al-Sharqi.

AmCham Qatar chairman Robert A Hager said, "AmCham Qatar is proud to partner with our friends at the German Business Council Qatar to talk about the issues that matter to businesses here - furthering the development and diversification of Qatar's vibrant and rapidly expanding private sector."

GBCQ deputy chairman and DB Schenker Overseas Cargo director Henning Zimmermann said, "United in the mission to support and strengthen Qatar's position as a leading business

hub, it is hugely beneficial to organise joint meetings with our partners at AmCham Qatar. Through events like this, we are obtaining insights across industries and will chart a course forward for success in Qatar."

The panel of experts agreed that having a strong presence on the ground in Qatar and a long-term commitment to doing business in the market were the two top factors for success.

The panel included Deugro regional vice-president Middle East Philipp M Luehrs, Northwestern University of Qatar director of Student Affairs Greg Bergida, MAN Truck & Bus Middle East & Africa FZE area sales manager & country manager Qatar Jörg Bauch, and ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems International Qatar director

Middle East Office, Mena Business Strategies and Politics Gregor F Mannherz.

AmCham Qatar hosts events open to AmCham Qatar members and members of the wider business community, and serves as a key forum for American, domestic and international businesses to pursue common commercial interests and build relationships in Qatar.

The next AmCham Qatar event, the Distinguished Speaker Series, will be held on November 19, featuring Boeing Middle East president Jeffery Johnson. For more information on AmCham Qatar events, visit <http://www.amchamqatar.org/index.php/blog/pages/upcoming-events> or follow @AmChamQatar on Twitter for the latest updates.



QBWA members with officials of JMJ Associates after a recent workshop.

QBWA, JMJ Associates sign partnership to develop organisational strategy

The Qatari Business Women Association (QBWA) has signed a partnership agreement with JMJ Associates, a global management consultancy specialising in developing high-performing organisations and project cultures.

The parties agreed to work on the development of QBWA's strategy, reformulate its vision and objectives, build organisational capability, and enhance the association's long-term impact. The agreement was signed by QBWA vice-chairwoman Aisha Alfardan and JMJ Associates Middle East director Simon Giffin. They agreed to strengthen ties to promote the role of women and build their capabilities as well as improve QBWA's performance.

Alfardan said, "We always strive to develop our strategy and revisit our vision and evaluate our goals. We believe that an institution that doesn't perform regular review and evaluation of its strategy and objectives is weak and lacks ambition."

She noted that the agreement represents an opportunity for the QBWA to take advantage of its experiences in past years and learn from experiences of JMJ Associates. "We consider JMJ Associates a vital partner and a pioneer in the development of QBWA's performance and we will do our best to get the best outcomes of this agreement to achieve our objectives and develop the performance of women in Qatar and enhance their role," Alfardan added.

JMJ Associates Middle East director Simon Giffin said, "We are delighted to have signed this partnership agreement with the QBWA to support the development of the strategy, vision, and

objectives of the organisation." Giffin said "the huge passion and commitment" of the QBWA leadership to make a difference for the women in Qatar "is very clear and forms a great foundation to create the next breakthrough in achievement."

He added, "Our team here, a significant proportion of which is female, has long supported the development and enhancement of the role of women in society and so this really is a meeting of two organisations with a common aim. We look forward to working together over the coming months and years."

Over the last few months as part of the partnership with JMJ Associates, QBWA has organised a number of sessions with its board members that sought to re-examine and evaluate the vision, mission, and objectives of the association.

JMJ Associates, which has been in Qatar since 1996, will continue to assist QBWA under the agreement in a number of capacity-building activities. Together, they will develop a long-term strategy to build organisational capability and identify and remove problems and obstacles faced by the association.

In the fourth quarter of 2014, QBWA will be launching a series of events and workshops, including a monthly business to business meeting that will develop the exchange between members of the association.

This includes the QBWA's Annual Networking Dinner as well as a number of training workshops for members in addition to the fifth edition of the Qatar International Businesswomen Forum on December this year.

Euromoney conference to focus on risks to banking

The risks facing major national, regional and international banks will be on the spotlight at the forthcoming Euromoney Qatar Conference, which takes place on November 24 and 25, as the global economy faces a growing range of pressures.

The conference is being held under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al-Thani, who will also deliver a keynote address on November 24.



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With the European Central Bank (ECB) announcing the results of "stress tests" at the end of October, questions are being raised about the capacity of financial institutions to absorb new shocks if the world economy experiences a fresh downturn.

The tests, which assess whether banks could fail or require further bailouts in a hypothetical financial crisis, found that 25 out of 130 banks in the Eurozone currently have insufficient capital to manage in such circumstances.

Against a background of global economic issues including tensions around Ukraine, falling oil prices and questions about the need for a new reserve currency - the Euromoney Qatar

Conference will host a special panel discussion to address the potential of a new financial crisis and ask if we are already in the first stages of a global downturn.

With contributions from Joannes Mongardini, head (Economics) at Qatar National Bank; Manolis Davradakis, senior economist, AXA Investment Managers; Bruce Fenton, president and managing director, Atlantic Financial Inc.; and John Sfakianakis, director, GCC, Ashmore Group, the discussion will include perspectives from across the global financial community.

Richard Banks, regional director, Euromoney Conferences, said: "For the most part, banks in the GCC region are confident about the future, given the strength of their economies, dynamic leadership and strong asset portfolio. However, as we saw in 2008, global financial issues can have a strong and immediate impact on the region, which is why Euromoney Qatar is balancing international and local perspective at this year's event. Despite the growth of the past year, we are seeing a number of risk factors that need careful monitoring in order for banks to continue to grow their yields."

Throughout the event, there will be global perspective provided by presentations from Rodrigo de Rato, former managing director, International Monetary Fund; Senator Philip Ozouf, assistant chief minister, States of Jersey; Denis Beau, director-general (Operations) Banque de France; and Sarkis Yoghourtjian, assistant director (Banking Supervision and Regulation) Board of Governors of the US Federal Reserve System.

There will also be strong local insight provided, with the conference being held under the patronage of HE The Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdullah, who will also deliver a keynote address on Day One.

Developing capital markets in Arab region vital: AMF

The Arab region is facing tremendous increase in financing needs, particularly those countries going through political changes, according to a top official of Arab Monetary Fund (AMF).

"The vital importance of developing capital markets in the Arab region comes specifically since the onset of the recent international financial crises, which were accompanied by a decrease in capital flows and cross-border banking loans," Abdulrahman A al-Hamidy, director-general and chairman of AMF, said.

It also comes within the context of the latest changes in international standards and, more particularly, the Basel III framework and its new liquidity management set of rules, he added.

International consultant Ernst and Young (EY) had recently said the Middle East and North Afri-

ca, which has registered a 10-fold year-on-year increase in capital raising through maiden offers during the third quarter of this year, is expected to see further surge in IPOs (initial public offerings) in 2015 on robust valuations.

"Mena IPO (initial public offering) activity is expected to surge in 2015, particularly in the GCC countries, with market valuations returning to somewhere near pre-financial crisis levels. Companies in the financial services and real estate sectors continue to dominate the pipeline," Phil Gandier, Mena Head of Transaction Advisory Services, EY, said.

"The Arab region is facing tremendous increase in financing needs, particularly those countries going through political changes. Developing these markets will benefit the region not

only by expanding alternative sources of financing, but also contributing to enhancing financial stability," he said, ahead of the 1st Arab Capital Markets Conference, which will take place in Dubai later this month.

The conference is being hosted by Thomson Reuters and the Union of Arab Securities Authorities (UASA).

"The aim of this conference is to promote cooperation and facilitate the exchange of the financial markets information, in addition to strengthening the Arab Securities Authorities efforts in developing capital markets according to the best practices and standards including international standards and principles issued by the International Organisation of Securities Commissions," according to Hassan Boulaknadel, UASA chairman and president of the Moroccan Capital Market Authority.



Al-Hamidy: For international standards.

Ooredoo's 'Burstable billing' for business and enterprise customers

Ooredoo has launched 'Burstable billing services' for business and enterprise customers in Qatar, which allows them to effectively manage their bandwidth requirements and gives the freedom to allow inter-office connectivity and bandwidth to grow as data traffic grows. Traditionally business and enterprise customers would have to purchase additional connectivity to handle peak usage and would need to initiate a service change for each link in use. With 'Burstable billing', customers can now burst their capacity up to 1Gbps with the assurance of having to pay only for the increased capacity when it is used. The automatic bandwidth management and billing ensures connectivity when it is needed the most and makes it easier to forecast and keep up with bandwidth demands between office locations. Ooredoo has Qatar's largest IP network and has recently deployed a nation-wide Fibre roll-out. This, accompanied with the option of 'Burstable billing', will help businesses to remove capacity bottlenecks and pay only for the additional bandwidth consumed during peak data requirements. The service is available without any monthly subscription cost and customers can activate the service immediately. More details on 'Burstable billing' can be had from www.ooredoo.qa. Picture shows the Ooredoo headquarters at Airport Road, Doha.

