



**APPG for BAME Business Owners
AGM
Minutes of Meeting on 10 February 2020
Room W2 – Palace of Westminster**

Attendees Present:

- 1) Chi Onwurah, MP - Chair
- 2) Baroness Burt of Solihull – Co-Chair
- 3) Joy Morrissey, MP – Treasurer
- 4) Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, MP
- 5) Dr. Rupa Huq, MP
- 6) Navendu Mishra, MP
- 7) Professor Monder Ram, Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CRÈME)
- 8) Diana Chrouh, Chrouh Consulting, Special Adviser to the APPG for BAME Business Owners
- 9) Lina Bourdon FSB
- 10) Arnab Dutt FSB
- 11) Isabel Oswell – British Library

1. **Chair Chi Onwurah:** Led welcome and introduction of attendees

2. **VISION AND MISSION OF THE APPG FOR BAME BUSINESS**

L. Burt: Highlighted the need for the APPG to be successful in getting a fairer deal for BAME businesses.

T. Dhesi: Concurred and stressed that the individual members of the APPG needed to work collectively if this aim was to be achieved.

M. Ram: Raised the idea of embedding the vision of the APPG into all parts of the industrial strategy for the UK. In particular he would like to see a more sustainable way of understanding minority businesses, as well as a greater focus on the positive impact that BAME businesses make.

He also suggested the APPG work to provide more detailed insight into changes in BAME business patterns. The aim would be to build evidence based data that could be used to inform government policy.

R. Huq: agreed that there was a greater need to focus on promoting the important contribution of BAME business owners and highlighted this with a reference to an example of local Turkish? business owners who run a catering business in her local constituency

3. **ELECTION OF ALL PARTY OFFICERS FOR THE GROUP**

- a. Re-election of Chi Onwurah MP as Chair
- b. Re-election of Baroness Burt as Co-Chair

- c. Election of Joy Morrissey MP as Treasurer
- d. Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP as officer
- e. R. Huq as officer

4. SECRETARIAT FOR THE APPG

D. Chrouch: Raised the need for a secretariat for the new APPG group

L. Burt: Asked Diana to consult existing stakeholders including the FSB and British Library could be consulted to ascertain their interest in supporting the a secretariat for the group.

5. FORWARD PLAN AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION LAUCH EVENT

D. Chrouch: Referenced the discussion of the Forward Plan which took place at the last meeting of the APPG in June 019. She introduced concept of a 'Listening Campaign' geared towards the collection of data from grassroots BAME business owners. She also highlighted the fact that there is currently no systemic way of monitoring BAME businesses owners.

L. Burt: referred to the existing difficulties in obtaining accurate and rich data surrounding BAME and women-owned businesses. She suggested that the APPG use the Listening Campaign to collect such data and ask the type of questions that will shine a light indubitably on BAME led businesses that are currently being under served by policy makers.

Ultimately, this would contribute greatly to the improvement of the government's understanding of BAME Businesses.

She emphasised the need to make sure the government wholly understood the importance of the APPG's work, and suggested the adoption of pressure group / lobbying tactics in order to achieve this particular aim.

D. Chrouch: Suggested focusing on key areas for questioning BAME business during Listening Campaign. This would be done in order to present refined data to the government – data that could be analysed in a meaningful way.

She also stressed the need to get stakeholders / collaborators buy in in order to push forward with the objectives of the APPG.

M. Ram: Listed the Office of National Statistics, the Cabinet Office, the Confederation of British Industry and the British Library as important stakeholders.

He underlined that the Listening Campaign needed to understand what was happening on the ground with BAME businesses in the UK. This would enable the APPG to create an informed manifesto that would illuminate issues that had been previously ignored.

D. Chrouch: Emphasised that the Listening Campaign would help to gauge the attitude of the country towards BAME businesses

Highlighted that the government's gender-neutral and colour-blind approach to the collection of business data can result in the exclusion of important issues concerning BAME led businesses.

As an example, she referenced the repeated ignoring of childcare even though this is a critical issue for many women led businesses.

J. Morrissey: Enquired about the prominence of import / export businesses within the BAME community.

M. Ram: Answered that BAME firms are more likely to export goods. He suggested that opportunities may arise from the foreign connections of BAME businesses in the post-Brexit era.

(L. Bourdon): Concurred with this point and stressed the need to make the government aware of the valuable foreign connections held by BAME businesses.

D. Chrouch: also agreed with this point, and suggested that it in the future it may be useful for the APPG members to map out their business connections across the globe as a part of the interim and final reports in the Forward Plan.

She advocated using the planned National Consultation Planning Workshop to promote the work of the APPG, while using the Listening Campaign to highlight the successes of BAME led businesses, as well as the difficulties faced by BAME businesses.

She highlighted the need to present BAME businesses as valuable assets, as well as showing that they deserve to be taken more seriously.

Furthermore, she stated that one of the objectives of the Forward Plan must be to highlight prevailing trends among BAME Businesses and subsequently informing the government about these trends. As an example, she mentioned the difficulties that increasing numbers of BAME led family businesses face as a result of second and third generation BAME immigrants pursuing educational achievement/ external careers rather working in the family business.

L. Burt: raised the importance of presenting data supporting the argument that BAME Business can indeed flourish if given opportunities / procurements by the government.

A. Dutt: raised the importance of linking this to a wider social value strategy and this could strengthen this argument

L. Burt: suggested that the House of Lords could contribute to the raising of awareness of this issue. She mentioned using her upcoming question in the House of Lords to promote the 'social value' of BAME businesses, as well as suggesting that the APPG enlighten the relevant authorities, effectively teaching them how to look out for the social value in BAME businesses on a regular basis.

J. Morrissey: Made enquiry concerning the red tape limiting the growth of businesses.

L. Bourdon: Concurred and used her own business as an example. She mentioned the need to balance the growth of her business in relation to an increasing tax burden as a challenge that many businesses owners face.

L. Burt: Asked how the APPG would proceed with the next stages of the Forward Plan

D. Chrouch: Responded and explained that the APPG should be working towards the publishing of an interim report. She explained that the next step was a planned workshop on the 24th February with stakeholders and collaborators to devise a strategy for a national consultation of BAME business owners, This report would include subsequent findings about BAME Businesses, and would also make recommendations to relevant ministers based on said finding