



All-Party Parliamentary Group for Black, Asian Minority Ethnic Business Owners AGM

Date: 1 March 2022 **Time:** 14.00 – 15.00 pm

Where: VIRTUAL (VIA ZOOM)

1. Welcome and Introductions

APPG chair Sir Peter Bottomley MP welcomed the attendees to the event, and recognised that the AGM had reached quorum.

2. Election of officers

The AGM then proceeded to vote in the following MPs and Peers as Officers for the upcoming year:

- Chair – Sir Peter Bottomley MP
- Co-Chair – Sarah Olney MP
- Co-Chair - Abena Oppong-Asare MP
- Treasurer – Christine Jardine MP
- Officer – Baroness Benjamin
- Officer – Mark Logan MP
- Officer – Seema Malhotra MP
- Officer – Chi Onwurah MP

3. Chair's Update

Sarah Olney MP, Co-Chair of the APPG gave the Chair's update on the work of the APPG over the previous year. Sarah referred to the large and varied body of work undertaken by the group which covers a wide range of policy areas that are important to the opening up of opportunities and overcoming of barriers for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Business Owners.

Sarah detailed some highlights during the year including:

- I. **Roundtable with Minister Nadhim Zahawi - Minister for Covid Vaccine Deployment** at the time, met with the APPG and grassroots ethnic minority business owners to discuss their important role in helping to address hesitancy by supporting vaccine uptake as well as addressing concerns about the potential impact of COVID passports on trade.
- II. **Roundtable with Minister Paul Scully - Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets** – met with the APPG and grassroots ethnic minority business owners to discuss its work in collaboration with UK Finance and the banking sector to improve access to finance for ethnic minority business owners. A central issue was a discussion about the need to address the lack of access to data to enable greater transparency about financing patterns.
- III. **Data collection recommendation by Office of National Statistics** – the APPG has worked collaboratively with the ONS and other stakeholders in support of the creation of a national system of data collection about ethnic minority business owners. The ONS have subsequently

recommended the addition of an ethnicity field to directors' annual registration with Companies House.

- IV. This working group was commissioned based on the APPG's October 2020 [report](#), that aimed to shed light on the issues ethnic minorities business owners faced during the COVID 19 pandemic. Sarah noted how the APPG subsequently met with Companies House in December 2021, and are currently exploring ways this field could be implemented.
- V. **Equalities Minister, Kemi Badenoch MP** - Finally, Sarah looked forward to the year ahead and outlined plans for an upcoming meeting between the APPG and Minister for Levelling Up at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Kemi Badenoch MP, was noted as a particular highlight.

4. Treasurer's Update

Shah Athar, Treasurer of the APPG gave a short update.

Diana Chrouch of Chrouch Consulting has continued to provide secretariat services valued at £12,000 for her work.

Asian Business Connexions have kindly donated their time to build the website valued at £499

5. Discussion of the APPG's Name

Diana Chrouch: noted that the Government has ceased to use the term 'BAME' due to it being almost universally disliked by ethnic minority communities. Diana asked the attendees to feel free to suggest possible alternatives to the term, which could collectively describe Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic entrepreneurs in line with the focus of the vision and mission of the APPG to support their advancement. She also noted the objections of **Baroness Benjamin**, who expressed reservations about the use of the term 'BAME' particularly as it was unacceptable to many ethnic minority communities. Diana opened up the discussion.

Sir Peter Bottomley: suggested that whatever the new name, on the register of the APPG it was noted that the previous name was 'The APPG for BAME Business Owners' to ensure continuity.

Professor Monder Ram: recognised the contentiousness of the issue and expressed his mixed feelings. He explained that by classifying businesses by different ethnic groups, you can risk 'othering' different communities. He reviewed the use of various terms including: 'People of Colour,' 'Indigenous People of Colour', 'Minoritized Ethnic Groups' in addition to 'Ethnic Minority Businesses'. To conclude he suggested that whichever term the APPG decides to use, they should do it with an explanation to avoid conflict and confusion.

Lola Owolabi: had no issues with the term 'BAME', but recognised that others do. She reiterated the view that whatever term the APPG decides to use, the term should be issued in conjunction with an explanation, and suggested that a survey be conducted as a useful way to gauge ideas and opinions about the best term

Menelik Shillingford: expressed his displeasure at the use of the term BAME and explained that having listened to suggestions, he preferred the term 'Ethnic Minority Businesses' because it is more all-encompassing of diverse ethnicities. He was however, very keen to underline that the APPG's name is less important than the work that the group does.

Professor Kevin Hylton: explained that he does not use the abbreviated term 'BAME', as he always uses the full term 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic'. He asked the group to consider the specific aims of the name of the group and the difference between an 'inclusive', or 'descriptive' term. If 'descriptive', the name is more likely to generate disagreement. If the term is 'inclusive' he suggests that this is less likely to create division.

In conclusion, Kevin recommends that, whatever is chosen as the new term, that this be explained in the group's terms of reference. He reiterated the point that although names are important, any over focus on the issue could potentially move the group away from doing its important work

Katarina Stawska-Hughes: detailed an article which broke down the terms being discussed. For instance: 'Ethnic Minority', 'Minority Ethnic' or 'Minoritized Ethnic' are common terms used to describe ethnic groups that are in a minority of the population. In the UK, this means all of those who are not 'white British', so these terms are also used to include individuals who are White and an Ethnic Minority.

Katarina explained further that the term 'Minority Ethnic' was proposed to counter the usage of the term 'Ethnic' when referring to people who are not 'White British.' The rationale for this is that by not putting 'Ethnic' first, this would help recognise that everyone has an Ethnicity, even White individuals.

'Racially Minoritized' has been recommended more recently, as it recognises that individuals have been minoritized for social process of power and domination rather than just existing as a statistic.

Jemma Fairclough: explained that she also dislikes the term BAME. Jemma liked the idea of 'Minoritized Ethnic Businesses', because it related most closely to the sentiments of the group about power relations. She also mentioned the idea of using the term 'Non-Indigenous UK'.

Abena Oppong-Asare MP: agreed that the use of the term BAME was a contentious issue. However, urged caution since whatever was agreed by the group in the meeting may not necessarily be the best thing for the community. She emphasised her desire that the equality element be strong in the APPG's name and thinking and very importantly to make sure that Black and Asian business owners are comfortable with the name. Abena then spoke more broadly about how she would like to help businesses in her Shadow Ministerial Role, and also cautioned against a lengthy debate on the name at the expense of work on other key issues.

Diana Chrouch: thanked the contributors and agreed to consult the groups member's and their stakeholders about their views about suggested names. She introduced the next agenda item for the discussion about the Government's "Levelling Up" strategy.

6. 'Levelling Up': White Paper

Emelia Quist: began by detailing her background as the Head of Policy Research at the Federation of Small Business. She paid tribute to Professor Monder Ram for their collaboration on the report "Unlocking Opportunity" published in 2020 (FSB and the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship).

Emelia outlined the importance of the 250,000 firms in the UK led by someone from an ethnic minority background and their positive impact on economy. She noted that the Government's 'Levelling Up' White Paper does not have enough general focus on entrepreneurship and more specifically, does not acknowledge the diversity of small business owners.

She went on to acknowledge the positive intentions of the "Levelling Up" strategy but cautioned about a range of potential challenges ahead in order to for the strategy to be delivered effectively. A key concern is the lack of a specific focus on geographical areas that have significant ethnic minority business communities especially as these businesses are critical to the prosperity of these areas. A related point is the important role that these businesses play in the survival of high streets in many areas including across the north of England.

Professor Monder Ram: agreed with Emelia about the lack of general focus on entrepreneurship and expressed the opinion that the lack of recognition of the importance of small firms led by ethnic minorities in the Government's White Paper was an oversight

Monder then detailed what in his view, were the key aspects of the paper and is broadly in favour of the main strategies including the drive to improve public services and restore local pride by empowering local leaders. He does however caution about the scale of the challenge

He noted that the whole report was based on the theory of 'six capitals'. The idea behind the theory is that if a place is going to thrive, it needs a combination of these six factors:

1. Physical Capital – such as infrastructure.
2. Human Capital – such as skills and training.
3. Intangible Capital – such as ideas
4. Financial Capital – such as money.
5. Social Capital – such as community interest
6. Institutional Capital – which is a proxy for local leadership.

However, whilst the White Paper recognises all of these capitals it fails to grasp that these factors are undercut by race and to address this there is a need to recognise the intersection of poverty with race and place, particularly in the context of enterprise.

Consequently, the lack of sensitivity to race is a fundamental flaw in this document which in turn means that the solutions proposed in the Paper; are not well connected to the important issues that are impacted by race. For example, it is well documented that ethnic minority businesses have good ideas, but then these are not translated into material businesses and the additional barriers that ethnic minority business owners face to boosting productivity and accessing scale up capital are not properly recognised or addressed

A related issue is the very limited provision of resources and budget since the paper sets out plans to set aside £5 billion for the 'Levelling Up' agenda but if we compare this to East/West Germany's plans, it seems very small compared to their investment of £70 billion per annum for a similar strategy. Furthermore, this money will be allocated by bid, and therefore the most eloquent bid wins, which again risk discriminating against those from the most deprived areas.

Professor Kevin Hylton: explained his role as Chair of the Sheffield Race Equality Commission which has held a number of select committee style hearings over the past year covering six key areas, including:

1. Business and Employment
2. Crime and Justice
3. Civic Life in Communities
4. Education
5. Health
6. Sport and Culture.

The Commission is close to reporting its findings and in the meantime Kevin reports that a central theme in all of the six inquiry areas is the impact that race has. A key area of concern is with regard to business and employment, since the findings show that many black led organisations are being underserved and are not being integrated into either the policy framework or economic opportunities of the city. Black entrepreneurs report struggling to access opportunities as a result of barriers to accessing finance and gaining access to markets such as procurement contracts from local authorities.

These matters have been compounded by a tendency to take a reactive approach to black led businesses, which was further highlighted by the lack of preparedness to meet their needs during the COVID-19 emergency. Unfortunately, this has followed on from a backdrop of austerity and the frustrations expressed by the Black Lives Matter movement.

He concluded by saying that there was a haemorrhaging of trust and confidence amongst black business owners with key institutions that they should be able to turn to enable them to. Kevin called for better recognition of the need to provide accessible support and resources in the broader business ecosystem.

Dionne Edwards: noted in Leeds where she is based that she had not had any real issues connecting with the Council and local authorities to ask for support and resources. She acknowledges that she this may be an exception, but as a black entrepreneur, she has not had difficulties and so it is important to acknowledge that not all businesses have the same experience

Diana Chrouch: moved to conclude the meeting by suggesting the APPG write an open letter to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This letter would seek to clarify the role of ethnic

minority businesses in terms of levelling up, and what long term plans the Government had to address this, particularly, with regard to the intersection of poverty with race and place.

Diana also noted that it was a concern that if ethnic minority led businesses were not being accounted for in this important long term Government strategy, then there appears to be no clear plan to remove barriers and encourage social mobility and economic growth for either these enterprises or the communities in which many of them are based.

Diana then ended the meeting by thanking Sir Peter Bottomley, officers, business owners and other stakeholders for their kind support over the previous year. She also said that she would send around suggestions and ask for further comments about the name of the APPG

Ends.

Attendees:

MPs

Sir Peter Bottomley

Abena Asaire-Oppong

Sarah Olney

Christine Jardin

Baroness Floella Benjamin (represented by proxy)

Seema Maholtra (represented by proxy)

Business Owners & Organisations

Jemma Fairclough FSB

Isabel Oswell British Library

Moslek Uddin – UK Curry Connect

Dionne Edwards – Heritage Circle

Bernard Idowu - BEIS

Lola Owolabi – Proud to be Me

Shah Athar - UK Curry Connect

Menelik Shillingford - London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Shakeel Ali - DPM Group

Professor Monder RAM - CREME

Professor Kevin Hylton – Chair Sheffield Race Equality

Emelia Quist – FSB Policy Research

Efuru Euba – African Disapora Network

Deborah turner – FSB Women

Camilla Harrold – UK Finance

Katarina Stawska-Hughes – Labour Party Public Affairs

Anjum Khan Birmingham Asian Business- Chamber of Commerce

Esenam Agubretu -London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Shaun Bailey – London Assembly