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Workshop held for Senior Iraqi Government officials on Economic Reconstruction and Governance

The BHF, in co-partnership with the UN-mandated University for Peace and the U.S. Institute for Peace, organized a two-day (August 10-11) workshop in Istanbul, Turkey for 25 senior-

level Iraqi government officials on issues related to economic reconstruction in Iraq. Held at the initiative of the

Iraq office of the UN Development Program and coordinated by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the workshop focused on improving governance as it relates to the private sector, fighting corruption, privatizing Iraq's State-Owned Enterprises, and a number of other key problems affecting the rebuilding of Iraq's economy.



Iraqi parliamentarian presentation at workshop. Dr. Abdalla at right



Istanbul – site of the workshop

A report of the meeting will shortly be posted to the BHF website.

Ministerial and Director-General level officials and representatives of the business sector heard presentations, participated in working group deliberations and exercises, and conducted reviews of the various problems confronting them in restarting the overall economy. A number of important recommendations emerged, and the group concluded that follow-on meetings will be needed to move the process ahead. A

This is the second Iraq-focused activity the BHF has conducted. In November 2006, BHF Council President Jack Maresca visited Iraqi Kurdistan to give advice to local entrepreneurs on attracting private-sector investment in the region. Maresca met with government official, banks and business leaders to find ways to encourage such investment, which is a principle key to economic recovery following the conflict.

This is also the third activity the BHF has conducted in partnership with the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) and the University for Peace (UPEACE), following training seminars presented in Geneva and New York. In all three of these activities UPEACE Vice Rector for Academic Affairs Professor Amr Abdalla, and Senior Program Officer Nina Sughrue of USIP, played major roles in the program.

Working Seminar held on the Global Peace Index (GPI)

On May 9th, the BHF hosted a luncheon seminar with guest speaker, Mr. Steve Killelea, on approaches to measuring economic benefits of peace for companies and on the linkages between peace, sustainable business and economic growth. Mr. Killelea, a global IT entrepreneur and Australia's largest private donor of international aid, is the founder of the Global Peace Index, which ranks nations according to 24 indicators that act as a benchmark for measuring the relative peacefulness of nations (see also <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi/results/rankings/2008/>)



Mr. Killelea discussed the establishment of the Institute for Economics and Peace, which will focus on the inter-relationships between business, peace and economics as a way to demonstrate the benefits of peace for businesses. The ultimate purpose of these efforts is to measure the economic benefits of peace and help to construct mechanisms to engage business leaders and politicians in constructive ways to build sustainable peace. Seminar attendees, who were drawn from the private sector as well as from NGOs and UN organizations in Geneva, discussed these and related issues, called for them to be examined in much greater depth in follow-up events, and expressed great interest in how these topics could positively affect their own field of work.

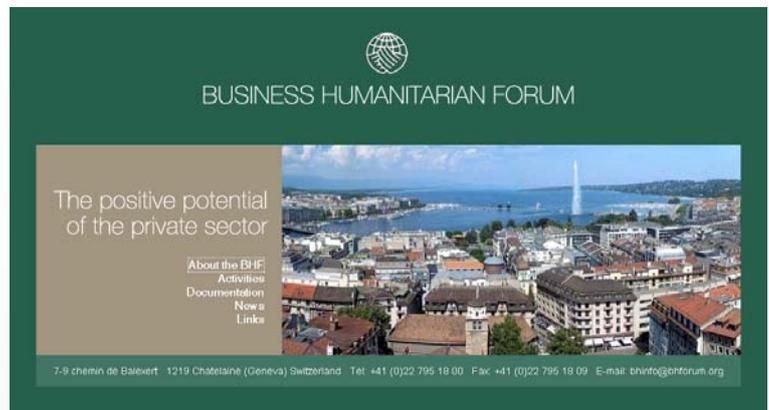
UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Grants Consultative Status to BHF

At its annual General Assembly meeting in New York in July, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) formally voted to grant the BHF consultative status within the ECOSOC system. This status will give the BHF the capacity to participate in various ECOSOC meetings on economic issues and to provide its views and experiences for the record. By virtue of its consultative status, the BHF also will enjoy enhanced access to UN officials as well as to UN offices and agencies dealing with these subjects. ECOSOC consultative status constitutes official UN recognition of the legitimacy and usefulness of the BHF's work in the economic reconstruction field and allows the BHF more effectively to participate in the UN's work in this area.



New BHF Website to be Launched in October

The BHF is making final preparations to launch a new website later in October 2008. With a clearer layout and more attractive graphics, the new website is simpler and easier to navigate and key information is presented in a more suitable format. The new website will be an important upgrade that modernizes the visual appearance of the BHF and improves the user-friendliness of the site as a whole. The website address, however, will remain the same: www.bhforum.org.



New BHF website homepage

Upcoming Events

On October 23 and 24, the BHF will again co-host a meeting in Geneva with the Conference Board Europe's Council on Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability on the subject of "Company Responsibilities in Countries with Human Rights Challenges." This meeting follows up a meeting on a similar topic this past February, but will review the recently published "Ruggie Report" which has provided a UN framework for business and human rights. The meeting is by invitation only will also examine further case studies related to business experiences in challenging human rights environments.

And on November 13 and 14, the BHF will co-host two meetings – one in Geneva and one in Zurich – on "Project Financing in Newly Emerging Markets." Working with the Swiss section of the International Chamber of Commerce, the BHF has organized a series of presentations by practitioners in the field. The objective is to spur interest and creative solutions to the problem of development financing in newly emerging markets. The meetings represent a continuation of a similar series of meetings held in 2007. Please e-mail Rob Dotta for further information on these events at rdotta@bhforum.org.