

Brief on De-briefing meeting for Expo Pakistan-2013 in Commercial Section-Tokyo

The de-briefing meeting of Expo Pakistan 2013 was held in the Embassy of Pakistan on November 20, 2013.

Main Points of Discussion-

The Ambassador of Pakistan wellcome all the distinguished delegates and expressed his gratitude for visiting Pakistan and attending the events of Expo Pakistan 2013. He informed the delegates that such visits of Japanese high profile business delegates would help in projecting the real image of Pakistan and dispel the misperceptions created by certain sections of media about Pakistan. He stressed the need for frequent visits of such kind, as seeing is believing.

The Ambassador informed the delegates that such de-briefing meetings are being arranged to take, frank and candid feedback of the delegates that would help in not only proper follow up but also to improve our future participations. He requested the delegates to share with us:

- Their overall experience about Pakistan.
- Effectiveness of their visit w.r.t Expo Pakistan 2013
- Feedback on
 - The best business practices being adopted in Pakistan
 - The quality of the product being displayed.
 - The available technology being used by the Pakistani companies
 - The quality of the human capital engaged by the Pakistani companies.
- Suggestions for improvement

AEON

This was their first visit to Pakistan and an experience to visit an exhibition in Pakistan. They consider that probably for certain reasons good companies from textile and clothing sector did not participate in the exhibition because after the exhibition when they visited various factories of home textiles and apparels they found out good companies with quality products being produced in Pakistan, good business practices being adopted in the leading manufacturing units of Pakistan. As compared to India they felt that Pakistani companies are more organized and making customized products for US and EU. They informed that IKEA Japan nearly import half of its bed linen from Pakistan. They had also a chance to visit FFC a big organization interested in entering Japan in the category of fresh and frozen vegetables and fruits. They consider this company as a potential company to compete the current import of frozen vegetables from China which is currently facing an image problem of adulteration.

However, they felt that the perception about Pakistan is a dangerous country with lot of security concerns therefore the Japanese are quite frightened because the Japanese Government has also issued a travel advisory not to travel to Pakistan. In contrast with their current experience about Pakistan where they felt no fear while moving in Karachi and Lahore. They informed that their current visit was in the individual capacity as the company policy did not allow them to travel to Pakistan.

They also informed that their group is also interested in importing fresh and processed fruits for AEON Group Malaysia from Pakistan. In this regard they would require the support of the Mission to take up the issue of travel advisory with the Foreign Office of Japan. They are also interested in the import of sports goods and sports wear keeping in view the upcoming Olympics 2020. Last but not least they would also like to look into the possibility of importing manicure & padicure and cutlery from Pakistan.

Their feedback regarding human resources in Pakistan they feel that they are sophisticated people and their first impression about Pakistan is that we can do business but Pakistan need to address the issue of tariff concessions to Pakistan, addressing the misperception about law and order and security in Pakistan and the logistics between Japan and Pakistan with special reference to cargo flights in addition to direct domestic flights.

G-MAX Corporation

This was their second visit in the same year and dealing with import of mangoes from Pakistan. Last year they imported a very small quantity but in the next season they are interested in import of 600 tons of mangoes from Pakistan. They also highlighted that the demand of Pakistani mangoes is going to be more in the coming year because of the recent disaster in Philippines which has destroyed the whole crop of mangoes in Philippines. They thanked the support of the Embassy of Pakistan and considered their visit to be very fruitful from business perspective.

SIDDIQUE Enterprises/ MATRIX Sourcing

They informed that their visit to Pakistan was related to two different product categories i.e. textile and clothing (Matrix Sourcing to act as buying agent for AEON, NITORI) and mangoes (AEON). They informed that their visit was successful and in addition to the T & C sector in the upcoming year their plan to import mangoes from Pakistan is about 4000 tons.

SCARECROW Co Ltd

They informed that they are dealing with medical supplements given to the pets. Though in their visit to Pakistan they could not have chance to meet exporters of this product but they had excellent meetings with veterinary doctors of Pakistan who were found very much interested in importing medical supplements for products in Pakistan. They hope that with the support of DTS Inc they would develop good business with Pakistan. In first step they intend to export the supplement and in the second would like to start productions in Pakistan and in addition to domestic sales would like to export to the adjacent global markets.

DTS Inc .

They informed that they had visited Pakistan several times but the way the event was handled this year, in terms of administrative, logistics arrangements and the business meetings, it need to be appreciated. The big issue they feel is the lack of information about Pakistan in the Japanese people. In the last 25 year the Japanese major investment has been towards China but there is a realization that after inclusion of Pakistan in N-11 countries they need to divert their eyes towards Pakistan. Traditionally Pakistan and Japan had very cordial relations based on common culture and life style and there is a need to take advantage to this asset.

They shared that working on JSEZ which will not only facilitate for increasing exports from Pakistan but also would give a chance to the Japanese investors who are interested to exploit the natural resources available in Pakistan for domestic market as well as later to export to the rest of the world. There is a need that Pakistan should focus on value addition rather than raw material both in agriculture as well as manufacturing sector. Pakistan also need to focus on packaging, facilitation for processed food and storage facilities with the help of the Japanese technology to meet the standards of Japanese market. They are currently working on the project where the technology and intellect of Japanese academia is being combined with intellect of Pakistani academia for production in Pakistan i.e. Tokyo University and Karachi University.

E-2 International

They informed that their visit was quite successful as they are making effort to enhance import of textile in Japan. In this regard they had some useful meetings in Pakistan to organize the single country exhibition in Osaka next year. Their second area of interest was Hydro Water Electricity Generation Project of 50 Megawatt in collaboration with Sindh Government, for which they had initial meetings with Sindh government during their visit at Expo 2013.

WORLD COMTECH Ltd

They informed that they are into two businesses; one related to IT industry and second import of minerals from Pakistan. They appreciated the arrangements made for facilitating the visit for Expo Pakistan and shared that they are optimistic that the negotiations at Expo 2013 on import of minerals from Pakistan for production of Iron & Steel would shortly start giving positive results.

APA Group

They informed that this was their first visit to Pakistan and they consider it very successful both from perspective of procurement of bed linen and cutlery products for their hotel industry and looking a possible joint venture partner in Pakistan for opening a hotel in Pakistan. They are impressed by the quality of the bed linen but there were slight issue of cost which they feel would be resolved soon. They also shared their apprehension about security issues in Pakistan. However, they appreciated the arrangements, meetings and shared their optimism towards starting import of bed linen from Pakistan.

NITORI (through separate conversation)

They informed that their visit was related to import of bed linen from Pakistan. Their visit was very successful in terms of finding manufacturers for not only bed linen but also some additional products related to home textiles i.e upholstery. They had also started negotiations for handmade woolen and man-made bio-eco friendly carpets. They see a lot of potential in shifting their business to Pakistan subject to issue of addressing the security issue and the travel advisory to visit Pakistan. They also share that they have found great potential for importing products from Pakistan in next phase for their new upcoming new stores being opened in US. Finally they also had chance to discuss with big retail chains of Pakistan i.e Gul Ahmad IDEAS and Nishat Group NISHAT LINEN regarding JV between both for domestic market of Pakistan and later replicating this model in adjoining market of India.

WORLD GOOD NEWS

They thanked the Embassy for their visit and shared their project of bringing foreign students into Japan for learning Japanese language. Their impression is that once they would learn the Japanese language then it would be very easy for them to know about the Japanese technology and later being hired by the Japanese companies working in their respective countries.

They had very successful programme for Bangladesh and Vietnam and now they is interested to do it in Pakistan.

SENKEN SHIMBUN CO LTD (through separate conversation)

They informed that it was their first chance to visit Pakistan and see the textile fashion industry of Pakistan. They had covered the whole event in their magazine and deeply impressed by the fashion industry of Pakistan. They had chance to visit and meet the representatives of Pakistan Institute of Fashion & Design (PIFD) and Indus Valley and see their collections in addition to see the collections of the major retails chain stores in Karachi. They are really impressed by the quality of fabric, design, asian-european fusion and above all the approach towards fashion. They feel that fashion industry of Pakistan had great potential in the Japanese market.

STREAM Corp(through separate conversation)

They informed that they were interested in import of Leather Products from Pakistan. This was their first visit to Pakistan and had good chance to see the variety of Leather Products produced in Pakistan. They feel that slightly the prices were higher than competitors but were quite optimistic that during negotiations they would settle this issue. However, they were impressed by the quality of products.

There was one consensus that in case the trade team would not have been with them this visit would have never been as effective, as they feel it is and they really appreciate the same and thankful to the Ambassador of Pakistan in Japan.

FINAL WORDS by the Ambassador

Ambassador thanked all the delegates for showing their interest in Pakistan and visiting to look with their own eyes and make their own impression about the quality of the products, the production process, the standards of compliance, the quality of the human resources and above all the security issues being most pursuant by the Japanese businessmen.

He reiterated that the visit of such high powered delegation at Expo Pakistan speak of its own about the misperception about our country. The efforts made by the Embassy of Pakistan for pre-departure meetings and debriefing meetings are very critical for affective output of the visit which would be very critical to have a proper follow-up.

We understand that we have lot of challenges but we also need to know that these challenges can be converted into opportunities keeping in view the highest rate of return on investment in the region. On the issue of market access and tariff concerns we are already engaged with the Japanese Government and the next Joint Ministerial Dialogue is planned for March 2014 where discussions on FTA with Japan would be on the top of the agenda.

Ambassador totally agreed with the apprehension of Japanese side regarding the issue of direct domestic and cargo flights and assured the delegates to take up this issue with both Governments to review the Air Services Agreement (ASA) to introduce direct flight at a minimum of code sharing basis.

He also agreed that there is a need to introduce Pakistan in the Japanese market and the Embassy plan to hold a single country exhibition before the start of next Expo Pakistan. He stressed the need for packaging, perseverance and presentation as key to success for the exporters of Pakistan to meet the standards of the Japanese market. He understands that the first visit of majority of the delegates would not achieve an immediate return but it set the stage for future interaction.

He finally requested to the delegates to give chance to the young Pakistani graduates in their respective fields to visit Japan as interns and learn the techniques and the culture of the Japanese corporations, so that they could replicate the same back at home.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks and possibility of frequent future interactions.