

## ICC steps up commitment to young entrepreneurs

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Following on from more than a quarter of a century of cooperation, ICC and Junior Chamber International (JCI), a worldwide federation for entrepreneurs and professionals under 40, have recently embarked on a variety of new joint initiatives to foster responsible entrepreneurship.

"Our relationship with the ICC is really producing visible results," said Graham Hanlon, JCI World President during his visit to Argentina where JCI Argentina and the Argentina Chamber of Commerce (Cámara Argentina de Comercio) established their relationship. "I have visited three JCI secretariats (Syria, Lebanon and more recently Argentina), all housed in ICC or Chamber of Commerce offices, and this will be the second agreement I have witnessed that will allow both organizations to develop international partnerships that will benefit everyone," he went on to say.

A similar agreement was recently signed between JCI Lebanon and ICC Lebanon, in which JCI will even assist ICC Lebanon with a facelift of its website.

Four years ago, both organizations pledged to assist each other in publicizing their activities, especially in the Middle East and Africa.

Earlier this month in Bangladesh, the Presidents of ICC Bangladesh and six local chambers, including the Federation, Metropolitan, Dhaka, and Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, met and drew up an action plan for chambers to work together to assist JCI Bangladesh assume a leadership role in providing expert guidance for young entrepreneurs.

At the same time, JCI Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BRAC Bank, a commercial bank in the country with a strong lending arm for small business. The MOU is aimed at aiding JCI develop its expertise in instructing SMEs on how to obtain financing and develop best practices in corporate social responsibility.

In July, JCI leaders will convene at the United Nations headquarters in New York for a summit designed to stimulate advancement on fulfilling the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through greater involvement in the UN Global Compact. The Compact is a framework for businesses to conduct their activities according to principles on human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption.

"As a global, multistakeholder initiative, the Global Compact has contributed to advancing voluntary corporate responsibility among a broad range of actors, articulating universal principles for voluntary corporate responsibility initiatives, and acting as a convening and learning forum to share and promote good practice, I applaud JCI for this initiative," said ICC Secretary General, Guy Sebban, who is a member of the UN Global Compact Board.

At the UN summit, a programme to grant a JCI seal of approval will be finalized, so JCI can recognize companies that meet high standards in their corporate social responsibility practices. Also to be discussed will be ways local JCI can work with UN Global Compact Networks, and a plan of action to collaborate more with ICC and the chamber of commerce community.

ICC World Chambers Federation has launched a survey to develop case studies of chamber-JCI initiatives from around the world, to be published on both the JCI & ICC WCF website in the second half of the year, as a way to provide inspiration to others for creating more of these joint projects. Some of these results will be showcased during the JCI Leadership Summit at the UN.

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