

**BLME'S MANAGER ATTENDS PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL  
VISITOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME**

*Sharjil Ahmed follows in the footsteps of world leaders*

**London, 10 May 2012** – Bank of London and The Middle East has today announced that Sharjil Ahmed, a manager for the bank was invited to attend the International Visitor Leadership Programme (IVLP), the US Department of State's premier professional exchange programme.

The IVLP was established in 1940 with the goal of promoting a better mutual understanding through educational and cultural exchange. With only one person invited from the UK each year, Sharjil has followed in the footsteps of ex-Prime Minister's Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Margaret Thatcher and Edward Heath, all of whom were selected to participate early on in their careers.

**Sharjil Ahmed, Manager at BLME commented:** "To have been asked to take part in the International Visitor Leadership Programme was a real honour. It was a truly fascinating experience that taught me a lot about cross border differences though social, economic, commercial and political exchange."

BLME believes that Sharjil's invitation demonstrates the growing international interest in Islamic finance.

**END**

**For more information contact:**

James Madsen, +44 (0) 20 7307 5328, james.madsen@capitalmsl.com

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**About BLME**

Bank of London and The Middle East plc ("BLME") is an independent UK wholesale Sharia'a compliant bank based in London. BLME received FSA authorisation in July 2007 and is the largest of its peers in Europe. It is led by a management team that brings together a combination of experienced international bankers and leading experts in Islamic finance.

BLME has three key business areas; Corporate Banking, Treasury and Wealth Management that includes Asset Management and Private Banking.

BLME is dedicated to offering innovative Islamic investment and financing products to businesses and high net-worth individuals in the European, US, Asian and MENA regions. To ensure that BLME's services and operations are wholly Sharia'a compliant, the Bank has a dedicated Sharia'a Supervisory Board ("SSB"). The SSB's role is to review contracts and agreements relating to all transactions ensuring that they are consistent with the principles of Islamic jurisprudence.

**About Islamic banking**

Islamic Finance upholds the principles of fairness, integrity and transparency. The principle of fairness is reflected in the risk and reward-sharing element that forms the foundation of every Islamic financial transaction.

Islamic finance aims to create business activities that generate a fair and equitable profit from transactions that are backed by real assets. This method of financing avoids speculation, short selling and excessive credit creation whilst encouraging sound risk management procedures.

Islamic banking has a robust system of risk management and self-regulation to ensure that each transaction is transparent and that the appropriate due diligence and higher standards of disclosure required are observed. To ensure compliance with these requirements each transaction and agreement is reviewed and approved by a Sharia'a Supervisory Board. This Sharia'a specific regulation and governance is in addition to the conventional regulation that applies to all UK based financial institutions.