



NATIONAL U.S.-ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

غرفة التجارة الأمريكية العربية الوطنية



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U.S. BUSINESS DELEGATION WRAPS UP HIGH-LEVEL MISSION TO ALGERIA AND TUNISIA

Despite Regional Challenges, Greenfield Economies of North Africa “Offer Tremendous Growth Potential”

*Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker: Economic Reform
“Will Turn Political Victory Into an Economic Triumph”*

A U.S. business delegation co-led by the U.S. Department of State, the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC), and the US – Algeria Business Council (USABC), recently concluded a week-long trade and investment mission to Algeria and Tunisia. The high-level infrastructure-focused mission, which included representatives of 18 American firms, spent time with top business leaders and senior government officials, including the President of Tunisia, H.E. Beji Caid Essebsi, the Prime Minister of Tunisia, H.E. Habib Essid, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Hon. Penny Pritzker, former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and numerous ministers from both Algeria and Tunisia.

The public / private delegation spent three working days in Algeria and four working days in Tunisia. During that time, delegates played a key role in several important business events in the region, including: the U.S. – Algeria Trade & Investment Conference, held in Algiers; the Investment & Entrepreneurship Conference, co-organized in Tunis by the American Chamber of Commerce in Tunisia (AmCham



Delegation members pose with H.E. Abdesselam Bouchouareb (center, top row), Algeria’s Minister of Industry and Mining, at the U.S. - Algeria Trade & Investment Conference.



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Tunisia), Partners for a New Beginning – North Africa Partnership for Economic Opportunity (PNB-NAPEO), and the U.S. Department of State; and the Mediterranean Building Exhibition (MEDIBAT), a regional infrastructure conference organized by the Sfax Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



Hon. Charles Rivkin, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs: "Today, I come to reaffirm our country's commitment to Algeria's economic future."

Co-leader of the mission, Hon. Charles Rivkin, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, noted, "Through our well-represented business delegation, the United States clearly demonstrated its commitment to being a major economic partner in the region."

and a co-leader of the delegation. "Algeria and Tunisia rolled out the red carpet for our delegation, and I am confident that many of our companies will secure business deals as a result of this visit."

"The Greenfield economies of North Africa offer tremendous growth potential for U.S. firms," said David Hamod, President & CEO of the U.S. – Arab Chamber

The mission's third co-leader was Dr. Ismael Chikhoun, President & CEO of the US – Algeria Business Council (USABC), who said, "U.S. delegates had the opportunity to learn about the ambitious program of Algeria's economic development plan for the next five years in different sectors, including all the incentives that the Algerian Government is putting into place to encourage investment and partnerships."

ALGERIA

Day One in Algeria

Day One was dedicated to high-level briefings at the Ministry of Industry and Mining, the Ministry of Water Resources, and the Ministry of Health.

In a briefing at the Ministry of Industry and Mining led by H.E. Abdulkrim Mansouri, Director of Algeria's National Agency for the Development of Investment (ANDI), delegates learned about Algeria's new development plan (2015 – 2019), which will guide the investment of \$262 billion in infrastructure development projects over the next five years.



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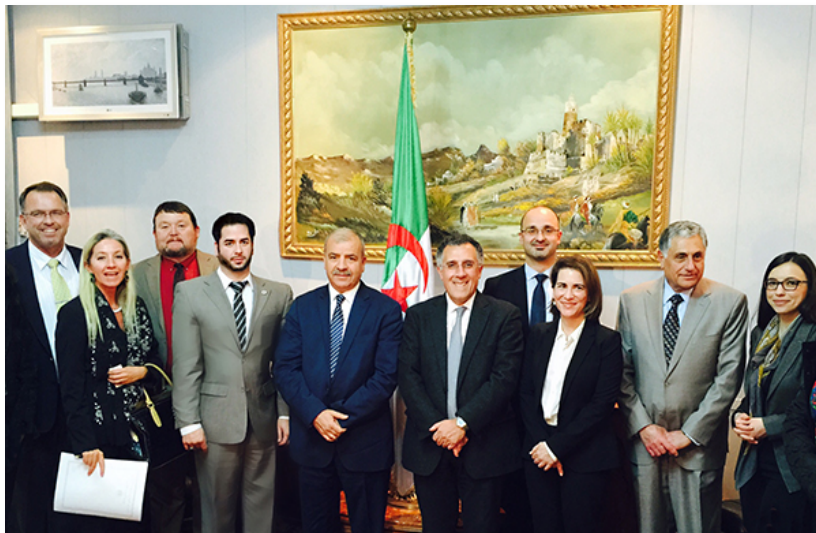
According to Mansouri, priority sectors will include agriculture, industry, tourism, and information & communications technologies (ICT). Geographically speaking, Mansouri said, Algeria is the biggest country in Africa, at 2.38 million square kilometers, with plenty of room to grow. “Algeria is the most stable country in the region,” he noted, highlighting the minimal impact of the Arab Spring on Algeria.



At a briefing at the Ministry of Industry and Mining, H.E. Abdulkrim Mansouri (center), discussed Algeria's priority growth sectors and opportunities for U.S. businesses.

There are commercial opportunities across the board, Mansouri suggested, including such leading edge (and potentially lucrative) sectors as biotechnology, healthcare, housing, and alternative energy, especially solar technologies. (Algeria receives 3,000 hours of sunlight per year.) Education is also a growth area, Mansouri said. Algeria is growing by one million persons per year, he concluded, with 1.5 million graduates annually.

At the Ministry of Water Resources, delegates met with H.E. Minister Hocine Necib, who noted that Algeria spends more money on water projects than any other country in Africa: \$40 billion spent since the year 2000, with an average expenditure of \$3 billion per year.



H.E. Hocine Necib, Minister of Water Resources (center left), invited U.S. companies with expertise in dams, high-intensity pumps, and irrigation to partner with Algeria on its upcoming water projects, averaging \$3 billion per year.

In the new five-year plan (2015 – 2019), Necib said, management of water resources will be a high priority, including but not limited to building and maintaining dams, installing high intensity pumps, and undertaking extensive irrigation projects. Algeria plans to irrigate more than one million hectares, the minister noted, “and we need the best expertise and know-how to take on this challenge.”



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Necib concluded, “We are seeking partnerships with enterprises that are experts in this field, with sufficient capacity to tackle these projects. We know that American companies have strong capabilities, and the ministry looks forward to working with them.”

Day One ended with a VIP Dinner held at the Algeria’s State Hall, *Djennan El Mithak*.



At the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Algiers, VIPs include (from left to right): Amin Salam, NUSACC VP of Business Development; Hon. Charles Rivkin, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs; Hon. Anne Patterson, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs; Hon. Joan A. Polaschik, U.S. Ambassador to Algeria; David Hamod, NUSACC President & CEO; and Dr. Ismael Chikhoun, U.S.-Algeria Business Council President & CEO.

Day Two in Algeria

Day Two was dedicated to the U.S. – Algeria Trade & Investment Conference, timed to coincide with the U.S. delegation’s visit. More than 200 Algerian companies participated in the event, which presented excellent opportunities for Business-To-Business (B2B) meetings. U.S. companies made presentations at the conference, which included the following keynote speakers:

- H.E. Abdesselam Bouchouareb, Minister of Industry and Mining
- Hon. Charles Rivkin, Assistant Secretary of State
- H.E. Ali Haddad, President of the Forum for Heads of Enterprises
- Mr. David Hamod, President & CEO, NUSACC
- Dr. Ismael Chikhoun, President & CEO, USABC



Remarks of the Minister of Industry and Mining

Last October, Minister Abdesselam Bouchouareb, Algeria’s Minister of Industry and Mining, led the highest level public / private delegation from Algeria ever to visit the United States. Dubbed the “Algeria Road Show,” and co-organized by the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce and the US – Algeria Business Council, the Algerian delegation interfaced with hundreds of U.S. companies in Chicago and Washington DC.

The American delegation’s visit to Algiers, Minister Bouchouareb noted, “represents an excellent continuation of the efforts that were made during our visit to the United States in October, 2014.” Trade and investment missions like these “open many doors and help to realize potential opportunities,” he said. “We already see the positive results.”

“Algeria is open for business,” Minister Bouchouareb noted. “Specifically, Algeria is open to partnerships and joint ventures with serious enterprises from the United States.”

The minister pointed out that the Governments of Algeria and the United States are discussing a number of bilateral agreements, including the Algeria – U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). These agreements will help to expand the U.S. – Algeria commercial relationship, he said, in such sectors as mining, pharmaceuticals, renewables, telecommunications, tourism, and infrastructure development. “We are not just a nation of oil & gas,” he noted.

Algeria supports public private partnerships (PPPs), Minister Bouchouareb suggested, as well as opportunities for Small & Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). SMEs make up the “backbone of any economy,” he said, and “here in Algeria, SMEs are playing a major, proactive role in all industries. The United States is a leader in SMEs, and we look forward to developing initiatives that allow us to bring our SMEs together with U.S. SMEs.”

Equally important, he suggested, are education and research, “two major tools for any nation to develop and thrive. We know that we can rely on a partner like the United States to help develop both of those fields,” Minister Bouchouareb said.



H.E. Abdesselam Bouchouareb, Algeria’s Minister of Industry and Mining.



Last but not least, he suggested, advanced technology represents yet another strength of U.S. companies. “We as a government are supporting initiatives to develop high-end technological capabilities serving all fields and industries,” he concluded, “and one way to do that is through exchange of knowledge and technology transfer with the United States.”

Remarks of the Assistant Secretary of State

In his remarks at the U.S. – Algeria Trade & Investment Conference, Assistant Secretary of State Charles Rivkin, like Minister Bouchouareb before him, highlighted the “win/win” nature of the U.S. – Algeria relationship.

American delegates are visiting Algeria “to establish ongoing and lasting relationships that strengthen both of our countries,” Rivkin noted. “American firms bring with them the latest technologies, the world’s best business practices and, most importantly, the know-how that they can transfer to their Algerian partners so that Algerian companies can become leaders in new sectors across the country.”

“Beyond the large investments and business transactions,” Rivkin said, “U.S. companies also have a culture of promoting innovation and entrepreneurial spirit that proves over and over again to be our greatest export.”

The Assistant Secretary highlighted the recent TIFA talks between U.S. and Algerian officials. “This was the first such meeting in more than 11 years,” he noted, “and it restarted conversations on how to facilitate easier access for goods and greater flows of capital. Throughout these discussions, it was clear that both sides had an honest and sincere interest in overcoming the obstacles of the past and setting a new tone for the future.”

“Today, I come to reaffirm our country’s commitment to Algeria’s economic future,” Rivkin said. “As long as the people of our two nations have aspirations and hopes for economic opportunity, it is our duty to honor them. The areas of



Hon. Anne Patterson, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs (left), and Hon. Charles Rivkin, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs (right), during a press conference upon their arrival in Algeria.

(Photo courtesy of Elwatan)



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cooperation that I laid out this morning are some of the ways that we can write our own stories, create our own prosperity, and change the trajectories of our future.”

“Once we overcome the remaining hurdles,” Rivkin concluded, “The potential of our relationship will be limited only by our imaginations.”

Day Two ended at the residence of the U.S. Ambassador, Hon. Joan Polaschik, who hosted a reception for the U.S. delegation and government dignitaries from Algeria and the United States. The latter included Hon. Charles Rivkin, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, and Hon. Anne Patterson, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

Day Three in Algeria

Day Three was dedicated to select site visits and Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings as follow-ups to the U.S. – Algeria Trade & Investment Conference. In the afternoon, delegates departed for Tunisia on Tunis Air.

TUNISIA

Day One in Tunisia

Day One in Tunisia, like Day One in Algeria, was dedicated to high-level briefings about commercial opportunities.

Briefing at the U.S. Embassy

U.S. Ambassador Jake Wallis and his team provided delegates with an overview of U.S. – Tunisia ties. “2014 was a breakthrough year in the relationship,” he noted. With a new consensus government leading the country, he suggested, “the fundamentals are now in place, and Tunisia wants to move forward. The country sees itself as a potential model for the region.”



The United States is well positioned to work with Tunisia, Wallis said, on economic reforms that will help to make the nation a more attractive investment destination. These

Hon. Jake Wallis, U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia: “Tunisia is positioning itself as a regional hub, and it sees itself as an island of stability in an otherwise rough neighborhood. The United States will continue to stand by Tunisia as it consolidates its democracy.”

(Photo courtesy U.S. Department of State)



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reforms include but are not limited to overhauling the investment code and public / private partnership laws, upgrading Tunisia's customs service and tax regime, restructuring the banking sector, and encouraging stronger intellectual property laws. He noted that "transparency, predictability, and the rule of law" are essential elements needed to attract more extensive foreign direct investment (FDI) into Tunisia.

The United States has provided Tunisia with nearly \$600 million in assistance since the revolution, Walles said, including loan guarantees, technical assistance for entrepreneurs, scholarships, security training, and advice on economic reform. Assistance has also included creation of the Tunisian-American Enterprise Fund, capitalized at \$60 million so far, to promote Tunisia's business community with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

"Tunisia is positioning itself as a regional hub," Ambassador Walles concluded, "and it sees itself as an island of stability in an otherwise rough neighborhood. The United States will continue to stand by Tunisia as it consolidates its democracy."

Meeting with Tunisia's Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining

Investment and manufacturing are an integral part of Tunisia's efforts to bolster its economy. Some of that responsibility falls to H.E. Zakaria Hamad, that nation's Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining.

In a meeting with the delegation, Hamad described Tunisia's ambitious plans for industrial development and related services. "We will be working closely with our international partners to ensure a high quality product and to encourage the latest technologies to improve productivity and advanced manufacturing," he said. "We hope that with the support of countries like the United States, we will undertake studies on innovation and



Meeting with the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (from left to right): Christine Arakelian, Global Health Integrators; Mehran Etemad, International Waste Industries; Amin Salam, NUSACC; Charles Rivkin, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State; H.E. Zakaria Ahmed, Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining; David Hamod, NUSACC; Jihad Khoury, Future Pipe Industries; Ramla Benaissa, Ramla Benaissa Architects; and Reda Znaidi, First Solar.



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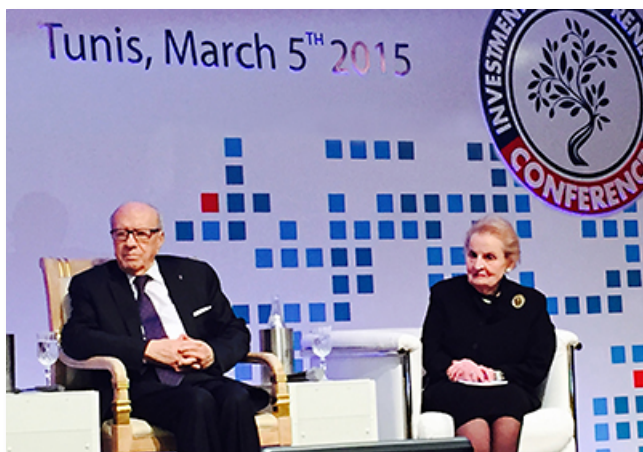
industrial processes in order to strengthen the acquisition and transfer of technology in cooperation with America's public and private sectors.”

Hamad suggested that he welcomes U.S. advice on new regulations and best practices with a view to implementing international standards that will enable Tunisia to compete in the global marketplace. Of special interest, he said, is agribusiness, a sector in which Tunisia is well positioned to compete. The ministry will also redouble its efforts to work with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Hamad suggested, in order to create new commercial opportunities for startups.

Day Two in Tunisia

Day Two was dedicated to the Investment & Entrepreneurship Conference, co-organized by the American Chamber of Commerce in Tunisia (AmCham Tunisia), Partners for a New Beginning – North Africa Partnership for Economic Opportunity (PNB-NAPEO), and the U.S. Department of State. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for delegation members to exchange views with newly-installed Tunisian ministers, including:

- H.E. Yassine Brahim, Minister of Development, Investment and International Cooperation
- H.E. Slim Chaker, Minister of Finance
- H.E. Noomane Fehri, Minister of Communication Technologies and Digital Economy
- H.E. Zakaria Hamad, Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining
- H.E. Zied Ladhari, Minister of Vocational Training and Employment
- H.E. Ridha Lahouel, Minister of Commerce



The conference opened with a recorded message from President Barack Obama, whose message was clear: “As Tunisia consolidates its democracy, the United States is proud to be your partner,” he said. “Like you, we know democracy requires strong democratic institutions, but also economic growth and opportunity, so citizens see that democracy can deliver a better life.”

Serving as keynote speakers in the Tunisia Investment & Entrepreneurship Conference were Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi (left), who offered the conference's finale keynote, and former U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright (right).



Remarks of Tunisia's Prime Minister

This theme was echoed by H.E. Habib Essid, Tunisia's Prime Minister. "Now more than ever," he said, "Tunisia needs the support of friendly countries to ensure the revival of its economy." Tunisia has made significant progress in its transition to democracy, he suggested, but the country continues to face large socio-economic challenges.

"We are trying to build a system based on freedom and pluralism and to introduce the principle of peaceful succession to power," the Prime Minister noted. Tunisians have faced some doubts during this transition period, he concluded, but that will not stop Tunisia from "continuing on the path laid through dialogue . . . and in the spirit of consensus that characterizes all Tunisians."



H.E. Habib Essid, Prime Minister of Tunisia (left), and Hon. Penny Pritzker, U.S. Secretary of Commerce (right).

Remarks of U.S. Secretary of Commerce

Hon. Penny Pritzker, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, delivered a keynote speech that commended the Tunisian people for their courage and lauded Tunisia's growing commitment to economic reform. "Four years ago, a new era began with a protest here in Tunis, launching a revolution and capturing the attention of the world," she said. "Thousands of people took to the streets, fed up with the tyranny of a government that denied its own citizens basic dignity, respect, and economic opportunity."

"Today, we cannot forget that the roots of your extraordinary political upheaval were about economic freedom," Pritzker continued. "Mohamed Bouazizi's demands were simple: the chance to earn a good living; the opportunity to start a business; and the need to put food on the table and support a family."

"Now," Pritzker said, "the world is watching to see what you do next to turn your political victory into an economic triumph . . ." "The next step – economic reform – is essential if the revolution is to fulfill the ambitions of the Tunisian people."



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Like the political process, Pritzker suggested, “the road ahead will be challenging. But you are fortunate. Tunisia possesses enormous assets that make a brighter future possible. Your broad, inclusive coalition government bespeaks Tunisia’s political stability. Your location, culture, and language place Tunisia as a vital link between Europe and Africa. Your country’s natural beauty makes Tunisia a magnet for a blossoming and revitalized tourism industry. And your well-educated and youthful population is a reservoir of talent.”



The panel, “North Africa as an Investment Destination: Challenges and Opportunities,” was moderated by David Hamod (left), NUSACC President & CEO, and included (from left to right): H.E. Slim Chaker, Tunisian Minister of Finance; Elizabeth Littlefield, Overseas Private Investment Corporation President & CEO; H.E. Ali Haddad, President of the Forum for Heads of Enterprises (Algeria); Driss Benhima, Royal Air Maroc President & CEO; and H.E. Jaloul Ayed, international banker and former Minister of Finance (Tunisia).

With nearly three decades of experience in America’s private sector, Pritzker focused on four areas left over from the Ben Ali era that are ripe for economic reform:

- 1) *Tunisia’s investment code*, which Pritzker characterized as a “byzantine maze.” She said, “Streamlining, simplifying, and clarifying the investment code will incentivize business formation, facilitate more private sector growth and competition, and send a signal to local and global investors that Tunisia is open for business.”
- 2) *Tunisia’s banking system*, which is “burdened by too many non-performing loans” and which needs a “bankruptcy law that protects risk-takers and permits failure. These are cornerstones of any successful entrepreneurial ecosystem.”



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- 3) *Tunisia's tax and customs system*, which Pritzker characterized as “unpredictable, inefficient, and far too discretionary.” Tunisia needs a “transparent, reliable, and modern tax and customs structure,” she said, with “equitable tax brackets that incorporate the informal economy into the broader market.”
- 4) *A strong public-private partnerships law*. Tunisia will benefit from a forward-looking PPP law, Pritzker noted, one that “increases transparency and predictability for domestic and foreign firms who want to invest in your future, reduces red tape for international investors, and attracts private capital for needed infrastructure projects.”

In terms of deliverables, Pritzker committed the U.S. Department of Commerce to launching a public-private partnership called [Regional Investments to Support Entrepreneurship \(RISE\)](#). She also committed to posting a new Commercial Service employee in Tunis to coordinate with private sector partners who will: increase training, mentoring, and access to finance for entrepreneurs; support the development of incubators and accelerators for Tunisian entrepreneurs; and encourage economic reforms that improve the commercial environment.”



Some of the delegation members joined U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker (front center right) and U.S. Ambassador Jake Wallis (second from right) at a gala dinner, held at the Acropolis de Carthage in Tunis.



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In wrapping up her remarks, Pritzker said, “I hope that my message today is crystal clear: America is your partner as you work to transform your economy to meet the aspirations of all of Tunisia’s citizens. I know that this transformation will not be easy and will not happen overnight. For a people that toppled a longstanding regime in the span of just four weeks, I realize that expectations run high for immediate results. But with patience from Tunisia’s citizens and with persistence from Tunisia’s government to undertake necessary reforms, I believe you will succeed in creating the conditions for investment, for job creation, and for broad-based growth.”

“The United States will support Tunisia’s government as it cultivates what President Obama has called ‘the greatest untapped resource in the Middle East and North Africa . . . the talent of its people’,” Pritzker pledged. “We will stand by Tunisia as you continue to fulfill the promises of your revolution – a politics that adheres to the voices of Tunisia’s citizens; an economy that advances opportunity for Tunisia’s families; the ability to realize your dreams of dignity and democracy; and the freedom to speak out and determine your own destiny.”

“This is Tunisia’s moment,” she concluded, “and if you seize it, your country can be a model of peace and prosperity not only for this region, but for the entire world.”

The Perspective of AmCham Tunisia

The American Chamber of Commerce in Tunisia ([AmCham Tunisia](#)), an organizer of the conference in Tunis, plays an important role as a commercial bridge between the United States and the Republic of Tunisia. AmCham’s President, Ms. Amel Bouchamaoui, urged, “At a time of political and economic challenges, we need more ambition, audacity, and creativity in our approach, as well as strong leadership to take bold, high visibility initiatives in key areas that can have a positive impact -- immediately and in the long-term.” She recommended three ways to accomplish this:

To the Government of Tunisia, she said: “Make Tunisia a more attractive partner to the United States and to the world by: creating a thriving environment for investment; eliminating unnecessary restrictions; enhancing Tunisia’s international credibility; investing in people (education, knowledge, and skills); investing in infrastructure; engaging appropriate reforms to raise effectiveness; encouraging innovation; enhancing growth and employment by working



Ms. Amel Bouchamaoui Hammami, AmCham Tunisia: “I urge you not to forgo this opportunity to choose the region and Tunisia as your destination. It is a place where you can travel, share ideas, do business, create wealth, and enjoy living.”



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hand-in-hand with business . . . and with national social partners to ensure social peace, social stability and social progress.”

To the U.S. Government, she said: “Establish a sense of urgency, launch a major initiative, and deliver quick wins. An ambitious and structured approach to our relationship is essential to deliver the conditions for tangible and sustainable results and to create opportunities for the long term in key areas such as trade, investment, entrepreneurship, science, technology, innovation, education, capacity building, and people-to-people exchanges.”

Hon. Madeline Albright, former U.S. Secretary of State (center), flanked by David Hamod, NUSACC President & CEO (left) and Amin Salam, NUSACC Vice President of Business Development.

And to Tunisia’s partners in the Maghreb, she said: “Initiate a structured regional dialogue toward regional integration to address the new challenges facing the region and to create opportunities and leverage benefits from cooperation and partnership with the United States and the rest of the world.”

She concluded, “To all our partners and friends . . . I urge you not to forgo this opportunity to choose the region and Tunisia as your destination. It is a place where you can travel, share ideas, do business, create wealth, and enjoy living.”

Remarks of Tunisia’s President

The day’s keynote finale came from H.E. Beji Caid Essebsi, Tunisia’s 88-year-old President, who delivered a lively, extemporaneous speech that dazzled the audience.

It is well known that Tunisia must bring about economic reform, President Essebsi said, in such areas as governance, the business climate, the fight against corruption, the consolidation of banking systems, and overhaul of the nation’s financial and tax regimes. “These reforms are necessary,” he said, “and they will happen without further delay.”



H.E. Beji Caid Essebsi, President of Tunisia: “Tunisia is now halfway and has no other choice but to move forward on the path of economic transition.”



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Contrary to some perceptions, he said, these reforms “are not dictated by international donors.” Rather, he noted, they are driven by Tunisian experts, including political and economic leaders.

Tunisia is now halfway and has no other choice but to move forward on the path of economic transition.” Tunisia is the “only Arab country that has succeeded, with minimal damage, to complete a political transition with the promulgation of a new constitution, along with free and transparent parliamentary and presidential elections,” President Essebsi pointed out.

He concluded, “Tunisia is now halfway and has no other choice but to move forward on the path of economic transition.” Working with foreign partners, especially the United States, he noted, will help to move Tunisia toward “unavoidable structural reforms, despite their impact, which can sometimes be painful.”

Day Three in Tunisia

For delegation members, Day Three began with a roundtable discussion with members of the Union Tunisienne de l’Industrie, du Commerce, et de L’Artisanat ([UTICA](#)), Tunisia’s largest business association. The session was overseen by Her Excellency Ouided Bouchamaoui, President of UTICA, and included heads of trade groups and leading businessmen and businesswomen across multiple sectors. The two sides discussed avenues of potential cooperation based upon technology exchange, knowledge transfer, and capacity-building to support human resources development.



The delegation visited the Bardo National Museum on their third day in Tunisia. Left photo (left to right): Jihad Khoury, Future Pipe Industries; Mehran Etemad, International Waste Industries; Amin Salam, NUSACC. Center photo: close up of Roman mosaic. Right photo: Tiled courtyard.



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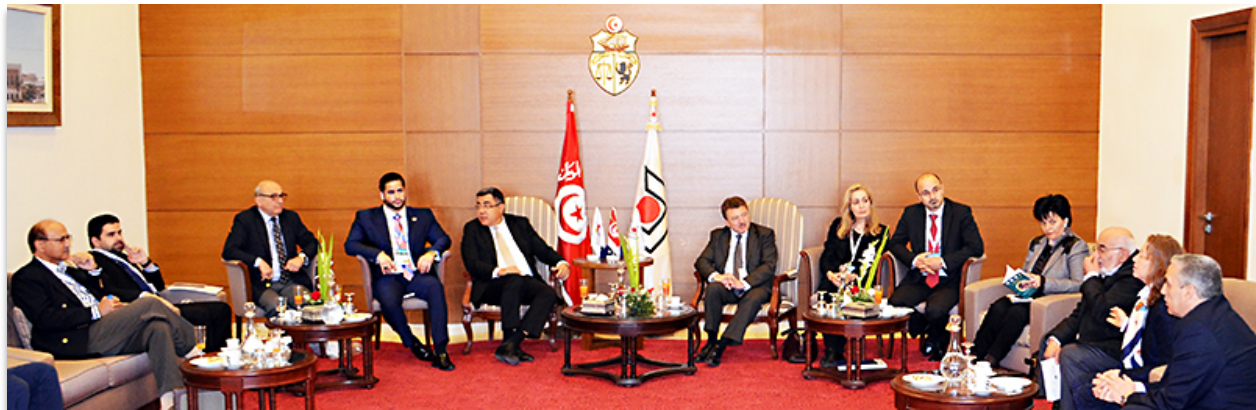
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Following Business-To-Business (B2B) meetings at UTICA, delegates paid a visit to the [Bardo National Museum](#), which features the world's most impressive collection of Roman mosaics, in addition to Islamic and Tunisian artifacts. The museum, originally called the Alaoui Museum, is housed in the former palace of the Bey of Tunis. (The Bardo Museum was the site of a terrorist attack on March 18 that killed more than 20 civilians, mostly tourists.)

Delegates then traveled to the city of Sfax, an industrial and agricultural hub located on Tunisia's Eastern Seaboard, where they were hosted for dinner by the [Sfax Chamber of Commerce & Industry](#). Sfax boasts the largest fishing port in Tunisia and is widely regarded as Tunisia's "Second City" – after Tunis, the capital. Sfax has its roots in commerce – it was founded in the year 849 on the ruins of ancient crossroads cities – and Sfax today plays a key role in supplying the commercial needs of Tunisia and neighboring Libya.

Last Day in Tunisia



A VIP tour of MEDIBAT, the Mediterranean Building Exhibition organized by the Sfax Chamber of Commerce & Industry, included a private meeting for the delegation with MEDIBAT's top leadership.

Day Four included a VIP tour of [MEDIBAT](#), the Mediterranean Building Exhibition organized by the Sfax Chamber of Commerce & Industry. This year's event drew exhibitors and participants from more than 20 nations, particularly Europe and Africa. Under the theme of "Africa is the Heart of MEDIBAT," the trade show drew ministerial-level delegations from numerous African countries.



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The National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce led the visit to MEDIBAT, which included the largest American delegation ever to attend that show. Delegates also had the privilege to spend quality time with two Tunisian ministers, H.E. Slim Chaker, Minister of Finance, and H.E. Ridha Lahouel, Minister of Commerce, who toured MEDIBAT with the U.S. delegation in tow.



The delegation walked the floor of the MEDIBAT Exhibition in Sfax with a number of Tunisian dignitaries, including H.E. Slim Chaker (front row, fourth from right), Minister of Finance; and H.E. Ridha Lahouel (front row, fourth from left), Minister of Commerce.

A sendoff luncheon, hosted by the Sfax Chamber of Commerce & Industry, included local government dignitaries, regional business leaders, and the American delegation. In the words of H.E. Ridha Fourati, President of the Chamber, “Sfax is proud to be the most commercial city in Tunisia, and we are equally proud to welcome so many distinguished visitors to our city. Tunisia is seeking trade and investment, and the excellent turnout for MEDIBAT reaffirms the fact that these delegates came to the right place!”

On the drive back to the capital city of Tunis, delegation members visited [El Jem](#), the last stop on the week-long visit to Algeria and Tunisia. El Jem is a Roman coliseum built around 238 AD and is one of the world’s largest ancient amphitheaters.

Parting Impressions

The 28-member U.S. delegation, at full complement, consisted of 18 U.S. companies representing 11 States and the District of Columbia. One-third of the delegation was made up of major multinationals, while two-thirds of the delegation consisted of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In 2014, revenues for the 18 companies totaled more than \$350 billion.



“The delegation’s visit approach provided outstanding opportunities to network with important regional players, as well as key U.S. Government stakeholders,” said Mr. Bernard J. Dunn, [The Boeing Company’s](#) President for Turkey and North Africa. “We believe these activities add true value and represent an excellent platform to discuss business challenges and opportunities.”

“High-level engagement to government decision-makers, including U.S. Ambassadors, enabled delegation members to gain unique insights into commercial opportunities in North Africa, an increasingly important market for Ford Motor Company,” noted Ms. Simonetta Verdi, Director, Government and Community Relations for [Ford](#) Middle East and Africa.

“The mission to Algeria and Tunisia gave us a new perspective on countries with extraordinary potential that are often overlooked,” said Ramla Benaissa, CEO of [Ramla Benaissa Architects](#), based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. “These nations present tremendous opportunities for architecture consulting. Delegation organizers provided the settings for meaningful discussions and exchanges with key government and business leaders in the fields of infrastructure and construction.” She concluded, “I am grateful to be part of this highly successful mission, which opened doors to these unique and promising countries.”



Mehran Etemad, President & CEO of International Waste Industries, in front of the El Jem coliseum.

Keith Esplin, Executive Director of [NEU Seed](#), an Idaho-based cooperative of potato seed growers, noted, “The market for our product in North Africa is one of the biggest in the world, and we were very impressed by the high level of interest expressed by growers and importers there. Even more impressive, perhaps, was the incredible hospitality that was extended to us every step of the way.”

“This was a well-organized bilateral mission that provided access to key U.S., Algerian, and Tunisian officials. The highlight was the B2B meetings with the key decision-makers in each country,” noted Nasim Khan, Vice President of Business Development in Africa at Arizona-based [First Solar](#). “I was very impressed with the organizers’ commitment to



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promote U.S. companies, as well as their high-level relationships in each of the host countries. Overall, a job very well done.”

“The prospect for waste management and renewable energy is great in both countries,” said Mehran Etemad, President & CEO of [International Waste Industries](#), which has installed more than 700 systems worldwide. “The authorities are fully aware of the serious problems regarding the landfills and open dumps, and they must make the hard decisions and proper investment to control this hazardous situation.”

“The mission offered me an unmatched value in meeting various high level officials and business leaders in both countries. Despite the diversity of sectors represented by our delegation, many of our meetings were targeted and customized, allowing us critical time with decision-makers and influencers in our respective industries,” said Jihad Joseph Khoury, Vice President – Africa at [Future Pipe Industries](#), a world leader in the design and production of fiberglass pipe systems. “Certainly, this will significantly improve my company’s ability to generate business in the region. Thank you for your excellent support and professionalism,” he concluded.



NUSACC President & CEO David Hamod accepts a gift of appreciation from H.E. Ridha Fourati, President of the Sfax Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

“U.S. businesses are in the vanguard of our engagement overseas, bringing with them the latest technologies and the world’s best business practices,” concluded Assistant Secretary of State Charles Rivkin. “Our government remains committed to supporting these firms as part of our greater diplomatic efforts, and with partners like NUSACC and USABC, we have made great strides in strengthening our commercial relationships in North Africa.”

The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, widely regarded as the voice of American business in the Arab world, is in touch with business communities across the United States and serves as the U.S. point of contact for the national chambers of commerce in the 22 Arab nations. On a daily basis, NUSACC works closely with leaders throughout the Arab world, as well as high-level decision makers in the U.S. business community, public policy research centers, multilateral institutions, nongovernmental organizations, media, and the U.S. Government.