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## NUSACC AND TRIPOLI CHAMBER (LIBYA) SIGN HISTORIC M.O.U. IN WASHINGTON, DC

### U.S. Special Envoy for Libya: Partnerships Like These Strengthen Libya's Physical, Political, and Social Infrastructure

#### *New Agreement Will Focus on Agriculture, Energy, Fisheries, High Tech, Infrastructure, and Sustainability*

On January 19, the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) and the Tripoli (Libya) Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to enhance commercial activity between Libya and the United States. The ceremony took place at the historic Meridian House, an appropriate venue for this high-level signing event.

Senior U.S. Government officials participating in the signing ceremony included Ambassador Richard Norland, U.S. Special Envoy for Libya, and Hon. Megan Doherty, Deputy Assistant Administrator at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).



NUSACC was represented by David Hamod, President & CEO, as well as Hon. James Smith, a NUSACC Board member and a former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

MOU signing ceremony at the Meridian International Center in Washington, DC. Signatories included NUSACC's David Hamod (center left) and H.E. Anwer Salem Abusetta (center right), Chairman of the Tripoli Chamber. Senior U.S. Government officials participated, led by Amb. Richard Norland (standing/center left), U.S. Special Envoy for Libya, and Hon. Megan Doherty (standing/center), Deputy Assistant Administrator at USAID. Business executives from select U.S. companies also supported the event.

The Tripoli Chamber was represented by its Chairman, H.E. Anwer Abusetta, as well as Mr. Esam Aljhani (Member of the Board) and Dr. Tarek Elsmuai (Manager of International Relations and Cooperation).

“Our Chamber is proud of its excellent relationship with the Tripoli Chamber, which is marked by decades of cooperation and partnership,” said NUSACC’s David Hamod. “We look forward to building on these successes in the months ahead.”

## Norland: Libya as a Gateway

Ambassador Norland complimented the two chambers for their efforts to ramp up commercial activity. “I am very honored to take part in this truly significant event,” he noted. “It is significant because these chambers are reinforcing a relationship between the United States and Libya, a country that has a strategic role to play as a crossroads in the Mediterranean – leading to Europe, Africa, and even through the Suez Canal to the Far East.”



**Amb. Richard Norland**

“Paving the way for Libya’s *physical* infrastructure may serve as a model for the country’s *political* and *social* infrastructure.”

It is also significant, Norland said, that Libya’s first delegation of 2023 is visiting the World of Concrete show in the United States. Concrete is a foundation for infrastructural development, he suggested. “Libya has a tremendous need for rebuilding infrastructure and creating new infrastructure,” he noted, “which will help that country serve as a gateway to the rest of Africa and throughout the region.”

In addition to working on Libya’s *physical* infrastructure, Norland pointed out, there is a pressing need to strengthen Libya’s *political* and *social* infrastructure. “Maybe what we are doing here – paving the way for Libya’s physical infrastructure – will serve as a model for what needs to be done for the political and social infrastructure: Reuniting the country’s political institutions, Central Bank, military infrastructure, and other institutions.”

“The United States is absolutely committed to make this the year of elections in Libya because elections are key to producing the kind of unity that Libya needs,” Norland said. “We also need to help ensure that Libya’s very substantial revenues are distributed in a way that meets the needs of its people.”

## Hamod: The Role of Commerce

NUSACC’s David Hamod noted that Washington DC and Tripoli have a “long history together, stretching back to 1796, when Tripoli recognized a very young country called the United States of America.” This long history serves as a foundation for the relationship between the Tripoli Chamber and NUSACC.



**Mr. David Hamod**

“So much of what we’ve heard about Libya has revolved around politics or security. But today’s ceremony is about commerce, plain and simple.”

During the past decade, Hamod said, Libya and the United States have experienced a lot of changes – and challenges. But important things that have not changed, he noted, include: The mutual respect shared by the Libyan and American peoples; our mutual vision of creating a better life for future generations of Libyans and Americans; a commitment to strengthening partnerships between our two chambers and nations.

“So much of what we’ve heard about Libya in recent years has revolved around politics or security,” Hamod noted. “But today’s ceremony is about commerce, plain and simple.”



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Ambassador Stuart Holliday, CEO of Meridian International Center, welcomes delegates to the MOU signing ceremony.

American companies invited to the MOU signing ceremony, he suggested, represent some of the sectors that are vital to the U.S. – Libya commercial relationship: Energy, telecommunications, engineering/architecture/design, infrastructure development, and capacity-building (including food security).

Finally, Hamod said, “I want to talk about the future, and the future of Libya resides with its youth. That nation is undergoing a historic transition from a hydrocarbons-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, so capacity-building for Libya’s youth is essential.” Hamod concluded, “In

my opinion, no country in the world is better positioned than the United States to exchange technology and expertise with Libya.”

### **Abusetta: Now is the Time to Invest**

The Tripoli Chamber is the largest chamber of commerce in Libya, with approximately 90,000 members encompassing 24 sectors.

Chairman Abusetta noted, “As part of our long-term vision to enhance our private sector, we strongly encourage U.S. co-investments in Libya, primarily in the marine and agricultural space. Libya is fortunate to have vast areas suitable for agriculture.” He went on to say, “With the ongoing global food crisis, this would be an ideal time for American companies to expand into Libya and to put our arable land to good use.”



**H.E. Anwer Salem Abusetta**

“Events like these help Libya to bolster its private sector and strengthen our commercial relationships internationally.”

Abusetta highlighted the importance of partnerships, including the one between the Tripoli Chamber and NUSACC. “Events like these help Libya to bolster its private sector and strengthen our commercial relationships internationally,” he said. “At the World of Concrete show, we met with more than 50 U.S. companies. These interactions with American products and know-how serve to bring us closer together.”

Like Hamod, Abusetta concluded his remarks with a focus on youth. “We are striving to empower, support, and invest in our youth in light of our mission to bolster the business community across all sectors,” he said. “This includes women business leaders and entrepreneurs. With help from the Tripoli Chamber, they are navigating regulatory laws effectively in Libya and beyond.”

## Looking Forward

NUSACC, celebrating its 50th anniversary, has taken more American business leaders to Libya than any other U.S. private sector entity. NUSACC has also *received* more Libyan business leaders in the USA than any other U.S. private sector entity.

This week's signing ceremony builds on the MOU that was signed by NUSACC and the Tripoli Chamber in 2012. The new agreement envisages cooperation in such fields as agriculture, energy, fisheries, high tech, infrastructure, and sustainability (including food security). On the American side, NUSACC will connect Libyan business leaders to U.S. universities, institutes, and producers of goods and services with a view to sharing expertise, technology, and best practices.



Amb. James Smith (left), NUSACC Board Member, participated in the MOU signing ceremony.

“Libya has clearly faced some difficulties in recent years,” NUSACC’s Hamod said, “but we are optimistic about the future. Libya has overcome challenges in the past and, with assistance from partners like NUSACC, I am confident that Libya will do so again.”

### Ambassador Richard Norland, U.S. Special Envoy for Libya

“Today’s signing event typifies the important role that NUSACC has played for 50 years in promoting commerce between the United State and the Arab world. Congratulations on this major milestone!”



For five decades, the National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) has served as a commercial bridge between the United States and the Arab world. Widely regarded as the voice of American business in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the Chamber serves over 50,000 members and stakeholders in the USA and across the Arab world. Awarded the E-Award for export excellence by the President of the United States, NUSACC is the only business entity in the USA that is recognized by the League of Arab States and the Union of Arab Chambers.



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