



National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce الغرفة التجارية العربية الأمريكية الوطنية

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U.S. – ARAB CHAMBER RAMPS UP ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

*New Office in L.A. Spearheads West Coast
Road Shows, Roundtables, and More*

NUSACC Supports Etihad Airways Expansion to Los Angeles

In recent months, the Los Angeles office of the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) has substantially expanded its scope of activities in Southern California. Many of these activities have been organized in cooperation with such local partners as the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the Office of the Mayor, the Port of Los Angeles, the U.S. Commercial Service, the District Export Council and others.

Under the dynamic leadership of that office's new Director, Ms. Rim Elbayar-Aly, NUSACC - L.A. has been involved in a variety of groundbreaking events this year:

- Supporting a [trade & investment mission](#) to Los Angeles by the Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee (responsible for the 2022 FIFA World Cup);
- Organizing an Iraq Road Show – to San Francisco, San Jose, Los Angeles, and San Diego – that featured H.E. Lukman Faily, Iraq's Ambassador to the United States, and Mr. Naufel Alhassan, Iraq's Commercial Counselor to the United States;
- Organizing a [West Coast Road Show](#) to Los Angeles and Seattle, Washington for Bahrain's Economic Development Board;
- Supporting the [U.S. – Saudi Business Opportunities Forum in Los Angeles](#);
- Supporting [CLEANTECH-LA](#), designed to establish Los Angeles as the global leader in clean technologies.



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The Los Angeles office will also play an instrumental role in supporting NUSACC's [2014 High Tech Road Show](#) which, this year, will visit Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, and Silicon Valley in Northern California.

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Representative of the events that NUSACC's L.A. office is hosting was a recent business briefing featuring Mr. Amin Salam, NUSACC's Vice President of Business Development. The targeted event, organized in cooperation with the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, drew more than 30 companies based in Southern California, according to Director Rim Elbayar-Aly. She said, "This event was



enthusiastically welcomed by local companies, which clearly understand the value of reaching out to emerging global markets in order to expand their business and to tap into these thriving economies."

Left to Right: Geert Boven, Sr. VP, Etihad Airways Americas; James Hogan, President & CEO, Etihad Airways; Amin Salam, VP for Business Development, National U.S. Arab Chamber of Commerce; Michael Kohlstrand, VP, Etihad Airways, Western USA.

The roundtable discussion included companies representing a variety of L.A.'s business sectors: healthcare, information & communications technologies (ICT), logistics & freight forwarding, development & design, engineering & construction, foodstuffs, and more.

Noted Mr. Salam, "This was a great opportunity to connect with companies in Southern California that have an interest in the burgeoning Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. More than a dozen different sectors were represented here today, a reflection of the diverse interests and capabilities of L.A. companies. Los Angeles is an increasingly important market for our Chamber and we are very pleased about the partnerships that NUSACC has been forming here."



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The National U.S. Arab Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles Office, hosted a Business Briefing Breakfast on opportunities in the MENA Region.

Topics discussed included the importance of building trust and long-term relationships with counterparts in the MENA region, undertaking comprehensive feasibility studies to understand the MENA market, and overcoming cultural and language barriers to tap into regional markets. Special focus was placed on small & medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which have lower overhead costs but which typically need more extensive “hand-holding” in new markets.

NUSACC’s extensive track record of success and experience in the region have helped hundreds of these small companies and start-ups in recent years. This was especially meaningful for L.A. firms that attended the roundtable. These included companies that: knew little about the region and were looking for more specific information and trade data; have started some discussions in the region but are not sure about how to move forward; have already established limited operations in the region and are interested to expand their presence in the MENA market.

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NUSACC's L.A. office is under the new leadership of Ms. Rim Elbayer-Aly.

Many of the companies that attended the event expressed a desire to build a stronger relationship with NUSACC. They highlighted a need to hold such seminars and informational sessions on a regular basis.

For example, Ms. Lilian Sagherian, Business Development Manager (Middle East) for DGX, a new member of NUSACC, said, “As Mr. Salam described very well, Americans are losing the business to Australian and European companies, and that is a new challenge for us. The DGX, DHX & DAX companies are well positioned to participate in bids throughout the region.”



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Noted Mr. Kasra Farasat, Director of American Export Lines (AEL), based in Los Angeles, "The NUSACC Los Angeles office brings together a diverse group of businesspeople who intend to do business in the region or who are already active in the region, such as our company. As a freight forwarder, our recent affiliation with NUSACC has proved invaluable in identifying new and more accessible gateways into the region."

Another highlight of NUSACC's presence in Los Angeles is the Chamber's positioning for site visits. Following the roundtable discussion, for example, NUSACC VIPs toured the manufacturing plant of Forceprotector Gear (FPG) – a producer of systems and gear for combat, peacekeeping, nation-building, humanitarian service, and a variety of other purposes. President & CEO Ed Perez, a new member of NUSACC, showcased FPG's manufacturing process, quality control, and supply chains.

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NUSACC's L.A. office played a supporting role in a recent event organized by Etihad Airways, a Platinum Plus member of the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce, highlighting the fact that Etihad will expand service to Los Angeles in June 2014.

The October 7 announcement was made in L.A. by James Hogan, President and Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Airways. He said, "We are delighted to add Los Angeles, a major U.S. and global destination with a significant metropolitan population and growing economy, to the Etihad Airways' network in 2014. This expansion will see Etihad Airways offer air travelers daily flights, from our Abu Dhabi hub, to four destinations across the United States."

Hogan continued, "The new service will also offer maximum connectivity, via Abu Dhabi, with 25 Etihad Airways destinations across the Middle East region and Indian Subcontinent, 12 of which are in India, catering for the demand from Los Angeles' diverse and multicultural population."

Los Angeles is one of the world's most iconic cities, boasting a metropolitan population area of more than 18 million people, second largest in the United States. To reach California nonstop, Etihad will deploy an ultra-long range Boeing 777-200 LR. Flight



FPG President & CEO Ed Perez, a new Platinum member of NUSACC, discusses with Amin Salam FPG's manufacturing process, quality control, and supply chains.



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EY171 will depart daily from Abu Dhabi at 8:45 am and arrive in Los Angeles at 2:15 pm the same day.



Amin Salam, VP, Business Development, NUSACC, offered the keynote speech.

Mr. Amin Salam, NUSACC's Vice President of Business Development, attended the Etihad announcement on behalf of the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce. He noted, "Los Angeles is a global city and a prominent platform for trade & investment, entertainment, media, fashion, science & technology, sports, education, medicine, and research."

Salam concluded, "The expansion of Etihad's international network to L.A. should play an important role in expanding commercial relations between the Golden State and the United Arab Emirates. The UAE is America's number one export destination in the MENA region, with U.S. goods exports

growing to more than \$22.5 billion last year, and California is an important part of that expansion."

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.