



NATIONAL U.S.-ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

غرفة التجارة الأمريكية العربية الوطنية

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NUSACC EXPERT ROUNDTABLE: U.S. AMBASSADOR HIGHLIGHTS COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN MOROCCO

***Ambassador Dwight Bush Tells U.S. Business Leaders:
“The Climate in Morocco is Right for U.S. Investors”
“I Really Respect and Appreciate what NUSACC is Doing,”
U.S. Envoy Says***

Washington, DC – This week, the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) hosted the U.S. Ambassador to Morocco, the Honorable Dwight Bush, as part of NUSACC’s Expert Roundtable Series. In his remarks to the capacity crowd at the Chamber, [Bush](#) praised the U.S.-Moroccan commercial relationship and thanked NUSACC for its efforts to expand and promote bilateral business ties.

Welcoming Bush to the Chamber, NUSACC Executive Vice President [Gordon Gray](#) said, “The Chamber is honored to have Ambassador Bush with us today to share his insights about Morocco. The United States and Morocco have long enjoyed a strong relationship. Building on his distinguished career in the private sector, Ambassador Bush has worked long, hard, and very successfully to make the relationship even stronger.”



The Honorable Dwight Bush,
U.S. Ambassador to Morocco

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Ambassador (ret.) Gray, who began his U.S. Government career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco, noted that it is the only country in North Africa with which the United States has a Free Trade Agreement. He concluded his opening remarks by expressing his appreciation to [LORD Corporation](#), a Platinum member of the Chamber, for sponsoring the roundtable.

Ambassador Bush began his remarks by recalling that NUSACC was the first organization to welcome him after his nomination was announced. Noting his many meetings with NUSACC during his tenure as Ambassador to Morocco, he said, "I really respect and appreciate what NUSACC is doing."

Under the leadership of H.M. King Mohammed VI, Bush said, the government has established a vision for its future place in the world economy. The Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Morocco is "very significant and, increasingly, U.S. companies are taking advantage of it."

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Morocco has a dynamic economy, Bush observed. "There is a lot of encouragement for business," he suggested. "The climate in Morocco is right for U.S. investment" due to its transparency, respect for the rule of law, and the ability to enforce contracts. The agricultural sector in Morocco is similar to that of California, he noted. From film production and tourism in Ouarzazate, to manufacturing and trade in Tangier, to business and finance in Casablanca, to fishing in Agadir, and to phosphate production in El Jadida, "Morocco is a country on the move," Bush said.



The Tanger Med port is the closest point between Europe and Africa.

Bush noted that the country is taking advantage of its unique location as a gateway to Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. The Tanger Med port, on the Straits of Gibraltar, is a bridge to Europe that handled 3 million twenty-foot containers last year, a 20 percent increase over the previous year. It is on track to become the largest transshipment port in Africa. Royal Air Maroc flies to some 25 West African destinations, and it recently began to offer non-stop flights between Washington's Dulles International Airport and Casablanca. Consequently, Bush quipped, "you no longer have an excuse not to visit."

To help businesses take advantage of Morocco's strategic location, its stability, and its infrastructure, Bush noted, Morocco offers various financial incentives that make it cost-effective for U.S. firms to engage in business opportunities in Morocco and across the

continent. For example, by operating in Casablanca Finance City, service companies can enjoy total exemption from corporate taxes for five consecutive years and a reduced rate beyond this period.

Bush suggested that all of the steps Morocco has taken to make it easy for businesses to open and operate have yielded results: In the World Bank's "Doing Business" rankings, Morocco moved up 46 places in only five years.

"It is a very safe and secure country," Bush observed, thanks to the commitment of the government and the Palace. Morocco also offers a good quality of life for U.S. businesses seeking to set up operations there: Housing is good, he noted, and there are five American secondary schools in the country.



Ambassador Bush (center left) speaks with a full capacity crowd at NUSACC's headquarters. NUSACC, represented here by Ambassador (ret.) Gordon Gray (center right), hosts monthly roundtables with leading experts.

Key Sectors

Ambassador Bush highlighted five sectors that are particularly promising:

- *Aeronautics*: In September, Boeing and the Government of Morocco signed a memorandum of understanding for the joint development of an aerospace supply ecosystem in Morocco. This initiative will introduce 120 Boeing suppliers to the Moroccan aerospace market with the goal of creating 8,700 skilled jobs and generating \$1 billion in annual export revenue. One hundred per cent of the aeronautics production is for the international market, Bush noted. For example, the electrical kits for the wings of Boeing 737s are all manufactured in Morocco.

- *Automotive:* In July 2016, Morocco approved the importation of vehicles that meet the U.S. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, a change that presents a huge opportunity for U.S. auto producers by opening up the Moroccan market. Ford, for example, already has a regional office in Morocco.
- *Renewable Energy:* “Morocco punches above its weight when it comes to renewables,” Bush pointed out. Morocco just finished successfully hosting COP 22, this year’s United Nations climate summit, in recognition of the strong and ambitious commitment that Morocco has made to renewable energy. The North African nation aims to increase the installed generation capacity from renewable sources to 52 percent by 2030. The first phase of the NOOR solar plant was inaugurated in 2016; it will be the largest concentrated solar plant in the world at 580 Megawatts. In addition, the government plans to construct several more solar power plants of roughly equal size elsewhere in Morocco.
- *Tourism:* Eight million tourists have visited Morocco since January of this year, and TripAdvisor, Inc. voted Marrakech as the world’s number one destination in 2015. The city offers accommodations for every traveler, Bush said, from those seeking luxurious hotels to back-packers trying to save money. Morocco’s unique combination of historical sites, cultural heritage, stunning natural environment, and modern amenities are unique, he suggested.
- *Agriculture:* This sector has great potential for U.S. small- and medium-sized enterprises because needs range from seeds to nutrients to cold storage facilities. Bush likened agriculture in California to that in Morocco, saying that they both have “the same sort of rich agricultural production.”

In conclusion, Ambassador Bush remarked, “It has been a unique and rewarding experience to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Morocco. The people welcomed me and my family right away.”

NUSACC Promotion of U.S.-Moroccan Trade & Investment

In recent years, NUSACC has supported numerous events designed to promote U.S. – Morocco commercial relations. Earlier this year, for example, NUSACC President & CEO [David Hamod](#) represented the U.S. business community at the opening session of the Third Morocco-U.S. Business Development Conference, held in Rabat, the capital of Morocco. Hamod led a delegation that included major multinational firms and smaller companies that were visiting



David Hamod (left), NUSACC President & CEO, speaking at the opening session of the Third Morocco-U.S. Business Development Conference

Morocco for the first time. (The annual revenues of companies represented in the NUSACC delegation were more than \$150 billion.) NUSACC also co-hosted, with Ambassador Bush, a reception for participants in the conference. To read more about NUSACC's support for this conference, please click [HERE](#). NUSACC also supported the previous Morocco-U.S. Development Conference held in Rabat, in March 2014.

NUSACC Expert Roundtable Series

The NUSACC Expert Roundtable Series, held at the Chamber's offices, provides NUSACC members and stakeholders with in-depth insights on commercial opportunities and challenges in the Middle East and North Africa. Information on upcoming Expert Roundtables will be available soon on NUSACC's [website](#).

VIP government attendees at the Morocco Roundtable included: Ambassador Salah Sarhan, the Chief Representative of the Arab League in the United States; Mr. Driss Alaoui, the Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco; and Mr. Anouar Benichou, the Commercial Counselor at the Moroccan Embassy.

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NUSACC's analysis of the most recent figures for U.S.-Moroccan trade may be found [HERE](#).

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To learn more about the benefits of membership in NUSACC, please click [HERE](#).

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.

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