



NATIONAL U.S.-ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

غرفة التجارة الأمريكية العربية الوطنية

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NUSACC EXPERT ROUNDTABLE SERIES: SPEAKER OF SUDAN'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. BUSINESS

***Sudanese Speaker, Citing "Abundant Economic Benefits"
for Both Countries, Calls for Increased U.S. Investment***

***High-Level Sudanese Delegation Signals Recent, Positive Changes
in the U.S. – Sudan Commercial Relationship***

Washington, DC – This week, the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) hosted Sudan's Speaker of the National Assembly, [H.E. Ibrahim Ahmed Omer Ahmed](#), as part of NUSACC's Expert Roundtable Series. The Speaker was accompanied by the highest level Parliamentary delegation seen in the United States in many years, with four Members of the National Assembly, including the Chairmen of the Committees on Foreign Relations and Economic Affairs. Attendees of the Roundtable discussion included leading business-people and senior U.S. Government officials.

Sudan's Ambassador to the United States, [H.E. Maowia Osman Khalid](#), co-hosted the event in cooperation with NUSACC and the Chamber's counterpart in Sudan, the Federation of Sudanese Businessmen



From left to right: David Hamod, NUSACC President & CEO; H.E. Ibrahim Ahmed Omer Ahmed, Sudan's Speaker of the National Assembly; H.E. Maowia Khalid, Sudanese Ambassador to the United States; H.E. Ahmed Magzoub, Chairman of the Sudanese National Assembly's Economic Affairs Committee; and GE representatives Pierre-Yves Daveau, Del Renigar, and George Pickart.

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and Employers. Ambassador Khalid noted, “Sudan and the United States now have the potential to enter a new era in our commercial relationship. Sudan needs much of what America has to offer – including technology and expertise – and we thank NUSACC for helping to bring Sudan’s business opportunities to the attention of the Chamber’s member companies.”

In his welcoming remarks, NUSACC President & CEO [David Hamod](#) said, “There has been a great deal of misunderstanding in the U.S. – Sudan relationship over the years, and I am hopeful that we are now on a track that will lead to increased mutual benefits for both nations. Sudan has enormous potential, and our Chamber is grateful for the opportunity to help bring these commercial opportunities to light. I would also like to thank the exclusive sponsor of today’s Roundtable, [GE](#), whose generous support made this event possible.”



Attendees of the Roundtable discussion included leading businesspeople and senior U.S. Government officials.

Potential for U.S.-Sudan Commercial Relations

Based on what he has seen in recent months, H.E. Ibrahim Ahmed Omer Ahmed suggested, he is very optimistic about positive changes in the bilateral relationship and how these changes may translate into expanded trade relations and more U.S. investment in Sudan. He highlighted a number of sectors that should be of particular interest to U.S. companies, including industry, mining, agriculture, solar energy, tourism, health, and education.

The Speaker explained that the partial lifting of U.S. economic sanctions on Sudan prompted his current visit to the United States. While decrying the effect of the sanctions, he expressed hope that there would be “no retreat, come July, from the progress that has been achieved. Sudan is looking forward. I stand for improved relations between Sudan and the United States. The future is bright.”

Describing the strengths of the Sudanese economy, the Speaker highlighted Sudan’s abundant natural resources, including uranium, zinc, mica, oil & gas, and precious metals, like gold. (Sudan expects to mine 100 tons of gold in the coming year.) He also touted his country’s 200 million acres of fertile soil that is available for agriculture, which helps to explain why Sudan has become the fourth largest investment destination in the Arab world. The Speaker, who received his PhD from Cambridge University, went on to say that Sudan is eager to develop stronger educational partnerships with the United States, noting that Sudanese university graduates could become a “valuable resource” for U.S. companies.



H.E. Ibrahim Ahmed Omer Ahmed, Sudan’s Speaker of the National Assembly, with David Hamod, NUSACC President & CEO.

H.E. Ahmed Magzoub, Chairman of the Sudanese National Assembly’s Economic Affairs Committee, added to the Speaker’s observations. “The industrial sector is growing very fast in Sudan,” he noted, “and the share of this sector is now more than 26 percent of the GDP. We have a very strong will to develop this sector, and we are looking for more cooperation with U.S. companies.” Moreover, according to the Sudanese delegation, health and infrastructure are especially promising sectors for U.S. companies.

Sudan’s top three import sectors from the United States in 2016 were agricultural products, food & kindred products, and machinery. Within the United States, New Jersey was the leading exporter to Sudan. For more information on U.S. exports to Sudan, please click [HERE](#).

In response to a question about Chinese investment in Africa, Speaker Ahmed replied, “It is true that we have friends from China and the Arab world investing in Sudan, and we welcome their investment. But we also need U.S. investment because of the technology, the capital and,

most important, the ‘know how’ of American companies. So we hope to improve economic relations with the United States.” The Speaker concluded his opening remarks by noting that “businesspeople can play a very important role in improving relations between Sudan and the United States.”

Sudan’s Initiatives to Promote Economic Growth

A strong agricultural revival, a gradual recovery of global oil prices, sustained inflows of Foreign Direct Investment, and positive political developments stemming from Sudan’s National Dialogue have all played important roles in revitalizing Sudan’s economy. Speaker Ahmed and Chairman Magzoub outlined some of the reforms that their country has taken to bolster economic growth with the aim of attracting investment. These reforms include:

- Promoting business by removing structural barriers;
- Reforming Sudan’s legal system;
- Liberalizing investment and labor markets;
- Providing adequate infrastructure, from improving roads to upgrading Sudan’s communications systems; and
- Implementing a more business-friendly taxation system, including lower customs duties.



From left to right: H.E. Ibrahim Ahmed Omer Ahmed, Sudan’s Speaker of the National Assembly; H.E. Ahmed Magzoub, Chairman of the Sudanese National Assembly’s Economic Affairs Committee; H.E. Maouia Khalid, Sudanese Ambassador to the United States.

Sudan’s Investment Act of 2013 puts local investors and foreign investors on the same footing. The Government of Sudan has established a “one-stop shop” to facilitate investment, which is supported by the country’s commitment to such global investment conventions as the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhama), the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).



H.E. Ibrahim Ahmed Omer Ahmed,
Sudan's Speaker of the National Assembly.

Responding to a question about intellectual property rights, the Speaker noted that a long-serving Secretary General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), H.E. Kamil Idris, is Sudanese. When Idris retired from WIPO in 2008, he made sure that Sudan was in compliance. As a result, Speaker Ahmed noted, "We have a strong law for protecting intellectual property rights. Whoever comes to work in Sudan can be assured that his intellectual property rights won't be violated."

Recent U.S. Executive Orders

President Donald Trump signed a revised Executive Order on foreign visitors to the United States on March

6, 2017. U.S. visas will not be issued to Sudanese citizens for the next 90 days, but certain visitors from Sudan will be permitted to travel to the United States. The Executive Order does not affect Legal Permanent Residents of the United States.

President Barack Obama signed an Executive Order on January 13, 2017, entitled "Recognizing Positive Actions by the Government of Sudan and Providing for the Revocation of Certain Sudan-Related Sanctions." This Executive Order provides for the revocation of the sanctions provisions in Executive Orders 13067 and 13412 after six months – i.e., on July 12, 2017 – if the Government of Sudan sustains positive actions it has taken over the last six months related to bilateral cooperation, including counterterrorism cooperation, as well as ending internal hostilities, promoting regional cooperation, and enabling humanitarian access.

In conjunction with the Executive Order, the U.S. Department of Treasury issued a general license, and the U.S. Department of Commerce instituted new changes facilitating broader trade opportunities. If the Executive Order remains in force, and if the Government of Sudan sustains its positive actions, U.S. persons will generally be able to transact with individuals and entities in Sudan, and the property of the Government of Sudan subject to U.S. jurisdiction will be unblocked. Specifically:

- All property and interests in property blocked pursuant to the Sudanese Sanctions Regulations (SSRs) will be unblocked;
- All trade between the United States and Sudan that was previously prohibited by the SSRs will be authorized;

- All transactions by U.S. persons relating to the petroleum or petrochemical industries in Sudan that were previously prohibited by the SSRs will be authorized, including oilfield services and oil and gas pipelines;
- U.S. persons will no longer be prohibited from facilitating transactions between Sudan and third countries, to the extent previously prohibited by the SSRs; and
- All transactions prohibited by E.O.s 13067 and 13412 will be authorized.

Looking to the Future

Sudan today is the “most stable country in the area,” the Speaker said, selected by the Arab Tourism Organization to serve as the Arab Tourism Destination for the year 2017. He noted that the Sudan of the past was “crippled by sanctions” and that the Sudan of today still faces challenges.

But the Sudan of the future, the Speaker suggested, holds great promise. Looking to the future, he characterized Sudan as a revitalized nation that will attract millions of tourists, by air and by rail, who will enjoy Sudan’s legendary hospitality through new hotel properties and a world-class infrastructure. This is Sudan’s vision for coming generations, he concluded, “and we are looking forward to building this future in partnership with the United States.”

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 in the Middle East and North Africa. Roundtables are held periodically throughout the year.

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For more information on 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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