

**the future begins
with a handshake.**

program



Welcome

On behalf of the Kingdom of Bahrain and His Majesty the King, Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, I would like to extend a personal expression of my deep gratitude and appreciation for your attendance at today's celebration of the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement.

On May 9, 2003, the President of the United States laid out a vision of a broad free trade zone in the Middle East, stating that such a program would secure peace, stability, and prosperity for all people of the region. On June 15, 2004—just 13 months later—President Bush issued notice of his intent to enter the United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement. With that, Bahrain became the first nation in the Arabian Gulf region to realize the President's vision.

It is at moments like this that I come to fully appreciate the importance of such agreements and the true meaning of international friendship. The United States and Bahrain have struck a resounding tone of mutual support and initiated a new era of free trade that is already serving as a model for other Gulf states in their efforts to secure similar agreements.

There are very profound implications for the businesses of both nations and this agreement is proof that the United States and countries in the Middle can find common ground that will serve the people of both nations very well. Together, we are demonstrating that the USBFTA, and future agreements like it, have the power to enhance the economic opportunities for all involved and proving that such agreements can transform our present understanding of U.S.-Gulf partnership.

I wholeheartedly encourage you—the American and Bahraini business communities here today—to immerse yourselves in these discussions. You are the leaders on whose shoulders success rests. Reach out to each other. The future begins with a handshake.

Thank you and enjoy.



Dr. Naser Al Belooshi
Economic Representative
Office of the Economic Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain

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Event Description

With today's event, we come together as friends to celebrate not just the remarkable things that we have accomplished over the past century, but to look toward the future, to a new and exciting era of business and all that it will mean for both nations.

When the signing of the US-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement, the century-long friendship between the United States and Bahrain took a great step forward, marking the fourth phase in an evolving relationship. In the first phase, the friendship was formed on cultural purposes when American missionaries founded a medical dispensary in 1893. The second phase saw the relationship transition to a military and mutual security arrangement necessitated by World War II and the global realities that followed. The third phase was marked by a maturation of the friendship to the political sphere as geographic and strategic alliances shaped world affairs. In the coming years, the friendship between the United States and Bahrain will embark upon a fourth phase, blossoming into a mutually beneficial economic partnership; one unlike any in the Gulf region.

Our two nations stand with much to gain in this new era. Bahrain, with its advantageous location in the heart of the Arabian Gulf, offers US corporations an unparalleled hub for doing business across the entire Middle East. Bahrain is truly "The Gateway to the Gulf." It is the undisputed financial center of the Middle East. Its laws are pro-business. Its lands are secured by the presence of the US Fifth Fleet. And, its economy is considered freest of all the Gulf nations. Conversely, the United States—with its ready and well-established markets—represents an exciting opportunity for Bahraini businesses to discover new channels of commerce and untapped consumer bases overseas.

U.S.-Bahrain FTA

The U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement (USBFTA) will be the cornerstone of a growing relationship between the U.S. and Bahrain. Just as NAFTA fostered growth and free trade between the US, Canada and Mexico, the USBFTA will establish similar open channels of business to the Arabian Gulf. The agreement will have long-term and far-reaching multiplier effects on bilateral trade and investment, deepening the ties between our two countries and enhancing economic opportunities for both.

The USBFTA establishes regulatory discipline and high standards for competition, transparency, customs, trade facilitation, intellectual property protections, labor rules, and environmental policies. It, likewise, eliminates all duties on consumer and industrial products traded between the two countries, a market that is certain to grow significantly in the coming years thanks to this agreement. Industries such as telecommunications, engineering, construction, insurance, information technology, agriculture, health care, and education are just a few sectors where American business stand to make inroads, in Bahrain itself and across the Middle East using Bahrain as a hub.

With the USBFTA, Bahrain establishes itself as a serious business partner with tremendous potential for growth for U.S. businesses investing in Bahrain and for Bahraini companies interested in expanding their markets to the U.S. The USBFTA will be the first step toward additional global agreements with neighboring countries. Ultimately, the agreement is a key component of the Bush administration's vision of a region-wide free trade zone to be completed by 2013.

We believe this historic agreement will lead to a new dimension of trade, investment and friendship between our countries.

Agenda

- 11:30 AM** Doors open to Villard Ballroom
Registration begins
Press call and photo opportunity
- 11:30 - 12:25 PM** Informal networking in Villard Ballroom
Images of Bahrain on the screen with audio track
- 12:30 PM** Program begins
(Note: Luncheon will be served throughout the program)
- 12:35 - 12:40 PM** Welcome and acknowledgement of dignitaries and Special guests
Dr. Naser M. Y. Al Belooshi
Economic Representative
Office of the Economic Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain
- 12:40 - 12:50 PM** **The Honorable Catherine Novelli**
Assistant U.S. Trade Representative
For Europe and The Mediterranean
Executive Office Of The President
Office of the United States Trade Representative
- 12:50 - 1:00 PM** **His Excellency Abdulla Hassan Saif**
Minister of Finance and National Economy
Chief Executive, Economic Development Board
- 1:00 - 1:10 PM** Service of main course
- 1:10 - 1:20 PM** **The Honorable Holly Vineyard**
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Africa, Middle East and South Asia
U.S. International Trade Administration
- 1:20 - 1:25 PM** **Tawfiq Al Moayyed**
Deputy Chairman, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- 1:25 - 1:30 PM** **Shaikh Daij Bin Salman Al Khalifa**
Assistant Undersecretary for Foreign Trade,
Bahrain Ministry of Commerce
- 1:30 - 1:40 PM** **Antranig R. Sarkissian**
Vice President, Group Marketing Executive, Citigroup International
- 1:40 - 2:00 PM** Dessert Service

(cont.)

Agenda (cont.)

- 2:00 - 2:10 PM** **David Hamod**
President and CEO
National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce
- 2:10 - 2:20 PM** **Maysoon Sabkar**
Manager, Strategic Planning Unit,
Economic Development Board of Bahrain
- 2:20 - 2:30 PM** Call for Action and Closing remarks
Dr. Naser M. Y. Al Belooshi
- 2:30 PM** Networking in Villard Ballroom

Speakers' Bios

Catherine Novelli

Assistant U. S. Trade Representative for Europe and the Mediterranean

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

Catherine A. Novelli coordinates U.S. trade policy for Western Europe, Central Europe, Russia, the NIS, the Middle East and Northern Africa. One of USTR's most senior trade negotiators, Ms. Novelli manages the Trans-Atlantic Economic Partnership (TEP) an ongoing program that has helped open up trade between the United States and the European Union.

Ms. Novelli is managing the initiative to create a U.S.- Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA). She led the free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations with Jordan, Morocco and Bahrain. She chairs Trade and Investment Framework Councils with a number of countries the region, including Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria, and is working on other broad-based trade initiatives to help bring peace and prosperity to the region.

Ms. Novelli co-chairs the Russia Economic Policy Group within the Administration, which sets the U.S. government's policy agenda for our trade and investment relationship with Russia. She also secured agreements that allow U.S. goods to compete in Central Europe, as these countries move closer to enlargement with the European Union.

Prior to assuming her current position, Ms. Novelli was the Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia where she played a key role in the formation of U.S. trade policy for Russia and Central Europe. She joined USTR in 1991 after serving in the Office of General Counsel at the Department of Commerce.

"I enjoy helping to lay the foundation for improving the lives of people in the countries that I oversee," says Ms. Novelli. "I believe that trade leads to greater economic development which gives people more choices and more opportunities."

Ms. Novelli is married and has two children.

H.E. Abdulla Hassan Saif

Minister of Finance and National Economy

Kingdom of Bahrain

Abdulla Hassan Saif, Minister of Finance and National Economy, Kingdom of Bahrain, holds an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from De Paul University (Chicago 2002) and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, UK (1990).

Before being appointed as Minister of Finance and National Economy in 1999, he worked in Bahrain Petroleum Company for nearly 14 years (in different departments), in the Civil Aviation Affairs (as Head of Finance and Administration) and for nearly 25 years in the Bahrain Monetary Agency (the Central Bank) as Deputy Director General, Director General

and Governor. He represents the Kingdom of Bahrain at the Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other Regional Institutions, including the Arab Monetary Fund, Islamic Development Bank, and Arab Fund for Economic & Social Development.

In Bahrain, he is Chairman of the Pension Fund Commission, a Member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Bahrain and Ex-Chairman both of the Gulf International Bank and of the Gulf Air Company.

Professional Background:

Joined the Bahrain Petroleum Company in 1957 as an apprentice. Served in all departments of the company until 1971.

Head of Finance & Administration, Civil Aviation Directorate, (1971 - 1974).

Deputy Director General, Bahrain Monetary Agency, (1974 - 1977).

Board Member, General Organization for Social Insurance, (1976 - 1995).

Director General, Bahrain Monetary Agency, (1977 – 1981).

Chairman, Gulf International Bank, (1978 - 1991).

Governor, Bahrain Monetary Agency, (1981 - 1999).

May 1999: Appointed Minister of Finance & National Economy.

Present Positions:

Minister of Finance & National Economy.

Chairman, Pension Fund Commission

Chairman, Gulf Air.

Governor, International Monetary Fund & The World Bank.

Governor, Arab Monetary Fund.

Governor, Islamic Development Bank.

Governor, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

Member, Board of Trustees, University of Bahrain.

Chairman, The Bahrain National Hereditary Anemia Society.

Awards:

Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from DePaul University, Chicago USA, June 16, 2002.

Holly Vineyard

Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Africa, the Middle East,
and South Asia

International Trade
Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

Holly Vineyard serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia in the International Trade Administration's Market Access and Compliance unit. In this position, she directs the Department's regional activities on market access, trade, commerce and compliance with international trade agreements. She is responsible for developing programs, policies and strategies to strengthen the United States' commercial position in over 80 countries throughout Africa, the Near East, South Asia and Oceania.

Ms. Vineyard joined the Commerce Department in 1994. Prior to her current position, Ms. Vineyard served as the Director of the Office of Africa, as Senior Policy Advisor to the Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, and as a desk officer in the Office of South Asia and Oceania. She has been detailed twice to the Senate Finance Committee, where she worked with the Trade Subcommittee on a wide range of

issues, including its consideration of the African Growth and Opportunity Act. Prior to joining the Commerce Department, Ms. Vineyard worked in the private sector.

She holds a master's degree from George Mason University and a bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary.

Dr. Naser M. Y. Al Belooshi

Economic Representative
of the Kingdom of Bahrain

Office of the Economic
Representative of Bahrain

Kingdom of Bahrain

Dr. Naser M. Y. Al Belooshi was appointed as Economic Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain to Washington, D.C. by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in July 2003. His mandate is to increase the economic ties between the United States of America and the Kingdom Bahrain and to coordinate Free Trade Agreement negotiations.

Born in Bahrain on October 4, 1953, Dr. Al Belooshi received his Ph.D. in Economics with honors and Masters Degree in Economics from the University of Paris, in addition to a diploma in Economic Planning from the International Institute of Public Administration (IIAP), Paris, France.

His career has included positions as Executive Director, Management Services, at the Bahrain Monetary Agency (the Central Bank of the Kingdom of Bahrain), from 1992 until his current appointment. From 1995-2001, he also served as an Executive Director of the Arab Monetary Fund, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. From 1987-1992, he served as Director of Economic Research at the Bahrain Center for Studies and Research.

Dr. Al Belooshi also served as Director of Research and External Examiner for Master Degree students in economics and lectured at various universities and colleges including the University of Maryland, European Division. He has also written various articles and research work related to economic development.

His distinguished awards include: the Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa Medal from His Majesty - The King Sheikh Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, the King of Bahrain; the Officier de La Legion D'Honneur Medal from Mr. Jacques Chirac, the President of the Republic of France.

As Economic Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United States, Dr. Al Belooshi has been active in providing testimonies and speeches regarding the merits of the Free Trade Agreement before United States government agencies, academic institutions and trade organizations. Recently Dr. Belooshi was a speaker at the Sixth Annual Monterey Congressional Forum on Trade Policy in Monterey, California and provided a testimony before the International Trade Commission (ITC) in Washington DC.

Dr. Al Belooshi is accompanied by his wife, Sharifa Benammour in Washington DC and their teenage son, Marwan, and teenage daughters, Leena, and Noor.

Antranig Sarkissian

Vice President

Citibank, N.A.

Antranig (Antro) Sarkissian is a Vice President of Citibank, N.A., New York. He is Group Marketing Executive presently responsible for the co-ordination of Citibank's New York-based marketing activities in the emerging markets of Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa and supporting William R. Rhodes, Senior Vice Chairman, Citigroup and Chairman of Citibank for that region. He is well-traveled in this territory and has extensive knowledge of the economies and Citibank's business activities in these countries. Antro grew up in Egypt where he graduated from the American University in Cairo in 1957 and joined Citibank in Cairo in 1958. In 1960, after receiving a Masters degree in Economics from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, he returned to Cairo and then joined Citibank in Beirut until 1965. Since then, he has served in a number of capacities at Citibank's Headquarters in New York.

Antro has held directorship positions with the US-Arab Chamber of Commerce and the US-Pakistan Economic Council. He served as a member of the former US-Egypt and the US-Sudan Business Councils. Currently, Antro is an alternate member of the US-Saudi Arabian Business Council, of the US-Russia Business Council and the US-Egypt Business Council. Since 1995, he has been a member of the Advisory Board of the Eurasia Foundation's Small Business Loans Program for Armenia; a past President of the Arab Bankers Association of North America and, currently, Treasurer and Member of the Executive Board of the Near East Foundation.

David A. Hamod

President and CEO

National U.S.-Arab Chamber of
Commerce (NUSACC)

Prior to joining NUSACC, he served as President of Intercom International Consultants, a Washington-based business consulting firm that he founded in 1988. Mr. Hamod has served as an advisor to numerous entities, including the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), and worldwide affiliates of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

In his capacity as U.S. Representative of the American Business Council of the Gulf Countries, Mr. Hamod served as the Washington-based voice of the American business community in the Arabian Gulf. He played an instrumental role in the success of the U.S.-GCC Business Dialogue, as well as the U.S.-GCC Standards Cooperation Program.

Prior to founding Intercom, Mr. Hamod worked for the Brookings Institution, Neill and Company, International Business Machines (IBM) Corporation, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), and The New York Times. He was chosen as "Rotarian of the Year" in Washington, D.C. in 1996, and he served as President of the Washington Rotary Club in 2000-2001.

Mr. Hamod has worked on business issues in the U.S. Congress since 1985, and he is very familiar with every facet of the legislative process. He has testified before the U.S. House of Representatives on a number of occasions, including his testimony in July 2004 on the U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. Hamod is a graduate of the University of Iowa (B.A.) and the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (M.A.). A member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, he was selected as the University of Iowa's "Distinguished Young Alumnus" for 1999-2000.

Maysoon Sabkar

Manager

Strategic Planning Unit

Economic Development Board
of Bahrain

Ms. Sabkar joined the EDB in 2001. Her main responsibilities include marketing and business planning. She is involved in major projects including labor market reform, FTA telecommunications negotiation team, privatization of electricity, branding and promotion of special projects, evaluation of bids for industrial policy, development of business services and education and training clusters, and responsible for corporate publications and communications tools.

Prior to joining EDB, Maysoon was in the Corporate Finance Department of an investment bank in Bahrain, where she was involved in due diligence and monitoring of the bank's private equity portfolio.

Education:

Master of International Affairs, School of International Affairs, Columbia University, NY

Bachelor of Arts in Economics, University of Pennsylvania, PA

Activities:

-Chairperson, Bahrain, Secondary Schools Committee, University of Pennsylvania (since 2000)

-Board member, International Advisory Board of the Global Alumni Network, University of Pennsylvania (2003- 2004)

-Member- Gulf 2000 Project- Change, Communication and Cooperation in the Persian Gulf (a members-only Columbia University project for Gulf practitioners and specialists)

-Program mentor- Crown Prince Leadership Program (2004)

U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Coalition

Co-Chairs Lionel Johnson
Citigroup, Inc.

William Rice
Alcoa

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www.nftc.org

National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce
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