

June 2010

What's Inside?

Page 2

Alhambra provides Accreditation Services to Saudi Universities

Immigration Seminar for Internat'l Students

Page 3

Introduction to the OIC

Page 4

Country Profile: Nigeria

Alhambra at Franchise Expo in D.C.

Page 5

Early Bird Membership Special



Chairman's Welcome to Our Readers



On behalf of the Alhambra-US Chamber of Commerce, I would like to welcome you to the inaugural issue of our newsletter. This quarterly publication will keep you abreast of Chamber programs and accomplishments, the activities of our leadership team, as well as events and trends

impacting business in the US and Muslim-majority nations and the diplomatic relations between them.

The idea for the Chamber came directly from my experiences as the first US Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). During this time, I had the opportunity to visit more than 30 countries and meet with leaders from government, business, and education in each of those nations. Everywhere I went, I encountered a desire for stronger ties between the US and Muslim-majority countries in the spheres of business, diplomacy, education and culture.

Such interactions present challenges but also represent incredible opportunities. Inspired by my experiences, I have created the Alhambra-US Chamber of Commerce to assist those wishing to develop these ties. The Chamber and our partners serve corporations, NGOs, academic institutions, government agencies and embassies to help them achieve their goals in the United States and Muslim-majority nations. We are here to provide our members and clients with world-class expertise, an unmatched network of contacts and comprehensive business services.

This newsletter and its content provide a window into important regional commercial and political developments as well as the activities of the Alhambra-US Chamber and how we can help our members and clients. We invite you to explore our website at www.alhambraUSchamber.org or contact us directly at info@alhambraUSchamber.org.

Sincerely,

Sada Cumber
Founder and CEO
Alhambra US Chamber of Commerce

Alhambra Chamber Cosponsors Public Diplomacy Luncheon

WASHINGTON – The Alhambra-US Chamber of Commerce joined the Arab Empowerment Initiative and Aspen Institute in hosting a unique public diplomacy luncheon in Washington. The event drew more than 300 participants from 40 nations. Its goal was to empower foreign diplomats, top US government officials, policymakers, members of civil society, grassroots organizations, and business investors to make personal and professional con-

nections useful in diplomacy and promoting international understanding while also providing a platform to showcase the talents, diversity, and contributions of Arab and Muslim Americans.

Speakers at the event included Ambassador Hussein Hassouna of the Arab League, Egyptian Ambassador Sameh Shoukry, State Department Special Representative to Muslim communities Farah Pandith, and Walter Issacson,

president and CEO of the Aspen Institute.



Ambassador Hussein Hassouna (center) and fellow speakers at the Public Diplomacy Luncheon

Alhambra Provides Training and Advisory Services to Saudi Universities Seeking Accreditation

DUBAI-- Alhambra co-founder and Managing Director Anjum Malik returned from Dubai last week, where the Chamber brought together experts to conduct accreditation training sessions for almost two hundred Deans and department Chairs from Saudi higher education institutions.

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"Accreditation is vital for an institution to achieve success in international education," Malik said, "It

During her visit, Malik also worked with groups from Imam University in Saudi Arabia to develop a comprehensive and compelling mission statement. She consulted on their web presence, strategic plan, and meeting accreditation standards.



Anjum Malik conducting the Accreditation and Strategic Planning Seminar in Dubai.

Visas: Oiling the Gears of the Global Economy

Every year, millions of people travel abroad for business. Business travel and sending employees overseas are vital activities for international business in the 21st century. The entire process depends on a network of passports, visas and immigration regulations that can be very complicated, especially when difficulties emerge.

To help untangle confusion & answer questions about overseas visas for business and education, the Alhambra-US Chamber of Commerce recently cosponsored a visa and immigration seminar in Austin, USA. The seminar was attended by more than 50 people from a dozen nations.

Keynote speaker for the event was vice-chairman of the Alhambra-US Chamber of Commerce, Geoff Connor.

Connor is also senior partner in one of the Chamber's affiliated organizations, the Law Firm of Connor and Demond, which is focused on visa and immigration issues. Speakers and presenters at the event were drawn from the ranks of Connor and Demond's attorneys and paralegals.

Speakers summarized the advantages and disadvantages of various US business and commercial visas for individuals and companies as well as discussing how business and employment visas could be used to put an individual on a potential track for citizenship.



Geoff Connor at the Immigration Seminar.

The seminar also included information for students studying or interested in studying at US colleges and universities. "American universities are among the best in the world, and they welcome the brightest people in the world to come here to study," Connor said.

However, if students are not careful, they can run into visa-related issues that can complicate, delay or even prevent the successful completion of their course of study. Again, Connor and Demond attorneys are also experienced with putting international students on a path to permanent U.S. citizenship.





The emergence of International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) was one of the most dramatic developments of 20th Century diplomacy. Formal groupings of nations that are mutually bound by treaty and united by common goals (such as NATO or the WTO) or identity (such as the EU or OAS), these entities are a vital part of contemporary international relations. One of the largest, most diverse and interesting such organizations remain less well known than many of its peers:

In 1969, the leaders of many Muslim-majority nations met in Rabat, Morocco and established the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The organization was envisioned as an intergovernmental **body intended to promote “the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of... international peace and harmony” among the people of the world.** Headquarters for the new organization were established in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Forty years later, with 57 members, the **OIC is the world’s second largest IGO, after the United Nations.** It is a dynamic conglomerate of Muslim-majority nations spanning the globe, and bringing together nations as diverse as Egypt, Kazakhstan Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. The OIC includes nations that are rich and poor, secular and religious, and have an incredible range of languages and forms of government.

For four decades, the OIC has promoted a variety of issues important to Muslim-

majority nations and many of the world’s 1.5 billion Muslims. The OIC has successfully mediated and consulted with member nations and the UN to promote a positive image of Muslims and advocated to eliminate widespread discrimination.

Assisting in this matter is the increase in member states during the last quarter of the 20th century.

Charting a course for a new century, in 2005 the OIC adopted a 10-Year **“Program of Action”, which seeks to promote “tolerance and moderation, modernization, extensive reforms in... science and technology, education, trade enhancement, and emphasizes good governance and promotion of human rights... especially with regard to rights of children, women and the elderly.”**

Aside from fostering humanitarian and social reforms across the world, the OIC has worked to promote strong economic ties between its member states. This has nurtured an increase in trade and industry

across member nations and has boosted some of the **world’s most promising emerging economies of the past 40 years.** Currently the

combined GDP of OIC states exceed \$10.1 trillion annually.

The growing visibility of the OIC, combined with the economic and political importance of many member states is reflected in the 2008 decision by the United States to appoint a Special Envoy to the organization. This move was intended to improve relations and promote cultural and economic exchange between Muslim nations and the west, especially the US.



Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu
of Turkey
Current OIC Secretary
General

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OIC Member Country Profile: Nigeria

A resource-rich nation with a massive population, Nigeria is **one of Africa's most consistent "hot topics" for international businesspeople, entrepreneurs and investors.**

Abundant natural resources, an active stock exchange, and focus on infrastructure development add up to make Nigeria a promising emerging market. According to the Economic Intelligence Unit and the World Bank, Nigerian GDP at purchasing-power parity has nearly doubled in just two years from \$170.7 billion in 2005 to \$292.6 billion in 2007. **Nigeria's key sectors include petroleum/energy, agriculture, and other natural resources.** Additional sectors of note include space-based communications, financial services, minerals, and film.

With a population of 149 million, Nigeria is the world's eighth most populous nation. A population growth rate of nearly 2%, per capita income of \$2,300, and economic growth rate in excess of 5% make Nigeria a vast market that is hungry for a wide range of goods and services. Nigeria is well known as an important energy producing nation. The country exports 2.3 million barrels of oil each day, **making it the world's eighth largest exporter.** Nigeria has proven reserves of more than 36 billion barrels. It is



also the world's 11th largest exporter of natural gas.

A culturally diverse nation, Nigeria is a federal republic of thirty-six states. In addition to being home to a wide range of **cultural groups and languages, Nigeria's population is also religiously diverse** — with a slim Muslim majority and large minorities who follow Christianity or traditional indigenous faiths.

As Nigeria has worked to strengthen its democratic and civil society traditions, it has also embraced closer relations with international investors and business delegations. Trade missions from the United States, South Africa, Japan, China, Canada and elsewhere often visit **Nigeria. The nation's huge investment potential** is understood worldwide and is increasingly attractive. In response, the Nigerian government has created the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), responsible for the constant upkeep of investment information for Nigeria.

Nigeria has been an OIC member since 1986.

Alhambra at International Franchise Expo in Washington, DC



House of Tutors

WASHINGTON – The Alhambra-US Chamber of Commerce partnered with the House of Tutors as an exhibitor at the 2010 International Franchise Expo in Washington DC, the world's premier annual event for those seeking to acquire or sell franchises. Every year, IFE attracts thousands of entrepreneurs, investors, business owners, and companies from around the world. The Chamber provides contacts and a wide range of services useful to franchises seeking to expand into the markets of Muslim-majority nations. At the same time, it can assist overseas entrepreneurs in finding and securing the ideal franchise opportunity for them. Also on hand was a representative of Alhambra's partner organization, the law firm of *Connor and Demand* offering visa and immigration legal services.

Special “Early Bird” Membership Offer through July 15th

As the Alhambra-US Chamber of Commerce launches operations to promote commercial, educational and cultural interaction between the US and Muslim world, we are making a special, limited-time only offer to prospective members: an *Early Bird Membership Package*.

Available until July 15, 2010, the Early Bird option offers business and other organizations a full-service executive membership package at an irresistible price. Other international business promotion organizations charge \$5,000 or even \$10,000 for a comparable suite of services and benefits. For a limited time, the Alhambra-U.S. Chamber of Commerce puts it all at your fingertips for just \$2,000 for one year.

The Early Bird Package offers business and other organizations the following benefits:

Access

- Members-only prices for trade missions, conferences, and other events.
- Priority notice for trade missions, VIP receptions, and other events.
- Access to VIPs and dignitaries at Chamber events.
- Priority table seating at Chamber events.
- Exclusive invitations to special receptions and other events for visiting dignitaries.

Exposure

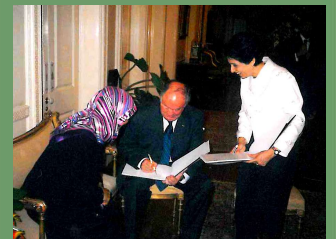
- Link to your website on our Chamber website (With company name and logo).
- Banner ad on Chamber website (at least 20 days/year).
- Name in company publications/programs.
- Listing in online member directory.

Business Support

- Quarterly teleconference with members of the Chamber leadership to offer input on achieving your goals and determining how Alhambra can best add value to your efforts.
- Four hours of complimentary research services. Additional hours at members-only rates.
- Two complimentary hours of partner matching and other high-end services. Additional hours at members-only rates.
- Members-only pricing for Chamber publications.
- Subscription to Chamber newsletter.



“The Chamber’s
ultimate goal is to
promote
commerce,
scholarship,
understanding and
closer relations
between two of
the world’s great
civilizations, Islam
and the West”



For more information, visit our membership page: <http://www.alhambrauschamber.org/membership>

Envisioned by a former US Special Envoy, the Alhambra-US Chamber of Commerce offers a full range of customized services to companies, governments, educational institutions and other entities active between the US and the 57 Muslim-majority nations of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Through diplomatic, business and personal connections, the Alhambra-US Chamber of Commerce offers our clients access to a network that is second to none. Highly successful in diverse backgrounds, the Chamber's leadership team puts world-class expertise in business, diplomacy, research and communications into your hand. There are many entities offering international business and professional services, but only the Alhambra-US Chamber of Commerce offers our members and clients these unique advantages as well as comprehensive, unified service across so many nations.

Through its services, the Alhambra-US Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to helping its members achieve their goals while also promoting US-OIC commerce and fostering understanding and goodwill between the US and the nations of the OIC.



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