



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

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OMAN BUSINESS ROAD SHOW TO THE UNITED STATES WRAPS UP IN NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

*Minister of Commerce & Industry Says the Visit
“Helps to Lay the Foundation for a More Robust
Commercial Relationship”*

*More Than 50,000 U.S. Companies Exposed to the Road Show, Attracting
the Largest Omani Business Delegation to the USA in Two Decades*



H.E. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Oman's Minister of Commerce and Industry, introduces the delegation to some 250 business leaders at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City.

New York, NY - The Oman Business Road Show, the largest and highest level government and business delegation from the Sultanate of Oman to tour the United States in the past two decades, has just concluded its final city visit, to New York City. At every stop on the ten-day Road Show – which also included visits to Houston, Chicago, and Philadelphia – momentum and “buzz” have increased, crowds have grown larger, and more deals have been struck.

In the end, more than 50,000 U.S. companies were exposed to the Oman Road Show through business entities in the United States, and delegates from Oman held upwards of 500 business-to-business



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(B2B) meetings and 40 site visits to U.S. institutions. Tens of thousands of visits were made to the website that was set up exclusively for the delegation's visit (www.OmanRoadShow.com), and media exposure – through outreach to more than 1,500 discrete media – reached millions of Americans through such portals as ABC, MSN, and National Public Radio.

“This was an extraordinary opportunity to reach out to the United States,” said H.E. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Oman’s Minister of Commerce and Industry, who led the delegation. “We were delighted by the response that we received from U.S. business leaders, government officials, and Americans from all walks of life. It is my sincere hope that this visit helps to lay the foundation for a more robust commercial relationship between the American and Omani business communities.”



The Honorable Greta C. Holtz, U.S. Ambassador to Oman: “Oman is fast becoming the region’s most effective logistics and supply hub because of its location and modern, efficient, and safe ports.”

The delegation was composed of 44 delegates, including Oman’s Ambassador to the United States – Her Excellency Hunaina Al-Mughairy – and the U.S. Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, the Honorable Greta C. Holtz. The involvement of both ambassadors throughout the entire Road Show provided a unique dimension and perspective that highlighted public / private partnerships.

“As Oman moves from a hydrocarbons-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, there is a key role to be played by the U.S. Government and America’s private sector,” said Ambassador Al-Mughairy. “We can learn from the experience and know-how of the Americans, and the United States, in turn, can benefit from accessing start-ups and entrepreneurs in the Sultanate who are eager to expand their professional horizons. I see this as a win/win for both nations.”



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According to U.S. Ambassador Holtz, “Oman is fast becoming the region’s most effective logistics and supply hub because of its location and modern, efficient, and safe ports. More and more U.S. companies are taking advantage of Oman’s ports, the ability to ship goods to the United States in 14 days, without customs, as provided under the U.S. – Oman Free Trade Agreement.” She continued, “We’re seeing a lot more manufacturing done in Oman by U.S. companies who ship to the United States and the region because of the advantages they see in Oman. The U.S. and Oman just signed an Open Skies agreement, which will allow for direct flights, another advantage for moving goods quickly to the United States.”



Panel 1 focused on investing locally in Oman while enjoying global access to markets. From left to right: Ms. Shireen Said, Commercial Attache at the Embassy of Oman; Ahmad Akaak, CEO, Salalah Port Services; Abdulrahman Al Hatmi, Director of the Rail Project, Ministry of Transport & Communications; Salim Al Yifai, General Manager, Oman Airport Management Company; Ahmed Azkawi, Project Director, South Batinah Logistics Hub.

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The Oman Road Show involved numerous senior government officials, such as mayors and representatives of local and state government, including the acting Governor of Texas. The four-state tour also involved key former Federal government officials who served as speakers during Road Show events. In Houston, for example, the Road Show was launched by the Hon. Andrew Card, former U.S. Secretary of Transportation and White House Chief of Staff. In Chicago, the Hon. Ray LaHood, former U.S. Secretary of Transportation and a Member of the U.S. Congress from the State of Illinois, served as keynote speaker.

In New York City, the keynote speaker was the Hon. Robert Hormats, former Under Secretary in the U.S. Department of State and now Vice Chairman of Kissinger Associates, Inc. In a speech to some 250 business leaders at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, Secretary Hormats stated, “There are many growing opportunities for closer business ties between Omani and American businesses. The presence of such a strong Omani delegation, led by His Excellency the Minister – who has demonstrated such great leadership at home



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The Honorable Robert Hormats, former Under Secretary of State: "Oman has been a good friend of the U.S. and an example of good governance and strong economic policy."

and internationally – along with such a high-level group of American business leaders, is very encouraging."

He continued, "The reduced demand in the United States for Middle East oil and gas should by no means be taken as a sign that the U.S. will disengage from the Middle East or that America's interests there have diminished. Policymakers and public opinion in the U.S. need to recognize that America's interests in the region remain deep, significant, and varied – warranting continuing and constructive engagement."

Secretary Hormats concluded, "Oman has been a good friend of the United States and an example of good governance and strong economic policy, one that focuses on increased diversification and inclusion, along with a forward-looking energy policy."

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The morning keynote speaker in New York City was Warren Struhl, a serial entrepreneur whose first start-up, at age 25, was Paper Direct. His most recent entrepreneurial venture is Polaroid Fotobar (www.polaroidfotobar.com), kiosks and shops that specialize in converting digital pictures into customized photo products. 380 billion pictures are taken every year, Struhl suggested, and more photos have been created in the past 12 months than in all of human history.



Hon. Greta Holtz, U.S. Ambassador to Oman, kicked off Panel 2, which focused on business opportunities in Oman. From left to right: Ambassador Holtz; Dr. Ahmed Al Qasmi, Director of Planning, Ministry of Health; Ali Habaj, CEO of Oman Flour Mills; Nicholas Barakat, CEO of Octal Company.



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Mr. Warren Struhl, a serial entrepreneur and inspirational speaker: "The greatest risk of all is to do nothing."

In his remarks on "Starting Them Up" at the Waldorf Astoria, which focused on the role of entrepreneurship as an economic driver, Struhl highlighted the importance of thinking outside the box. He cited two of his "business idols," Howard Schultz (Starbucks) and Steve Jobs (Apple), who came to define the consumer experience and the importance of productivity in retail, respectively.

Regarding the prospective role of entrepreneurship in Oman, Struhl cited the former Chairman and CEO of Coca Cola, Roberto Goizueta, who said, "The greatest risk of all is to do nothing."

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H.E. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Oman's Minister of Commerce and Industry, began his remarks with some parallels between New York City and the Sultanate of Oman. He noted,

Oman, like New York, has been a trading hub and commercial gateway for centuries. Historically, our economy, like yours, revolved around maritime trade, serving distant markets all over the globe.

In fact, it was this love of the sea that brought Oman and New York together in the New World for the very first time – on April 13, 1840. On that date, the Omani ship *Sultana* docked in New York, marking the very first visit by an Arab envoy to any port in the fledgling United States.

The *Sultana* carried ivory, rugs, spices, coffee and dates, as well as lavish gifts for the American President, Mr. Martin Van Buren. Oman's emissary, H.E. Ahmed Bin Na'aman, was generously received by the people of New York.

Fast forward to today, almost 175 years later, and New Yorkers are once again rolling out the red carpet for us Omanis. Our delegation of more than



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40 government officials and business leaders is deeply grateful to the people of New York for your famous hospitality.



H.E. Ali Al Sunaidy led a lively discussion from the floor at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

Apropos of hospitality and tourism, Minister Al Sunaidy noted that “ports, logistics, airports, and the new railway system are redefining Oman,” making it a hub for the region and beyond. “Because of our extraordinary location at the crossroads of the world, we are uniquely positioned to serve large markets nearby – the more than 3 billion consumers in Europe, Africa, and Southwest Asia – all of which are just a short flight away from Oman,” he said.

The Sultan Qaboos Port is being revamped for tourist traffic only, he noted, with an estimated 150 cruise ships to begin arriving in Muscat within the next year. The new international airport is expected to receive 12 million visitors by the year 2015, he said, and Oman’s road network – considered third best in the world by the World Economic Forum’s *Global Competitiveness Report* – will transport tourists throughout the Sultanate. Oman’s new Opera House is one of the most elegant in the world, His Excellency suggested, and the new convention center will hold 5,000 visitors.

Perhaps the main reason for the delegation’s visit to New York, Minister Al Sunaidy said, was to gain a better understanding of that city’s tourism infrastructure. With this in mind,



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delegates enjoyed visits to some of New York's most iconic structures, as well as VIP tours of:

- The Fulton Street Transit Center, a \$1.4 billion multi-modal hub at Ground Zero that will inter-connect numerous subway and rail lines. With nearly 70,000 square feet of retail space, the new Center will serve 300,000 visitors daily and will eventually connect to the World Trade Center, PATH trains, and Hudson River ferries at the World Financial Center. (Tour arranged by Grimshaw)
- Red Hook Terminal and 34th Street Terminal on the East River. A private ferry ride, organized by Langan International, took delegates to select sites along the Hudson River, including the Statue of Liberty.
- Crystal Springs, a world-class resort near New York City in the rolling farmland of The Garden State (New Jersey). This facility, which has the potential to serve as a model for a comparable resort in Oman, offers championship golf courses, spas, restaurants, and retail outlets, and it characterizes itself as America's #1 residential resort community.



Select delegates enjoyed a VIP tour by Grimshaw Architects of the Fulton Street Transit Center, still under construction, which will serve 300,000 visitors daily. In the background is One World Trade Center ("Freedom Tower") which, when completed, will be the tallest building in the United States and the third tallest building in the world.

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Many of the excursions and receptions in New York City were arranged by such Corporate Gold Sponsors as [AIG](#), [Grimshaw](#), [L-3 Security & Detection Systems](#), and [Louis Berger](#), with support from the Road Show's Nationwide Sponsor, [Occidental Petroleum Corporation](#).



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The Oman Road Show was organized by the [National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce](#) (NUSACC), the New York office of which is headed by Janine Colon. She noted, “The highly successful visit to New York and New Jersey can be attributed to the hard work of our local partners. These include but are not limited to [Empire State Development](#), the [Greater New York Chamber of Commerce](#), the [U.S. Commercial Service](#), and the [World Trade Center of Northern New Jersey](#). They did an outstanding job of hosting our colleagues from Oman.”



Oman Road Show VIPs and sponsors included (front row, left to right): Nofal Barbar, NUSACC Executive Committee member; Hon. Greta Holtz, U.S. Ambassador to Oman; H.E. Ali Al Sunaidy, Oman Minister of Commerce & Industry; Hon. Robert Hormats, Vice Chairman, Kissinger Associates, Inc.; David Hamod, NUSACC President & CEO; Vincent Chang, Partner, Grimshaw; Carmela Mammas, NYC U.S. Export Assistance Center. Back row, left to right: Mark Jaffe, President & CEO, Greater New York Chamber of Commerce; Tom Topolski, SVP & Managing Director MENA Region, Louis Berger; Paul Simpson, VP & General Manager for Cargo Solutions, L-3Communications.



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David Hamod, President & CEO of the Chamber, agreed. “Organizing a ten-day, multi-city tour like this one would not have been possible without the superb support of our sponsors and partners nationwide,” he said. In the same spirit, he noted, “The delegation from Oman was very well prepared for this visit, in large part because of the Ministry’s organization, vision, market analyses, and its deep commitment to generating serious business leads during this trade and investment mission.” Hamod concluded, “Our Chamber truly appreciated the opportunity to support this important delegation from the Sultanate of Oman.”

Noted H.E. Minister Al Sunaidy, “This trip opened the eyes of many in the Sultanate to the real potential offered by Oman – U.S. commercial relations, especially in the context of the Free Trade Agreement shared by our two nations.” He concluded, “I am grateful to everyone at the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce for organizing this Road Show at the request of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry and, on behalf of the delegation, I offer thanks to all those in the USA and Oman who helped to make this visit the most successful of its kind.”

Delegates enjoyed a private ferry ride, organized by Langan International, which took delegates to select sites along the Hudson River and New York Harbor, including the Statue of Liberty.



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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