

ALGERIA TODAY

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SYMPOSIUM OF INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALGERIA-US AFFAIRS

The first Algeria-US symposium on Algerian business was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Algiers from December 7th-8th, 2005. The World Trade Center Association of Algeria (WTCAA), the US-Algeria Business Council, and the Algerian-American Chamber of Commerce organized the event. The symposium, "First Algerian-American Symposium on Business Opportunities in Algeria," had approximately 300 participants.



The event focused on the sectors of public labor, infrastructure, and housing, providing an occasion for the two countries to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations and uncover investment possibilities. In attendance of the symposium were ministers, diplomats, high officials, and representatives from Algerian and American companies.

U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, Mr. Richard Erdman addressed the symposium participants in a speech outlining Algeria's "excellent market" for investment: "You came to the right place at the right time."

He pointed out to the American representatives that aside from the hydrocarbon sector, a lot of investment could be found in housing, infrastructure and the sector of irrigation and water.

The symposium produced an Algerian-American joint venture for the construction of 850 "luxury" residences in downtown Algiers. An agreement was signed between EPLF-Boumerdes and American engineering and construction group, Wink Global Ventures (WGV).

There are approximately 500 Algerian products that will be exported to the United States. In 2004, the trade between the two countries was \$8.5 billion.

PRESIDENT BUSH EXTENDS WISHES TO PRESIDENT BOUTEFLIKA

President George W. Bush addressed a message to President Bouetflika in which he wished him a "prompt and rapid recovery." President Bush said that he was "worried" when he heard of President Bouteflika's medical treatment and took the opportunity to also extend his wishes for "a lot of success and good health in the days to come."

The message also expressed the U.S.' president's appreciation for Algeria's cooperation and friendship.

FIRST AFRICAN ROAD CONGRESS KICKS OFF IN ALGERIA

The Head of Government, Mr. Ahmed Ouyahia, officially inaugurated the first African Road Congress (ARC) in Algiers on December 6th, 2005. Seventeen African ministers that are in charge of infrastructure participated in this Congress. There were about 1,200 African congressional representatives present.

Mr. Ouyahia underlined a harmonious message

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ALGERIA ATTENDS CONFERENCE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE ARAB WORLD

Algeria participated in an international two-day-conference on the rights of women in the Arab World, organized in Yemen with assistance from the United Nations and the European Union. The conference, "Woman and Justice," shed light on the imbalance existing in the laws and the status of women, in each respective Arab country.

Algerian representative, Mrs. Nouara Saadia Djaafar, Minister Delegate in charge of *Family and Women's condition*, shared the progress of Algerian women in society. In law and justice, Minister Djaafar showed that 900 judges are women and that 50% of the magistrates in certain jurisdictions are also women. She also indicated that during the last shuffling of magistrates, 33 women were named to preside over the tribunals.

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of "African integration" and applauded the nations for coming together. He urged the nations to "mobilize" their means to develop road infrastructures as a way to facilitate easier economic integration. Noting that the world is rapidly globalizing, Mr. Ouyahia said: "At the time of great groups, we have to unite our visions and mobilize our means, even still limited, in order to accelerate the economic integration process of the continent, a process where roads represent a necessity."

The ARC encourages cooperation between the countries and is a forum for idea exchange. Algeria will chair the Congress for the next three years.



US, ALGERIA PARTNER IN HIGH SCHOOL EXCHANGE PROGRAM



Algerian high school students now have the opportunity to benefit from a scholarship to study in the United States. The U.S. State Department is fully financing this educational initiative, called YES, that targets first-and second-year high school students.

Once in America, the Algerian students attend a local high school and partake in extra-curricular activities while residing with an American family for one year. Mrs. Taous Chabane, Project YES' Supervisor, said that the experience will enable the Algerian students to understand firsthand the American educational system, while relying on themselves and defining their personal goals and ambitions. Americans will also gain from the exchange because of their exposure to the Algerian culture that the students will bring during their stay.

About 25 students took part in the project when it was launched in 2004 for the 2004-2005 academic year. The application deadline is January 15, 2005, for the 2006-2007 school year.

SUN MICROSYSTEMS CONSIDERED FOR IT DEVELOPMENT IN ALGERIA

Sun Microsystems is a potential candidate in the search for partners who will build a strong Information Technology industry in Algeria. Since the reforms of the year 2000, Algeria continues to advance in telecommunications and tries to form partnerships with leaders in the IT domain. Minister of Information Technology and Communications, Mr. Boudjemaa Haichour, said that Algeria has a developed infrastructure and is in a strategic location, which in turn, can develop the country's electronic marketplace and keep it up-to-date with the network age.

Sun representative in the Middle East and North Africa, Mr. Bruno Haubertin, declared that the company would not just transfer technology and know-how to Algeria – it would understand and meet the needs of the Algerian market. Sun wishes to work with Algerian universities and develop information programs.

SONATRACH MAKES SIXTH DISCOVERY OF THE YEAR

Sonatrach, Algeria's state-owned and leading energy enterprise, reported on December 5th, 2005 that it has made its sixth discovery for 2005 near Ouargla in the northern part of the Saharan region of the country. The well was tested at a rate of 825 cm/hr of oil and 948 cm/hr of natural gas; it was drilled about 4,240 meters.

JOINT VENTURE - SONATRACH/AET

Sonatrach/Hyproc, the enterprise's maritime transport division, signed a joint-venture contract with American Eagle Transport (AET) on November 27th, 2005. Sonatrach is acquiring three new tankers that will transport a total amount of 470,000 tons of crude oil. AET was chosen after six other bids were made. The three tankers are expected for delivery during the 2008-2009 fiscal year and will be chartered by Sonatrach for the next 15-20 years.

AMERICAN ENTERPRISE, ACTIVE POWER, PREPARED TO INVEST \$2 MILLION

Active Power, an American enterprise that designs, manufactures and markets battery-free power quality products, arrived in Algeria December 12, 2005, ready to invest \$2 million to build a factory that will sell European, Middle Eastern, and African merchandise. This decision by the enterprise is second to the Austin, TX enterprise. Active Power chose Algeria for its development and investment opportunities and for its national market standards. It was also attracted by Algeria's available labor force .

FACT SHEET ON ALGERIA'S IMPORT MARKET

WHAT DOES ALGERIA IMPORT?	2005 IMPORT VALUE	COMPARED TO 2004
Algeria's largest imports are industrial: cars, planes, electronic appliances, and public labor tools	\$6.6 billion dollars, representing 42.5% of the global volume of imports	35% increase
The second grouping of imported products: wood, steel, concrete	\$3.8 billion, representing 24.66% of all imports at the end of 3 rd semester,	13% increase
Third category of imports: Cereals, milk, dairy products, dried vegetables, meats, sugar, tea and coffee	\$2.6 billion, representing 17% of the global volume of imports	0.6% drop in 2005
Fourth type: medicines, telephones, domestic equipment, etc.	\$2.3 billion, representing 15% of the global volume of imports	A 10% increase, due especially to telephones.

- The United States is Algeria's third largest import market. It imported \$971.7 million worth of goods, up to October 2005 .

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***Once Upon A Time in the Oued* A FILM REVIEW**

The fusion of French-Algerian cultures and traditions came alive on screen in the film, *Once Upon A Time in the Oued*, where a French-born child of traditional Algerian and Moroccan parents is comically unfolded. The movie was released mid-October 2005, and has received raving reviews for the good-natured feeling and comedy of the story according to the magazine *Variety*.

A Christian boy, who wishes he was an Arab Muslim like the majority of his friends, narrates the film. He stows away in a ferry in a desperate attempt to accompany his friend's family trip to Algeria. The film tells the story of the two boys' cultural experiences in Algeria – from dodging arranged marriages, to a circumcision party, to playing soccer with local boys and on an Algerian team, and the inevitable interaction with girls.

Once Upon A Time in the Oued is a Gaumont Columbia TriStar release, directed by Djamel Bensalah.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- The National Statistics Office announced that the unemployment rate in Algeria went down 15.3% in 2005, compared to a 17.7% drop in 2004 and 23.7% in 2003.
- Trade Minister, Mr. El Hachemi Djaaboub, stated that during the first three quarters of 2005, Algeria exported \$31.28 billion against \$24.75 in 2004, a 26.4% increase. Hydrocarbons constituted 97% of the global exports, while oil exports have recorded an increase of 8.5%. Additional exports included phosphates, zinc, ammonium and Deglet Nour dates.
- Housing and Town Planning Minister, Mr. Mohamed Nadir Hamimid, stated on December 8th, 2005, that families whose homes in the Boumerdes province had been totally destroyed in the May 21, 2003 earthquake, would be re-housed by June 2006.
- The Algerian Cardiology Society announced on Monday, December 12, 2005, that the Swiss Pharmaceutical group, Novartis, recognized two Algerian doctors, Doctor Salim Benkheda, a cardiologist, and Doctor Samia Zekri, who works in internal medicine, for their work. The prizes were 400,000 DA and 300,000 DA respectively.
- Chairmanship of the Union of Economic and Social Councils of Africa (UCESA) was passed on to Algeria on November 28th, 2005 for the next two years. New president, Mr. Mohamed Seghir Babes, said that UCESA was in favor of a civil society that greatly contributed to the promotion of economic and social development in Africa.
- On November 22, 2005, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria agreed to reinforce regional integration between their countries and report periodically to the IMF and World Bank.
- Italian and British delegations visited Algeria for business meetings early December 2005, aiming to set up joint ventures and enhance bilateral cooperation.
- During the meeting of Arab and Latin America's foreign ministers at the Arab League in Cairo, Egypt, on Wednesday, November 30th, 2005, the Algerian delegation declared that Algeria is setting up an Arab-Latin American library at the National Library in Algiers.