



NATIONAL U.S.-ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

غرفة التجارة الأمريكية العربية الوطنية

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NATIONAL U.S. – ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (NUSACC) RECOGNIZES MOROCCO’S PRINCESS LALLA JOUMALA ALAOUI AS 2023 “AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR”

*100 Thought Leaders, Including Nine Arab
and African Ambassadors, Pay Tribute to
Her Highness at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Washington DC*

Washington, DC – The National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) has named H.H. Lalla Joumala Alaoui, the Kingdom of Morocco’s Ambassador to the United States, as the 2023 “Ambassador of the Year.” The award ceremony and luncheon included a “Top 100” list of leaders from business, government, media, and non-governmental organizations. (Click [here](#) to see a three-minute video of the event.)

The award, now in its 20th year, is given annually to a member of the Arab diplomatic corps in the USA for his or her outstanding contributions to U.S. - Arab commercial relations.

“Her Highness has helped to elevate Morocco – U.S. relations during her seven-year tenure as Ambassador here,” said David Hamod, President & CEO of NUSACC. “Her genuine, heartfelt approach has endeared her to a wide variety of communities across the USA, and her commitment to international understanding has helped Americans to gain a greater appreciation for Morocco, one of America’s oldest allies.”

H.H. Lalla Joumala noted, “It is an honor to be recognized by the National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce as ‘Ambassador of the Year’ for 2023. Morocco and the United States enjoy a longstanding friendship of over 240 years, and our two countries have been working side-by-side to promote such common values as peace and stability.”



Her Highness (center) is flanked by Ambassador Henry Wooster (right), Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, and David Hamod (left), NUSACC’s President & CEO.



The Ambassador of the Year Award attracts high-level leaders from government, business, media, and the NGO community. Participating in this year’s event were many senior diplomats, including nine current ambassadors from the Middle East and Africa.



H.H. Lalla Joumala Alaoui, the Kingdom of Morocco’s Ambassador to the United States.

She concluded, “Strengthening our economic relationship is an ongoing objective that could not be achieved without the support of Moroccan and U.S. business associations – like NUSACC – which have been very helpful in paving the way toward that goal.”

The high-level award ceremony attracted nine current ambassadors from the Middle East and Africa, including Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Spain, Tunisia, and the League of Arab States. Four former U.S. Ambassadors to Morocco participated in the event, as did the current U.S. Ambassador to

Morocco, Hon. Puneet Talwar, who sent a congratulatory message from Rabat. Numerous U.S. Government officials were in attendance, led by Amb. Henry Wooster, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

Twelve sponsors supported the award ceremony, including two Lead Sponsors: General Atomics Aeronautical Systems and Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).



Four former U.S. Ambassadors to Morocco participated in the event. From left to right: Hon. Dwight Bush, Hon. David Fischer, Hon. Ed Gabriel, and Hon. Marc Ginsberg. David Hamod (center left), NUSACC’s President & CEO, commended H.H. for her exceptional leadership.

Princess Lalla Joumala will be concluding her responsibilities very soon as Morocco’s Ambassador to the United States. The award luncheon – the only public sendoff event for Her Highness – served as an informal capstone of her tenure in Washington DC.



100 leaders from business, government, media, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the event.

Introduction of Her Highness



Hon. Dwight Bush, former U.S. Ambassador to Morocco and a NUSACC Board Member.

The Honorable Dwight Bush, former U.S. Ambassador to Morocco and a NUSACC Board Member, introduced H.H. the Ambassador. He said, “It is my distinct honor and pleasure to introduce the recipient of this year’s NUSACC *Ambassador of the Year* award, Her Highness Ambassador Lalla Joumala Alaoui.” He went on to say:

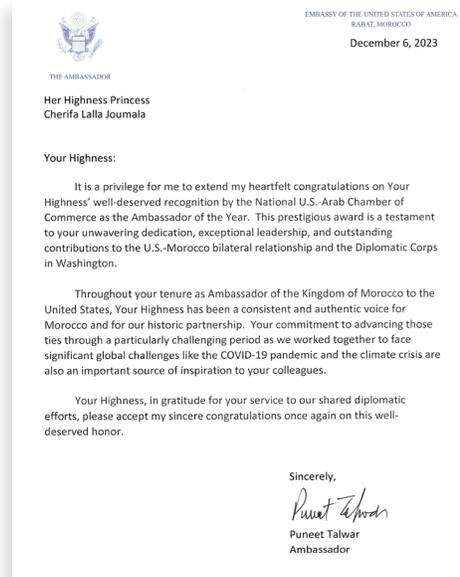
“Over time, trade and investment have been hallmarks of our relationship, in addition to mutual commitments to the development of civil institutions, human rights, security and advancements in education, and, more recently, renewable energy. Along the way we have negotiated a Free Trade Agreement, the first bilateral FTA for the United States on the continent of Africa.”

“Sectors like automotive, aerospace, hospitality and agriculture are thriving. Every month, U.S. companies are considering and making investments in Morocco, drawn by its stability, embrace of a commercial rule of law, and an increasingly skilled young workforce. There are numerous U.S. companies that are interested in not just doing business in Morocco, but also using Morocco as a stepping-out point for their business across the continent.”

“His Majesty, King Mohammed VI, is very focused on making sure that Morocco is a place where companies feel welcome, where their relationships are nurtured and appreciated by the Government of Morocco.”

“So, to make certain that these priorities stay in focus, King Mohammed VI sent to Washington a great gift: Her Highness Lalla Joumala. It is clear to all of us that H.M. made an exceptional appointment to Washington.”

“Her Highness is a ‘diplomat’s diplomat.’ By this I mean that she has successfully navigated in Washington DC the nuances of advocating for her country while gaining a concomitant appreciation of American politics and our culture. She has nurtured a broad range of relationships and interests, as evidenced by the impressive crowd here today.”



Hon. Puneet Talwar, current U.S. Ambassador to Morocco, sent a congratulatory message from Rabat.

Morocco was one of the first countries to recognize the newly independent United States, opening its ports to American ships by decree of Sultan Mohammed III in 1777. Morocco formally recognized the United States by signing a treaty of peace and friendship in 1786, a document that heralds the longest unbroken foreign relationship in U.S. history.

“I consider Her Highness to be a dear and cherished friend. Madam Ambassador, you will be sorely missed in DC. We wish you Godspeed as you enter the next chapter of your personal journey.”

“In the meantime, I now welcome you to the podium to receive this most appropriate recognition of your work and time in Washington DC.”

Her Highness Reminisces

“I am truly humbled to be here today in the presence of such a wonderful group of colleagues, friends, and family to receive this distinction, which I accept on behalf of my country, Morocco, and which I see above all as a wonderful tribute to the vision of His Majesty, the King, for a strategic, diverse, and ever-growing partnership with the United States of America.”

“Indeed, the Moroccan-American alliance is not only historic and deep, it is a relationship that has withstood the test of time and remains to this day America’s longest unbroken treaty of friendship. And *friendship* is the key word, for at the very heart of our longstanding alliance are the women and men whose connections have over the years built unshakeable bridges of exchange and understanding between our two countries.”

“Morocco’s greatest resource is undoubtedly its people, which is why His Majesty the King has always placed human development at the center of all of the Kingdom’s policies. For this reason, I feel like today should be a celebration of the many incredible people that I personally, throughout my tenure, have witnessed invest their time, energy, and spirit in working to support and advance the historic partnerships between our countries. Without them, we would not have witnessed the flourishing of our ties at all levels of cooperation.”

“Since we are hosted today by the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, I would like to underline in particular the crucial role played by the economic actors and private sectors of both our countries in nurturing the common interests and shared prosperity that are the drivers of any genuine partnership.”



Citation from the Governor of the State of Maryland, Hon. Wes Moore.

1789 letter from President George Washington to his “Great and Magnanimous Friend,” H.M. Sultan Mohammed III of Morocco

“Within our territories there are no mines, wither of gold or silver, and this young nation just recovering from the waste and dissolution of a long war, have not, as yet, had time to acquire riches by agriculture and commerce. But our soil is bountiful, and our people industrious, and we have reason to flatter ourselves that we shall gradually become useful to our friends.”

“Since our Free Trade Agreement came into effect nearly 20 years ago, bilateral trade in goods has grown fivefold. In 2022, the trade volume between our two countries reached \$5.4 billion, and last year, U.S. investment in Morocco accounted for more than 30 percent of total foreign investments in the Kingdom. Ranking the United States as Morocco’s top foreign investor, as Africa steadily emerges as a new driver for global growth and moves toward a continental free trade zone, Morocco’s deep ties in the continent offer even greater potential for U.S. companies.”



David Hamod,
President & CEO of NUSACC.

“The future is indeed bright for our bilateral economic and commercial partnership, and in general for our Moroccan-American alliance, which undoubtedly will continue to thrive.”

“Finally, I would like to end on a more personal note. As many of you know, this is my last public engagement, as I officially end my tenure as His Majesty’s Ambassador to the United States. It has been a real privilege to serve my King and country throughout the past seven years and to witness firsthand the continued advancement of our special and historic relationship with the United States.”

Testimonial Remarks

Testimonial remarks were offered by four distinguished guests: Amb. Henry Wooster, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East; British Robinson, Coordinator for Prosper Africa; Florizelle Liser, President & CEO of the Corporate Council on Africa; Amb. (ret.) Ed Gabriel, President & CEO of The Gabriel Company and a former U.S. Ambassador to Morocco.

Amb. Henry Wooster, U.S. Department of State

“The United States has not only a historic partnership with Morocco, but also a deep and abiding friendship. The gracious hosts of AFRICOM’s largest exercise on the African continent, ‘African Lion,’ Morocco is a bastion of security and stability in North Africa, working in close partnership with us and our allies. Morocco remains a stalwart partner in global efforts to promote peace and security, including co-chairing the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the Africa Working Group of the Coalition to Defeat ISIS.”



Amb. Henry Wooster, Principal
Deputy Assistant Secretary of
State for the Near East.



Amb. Henry Wooster
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East

“This year’s honoree, Her Royal Highness Ambassador Lalla Joumala, has exemplified the depth and breadth of our partnership over the course of her tenure here since 2016.”

Kimberly A. Bassett, Secretary of State of the District of Columbia

“Morocco has been an amazing community partner of our city. They have opened their residency and their embassy up to DC residents, and they have participated in our public schools. We have 33 African embassies in Washington DC and about 17,000 Africans in our city. We are proud that we have the largest number of women ambassadors ever – including Africa – and we believe in girl power! Mayor Muriel Bowser always says, ‘We are DC.’ Well, in this room today, we are DC and Africa!”



“Her Highness has been instrumental in deepening our countries’ shared commitment to face the significant challenges posed by climate change. From Morocco’s hosting of COP 22 to its launch of its National Strategy for Green Hydrogen, we have seen Morocco become a model for the rest of the world when it comes to the transition to renewable energy. This will be critical to achieving our shared and urgent goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing the climate crisis.”

“Her Highness the Ambassador has prioritized work that strengthens our bilateral economic relationship. Since the implementation of the U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement in 2006, we have seen overall bilateral trade increase by more than 300 percent, advanced in part by our joint dialogues and mutual efforts to promote investments.”

British Robinson, Prosper Africa

“I’m proud to be here as Coordinator of the U.S. Government’s Prosper Africa Initiative – a Presidential, national security initiative focused on strengthening the strategic and economic partnership between the U.S. and African countries by catalyzing two-way trade and investment flows.”

“I am here today to recognize and celebrate Her Highness’ tireless efforts to deepen the precious relationship between Morocco and the United States. I know you have made it your life’s work to build stronger ties between our countries, Your Highness, and it is in no small part due to those efforts that Morocco is the location of one of just two Prosper Africa regional offices on the continent.”



British Robinson,
Coordinator for Prosper Africa.

“Princess Joumala, the Moroccan people are so fortunate to have you as their Ambassador to the United States, and the U.S. is equally blessed to have you in Washington DC. You are an incredible diplomat and an accomplished woman who believes in the power of economic and cultural ties to connect people across languages, across borders. We are grateful for your leadership, your vision, and your partnership.”

Florizelle Liser, Corporate Council on Africa

“Corporate Council on Africa member companies represent a diverse pool of industries active in Africa’s most promising sectors, including agribusiness, energy, finance, health, ICT, infrastructure, and security.”

“I had the honor of meeting Her Highness in 2019 when CCA’s Board of Directors selected Morocco to host the 13th edition of our signature program, the U.S.-Africa Business Summit.



Florizelle Liser, President & CEO of the Corporate Council on Africa.

I came out of that initial meeting with a strong sense that with Her Highness’ support and guidance, this Morocco Summit could be our best yet.”

“Trust me, it was, despite happening two years later than planned because of the COVID pandemic. I was grateful to count on Her Highness’ leadership, wisdom, and great insight on the inner workings of the Moroccan government as we planned – and together delivered – the 2022 Summit.”

“Your Highness, thank you again for your central role in the partnership between CCA and the Kingdom of Morocco.”

Hon. Ed Gabriel, Former U.S. Ambassador to Morocco

“Your Highness, we in the United States owe you a debt of gratitude for improving relations between the U.S. and Morocco, not only with regard to trade and investment, but especially for important cultural projects you initiated and crucial political issues addressed during your tenure as Ambassador. You have been a key interlocutor at some of the most important times in the U.S. - Morocco relationship.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, Lalla Joumala and I have been friends for more than a quarter of a century. I was serving as U.S. Ambassador when H.M. King Hassan II died and H.M. Mohammed VI became King. This was a crucial time in Morocco’s history, transitioning to a new leader after 40 years; it proved to be a most successful transition for the U.S. and Morocco, due to strong and committed leadership in both nations.”



Amb. (ret.) Ed Gabriel, President & CEO of The Gabriel Company and a former U.S. Ambassador to Morocco.

“During this time, I got to know King Hassan and his sisters, as well as King Mohammed’s immediate family and his cousins. It is testimony to King Mohammed’s confidence in Lalla Joumala that H.M. appointed her to two of Morocco’s most important and powerful diplomatic posts, London and Washington DC.”

“I was lucky to become friends with Lalla Joumala early in my tenure. Whenever I was confronted with a thorny issue, our mutual friends would suggest that I talk to her. I knew if I took her advice I’d stay out of trouble and not make any unfortunate diplomatic mistakes. Lalla Joumala, you are a wise and caring individual. Thank you!”

“No one has represented her country better and with more elegance, and with more success, than she has. The U.S. – Morocco relationship is stronger because of the trusted friendships that Lalla Joumala has made here in Washington.”



Tamer Aly, Managing Director of Middle East & North Africa at General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (Lead Sponsor)



Fayssal Samaka, Director of Diplomatic Sales at the Ritz-Carlton Washington DC, congratulates H.H. Lalla Joumala Alaoui.



Her Highness is flanked by VIP guests, including such NUSACC Board members as Amb. Dwight Bush and Amb. James Smith.

Government-to-Government Relations

The Morocco-U.S. Strategic Dialogue – launched in 2012 – underpins many of the official programs between Morocco and the USA. A subgroup of the Strategic Dialogue, the U.S.-Morocco Africa Working Group, met in late October to discuss regional stability and security, trade and economic ties, and governance and development partnerships. A sampling of other government-to-government initiatives includes:

↪ *Prosper Africa* – a whole-of-government initiative that helps companies and investors do business in U.S. and African markets – opened a regional office in Morocco in 2022 to serve as an economic hub for North Africa. Since then, Prosper Africa, other U.S. Government agencies, and the Government of Morocco launched a \$100 million credit guarantee facility to support green investment in Morocco’s industrial zones.

↪ *U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)* and the Government of Morocco signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 2021 to invest \$3 billion over four years in projects in Morocco and in co-investments with Moroccan partners for projects in Sub-Saharan Africa.

↪ *The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)* carried out a \$460 million Employability and Land Compact in Morocco that has improved the lives of an estimated 800,000 Moroccans. These investments focused on education and land reform. To date, MCC has invested more than \$1 billion in Morocco.

↪ *The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)* is working closely with the Government of Morocco to support projects in participatory governance, economic growth, education, climate adaptation, and community resilience. USAID’s Africa Trade and Investment Program – part of Prosper Africa – was launched in 2021 to encourage business development and investment facilitation across Africa, including in Morocco and North Africa.

↪ *The U.S. Department of Defense* and Morocco’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed an agreement in 2020 that will chart security cooperation between the two nations through 2030. The agreement “serves as a road map for defense cooperation and aims to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries and support shared security goals,” stated Morocco’s Foreign Ministry.

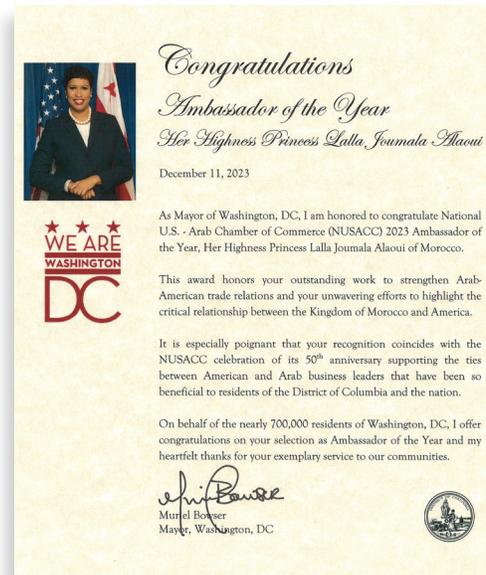
As part of the Kingdom’s efforts to expand its presence in select U.S. states, the Government of Morocco will open a new Consulate General very soon in Miami, Florida. The new facility will strengthen political and commercial relationships, while also serving the Moroccan diaspora community. (Florida has the highest concentration of Moroccan residents in the USA.)



Commercial Relations

The Morocco – U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which entered into force in 2006, serves as the foundation of the two nations’ trading relationship. On the strength of the FTA, U.S. goods exports to Morocco have grown from \$837.9 million in 2006 to \$3.717 billion in 2022, an increase of 343.7 percent. In recent years, Morocco has become one of America’s “Top Five” destinations for U.S. goods exports to the Arab world.

Because the FTA with the United States represents the “gold standard” of free trade agreements worldwide, the FTA has also helped to boost foreign direct investment (FDI) in Morocco. In 2022, the USA overtook France as the top foreign investor in Morocco, according to Morocco’s Office des Changes, and U.S. investments there (\$761 million) now account for more than 30 percent of foreign investments in the Kingdom. Morocco is experiencing a substantial increase in FDI in response to that nation’s new Investment Charter, adopted at the end of 2022, which aims to reach 550 billion Dirhams (over \$50 billion) of investment by 2026.



Citation from the Mayor of Washington DC,
Hon. Muriel Bowser.

There are over 150 U.S. firms operating in Morocco. The aerospace sector has attracted significant U.S. investment, as have the agro-industrial and energy sectors, especially renewables. Morocco’s 2009 National Energy Strategy called for an increase of renewable energies in the electricity mix to 52 percent by 2030. The Government of Morocco has announced that it will reach this target by 2025.

The growing commercial relationship has increased demand for air travel, and Royal Air Maroc (RAM) – Morocco’s flagship airline – is adding to its destinations in the USA. In recent years, RAM has added three new nonstop flights, to Boston, Miami, and Washington DC. According to *Travel Weekly*, the Moroccan national airline is making plans for nonstop flights to Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago, as well as RAM’s first nonstop flights from the USA (JFK) to Marrakech and Rabat.

Amb. Henry Wooster
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East

“Over the last fifty years, NUSACC has served American and Arab business communities by forging vital connections between Arab countries and the United States.”



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