

## Bahrain Investment Wharf Participates in Trade Mission Delegation Visiting the United States

**FTA provides global access to Bahraini products**

**Manama, Bahrain, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2007:** In order to network with major investors, developers and to further enhance the vision of Bahrain as an investment hub, Bahrain Investment Wharf has participated in the Bahraini trade mission delegation that will visit the United States from 4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> March. The visit is organized by Bahrain Economic Development Board.



His Highness Sheikh Salman Bin Hamed Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Commander-in-Chief of Bahrain Defence Force, will head the trade mission delegation in Chicago and Houston along with an impressive team of ministers, businessmen as well as Economic Development Board members. This mission is targeted at showcasing investment opportunities existing in Bahrain for U.S. businesses and the primary objectives of the mission is to promote Bahrain as the destination of investment and trade hub in GCC region by promoting the FTA, and also to establish contacts with US counterparts as well as initiate matchmaking for Bahraini entrepreneurs in the US.

Ahmed Al Qattan, Chairman -BIW, said “The Free Trade Agreement will contribute in developing and enhancing the cooperation between the two countries in the various fields, especially, the trade, financial and investment sectors. Such agreement will open up a new horizon for local and international investors, encouraging them to select the Kingdom of Bahrain as a centre for their investment activities and businesses, taking advantage of the



massive American market.” Al Qattan underlined the positive aspects of the Free Trade Agreement and its role in creating and increasing job opportunities.

The agreement diminishes most trade restrictions and it is hoped that it will increase bilateral trade and encourage the U.S.A to see Bahrain as a business hub to reach out to the entire Middle East. The FTA provides immediate duty-free access to all producers trading between the two countries.

The FTA brings major opportunities to the Kingdom’s private sector as well. The agreement will immediately offer Bahrain’s private sector duty-free access to the US market. The industrial, telecom, banking and finance, insurance and other various manufacturing sectors will be the immediate beneficiaries of this landmark trade agreement. The private sector leaders believe that a comprehensive strategy will enhance the existing trade volume by at least by 20 per cent as well as an increased flow of inward foreign direct investment in all vital segments of the nation’s economy.

The agreement includes simplified rules for the “country of origin”, which will offer Bahraini industries a duty-free access to the US market, resulting in encouragement to the industries from all over the world to take advantage of such benefits by having their own manufacturing facilities in Bahrain and benefiting from a direct access to the enormous US market, something not easily obtained by producing in their original countries.

In 2006 American exports to Bahrain topped US\$ 450 million, with an increase of 43.6 per cent compared to 2005. The Bahraini exports to the US also increased by 72.9 per cent compared to 2005.

Ahmed Al Dailami, the Director of Marketing and Sales in Bahrain Investment Wharf and BIW representative in the delegation believes that with all the advantages that are offered namely; tax free economy of Bahrain, 100% foreign ownership, skilled workforce, advanced and liberal telecommunications sector, and Bahrain’s strategic geographical location and

above all the Free Trade Agreement with the U.S.A allows the Wharf to play a key role in positioning Bahrain as the new world destination for industrial investments. He said “By encouraging business leaders from around the world to invest in Bahrain, BIW aims to create an influx of capital that will be redirected into the local economy.”

The 1.7 million square meters project area, is strategically located in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in the Hidd industrial Area, providing direct access to major sea, air and road networks, such as the new port of Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman, Bahrain International Airport, King Fahad Causeway, and the newly planned causeway connection to Qatar, resulting in easy import and export of goods, reducing logistical requirements, which translates into direct cost reduction.

The Wharf is divided into four major sectors, each fully equipped with a state of the art infrastructure to meet the demands of all potential businesses. The Industrial Park, with an approximate area of 800,000m<sup>2</sup>, is the major component of the project, which will accommodate both medium and small industries. Focusing on knowledge based and clean industries.

“This will surely result in an impact on the Bahraini economy directly, through the capital produced by foreign investment, and indirectly through the new opportunities that will be created in supporting services and industries such as Finance, Tourism, Construction and Trade.” concluded Al Dailami.

