



Breaking New Ground – Bridging Cultures

“Businesswomen in Trade”
to the Gulf States

Target Date: March 2007

Trade Mission to the Gulf States

Women Engaging in Bridge Building (WEBB) is pleased to announce its first trade mission to the Middle East for women in the education/training and financial sectors. This trade mission will bring together a delegation of approximately 20 influential businesswomen in Canada plus sponsors and match them with leading, dynamic businesses from the Gulf. This private sector initiative will travel to Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, Manama in Bahrain, and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia.

According to Forbes Magazine in its most recent “100 Most Powerful Women to Watch”, highlighting the Gulf States being progressive as women are now voting and running for office in Iraq, Kuwait and Bahrain. Of equal importance, a 2003 study in Saudi Arabia showed that the majority of heirs to family-owned businesses which amounts to billions of US\$\$ in the country are women — a fact that calls for greater involvement by Saudi women in managing business, both directly and indirectly. Many family-owned firms are among the largest in the country in terms of assets (billions), operation and manpower. There are at least 460 such businesses; moreover, there are more Saudi women that have direct involvement in these businesses.

Importance of Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Market to Canada

The GCC represents the most prosperous grouping in the Middle East and North African region and is a strategic entry point to the larger Middle East / South Asia / East African market. The region has one of the fastest growing GDPs in the world, and is blessed with extensive natural resources. It is estimated that the value of investments in Canada from the Gulf range from between \$3-5 billion, mainly from Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E. and Kuwait. Two-way trade in merchandise with GCC countries exceeded \$3.1 billion in 2005, with Canadian imports (\$1.91b) exceeding Canadian exports (\$1.28b). This data may understate our trade, as many Canadian goods are shipped to the region via the United States or other countries.

Women Engaging in Bridge Building (Canada)

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Primary Purpose/Objectives:

- Increase trade and investment opportunities for Canadian Businesses targeting Canada's most powerful women executives and women entrepreneurs.
- Provide an opportunity to participate in a trade mission to a region rich in opportunities for Canadian businesses.
- Provide awareness to adequately prepare women and Canadian businesses to enter this market.
- The Mission activities will include: business meetings, plenary sessions, meetings with experts, roundtable discussions, industry visits, reception hosted by Embassy, networking opportunities and city tours.

Expected Results:

- Support business deals and partnerships through business-to-business meetings identified and arranged by the Posts and key organizers.
- Further the trade knowledge of the participants with some practical hands-on experience in the marketplace, while providing them with opportunities to further their business know-how through contacts in their respective sectors.
- Increase trade and investment in the following sectors: education, financial services industries.

Sectors of interest:

- While this mission will be open to women operating in all key export sectors, efforts will be made to recruit from sectors that are relevant to the Gulf markets. The sectors to include:
 - Financial Services
 - Education / Training

Potential Collaborative partnerships with:

- Women's Organizations:
- Private Sector
- Community Organizations:
- Government

Eligibility Criteria:

- The initiative will primarily target women business owners but consideration will be given to include individuals who are in a position to influence business opportunities for other women, such as business and/or technology advisors and representatives of WBI delivery agents. Therefore, recruitment will be targeted primarily towards business owners.
 - The business must be at least 50% owned by a woman or women.
 - Senior level women executives from Canada's largest corporation
 - At least one of the women business owners must be actively involved in operating the business and hold authority to make major business decisions.
 - The business is export-ready or made some export sales, and has committed to developing the export market within the next 12 to 24 months.

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Project Components:

- **Information:** Direct conversation will be done for all potential participants. The focus will be on the importance of exports to the growth of SMEs, details on the Women's Exporter's Initiative and the commitment that each participant should expect to make, in terms of costs, time and incorporating newly-acquired exporting skills to their business
- **Matchmaking:** The Trade Commissioner Service at Post will be asked to develop profiles of the potential opportunities available; to identify potential business matches, and work on establishing a number of appointments for these Canadian businesses. With the support of Posts, participants will be acquainted with local networks of business of women business owners and exporters, as well as associations. There will also be a consultant who is very familiar with the region establishing and managing pre-mission one-on-one matching relationship to ensure results.
- **Evaluation:**

An evaluation will be done to determine the effectiveness of the Mission and identify any changes or adjustments that should be brought to future like missions.

For additional information or to confirm your corporate participation, please contact:

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WEBB TEAM:

Board of Directors

Ms. Nazreen Ali, MBA - President

Ms. Sandra Anstey, Director; Former President, OWIT (Organization of Women in International Trade), Public and Government Relations, Toronto

Ms. Terry Brown, Director; Businesswoman, Alberta

Dr. Daood Hamdani, Director; Internationally renowned Scientist, Ottawa

Mr. Khalil Yardon, Treasurer, Ottawa

Current Advisory Board:

Mr. Charlie Coffey, O.C. EVP RBC Financial Group, Board Member of Agha Khan Foundation Chair, national advisory council, Canadian Museum for Human Rights; member, National Committee of Agha Khan Foundation Canada; Governor, The Canadian Council of Christians and Jews and a Director of the Arctic Children and Youth Foundation

Her Excellency, Dr. Sallama Shaker, Deputy Minister for Cultural, Technical Cooperation, and Dialogue of Civilizations, Egypt and Former Ambassador from Egypt to Canada

Her Excellency, Ms. Nurjehan Mawani, His Highness Prince Agha Khan Shia Ismaili Ambassador to **Kyrgyzstan**, Former Commissioner Public Service Commission & Former Head of Refugee Board Canada

Ms. Louise Kissane, Retired Businesswoman; Italy

Mission Team:

From Private Sector:

Mr. Charlie Coffey, O.C. EVP RBC Financial Group, Board Member of Agha Khan Foundation Chair, national advisory council, Canadian Museum for Human Rights; member, National Committee of Agha Khan Foundation Canada; Governor, The Canadian Council of Christians and Jews and a Director of the Arctic Children and Youth Foundation

Ms. Nazreen Ali, MBA – President, WEBB Canada & Mecca Capital Corporation

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