

Tunisia Investment Conference
November 15, Marshall Center

CONTEXT

Having signed the US-Tunisia Political and Economic Partnership last week, the enclosed conference proposal will fulfill one of the main objectives of the joint declaration announced this week (attachment 1), which reads in part:

To galvanize the interests of potential investors in the Tunisian market, the Governments intend to undertake events that link potential investors to the Tunisian diaspora who are, indeed, among the best and most genuine exemplars of the benefits of doing business in Tunisia. To that end, the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation intends to explore how to catalyze significant new American private sector investment in Tunisia, including expansion of small-to-medium enterprise lending, as well as opportunities in franchising, infrastructure, and renewable resources and clean technology in the country.

Hosted by Special Representative Balderston, Ambassador Taylor, A/S Fernandez, OPIC CEO Littlefield, and other senior USG officials, this conference will bring together 300 US investors who are interested in deepening ties with Tunisia. A preliminary list will draw from the US Chamber of Commerce, Arab-American Chamber of Commerce, Jim Zogby's network through Partners for a New Beginning, the Tunisian American Young Professionals network, and the list of companies currently doing business in Tunisia (attachment 3). Secretary Clinton will conclude the day's session with closing remarks.

FORMAT

The day-long session will begin with a brief "Setting the Agenda" overview by Cheryl Benton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. Michael Hammer, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, will provide the welcoming remarks.

Three keynote addresses will then follow: "Priorities in US – Tunisia Policy" by Amb. William Taylor, Special Coordinator for Middle East Transitions, "The Economic Agenda: Opportunities for Growth" by Jose Fernandez, Assistant Secretary for EEB, and "Public Private Partnerships: The Way Forward" by Kris Balderston, Special Representative for Global Partnerships.

The morning will continue with sessions on “Investing in Tunisia” by Elizabeth Littlefield, President and CEO, “Trade with Tunisia” by USTDA or Ex-Im Bank, and a session on “Development in Tunisia” by USAID.

Following lunch, a series of afternoon panels on opportunities in the franchising, tourism, and ICT sectors will connect potential investors to others who are looking to do work in the region. At 4:45, Secretary Clinton is scheduled to give closing remarks.