

## Syrian-Chinese Business Council Launched to Boost Investment Relations

Mar 29, 2011



**Damascus, (SANA)** – The Syrian-Chinese Business Council on Tuesday evening started its activities with the aim of boosting trade, investment and economic relations between the two countries.

Chairman of the Council Muhammad Hamsho invited the Chinese side to establish a holding company in Syria with Syrian partners with the aim to start investments in different sectors including finance, trade, transport, energy, agriculture and industry.

Earlier, the Syrian-Chinese Trade and Economy Forum, held in Damascus, focused on cooperation opportunities and the possibility of establishing commercial and investment partnerships and projects in various field.

The Forum is organized by the Syrian-Chinese Business Council, with the participation of directors and representatives of Chinese and Syrian companies.

Assistant Minister of Economy and Trade Khaled Sallouta called on Chinese businessmen to benefit from the investment atmosphere in Syria and its legislations, infrastructure and the benefits provided to investors.

He underlined the need for exploring new cooperation opportunities, pointing out to the development of legislations and systems that served to advance business and investment in Syria.

In turn, Hamsho stressed the need to boost economic, investment and commercial relations between Syrian and Chinese companies, noting that Chinese companies can benefit from Syria's agreements with other countries, particularly the Arab Greater Free Trade Zone agreement.

For his part, China's Vice Chairman of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) Wang Jinzhen pointed out that trade exchange between Syria and China has expanded, with Syrian exports to China witnessing an increase in recent years.

China's Ambassador in Damascus Li Huaxin said that there is still a lot of untapped potential in relations between the two countries, affirming that China is prepared to exert more efforts to develop cooperation and benefit the two countries and their people.

Participants in the Forum underlined the importance of participating in expos and the need for businessmen to further promote economic relations between the two sides, particularly in banking and tourism.

They pointed out that Syrian-Chinese economic relations have expanded in recent years, with China

participation in many projects in Syria in the fields of petroleum, environment, industry and communications, in addition to funding projects and training workers.

H. Sabbagh

## Course on Education Quality Standards Sets Arab Quality Framework

Mar 29, 2011



**Damascus, (SANA)** – Specialized Experts' Quality Course for Basic Education on Tuesday started its works, setting an Arab framework for basic education's quality assurance through exchanging Arab, regional and international expertise.

The three-day course is held by Ministry of Education in cooperation with UNESCO Regional Office in the Arab countries and Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).

Deputy Education Minister Farah al-Moutlaq highlighted the importance of the course in proposing mechanisms for handling the indicator of quality absence in educational institutions and combating the ensuing outcomes.

He pointed out that the Ministry has improved the curricula of general education, as it also worked on boosting the qualification of the teaching staff in addition to integrating technology in education and developing the examination system.

Secretary of The Syrian National Committee of UNESCO Nidal Hassan clarified that the increasing demand on education during the past few years has had its effects on the issue of education and made influencing it a high priority.

Head of UNESCO's Regional Office in Beirut Abdul Monem Othman pointed out that evaluations have shed light on the notable degradation of education results in the Arab region compared to other regions in addition to the inadequacy of graduates' skills compared with the requirements of the modern labor market, which makes mixing the two factors of broadening education one hand and developing its quality on the other a must.

The participants reviewed the guidelines for guaranteeing quality in the basic education, as they also discussed the factors of quality assurance which are taken into consideration while paying field visits to schools such as students' achievement, their personal and social development, teaching and learning quality, curricula and management.

They also got acquainted with the principle and diagrams of quality assurance in Britain and the USA

in addition to Arab experience in this domain.

The meeting was attended by education experts from Tunisia, Morocco, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia Egypt and the USA in addition to Syria.

R. Milhem / S. Sabbagh

## **International Conference on Disaster Management: Developing Programs to Make Societies Safer**

Mar 29, 2011



**Damascus, (SANA) –** The International Conference on Disaster Management started activities on Tuesday with the aim of developing programs to make the societies safer and more capable of facing disasters.

The three-day conference discusses issues on the incorporation of disaster risk reduction into social programs and those of national associations, in addition to mobilizing necessary resources for this purpose.

Head of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) Abdul Rahman al-Attar said the SARC stresses the need for qualifying cadres on disaster management in cooperation with regional and international organizations.

He indicated to the necessity of unifying efforts to build the capacity of volunteers and supporting the establishment of disaster early warning system, in addition to providing the assistance required in this regard.

Matthias Schmale, Under-Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said the conference is important in terms of exchanging expertise and making use of the Syrian experience in hosting the Iraqi and Lebanese refugees.

Schmale added that executive steps to improve the application of disaster management programs over the next two years should be reached during the conference.

The discussions will also focus on the weaknesses of societies in managing disasters regardless of its causes, an earthquake, climate change or famine and on finding the appropriate solutions.

The conference, held every two years, was organized by the International Federation of Red Cross and

Red Crescent Societies in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

R. Raslan/ H. Said

## **Hama Exports 669 Tons of Pistachio Exported to Europe and the Gulf States**

Mar 29, 2011



**Hama, Central Syria (SANA)**-The Pistachio Office affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture has announced that more than 669 tons of pistachio have been exported to several European countries, in addition to the Gulf States, Egypt, Jordan and Turkey.

Chairman of the Hama-based Pistachio Office Hassan Ibrahim stressed that all the exported shipments of pistachio are distinguished by the high quality, adding that all the shipments have went under an accurate laboratory analysis to match up with the international standards.

He indicated that the office cooperates with the bodies concerned for considering new mechanisms to facilitate the measures of exporting the domestic products through granting certificates of origin (OC).

He added that the Office has opened three field schools in Hama for developing the cultivation of pistachio within a program for the integrated management of blights in the current year.

He pointed out that Hama ranked first in producing pistachio among the Syrian provinces.

H. Zain / R. al-Jazaeri

## **Workshop on al-Ghab Region Development Agropolis Program**

Mar 29, 2011

**Damascus, (SANA)-** Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform on Monday held a workshop on the executive strategy for the Development Program of al-Ghab Region (Agropolis).

The 4-day workshop is held in cooperation with the State Planning Commission and General Board for al-Ghab Management and Development.

It discusses mechanisms of setting a unified framework for the common vision on the integrated development program at al-Ghab region in addition to tackling the obstacles hindering the implementation of the program.

Assistant Minister of Agriculture Nabi Rashid Mohammed said the project aims at developing al-Ghab region which is considered one of the most fertile regions in Syria.

He added that a number of studies have been conducted by several bodies should have included setting up a clear strategy for developing this region through carrying out several projects in the spheres of agriculture, tourism, environment and housing.

Located in the governorate of Hama, Al-Ghab is a highly populated region. Approximately 62% of this land is made up of fertile agricultural soils, 26.2 % forests, in addition to 9.6 % of non-arable land and 2.3 % of grass-plains and pastures.

The region has high development potentials due to the abundant natural resources and favorable rainfall and water resources. The region also enjoys uncontaminated air quality, in addition to impressive landscapes that have a tourist potential.

United Nations Resident Coordinator in Syria, Ismael Ould Sheikh Ahmed, said the program aims at improving the livelihood of people living in al-Ghab through the development of agriculture, agro-industry, tourism, free trade and the preservation of environmental services.

It also seeks to develop a strategy for pushing forwards the development process in the region in addition to encouraging agricultural investment.

H. Zain/ R. al-Jazaeri