

TRADE MISSION DJIBOUTI

From 12-15 May, 2014, the very first trade mission from the Netherlands to Djibouti took place. This mission was organized by NABC in close cooperation with the Dutch Embassy in Addis Ababa (accredited to Djibouti) and the Honorary Consul for the Netherlands in Djibouti, and supported by Djiboutian authorities.

The focus of this mission was on the maritime sector, Transport, construction and agro-logistics, for which Djibouti is the regional hub as it functions as the main transit point for goods to and from the East African region, especially Ethiopia, to Europe, the Middle East and other regions.

The delegation consisted of 12 Dutch companies and was headed by H.E. Lidi Remmelzwaal, the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Ethiopia and Djibouti and Mr. Lorenz Winkel, Area Director Africa at Damen Shipyards, on behalf of NABC and the private sector.

The mission kicked-off with a tour through the Ports of Djibouti – facilitated by the Djibouti Port & Free Zone Authorities, DPFZA - including the 'old' multi-purpose port, the Doraleh Container Terminal and the Oil Terminal. The tour also included a visit to the Free Trade Zone of Djibouti which is currently being expanded with a second Free Trade Zone, and the Dutch logistics company Steder Group. This expansion is only one of the many upcoming projects and investments taking place in Djibouti's port area.

Following the visit through the ports our delegation was offered a lunch by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Djibouti and the Chambre de Commerce of Djibouti. This lunch was attended by several Djiboutian public and private sector officials and hence offered some networking opportunities.

One of the most important components of our NABC missions is the usual Matchmaking or B2B session, in which the delegation members have coordinated bilateral 'speed dates' with potential business partners which took place in the afternoon of the 13th and was hosted by the Chambre de Commerce of Djibouti. The B2B proved to be a great success as the Dutch delegation members had fruitful meetings with 8 to 10 of Djiboutian and international companies.

This first day was closed with a spectacular networking reception on Deck of the Dutch Navy Ship *HNLMS Eversten*, attended by many Djiboutian and international companies and Djiboutian government authorities.

The second day started with the Djibouti-Pays-Bas Business forum under the high patronage of the Prime Minister of Djibouti at the Kempinski Palace hotel in Djibouti City. This forum was organized by NABC in close collaboration with the NIPA (National Investment Promotion Agency) and the Ministry de l'Économie et des Finances chargé de l'Industrie. During this forum the willingness of both the Djiboutian and Dutch authorities and the Dutch private sector to strengthen business relations was emphasized. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between NABC and the Chambre de Commerce de Djibouti was the perfect embodiment of the commitment of both countries towards this mutual objective.

In the afternoon we organized some company visits for the delegation: a visit to Djibouti's largest conglomerate GSK Group and a parallel visit to Marill Automotive and Transit Marill, which proved to be very fruitful.

On May 15, the last day of the mission, the companies had time for individual follow-up, a visit to the Fishing harbor and a meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture.

All-in-all, the program of the mission was very diverse and gave the Dutch companies the opportunity to get a good insight into Djibouti's business opportunities and acquire the first contacts to get started with business in Djibouti.