

CHEVENING - AREEBA - MOU SIGNED

process will be answered by the appropriate Directorate within an agreed timescale.

4) As part of the on-going process of making more information available to the trade and public we also have plans for the introduction of a Customs Website. This Website, in Arabic and English will have copies of the Customs Code, subsidiary legislation for the most commonly used procedures; Tariff information; and advice for passengers entering and leaving Syria. The Website will have links to other related Websites and much of it will be capable of being downloaded for convenience.

We aim to provide a modern, transparent and progressive Customs service that will help facilitate trade whilst fulfilling its national and international obligations in the global fight against smuggling. Completion of the above projects will go a long way to modernise Customs but more will need to be done to recruit and retain the right calibre of recruits required to make possible our modernisation plan. The Government of Syria and the other donors have provided a good basis for the modernisation programme, it is now up to Customs to implement their wishes and provide a more efficient and effective service to the Government and people of Syria and our international stakeholders.



On 14 April the British Embassy and Areeba signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Chevening scholarships. Areeba for the first time will co-sponsor with the British Embassy a Chevening scholarship sending a promising Syrian graduate for one year's postgraduate study to the UK.

The international Chevening programme began in 1992. The title of the scholarship is taken from the name of the official residence of the British Foreign Secretary. The scholarship focuses on areas of importance to both Syria and the UK such as human resources, non-governmental organisations, oil and gas, law and development. The scholarship promotes academic links between our two countries and forges long lasting friendships. Syria has one of the highest levels of participation in the Chevening scheme in the world. The British Council administers the Chevening awards on behalf of the Embassy. Last year they helped us send 12 Syrians to take up scholarships and this year we will be sending 10 new scholars.

Areeba's participation in the Chevening scheme along with our other co-sponsors, Shell, Aga Khan Foundation and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Higher Education is highly appreciated by the British Embassy and enables us to send

even more Syrian scholars to the UK. It is an excellent example of cooperation between our two countries.

Here is the view of Mr Ahmed Barakat, a Syrian Chevening scholar 2005-2006:

My experience as a Chevening scholar was one of the most memorable periods of my life. As an MA student, I received the best education and was supervised by the best teachers. I learnt essential skills in research and analysis, which is the basis for any higher education study or career.

But Chevening gave me more than an exciting opportunity to study in a different environment. Socially, I met all types of people through activities and trips organised by Leeds University. I learnt a great deal about the social and cultural heritage of Britain. It was unforgettable.

The support I received from the British Council was excellent. When I needed help or advice the British Council was always there to listen, advise and support. I am now involved with other Syrian Chevening scholars in the Chevening Alumni group.

Advertising for next years Chevening scholarships will begin in the Autumn. Details will be available on our website and we will advertise in the local media...so keep your eyes open!