



Middle East: US\$200 million investments coming to fruition

press release

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Air Liquide in the Middle East

Air Liquide is present in **Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates** where the Group has established its headquarters for Middle East region.

With **350 employees** in the Middle East, Air Liquide has invested US\$300 million over the 2002-2007 period and **will invest a further US\$1 billion in the Persian Gulf region over the next five years.**

Middle Eastern countries have double digit **rates of GDP growth, leading to growth in the industrial gas market exceeding +20% per year.** Industrial markets in the zone, such as petrochemicals, chemicals, metals and food, require increasing quantities of industrial gases.

Air Liquide announces that the development of its business in the Middle East is accelerating, as investments totaling around US\$200 million are coming to fruition.

Shuaiba Oxygen, Air Liquide's subsidiary in **Kuwait** (a partnership with Kuwait Cryo) has supplied since the start of July, the new petrochemicals plant **Equate** (co-owned by the group Dow and the Kuwaiti company Petrochemical Industries Company - P.I.C.) with **oxygen, nitrogen and compressed air.** This new air separation unit near Kuwait City, has production capacity of 1,500 tonnes of oxygen per day.

GASAL, Air Liquide's subsidiary in **Qatar** (a partnership with Qatar Petroleum and QIMCO) has just commissioned two new air separation units. The Mesaieed unit (40 km south of Doha), commissioned last April, supplies the **Qatar Steel Company (QASCO)**, a leading steel producer in the Middle-East, with **oxygen and nitrogen.** This unit also supplies five other customers in the industrial basin, through GASAL's pipeline system.

The second air separation unit, commissioned early July in the industrial basin of Ras Laffan, supplies **nitrogen** to the **Ras Laffan Olefins Company (RLOC)**, a subsidiary of Qatar Petroleum, Chevron-Phillips and the Total group.

Air Liquide Egypt has just commissioned a new **carbon dioxide** production unit in Aboukir, to serve the food and soft drinks markets, currently undergoing strong development. This is a new step in the industrial development of the Group which has been present in Egypt since 2002, meeting the growing gas needs of industrial customers.

Air Liquide Sohar Industrial Gases (ALSIG), Air Liquide's subsidiary in the **Sultanate of Oman** (a partnership with Oman Refinery Company, Mohsin Haider Darwish and Omzest) will begin supply **nitrogen** to **AOL** (Oman Aromatics) in

October 2008. The new air separation unit, located in the port of Sohar, **will double current production capacity of the Group in the Sultanate of Oman.**

The argon production from Shuaiba Oxygen, the acquisition of the Pure Helium company and the liquid sourcing available from the new projects provide **ALMENA** (Air Liquide's Merchant subsidiary in the region) with rapidly expanding industrial merchant sales in Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and other countries throughout the Gulf, in particular to the welding and construction markets.

Pierre Dufour, Senior Executive Vice-President of the Air Liquide Group, responsible for the Middle East zone, declared: **"We are delighted that so many projects are coming to fruition in the Middle East, which enable us to be present in most of the markets in this zone. The Group is keen to meet the growing needs of its customers, in particular in the main industrial basins. These investments are carried by the trend for outsourcing industrial gas needs and are in line with Group growth strategy, which is to invest over one billion dollars in the Middle East in the coming five years."**



With more than **40,000 employees** in **75 countries**, Air Liquide is the **world leader** in industrial and medical gases and related services. The Group offers **innovative solutions** based on constantly enhanced **technologies** and produces **air gases (oxygen, nitrogen, argon, rare gases...)** and many other gases including **hydrogen**. The Group contributes to the manufacturing of **many everyday products**: bubbles in sparkling beverages, protective atmosphere for packed foods, oxygen for hospitals and homecare patients, ultra-pure gases for the semiconductor industry, hydrogen to desulfurize fuels...

Air Liquide is committed to **sustainable development** and helps to **protect life**. Founded in 1902, Air Liquide has successfully developed a long-term relationship with its shareholders built on **trust** and **transparency** and guided by the principles of **corporate governance**. Since the publication of its first consolidated financial statements in 1971, Air Liquide has posted **strong and steady earnings growth**. Sales in 2007 totaled **11,801 million euros**, with sales outside France accounting for almost 80%. Air Liquide is listed on the Paris stock exchange and is a component of the CAC 40 and Eurostoxx 50 indices (ISIN code FR 0000120073).