

US President Obama hosts Muslim business summit

Some 250 delegates from 50 countries attended the summit

US President Barack Obama has announced a series of educational and business exchanges in an effort to improve ties between the US and the Muslim world.

Mr Obama unveiled his plans to Muslim entrepreneurs from 50 countries at a summit hosted in Washington.



"Real change comes from the bottom up, and that is why we are here," he said.

The president pledged to host the summit in a landmark speech in Cairo last year, when he called for a "new beginning" to US-Muslim relations. In his 2009 speech, President Obama called for both sides to make a "sustained effort to respect one another and seek common ground". The BBC's Kim Ghattas says entrepreneurship is Washington's new tool to improve ties with the Muslim world - by building on people-to-people contact and helping them to create change in their own countries. Mr Obama said women working in the field of technology in countries with a Muslim majority would be given the chance to work as interns in the US.

He also told the audience of 250 delegates that a new fund promoting global technology and innovation could potentially raise \$2bn (£1.3bn) of private investment.

He added that the market was the most powerful force to create opportunities and lift people out of poverty.

The president also said Muslim perceptions of the US must change.