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## Human Rights Council

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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by ArabEuropean Forum for Dialogue and Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[29 January 2021]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## **Empowering Saudi women socially, culturally, and politically within the 2030 vision**

Saudi Arabia witnessed unprecedented decisions in the field of women's rights, which began by lifting the ban on women driving cars, and announcing that women would be allowed to attend the stands of football stadiums, which constituted a unique event and a major breakthrough in terms of strengthening the role of women, under the direct leadership and care of Saudi leadership.

This enlightened vision met with great acceptance and international welcome from all circles interested in women's affairs, and it also reflected satisfaction with Saudi women who found their appropriate place in the thought of the Saudi leadership without prejudice to the privacy of society or its customs and traditions.

Saudi women have achieved great successes in administrative work and have had an active role in Saudi society, she participates like Saudi man in all fields for the revival of this country. With her knowledge, intelligence, effort, principles, and legitimacy constants, the Saudi woman has proven to herself and the whole world her ability to give continuously in all fields: scientific, social, medical, economic, commercial, and even technical.

The leadership role of Saudi women has evolved in recent years and they have assumed important positions in various governmental and private sectors and in civil society institutions. In her belief and determination to have the real leadership role that achieves the desired role for women as an active partner and contributes to advancing development. There are many examples of the achievements of Saudi women locally and internationally, and among the most prominent features of the recent development of her leadership role is her success in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry elections and her entry into the competition in the municipal council elections.

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 included a distant view of Saudi women and their leadership role in society and gave them effective developmental roles to achieve great successes at the local and global levels. Saudi Arabia and its authentic culture; let us find that empowering women to exercise their leadership role in community development is rising in various fields.

The beginning was with the entry of women into the Shura Council, after 20% of the council's seats had been allocated to women. To participate in making important decisions for the benefit of the citizen and society.

According to the National Transformation Program, which contains 36 strategic goals that support empowerment, independence, and self-reliance of women, "Saudi women are an important element of the Kingdom's strength. The Kingdom will continue to develop talents and invest energies to enable them to obtain appropriate opportunities to build their future and contribute to the development of Saudi society and economy."

The new approach in Vision 2030, and the National Transformation Program 2020, and the Fiscal Balance Program stress the importance of the full participation of Saudi women in the labor market, and strive to increase women's participation in the labor market from 22% to 30% in 2030, which contributes to an increase of up to 3% of non-oil Gross Domestic Product, and working to reduce total unemployment from 7.12% to 7%.

The Saudi government is taking clear steps to achieve this goal, and it is hoped that Saudi women will play an important role in reviving the business sector, investment, and managing various economic activities. Saudi Arabia has adopted the seventeen sustainable development goals, among the member states of the United Nations, among them the fifth goal (achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls), which is concerned with ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls.

As an important step, the 2030 Agenda recognizes the need to ensure the empowerment of economic opportunities for the female workforce, and the consequent necessity to encourage appropriate legislation, policies, and procedures to achieve economic growth and sustainable development.

Vision 2030 is concerned with focusing on strengthening small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurship as an important element on which the new economic approach based on development and innovation depends, including businesswomen, as women entrepreneurs are helped in identifying and exploiting new markets, whether local or global.

An extension of women's rights in Vision 2030 and the measures taken to eliminate violence against women and children. In February 2018, a supreme order was issued to provide human rights assistance to women and children in cases of abuse. All these visions and decisions represent qualitative moves in the march towards achieving the best levels of promotion and protection of women's rights and achieving sustainable development.

The great and constructive steps that Saudi Arabia has taken years ago to integrate women into political life; she became a member of the Shura Council, and she has the right to vote in Parliament, in addition to her membership in local councils.

These steps were a challenge for Saudi women, and then the political leadership came with a new vision based on the fact that Saudi Arabia's position at the global level must be a highlighted, respected, and appreciated position, thus these decisions made Arab woman a happier in general.

These decisions will activate the Saudi role to implement the Arab Strategy for the Development of Women 2030, which was approved by the recent Jordan Summit last March. This strategy included among its major priorities the right of women to move and their right to practice their social life, in line with Islamic law, and therefore the inclusion of women in the fields of political, social, and economic development will not only contribute to the development of women, but also to the development of Saudi society.

The Saudi Vision 2030 promotes the role of youth in achieving development goals as being the largest segment of Saudi society, and this vision is unique and distinct due to its reliance on full coordination between agencies and each other and the linkage between different issues and the development of the country's future policies and youth, as well as preserving natural resources for future generations.

Royal decisions in support of women reflect the leadership's interest in empowering women and the imperative for them to assume leadership positions in the state, as they will thus participate with men in decision-making positions.

These decisions established the principles of equality and transparency in dealing with the citizen. Saudi Arabia has taken successful steps in empowering women and their participation in the national building process, which has made diversity a top priority.

Here we refer to the qualitative shift that Saudi women are witnessing in Saudi Arabia, with the direct support of the Saudi leadership, and their demonstrated commitment to endorse women's rights and affirm that the tolerant Sharia is the main source of support and empowerment of women, as well as the issuance of laws and charters that contribute to strengthening the march of Saudi women.

The Saudi experience in the field of enhancing the role of women is a pioneering and unique experience that reflects the leadership's interest in enabling community members to play their active and important role to achieve the desired revival and progress in light of an ambitious and honest vision that reflects Saudi Arabia's aspirations in line with the development and the progress with a Saudi national vision par excellence.

A Saudi woman is an important model for her intellectual and her awareness that enable her to activate these elements in building society and maintain its enlightening and pioneering cultural path, in light of the political and social support provided by Saudi Arabia, as Vision 2030 reflects the ambitious aspirations of the Saudi people.

Royal decisions related to women came at the appropriate time and in the appropriate form for the Saudi society and commensurate with its cultural and societal heritage, and here highlights the Saudi Arabia's role in strengthening the role of women politically through rising her to decision-making positions through a partnership based on competence and knowledge, which enhances the chances of success of the series of programs directed to raise women's efficiency and support them socially and politically. Arab and international organizations concerned with women look with amazement at the Saudi experience in the

field of women, and work will be done to increase interaction between institutions, agencies, and the initiative concerned with women during the coming period.

Saudi Arabia's national strategy reflected the essence of the successes and achievements that Saudi women are witnessing in the current stage, and the next stage will witness precious additions to the integration of women through their participation in the highest leadership levels in Saudi Arabia, and this is what the vision endorsed and confirmed by royal decisions in this direction by increasing the participation rate for women, caring for them and supporting them through the programs and institutions supported by Saudi Arabia to raise the efficiency and the level of women, grant them the latest technology and push them to participate in international forums, which increases their cultural and educational aspect and their ability to make decisions.

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