Statement of
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Before
The Third Committee
68th Session of
The United Nations General Assembly

Item 28 (a - b)
Advancement of Women

Delivered by
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Mr. President,

The Delegation of my Country would like to convey to H.E., Ambassador Stefan Tafroy, its sincere congratulations on his election as President of the Third Committee during the 68th Session.

Mr. President,

In recent years, the Saudi woman made significant achievements in many fields and earned unprecedented gains due to the support of the Kingdom's political will to grant the Saudi woman her full rights which enable her to play her key role in serving her society and country while maintaining her Arab-Islamic identity.

In the field of education, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been keen to take several measures to ensure the advancement of the Saudi woman from primary schools to college and beyond to be qualified to hold highest-rank positions in government agencies.

In this regard, the Kingdom has established many new subjects and specialties in Saudi universities for women in the fields of Media, politics, engineering, and law. In addition, the King Abdullah Scholarship Program quadrupled the opportunity for Saudi women's education abroad in the past four years, and the number of women who benefited from these opportunities reached 24,581 students. As for higher-education institutions, female students reached 473,735 to exceed male students’ figures which reached 429,842 students in 2011. It is worth mentioning that the number of female students enrolled in 1961 was only four. Recently, new areas of specialties were open for women such as
The Kingdom strives to set policies aimed to encourage all civil institutions and the private sector to adopt a national integrated plan designed to ensure the effective participation of women in many institutions and associations, such as chambers of commerce, literary clubs, associations of social services; in addition to the establishment of a number of sports clubs for women, and launching an awareness campaign, conducted by some government agencies in collaboration with civil society organizations, to educate women about the laws and regulations concerned with protecting their rights.

In the area of women's empowerment and enhancement of their participation in national decision-making, the Kingdom issued many decisions in this regard, the most important of which was to participate in the Shura (Advisory) Council with a membership of no less than 20%, in addition to the women right to run and vote in municipal councils' elections. These decisions come as an extension to previous steps taken by the Kingdom in this regard, such as appointing more women in the diplomatic corps, economic activities, national dialogue, media, and cultural fields in which women have assumed a prominent role. Moreover, Saudi women have made many achievements in the fields of medicine at the national and international levels, became qualified to hold the highest rank positions in the Kingdom (deputy ministers, deans of universities, chairpersons and board members of banks and joint-stock companies, and more), and assumed many leadership positions in the Kingdom's institutions related to civil rights of women and children, domestic violence, social services and others.
Mr. President,

The Kingdom has always been keen on engaging women in working with international organizations. Saudi women are successfully holding several international positions, notably executive director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the membership of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Moreover, a Saudi woman was honored with a human rights' prize for her efforts on the empowerment of women and maternal health.

Mr. President,

There are many texts and concepts in the Islamic Shariaa (Legislation) which forbid any abuse or injustice against women. The Kingdom's continuous commitment to grant women their full rights in accordance with the Islamic Shariaa is manifested in various effective measures taken, such as joining the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, supporting international mechanisms for women's rights through the Kingdom's membership in the Executive Board of the UN Women and contributing an amount of $2 million for its activities, and the appointment of two Saudi women as associate experts in the UN Commission on Human Rights.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

The serious violence and abuse endured by women in conflict areas cannot be tolerated. Therefore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, government and people, call upon the international community to shoulder its responsibilities, swiftly act to prevent such crimes and ensure justice and unhindered progress in the development of women.