



# US WOMEN'S CAUCUS

*Feminist Advocacy at the UN*

April 4, 2024

His Excellency Dr. Abdulaziz Alwasil  
The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations  
809 United Nations Plaza Floor 10  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ambassador Alwasil:

On behalf of the US Women's Caucus, an alliance of US NGOs engaged with the UN, we wish to extend our congratulations on your election as Chair of the UN Commission on the Status of Women for its 69<sup>th</sup> session. Like many other women's organizations, we hope that you will promote the ideals of the UN and CSW with strong advocacy for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls around the world. A proactive approach would end widespread skepticism that Saudi Arabia has taken the CSW position to burnish its poor reputation on human rights for women and girls. We encourage you to seize the opportunity to set a positive example of change for other nations that have traditionally restricted women's rights.

With that goal in mind, we encourage the Kingdom to take bold steps to improve the human rights of women and girls at home. We note that since 2019, as part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030, there has been welcome progress on the rights of women in Saudi Arabia with more women being educated; more women working; and a lifting of some restrictions on dress codes, mixed gatherings, driving, and guardianship rules. However, there are still many substantial reforms to be made in the country before the Kingdom will be seen as empowering women such as passage of laws protecting women and girls from harassment, rape, gender-based violence, and honor killings; repeal of all restrictive guardianship rules; and revision of gender-biased laws relating to marriage, divorce, and guardianship of children. We are particularly concerned about the censorship, persecution, and imprisonment of women's rights advocates and feel an end to those practices are necessary reforms to provide global leadership on women's rights.

The world will be observing how well you and your country use your time as Chair. We hope you will choose to be a force for inspirational and transformational change in women's lives, not only in your own country but also the rest of the world. By doing so, you will confound your critics and silence the nay-sayers who opposed your candidacy.

With the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action at the CSW 69 session, your role in its success will be paramount. We hope that you will be a champion and beacon of hope to the women of the world as the CSW reviews the Beijing Platform. We would be happy to support you in those efforts.

Yours very truly,

The Rev. Susan H. Lee, Ph.D.  
President

*US feminists collaborating to advance human rights and gender equity for women and girls worldwide*  
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