**Canadian Recommendations – UPR 17**

**October 21, 2013**

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

**Question**

Would the Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia inform us on the status of its progress in fulfilling its commitment to abolishing legislation and practices that discriminate against women? Of particular interest are details regarding implementation of measures taken on: national IDs for women; criminalization of and protection from domestic violence; the age of majority relating to marriage; full political participation, access to health care services; and freedom of movement for women, both domestically and internationally, including the de-facto prohibition on women driving.

**Recommendations**

Canada recommends that Saudi Arabia:

1. Abolish, modify or introduce legislation, measures and practices to ensure the effective elimination of all forms of legal discrimination against women and to allow for their full participation in society, including in decision making and political processes, on an equal basis with men.

2. Introduce and implement a law prohibiting all child, early and forced marriages, including the introduction of a legal minimum age of majority for marriage, and other measures to safeguard and enforce women’s rights relating to marriage, choices and free and full consent.

3. Take necessary measures to ensure the effective enjoyment and protection of the right to freedom of religious belief, with a view to promoting the equality of all peoples and respect for all faiths.

4. Draft and implement a penal code and amend the Law of Criminal Procedure to comply with all its obligations under international law, including prohibitions on judicially sanctioned corporal punishment and the execution of juvenile offenders.

5. Take measures to foster an enabling environment for civil society, including through enacting and implementing before the next UPR a law on associations to allow for the legal creation and registration of independent civil society associations and organizations.

**Observations – Time permitting**

Canada recognizes and welcomes the media campaign this year in Saudi Arabia to raise awareness about domestic violence and the recent announcement of a new law criminalizing domestic abuse. Canada encourages the full implementation and enforcement of the provisions of this law, with clarification of specific roles and responsibilities for Saudi government bodies. Furthermore, we welcome recent moves to clarify the right of women to request and obtain national identification without requiring a guardian’s approval or presence.

Canada remains concerned about the reported high number of executions in the Kingdom, the application of corporal punishment, limitations on freedom of religion, the ongoing discrimination against women, and the mistreatment of migrant workers, including foreign domestic workers.

Canada takes note ofthe efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the King himself, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, to encourage dialogue amongst different faiths and sects and to promote the values of mutual respect and understanding and equality, including through active support for the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue established in Vienna in 2012. With a significant population of non-Muslim expatriates residing in the country as well as practitioners of numerous sects of Islam, Canada encourages the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in its efforts to ensure an environment of respect and tolerance for the observance and practice of all faiths and beliefs in the Kingdom.