



Universal Periodic Review: 17<sup>th</sup> session  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
Delivered by Ambassador Ellis  
21 October 2013

New Zealand welcomes the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Human Rights Council. Thank you for your presentation today and for this opportunity to continue our discussion on human rights issues in Saudi Arabia.

New Zealand welcomes efforts to improve the position of women in Saudi society since 2009, including the appointment to the Shura Council of 30 women and granting women the right to vote and to stand for municipal elections.

New Zealand particularly welcomes the introduction of a law criminalising domestic abuse, and is interested to learn what steps are being taken to implement and enforce this law.

Despite this important progress, New Zealand considers that there is still much work to be done and **recommends that Saudi Arabia continue the progress underway and introduce further steps to achieve gender equality, in particular the abolishment of the system of male guardianship, which restricts the ability of women to act as equals in society.**

New Zealand was pleased to learn about steps that have taken since 2009 to improve implementation of the Labour Code. Concerns remain, however, about the position of the most vulnerable migrant workers, particularly domestic and agricultural workers. Therefore, building on recommendation accepted during Saudi Arabia's first review, **New Zealand continues to recommend expanding the scope of the Labour Code to include all migrant workers and recommends the establishment of an accessible complaint mechanism, such as a free-phone service, to which migrant workers can confidentially report instances of abuse and exploitation, as well as seek assistance.**

In concluding, New Zealand thanks the delegation of Saudi Arabia for its consideration of New Zealand's recommendations.