



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-third session

Agenda item 9

### Report of the Economic and Social Council

#### **Letter dated 23 April 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 23 April 2019 that I sent, as the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to the President of the Economic and Social Council (see annex), as well as a related document regarding the process of adoption of the agreed conclusions of the sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

I should be very grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 9.

(Signed) Abdallah Y. Al-Mouallimi  
Permanent Representative



**Annex to the letter dated 23 April 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I would like to bring to your attention our reservations regarding the outcome document of the sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, as described in the enclosure.

Furthermore, we would like to draw your attention to what we believe were erroneous practices in administering the closing session and adopting the outcome documents, despite repeated assertions by our delegation that we could not join the consensus because of the serious reservations we expressed regarding the substance of the document.

We note that this practice of trying to reach consensus at any cost and in any manner is part of the broader process whereby some countries or groups of countries are trying to impose their value system and their views, especially on social issues, on the rest of the world without due regard for cultural, social or religious sensitivities. This process of cultural coercion cannot be conducive to the peace, tolerance and understanding that we should all aspire to promote. The search for consensus is desirable and positive, and we believe that we have tried hard to reach such a consensus, but enforcing new language and controversial positions as the new agreed norm cannot be accepted.

In the light of the above, I respectfully submit the following requests:

1. Distribute a copy of the present letter and its enclosure to all Member States. We have already taken the liberty of sending copies of the letter to the Secretary-General and to the President of the General Assembly.
2. Add our enclosure containing our list of reservations to the outcome document and incorporate it as an integral part of the document, thereby reflecting our view, as well as the views of a number of other Member States who did not have the chance to express them clearly.
3. Direct the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, together with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, to conduct a comprehensive review of the procedural flaws that took place and to provide appropriate recommendations for improving the working methods of the Council's functional commissions, in order to help prevent similar breakdowns of diplomacy and good order.

*(Signed)* Abdallah Y. Al-Mouallimi  
Permanent Representative

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**Enclosure****Statement of the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations on the closing session of the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-third session**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentleman,

After serious consideration, back and forth discussions, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not prepared to join consensus. We have worked long hours for many weeks. We have made compromises. Regretfully, not all delegations have shown flexibility. The agreement we have before us disregards important red lines for my country known to all. We are disappointed that the facilitator waited so long to try and forge consensus on all issues. All red lines were preserved in the text until today. It is not fair to try and force us to agree to compromises that are forced and quickly prepared.

Specifically,

- Multiple references to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
- Promotion of sexual rights and related issues that have never garnered consensus
- Refusal to recognize parental rights language
- Refusal to recognize the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society
- Failure to fully reflect the role of the family in protecting women and girls
- Promotion of sexuality education for children, despite its irrelevance to the theme
- Focus on ambiguous terms such as multiple and intersecting discrimination
- Lack of language on national sovereignty
- Lack of balance when addressing the issue of violence
- Overall issues of transparency and failure to give sufficient time to controversial issues

In this regard, we repeat, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia cannot join consensus on accepting the agreed conclusions of the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

Thank you.

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