

# Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia Event Summary

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## *A Conversation with Her Royal Highness Ambassador Reema Bandar Al Saud*

Hosted by the Colorado Business Roundtable

July 8, 2020  
Zoom Interactive Event  
2:00-3:00 EDT

Ambassador Reema Bandar Al Saud addressed a virtual event hosted by the Colorado Business Roundtable on July 8, 2020. After being introduced by Dr. Becky Takeda-Tinker, President of Colorado State University Global, Ambassador Reema focused her remarks on several topics impacting the U.S.-Saudi partnership, in particular, women's empowerment in the Kingdom. She then participated in a question and answer session, moderated by Debbie Brown, President of the Colorado Business Roundtable. The questions were posed by nine distinguished women leaders from Colorado. These panelists included:

- Kristen Blessmen, CEO – Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce
- Karen Gerwitz, President – World Trade Center, Denver
- Lynn Granger, Executive Director – American Petroleum Institute Colorado
- Rebecca Kersting, Co-President – CAP Logistics
- Rep. Betsy Markey, Executive Director – Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade
- Lt. Gov. Dianne Primavera
- Dr. Becky Takeda-Tinker, President and CEO – Colorado State University Global
- State Senator Angela Williams

Each panelist posed one question of their choice to Ambassador Reema, many of which touched on women's empowerment and Ambassador Reema's background of activism on behalf of women. Throughout the event and in her answers, Ambassador Reema spoke to the sameness of women in the U.S. and in the Kingdom, and the challenges faced by women in business and in a broader sense, throughout the world. Many answers touched on Ambassador Reema's personal experiences, like working to raise awareness for breast cancer in the Kingdom and her years of experience working in the private sector.

Ambassador Reema further discussed the bold and inspiring transformation occurring in Saudi Arabia under Vision 2030. From diversifying the Saudi economy to opening Saudi Arabia to tourism, Vision 2030 touches every government department and Saudi citizen. Vision 2030 additionally seeks to empower women, an effort recently recognized by the World Bank Group whose yearly Women, Business, and the Law report recognized Saudi Arabia as having made the biggest yearly improvement. Specifically, the report recognized Saudi Arabia for barring sexual harassment in both the public and private employment sectors, legally protecting pregnant employees from discriminatory dismissal, setting the retirement age the same for men as for women, and mandating equal pay for women as their male counterparts. Ambassador Reema spoke passionately on these changes and provided real world examples as to how significant these changes are for women in the Kingdom.

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Additional topics addressed by Ambassador Reema during the event's Q&A included:

- How COVID-19 has impacted Saudi Arabia and the leadership of the Kingdom handling the pandemic to protect the holy sites of Mecca and Medina.
- Saudi Arabia's recent efforts in space and where do women fit into these efforts.
- The development and laws and regulations in the Kingdom and how these laws impact business in Saudi Arabia and internationally.

The event concluded with Ambassador Reema thanking the panelists and encouraging all attendees to visit the Kingdom once the restrictions of COVID-19 allow.