

Roundtable on IGNITING Women's Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Saudi Arabia

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

10:00 am ET/5:00 pm KSA

Online event via Zoom

Speaker Bios



Ms. Lateefa Alwaalan

Managing Director, Endeavor Saudi Arabia

Lateefa Alwaalan is the Managing Director at Endeavor Saudi Arabia. She is a Board Member at Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and at GEN Saudi. She is the Founder of Yatooq and the Co-founder of Aroom and Cella+ Network. Formerly, she served as the General Manager of Alwallan Pharmacies Group and worked as an MIS Analyst at Atheeb Telecom Consortium. She started her career as a Junior Programmer at iLink before joining Riyadh Bank as a System Administrator. She earned an MBA and a Technology Entrepreneurship Certificate from the University of Washington in 2011 and graduated with a Bachelor's in Computer and Information Sciences from King Saud University in 2006. She was named Entrepreneur of the Year – KSA in 2014.



Ms. Deemah AlYahya

Acting Secretary General, Digital Cooperation Organization

Deemah AlYahya is a digital economy and innovation advisor. She is the founder and CEO of WomenSpark, the first Saudi women's angel investment group. She has spent over 18 years focusing on empowering tech entrepreneurs and working to build ecosystems that are conducive to more innovation. Throughout her career, she has collaborated with the private and public sector to advise, design, and orchestrate major strategic programs and initiatives through organizations such as the MiSK Foundation, the National Digitization Unit strategy, Microsoft, Tadawul and others. She has represented Saudi Arabia in various key international summits, such as WEF, G20, and ITU, with an emphasis on advancing Saudi contributions to the international digital economy. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree from King Saud University before attending Harvard Business School. She was named the Best Digital CEO of the Year in 2018.



Ms. Virginia Littlejohn

*Co-Head, US Delegation, Women20 (W20) of the G20
Co-Founder & President, Quantum Leaps, Inc.*

Virginia Littlejohn organized the National Association of Women Business Owners' first two National Public Affairs Days, was National President in 1984-85, led its participation in the 1986 White House Conference on Small Business, helped spearhead passage of the Women's Business Ownership Act of 1988, and served on the National Women's Business Council for 4 years. She has organized 3 global best practice conferences on women's entrepreneurship for the OECD, was Vice President of the World Association of Women Entrepreneurs, created and incubated the Financial Alliance for Women during its first year, co-incubated WEConnect International, and helped the International Trade Centre develop its policy agenda. She is President and Co-Founder of Quantum Leaps, Inc., and is Co-Head of the US delegation to the Women20 (W20) of the G20 countries, and is the Co-Coordinator of the W20's Women's Entrepreneurship and Finance Working Group. She has won 4 lifetime achievement awards for her global work on behalf of women's entrepreneurship.



Ms. Martina Strong

Charge d'Affaires, U.S. Mission to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Martina Strong is honored to lead the U.S. Mission to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as Chargé d'Affaires. She is joined in Riyadh by her husband, U.S. Army Col. John L. Strong (Ret.) and their daughter Eleanore. A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Ms. Strong previously served in Iraq as Political Minister Counselor in Baghdad and as the U.S. Army's Political Advisor in Basrah. Prior to her arrival in Riyadh, she was the Deputy Chief of Mission in Bulgaria. Her other overseas postings included Poland, the Czech Republic, Bosnia Herzegovina, and France. Ms. Strong also spent two years as Director on the National Security Council at the White House, where she headed the U.S. government's multi-agency effort to organize the 2004 G-8 Summit in Sea Island, as well as two other G-8 Summits and various multilateral meetings. The Department of State has recognized Ms. Strong's achievements with numerous awards, including the AFSA Sinclair Language Award and eleven Superior Honor and Senior Performance Awards. During her service in Iraq, the U.S. Army awarded her the Meritorious Civilian Service Award and the Superior Civilian Service Award. In Bulgaria, the Defense Minister honored Ms. Strong with the Meritorious Service Medal for her contributions to the U.S.-Bulgarian security partnership.

Moderator Bio



Mr. Amjad Ahmad

Director and Resident Senior Fellow, empowerME, Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East, Atlantic Council

Mr. Amjad Ahmad is director and resident senior fellow of empowerME at the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. He focuses on shaping innovative investments to empower entrepreneurs, women, and youth in the Middle East. He develops strategies and policies to drive sustainable prosperity through the creation of dynamic entrepreneurial economies, the economic participation of women, and educational transformation. Amjad is also managing partner of the venture capital firm Precinct Partners and serves on the boards of Eyewa, Tapal Tea, RSA Global, Mumzworld, Mr. Usta and The Luxury Closet. Based in

the United Arab Emirates for fifteen years prior to moving to Washington, DC, Amjad has collaborated with business leaders and entrepreneurs to build leading companies in the Middle East. Through his work as a venture capital and growth investor, Amjad established two investment firms in the region that provided over \$1 billion in funding to over fifty companies in sectors ranging from technology and education to healthcare and finance. During the past five years, Amjad has focused his investments on entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology. Amjad holds a master's degree in international affairs with a concentration in international finance and economics from Columbia University and is a graduate of the general management program at Harvard Business School.