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Top 20 Women Leaders in Middle East National Energy Sector

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Dyala Sabbagh

Founder & Editor in Chief
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FOREWORD

The energy industry has long been a cornerstone of the Middle East's economic strength, shaping not only the region's prosperity but also its role in the global landscape. For decades, this sector has been defined by resilience, innovation, and transformation—yet one of its most significant shifts in recent years has been the increasing presence of women in leadership roles.

Today, women are rising to senior positions within the energy sector, leading subsidiaries of national oil companies (NOCs), pioneering sustainability initiatives, and shaping the future of energy policy. Their expertise and vision are driving innovation in hydrocarbons, renewables, and emerging technologies, proving that inclusivity is not just an aspiration but a strategic advantage.

Yet, while we celebrate these advancements, we must also recognize the road still ahead. Despite progress, no woman currently leads a national oil company in the region, and structural barriers continue to limit representation at the very top. Achieving true gender diversity in the energy sector requires sustained effort—through mentorship, policy reforms, and cultural shifts that ensure women are not only present but empowered at every level.

The Middle East's energy future will be defined by those who can adapt, innovate, and lead with vision. As we move forward, let us ensure that this leadership reflects the full talent and potential of our societies. The progress we celebrate today should serve as a foundation for an even more inclusive and dynamic tomorrow.

The future of energy is diverse, and in that diversity lies our greatest strength. ■



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Dr. Abeer Al-Olayan

Director General
Ministry of Energy
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Dr. Abeer Al-Olayan is a renowned scientist, innovator, and policy leader, driving Saudi Arabia's energy transition as General Director at the Ministry of Energy and Senior Advisor to the Deputy Minister. With expertise in petroleum sciences and materials engineering, she has developed groundbreaking patents enhancing drilling efficiency and safety.

Previously at Saudi Aramco and MIT, she pioneered smart fluids and sustainable energy solutions. A champion for women in STEM, she co-founded the Network of Arab Women for Science and Technology. Recognized as Oil & Gas Woman of the Year (2017), she continues shaping Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 energy strategy.



Fatema Mohamed Al Nuaimi

CEO
ADNOC Gas

Fatema Al Nuaimi is a renowned energy executive and was recently appointed Chief Executive Officer of ADNOC Gas, effective January 1, 2025. In this role, she will lead ADNOC Gas' ambitious growth strategy, focusing on business expansion, decarbonization, and futureproofing operations. She currently serves as Executive Vice President for Downstream Business Management at ADNOC and has extensive leadership experience across ADNOC's gas and energy sectors. Previously, she was CEO of ADNOC LNG (2019-2022), where she played a key role in advancing strategic initiatives and optimizing ADNOC's gas master plan. Ms. Al Nuaimi also holds influential positions across ADNOC entities, serving on the boards of ADNOC Offshore and Emirates General Petroleum (Emarat), as well as on the executive steering committee of ADIPEC. She chairs ADNOC's Gender Balance Committee, reinforcing the group's commitment to diversity and inclusion. She holds a B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering from UAE University and an MBA from the American University in Dubai.



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H.E. Eng. Hala Adel Al-Zawati

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources
Kingdom of Jordan

H.E. Eng. Hala Adel Al-Zawati is Jordan's Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, with 30 years of regional experience in public policy, energy, water, ICT, and tourism. She began as a communications engineer before consulting for USAID, JICA, UNDP, and the EU.

She led Jordan Strategy Forum (JSF) and championed renewable energy laws as Ex-CEO of EDAMA Association. As a consultant for KAFD, she advanced solar, wind, and waste-to-energy projects. A founder of EasyInfo, she also launched WeRonline2, bridging the digital gap for seniors. She holds a BSc in Electrical Engineering (Jordan University) and a Mini MBA (Instituto de Empresa, Spain).



Hadyah Mohammed Fathalla

Board Member
Bapco Energies

Hadyah Mohammed Fathalla is a distinguished Bahraini professional with over 20 years of experience spanning national security, policy-making, entrepreneurship, innovation, and digital transformation. She currently serves as a Board Member at Bapco Energies, contributing her extensive expertise to the energy sector. Previously, she held the position of Chief Operating Officer at C5 Accelerate LLC from 2015 to 2019, where she was instrumental in developing innovative technology ventures across the Middle East and Africa. Ms. Fathalla's academic credentials include a Master's in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School, focusing on International Global Affairs and Security, and an MA in War Studies from King's College London. Her multifaceted career reflects a commitment to advancing technological innovation and strategic development in Bahrain and the broader region.



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Haifa Al Khaifi

Finance Director & Secretary of the Oil & Gas Board,
Petroleum Development Oman (PDO)

Haifa Al Khaifi is a C-suite executive known for her strategic leadership in energy and finance. As Finance Director at PDO, she has driven sectoral reform, funding strategies, and ESG integration, overseeing \$508 million in SME investments. She served as Interim CEO of Energy Development Oman (EDO) and is Vice Chair of State Street Saudi Arabia Financial Solutions.

A key voice in energy transition and sustainability, she engages with IMF and policymakers to shape economic frameworks. Recognized by Forbes as one of the Middle East's most influential women, she continues to lead impactful transformations in the industry.



Eng. Hessa Ahmed Hamdan Al Malek

Executive Director of the Maritime Sector
Federal Transportation Authority for Land and Maritime, UAE

Eng. Hessa Ahmed Hamdan Al Malek is a pioneering maritime leader, currently serving as Advisor to the Minister for Maritime Transport Affairs at the UAE Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure. With 20+ years of expertise in urban planning, maritime transport, and public works, she has shaped maritime strategy, policy, and education in the UAE.

Previously, she held leadership roles at the Ministry of Public Works and Federal Transport Authority, driving maritime law reforms and infrastructure development. As President of AWIMA, she champions women in maritime, inspiring future leaders through advocacy and empowerment in the industry.



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Dr. Lamya Nawaf Fawwaz

Executive Director of Brand & Strategic Initiatives,
Masdar, UAE

Dr. Lamya Fawwaz is Executive Director of Brand & Strategic Initiatives at Masdar, leading its global branding, communications, and strategic initiatives to accelerate the energy transition. She drives key platforms such as Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, Women in Sustainability, Environment, and Renewable Energy (WiSER), and Youth 4 Sustainability (Y4S).

She also directs the Zayed Sustainability Prize, recognizing global innovation in sustainability. Previously, she was Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Masdar Institute. A board member of the Arab International Women's Forum, she holds a Doctorate and Master's from George Washington University, specializing in education administration and information systems.



H.E. Dr. Leila Benali

Minister of Energy Transition and
Sustainable Development,
Kingdom of Morocco

H.E. Dr. Leila Benali, an international energy expert with 20+ years of experience in strategy, finance, and engineering, was appointed Morocco's Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development in 2021. She has worked with Saudi Aramco, APICORP, and the World Economic Forum.

An engineer turned economist, she has published extensively on energy and reforms. She was also part of Morocco's Special Commission on the Development Model (CSMD). Dr. Benali holds a PhD in Economics, MSc in Political Science (Science-Po Paris), and MSc in Industrial Engineering from Ecole Centrale Paris and Mohammadia Engineering School.



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Ms. Lynn Laverty Elsenhans

Board Director
Aramco

Ms. Lynn Laverty Elsenhans is currently a member of the Board of Directors of Baker Hughes Company and TSMC.

She previously served as Chairwoman, President, and Chief Executive Officer of Sunoco Inc. and worked for Royal Dutch Shell, where she held a number of senior roles, including Executive Vice President of Global Manufacturing.

Ms. Elsenhans has a Bachelor's degree in applied mathematics from Rice University, and an MBA from Harvard Business School.



H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri

Group CEO of 2PointZero,
Chair of the International Affairs Office at the Presidential Court
& Former Minister of Climate Change and Environment - UAE

H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri is the Head of International Affairs at the UAE Presidential Court. Previously, as Minister of Climate Change and Environment, she led climate action, biodiversity conservation, and food security efforts, playing a key role in COP28 UAE. She also served as Minister of State for Food Security, overseeing national food stocks, water supply, and innovation. With extensive experience in marine sustainability and resource management, she has shaped UAE's environmental and food policies. H.E. Almheiri holds a Master's in Mechanical Engineering from RWTH Aachen University, Germany.



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Maryam Ahmed Al-Bishri

Head of Asset Planning - QatarEnergy,
The Chair of Women in Energy, Society of Petroleum Engineers

Maryam Ahmed Al-Bishri is the Head of Subsurface Asset Planning at QatarEnergy and serves as the Chair of the Women in Energy chapter within the Qatar Society of Petroleum Engineers (QSPE). She earned her bachelor's degree in Petroleum Engineering with a minor in Geology from Texas A&M University at Qatar in 2011. In 2015, she completed a master's degree in Reservoir Geoscience and Engineering from IFP School in Paris. Recognized for her leadership and dedication, Maryam was honored as Qatar's Female Engineer of the Year in 2017 and named Texas A&M at Qatar's Alumnus of the Year in 2022. She actively mentors young professionals and advocates for women's advancement in the energy sector.



Dr. Nawal Al Hosany

Permanent Representative of the UAE to the International Renewable
Energy Agency (IRENA)

H.E. Dr. Nawal Al-Hosany has served as the UAE's Permanent Representative to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) since 2018. She previously led sustainability initiatives at Masdar, directed the Zayed Sustainability Prize, and was Deputy Director General at the Emirates Diplomatic Academy.

A global sustainability leader, she sits on key climate-focused boards, including the COP28 UAE Advisory Committee and National Geographic's Advisory Council. She has received prestigious honors, including a Doctor of Letters Honoris Causa from Keele University. A passionate adventurer, she is also one of the first Emirati women to climb Mount Kilimanjaro.



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Nadia Bader Al-Hajji

CEO
Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), Kuwait

Nadia Bader Al-Hajji joined PIC, a subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, in 2019 and assumed her current role in 2022. PIC recorded a net profit of \$127 million in the financial year ending March 2024. Al-Hajji is also the chairman of the EQUATE Group and the Kuwait Olefins Company. She is a board member at the Canada Kuwait Petrochemicals Company, and a board member and treasurer at the Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association. She is also head of the Diversity and Inclusion Council at the Kuwait Petroleum Company and its subsidiaries, among other roles.



Pakinam Kafafi

CEO
TAQA Arabia, Egypt

Pakinam Kafafi is a seasoned energy expert with 28 years of experience, serving as CEO of TAQA Arabia since 2013. She has led the expansion of Egypt's largest private-sector energy distribution company, overseeing gas, power, petroleum, and water infrastructure while driving renewable energy projects like the 65MW solar plant in Benban. Previously, she held senior roles at EFG Hermes, leading major privatizations. Recognized by Forbes Middle East's Power Businesswomen ranking, she serves on multiple corporate and advisory boards, championing sustainability and social impact initiatives across Egypt.



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H.E. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak

President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN),
Managing Director, Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD)

H.E. Razan Al Mubarak is a global leader in environmental conservation, serving as President of IUCN, the second woman and first Arab to hold the role. She is also the Managing Director of the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), leading efforts to double protected areas, cut emissions, and reintroduce endangered species like the Scimitar-horned oryx. As the founder of the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, she has supported 2,000+ projects in 160+ countries. A board member of Masdar, she champions renewable energy and sustainability. H.E. Al Mubarak holds an MSc from University College London and a BA from Tufts University.



Sabrina Al Bakri

Chief Financial Officer
OQ Group, Oman

Sabrina Al Bakri has been Chief Financial Officer of OQ since September 2021, with 17+ years of expertise in corporate finance and performance reporting. She previously held key roles at Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), Shell International, and Aabar Investments, specializing in complex funding solutions.

Since joining OQ in 2018, she has led treasury and insurance, later becoming Treasury Manager and Director at OQ Trading. A Certified Chartered Accountant (ACCA), she holds a Finance degree from the University of Nottingham. Recognized for her leadership, she was honored at the Oman Woman of the Year Awards 2021 in Finance.



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Sara Akbar

Chairperson & CEO, OilSERV Kuwait,
Non-Executive Director, Petrofac

Sara Akbar has over 40 years of experience in the oil and gas industry, with significant operational and project management capabilities. She is also the Chairman of the Board of OilTECH Iraq, an indigenous oilfield services company operating in Iraq. Sara was previously a member of the Kuwait Supreme Council for Planning and Development and member of the Board of Trustees of Kuwait's Silk Territory project. Among her many awards, Sara earned the prestigious 'Leader in Energy' award at the Women in Leadership Awards & Forum in 2009, the first and only woman leader in the oil and gas industry in the Middle East.



Tayba Al Hashemi

CEO
ADNOC Offshore, UAE

Tayba Al Hashemi is the CEO of ADNOC Offshore, leading one of the world's largest offshore hydrocarbon producers and overseeing a \$3.8 billion electrification project to cut emissions by 50%. With over 20 years in the industry, she previously served as CEO of ADNOC Sour Gas and Al Yasat Petroleum, becoming the first female CEO of an ADNOC Group company. A champion of gender balance, she sits on multiple ADNOC boards and committees. Recognized among the Middle East's most powerful businesswomen (2023), she holds a Chemical Engineering degree from UAE University.



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Wadha Ahmed Al-Khateeb

CEO
Kuwait National Petroleum Company

Wadha Ahmad Al-Khateeb, CEO of KNPC since 2022, has 28 years of experience in the oil sector. She led KNPC's first export of 95-octane fuel to Europe in 2023 and spearheaded a multibillion-dollar Clean Fuel Project. She is the first woman and first Kuwaiti to chair the Gas Processors Association, GCC Chapter.

Recognized in Forbes Middle East's Power Business Women list (2020, 2021), she initiated cost optimization efforts, saving \$23 million. She also led Kuwait's first UNFCCC-registered project and launched one of the world's largest Leak Detection and Repair programs. A chemical engineering graduate from Kuwait University, she actively supports women's leadership and social initiatives.



Walaa Al Malki

Chief of Oil Policies,
Ministry of Oil & Environment,
Kingdom of Bahrain

Walaa Mohammed Al Malki is a Studies Specialist at Bahrain's Ministry of Oil and Environment. In this role, she contributes to the development of policies and strategic initiatives within the oil sector. Her academic achievements include earning a master's degree, for which she was congratulated by the Acting CEO of the National Oil and Gas Authority (NOGA). Al Malki's expertise and dedication play a pivotal role in advancing Bahrain's energy sector.



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