



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

# The Shura Council

Its Duties and Work Mechanisms



1436 - 2015



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ





## Table of Contents

Shura in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	6
Duties and Responsibilities of The Shura Council	10
Membership of The Shura Council	16
Council's Presidency	18
The Council's General Panel	19
Sessions	20
Committees	22
Voting and Issuance of Resolutions	24
The General Secretary	26
Independency	28
Period of the Term	29
Council's Relations with Citizens	30
Participation in Regional and International Parliamentary Conferences and Meetings	31
Relations with other Councils	32
The Council's Headquarter	33

## Shura in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



**King Abdulaziz ibn Abdulrahman Al-Saud**  
- may Allah's mercy be upon him-

Rulers of the country complied with the Islamic Shura approach since the foundation of the first Saudi state in 1158 A.H till now; Shura has been adopted throughout this period. Anyone following the history of the country's rulers, would notice their high interest in Shura and applying its principles in accordance with the divine teachings, and in compliance with the open door policy. The open councils have become a feature of the daily practice and activity of this country's rulers<sup>1</sup>.

King Abdulaziz ibn Abdulrahman Al Saud - may Allah's mercy be upon him- has adopted a straight methodology that is based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. The king has taken from Shura a source for the administration of the country and running its affairs. The founder of the country, King Abdulaziz ibn Abdulrahman Al Saud has dedicated himself to instilling the principle of the Islamic Shura. He wisely started applying this method in his public council, in the sessions of scholars, and in the meeting with leaders of tribes and clans.

---

<sup>1</sup>The Process of Shura in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Zahrani, 1419 A.H.



The foundation of The Shura Council in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was in the beginning of the fourth decade of the fourteenth Hijri century. The history of the council's foundation has passed through different stages since 1343 A.H - 1925 A.D.

The most prominent stage of the council was when King Fahd ibn Abdulaziz - may Allah's mercy be upon him - has updated the Basic Laws of the country. Updating the Basic Laws was when he declared (in his historical speech on 27/08/1412 A.H) the issuance of the Basic Law of Governance, Law of the Council of Ministers, the Law of The Shura Council, and the Law of the Provinces.

Updating the law of The Shura Council was an updating and developing of the earlier law of 1347 A.H, through enhancing the frames of the council, its means, and methods with regard to qualification,

organization and efficiency. That is to cope with the successive developments that the country has witnessed during the last epoch in all fields. Updating the law also aims to cope with the modern time and all its demands and situations, in a new start of the remarkable Shura history in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. King Fahd has boosted the pillars of Shura in the kingdom in the issuance of a new law for The Shura Council on 27/08/1412 A.H, that replaced the earlier one of 1347 A.H. The king has adopted the internal regulations of the council and its appendices on 03/03/1414 A.H., has formed the council in its first term, that was presided by Sheikh Mohammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Jubair - may Allah's mercy be upon him - ; has supervised the way of choosing the national qualifications to form the council; has supported the launch of the first council's round; and has made available to the council all means and facilities that enable it to perform its tasks and duties in the best way.



**King Fahd ibn Abdulaziz Al-Saud**  
**-may Allah's mercy be upon him-**



**King Abdullah ibn Abdulaziz Al-Saud**  
-may Allah's mercy be upon him-

On 24/11/1422 A.H, February, 6, 2002, A.D. the royal decree was issued to nominate his excellency Dr Saleh ibn Abdullah ibn Hameed as the Speaker of The Shura Council, replacing Sheikh Mohammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Jubair - may Allah's mercy be upon him - ; the former continued presiding the council till the end of its fourth term.

On 19/02/1430 A.H, the royal decree was issued to nominate Sheikh Dr Abdullah ibn Mohammad ibn Ibrahim Al Ash-Sheikh as a Speaker of the council.

On Sunday 27/10/1432 A.H The Shura Council witnessed a historical decision when King Abdullah ibn Abdulaziz - may Allah's mercy be upon him - declared the joining of woman to the membership of The Shura Council, starting from the sixth term.

Thus, this term is a transition of the council, where it was crowned with the woman's participation; thirty women were nominated as members in the council.

The Shura Council has gained enough care and attention from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the King Salman ibn Abdulaziz, to enhance the goals of the council to achieve the interests of the country and citizens.



**King Salman ibn Abdulaziz Al-Saud**  
The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

Throughout the council's past terms, the elite, that formed this improved council, has proved its capability in the achievements, and the huge efforts, and important decisions in a short time.





## Duties and Responsibilities of The Shura Council

Article sixty seven of the basic law of governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has specified the tasks of the Regulatory Authority of the country. That was through making laws and regulations that safeguard all interests, and remove evil from the State's affairs, according to Sharia. Its tasks shall be exercised according to provisions of this Law of Governance, Law of the Council of Ministers, and the Law of The Shura Council.

The Shura Council and The Council of Ministers form the Regulatory Authority of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Shura Council raise its resolutions to the king, and he decides what should be referred to The Council of Ministers. If the views of the two councils agree, the resolutions are issued after the approval of the king; if the views do not agree, the issue is referred to The Shura Council to investigate and amend what seems appropriate, and then raise it to the king to decide what he sees possible. Thus, laws, treaties and international agreements, and concessions are issued and amended by a royal decree, after being reviewed by The Shura Council, as illustrated in Article 18 of the Law of The Shura Council.

The Shura Council exercises its tasks according to its law, issued by the royal decree (A/91) on 27/08/1412 A.H, and the basic law of governance, adhering to the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and maintaining the brotherly ties, and cooperating unto righteousness and piety. The council holds to the bond of God and adheres to the sources of the Islamic laws; its members are careful to serve the public interests, and preserve the unity of the community, the entity of the state and the interests of the nation, as illustrated in Articles 1 and 2 of the Law of The Shura Council.



One of the duties of The Shura Council is the expression of opinion on State's general policies referred by the President of The Council of Ministers. The Shura Council shall specifically have the right to exercise the following:

- a. Discussing the general plan for economic and social development, and giving view.
- b. Revising laws and regulations, international treaties and agreements, concessions, and providing whatever suggestions, deemed as appropriate.
- c. Construe laws.
- d. Discussing government agencies annual reports, and attaching new proposals when appropriate.



In order to activate the role of the council and enable it to perform the duties that it is in charge of, the law has made possible the following:

### **1. Requesting the ministers and state officials to attend the council's sessions:**

When the council sees a need for a minister or a state official to attend sessions, it can submit a request to the President of The Council of Ministers (i.e. the king). The council often does this, when it requests a number of ministers and officials concerned with the related with raised issue, to attend one of the council's sessions, reply the questions and interrogations about the topic under discussion, and investigate the topic when it is of their specialization, as far as the council considers that as important. Those ministers and officials shall have the right to participate in the discussions but, do not have the right to vote, as illustrated in Article 22 of the council's law.

### **2. The right to propose a new draft law or amend a law in force:**

Article 23 of the Law of The Shura Council maintains that the council has the right to propose a new draft law, or amend a law in force, and investigate that in the council. The Speaker of The Shura Council shall bring what the council decides before the king.



## **Membership of The Shura Council**

The Shura Council consists of the Speaker and one hundred and fifty members, chosen by the king from amongst scholars, those of knowledge, those of expertise, and those known as specialists. This is provided with the fact that women representation shall not be less than ( 20% ) of members' number, and the membership is four years in each period. It is stipulated that the member of The Shura Council shall be as follows:

- a. A Saudi national by descent and upbringing.
- b. A person well known for uprightness and competence.
- c. A person, not less than 30 years old.

### **Membership Period:**

Article 1 of the law of the rights and duties of The Shura Council's members maintains that membership of the council is effective from the beginning of its term, which defines its formation according to article 13 of the council's law. The term of the new member is effective from the date of the royal decree that nominates him or her, and is terminated with the end of the council's term. In case the term of the current council ends before the new council is formed, his or her membership shall remain valid until the new council is formed, unless the membership is terminated.

### **Rights and Duties of The Shura Council Members:**

The law concerned with the rights and duties of the council's members shows that a member should be impartial and objective in all his functions at the council. The member shall not raise a private or personal issue, or an issue that is contrary to public interest before the council. The member should regularly attend the council's sessions and committee meetings.





Also, the law of the council shows that the member of The Shura Council should not exploit his or her membership for his own interests, and cannot combine between The Shura Council membership with any government post, or the management of any company, unless the king deems it necessary (Articles 2 and 3 of the council's law).

A council's member shall retain the position and grade he or she held before joining the council, and the council's membership is considered in the years of work, according to the law of the council. The member has the right to apply for the termination of membership in The Shura Council, through the president of the council, who in turn raises the request to the king.

The Shura Council member shall receive a monthly remuneration, and shall be treated like at 15th grade employee as far as allowances, increments, compensations, and privileges are concerned. All this payment shall not affect the pension that a member may deserve.



## Council's Presidency



**H. E Speaker of The Shura Council  
Dr. Abdullah ibn Mohammad  
ibn Ibrahim Al-Sheikh**

The Speaker of the council supervises all the functions of the council, represents the council in its relations with other agencies and organizations, and act as its spokesman.

The Speaker of the council shall head all sessions of the council, the meetings of the General Panel, as well as the committee meetings he attends.

The Speaker of the council may call the council, the General Panel, or any other committee for an emergency session to discuss a specific topic.

The Vice Speaker of The Shura Council assists the Speaker when present, and assumes his powers in his absence, while the Assistant Speaker can chair the sessions in case the Speaker and his vice are absent.



H.E. Speaker of the council heading one of the General Panel meetings



## The Council's General Panel

The panel is entitled of an important role in the council. It consists of the Speaker of the council, the Vice Speaker, the Speaker's Assistant, and heads of the council's specialized committees.

The Secretary General attends the meetings of the panel. It is, therefore, the main director of the council and its committees. The panel supervises the organization of all activities to guarantee the smooth performance of activities in the council, in light of its specializations that were specified in the internal law of the council, and were issued in the royal decree (A/15), on 03/03/1414 A.H, and represented in:

(a) The preparation of the general plan for the council and its committees to enable the council to perform its duties and realize its objectives.

(b) Setting the agenda of the council sessions.

(c) Deciding upon objections referred to it by the council's Speaker or the council regarding the contents of the session minutes, the results of voting, the counting of votes or any other objections, raised during council's sessions. Its decision, therefore, shall be final.

(d) Issuing the necessary rules to regulate the work of the council and its committees in accordance with the law and regulations of the council.

In addition, the panel is entitled to a number of the tasks and interests that are allocated to it, and are concerned with the financial and procedural issues of the council, its members, and employees.

The General Panel's meetings shall not be valid, unless they are attended by at least two thirds of its members. Its resolutions shall pass by majority vote of the members present. In case of a tie, the Speaker shall cast the deciding vote.



**H.E. Vice Speaker  
of The Shura Council  
Dr. Mohammed Amin Al-Jefri**

## Sessions



**H.E. the Assistant Speaker  
of The Shura Council**

**Dr. Yahya ibn Abdullah Al-Sam'an**

The Shura Council holds an ordinary session at least once every two weeks, but demands of duties has made it necessary to hold two sessions a week. The meeting of the council cannot be considered as regular, unless at least two thirds of the members attend, including the Speaker or who is entitled to replace him. The day and time of a session is determined pursuant to a decision by the council's Speaker. He may advance or postpone sessions when necessary.

The Speaker of the council opens and adjourns the council's sessions, manages its discussions and participates in them, determines the topics for discussion, and may do whatever he deems appropriate and sufficient to maintain order, during sessions (Article 3 of the council's internal law).

The agenda of a session shall be distributed to the members before convening the session, along with reports pertaining to topics listed on the agenda and whatever the General Panel deems necessary.

The council may postpone discussion of a topic or may restudy it, in accordance with articles 12 and 13 of the council's internal law. The council's sessions are open unless the general interest deems its secret.



## Committees

In accordance with Article 21 of the internal law of The Shura Council, the council has formed the following specialized committees to exercise its powers:

1. Committee on Islamic and Judicial Affairs
2. Committee on Social, Family, and Youth Affairs
3. Committee on Economy and Energy
4. Committee on Security Affairs
5. Committee on Administration and Human Resources
6. Committee on Educational and Scientific Research Affairs
7. Committee on Culture, Information, Tourism, and Antiquities
8. Committee on Foreign Affairs
9. Committee on Hajj, Housing, and Services
10. Committee on Health Affairs
11. Committee on Financial Affairs
12. Committee on Transportation, Communications, and Information Technology
13. Committee on Human Rights and Control Commissions
14. Committee on Water, Agriculture, and Environment

Committees are formed at the beginning of each year of the council's term from a number of its members, in accordance with the specialization of the member and his expertise. Committees normally meet at times, other than those of sessions, and each committee has its own chairman and secretary.

The Article 26 of the internal law of the council states that committee meetings shall be held in public, and shall not be considered valid unless at least two thirds of the committee members are present. Each committee shall pre-



pare its agenda upon its chairman's suggestion, and shall issue its recommendations by majority vote of members present. In case of a tie, the head of the committee shall cast the deciding vote.

According to Article 24 of the internal law of the council, the committee's head shall manage its work and speak on its behalf

Before the council. In the absence of the head of the committee, his or her vice shall replace him. In the absence of the head of the committee and his or her vice, the eldest member shall head the committee.

The Article 28 of the internal law of the council has given its member the right to express his or her opinion on any topic that has been referred to one of the committees, even if he or she is not a member of that committee. Committees adopt different procedures when studying certain topics to be guided by the views of the specialists and considering such views. When the committee completes the review of a certain topic, it shall write a report that includes the basis of the topic referred to it, the committee's point of view, its recommendation and the reason on which the recommendation was based, and the opinion of the minority, if any.

In addition to the permanent specialized committees of The Shura Council, there are special committees that the council forms to study a certain topic, and other minor committees, that are formed by the specialized committees to study certain topics.



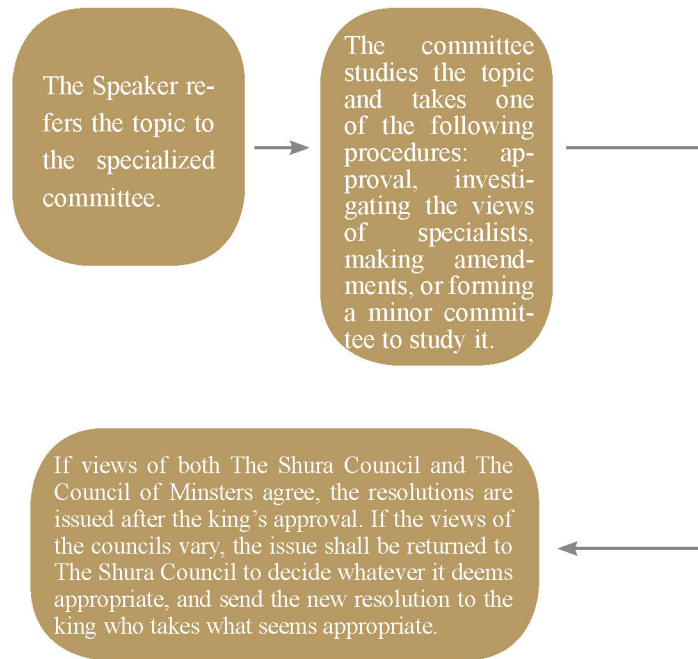
## Voting and Issuance of Resolutions

The council resolutions shall be adopted by majority as set forth in Article 16 of the Law of The Shura Council, which is issued by the royal decree A/15, on 03/03/1414 A.H. The majority is more than half of the council's members. In case a majority vote is not attained, the topic shall be rescheduled for voting in the following session. In case the topic does not win the necessary majority in this session, the issue shall be brought before the king along with any relevant study as well as the results of the voting in both sessions (Articles 31 of the council's internal law).

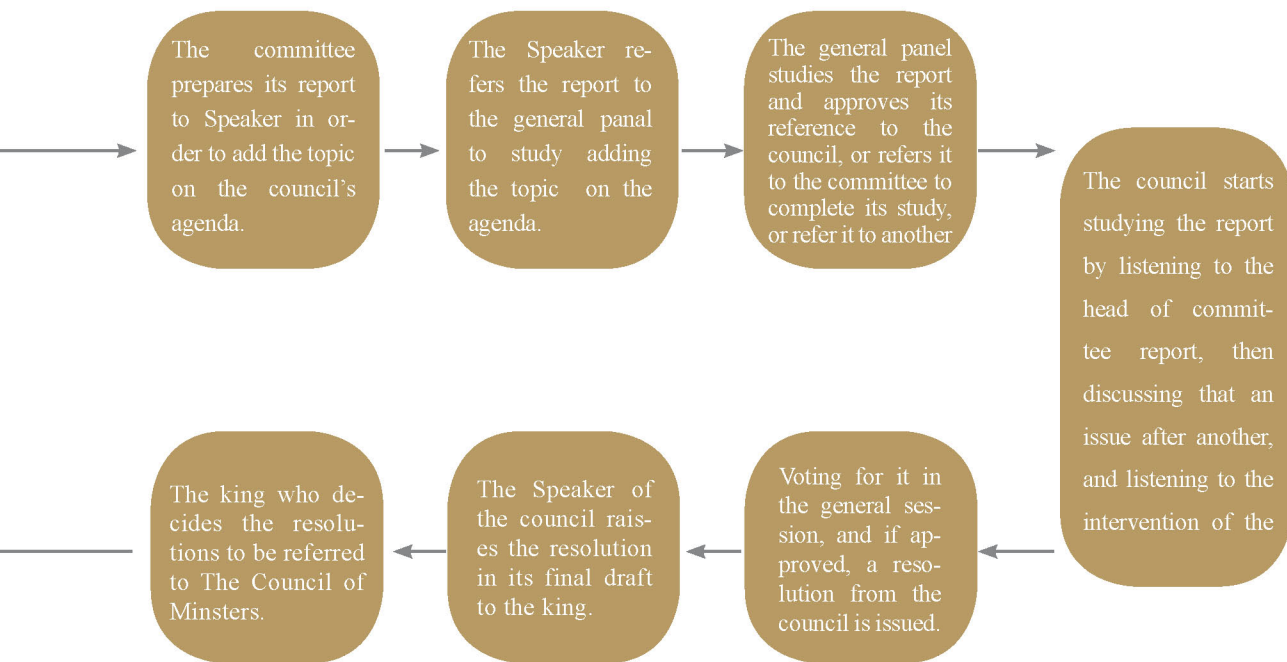
As set forth in Article 32, no discussion or presentation of new opinions shall be allowed during the voting process. In all cases, the Speaker shall vote after the members have voted.

### The Adopted Mechanism of Issuing Resolutions:

The process of issuing resolutions in The Shura Council goes through a number of stages:







## The General Secretary



**H.E. the Secretary General  
of The Shura Council,  
Dr. Mohammad ibn Abdullah Al-Amr**

The general secretary of the council is considered as the executive apparatus, that executes the council's duties and the objectives, where the General Secretary performs the technical, financial, and administrative duties that enhance the council to perform its tasks. The General Secretary is supervised by its Secretary General, who directs and coordinates the duties. The General Secretary is held accountable before the Speaker of the council for the financial and administrative affairs.

The Secretary General attends the council's sessions and the meetings of the General Panel, supervises taking of minutes, and announces to the members the schedule and agenda of the sessions.

The General Secretary, and in support of other administrations, provides the technical and administrative aid that the council, its General Panel, and specialized committees need in preparing studies and research, and data collection concerning the raised topics. This enables the council and its members to take resolutions that are built on sound bases, besides the duties that are concerned with organizing the sessions and meetings, such as sessions' agenda, writing minutes, helping committees in preparing reports, preparing for its meetings, and moreover following up the resolutions of the council and documenting them. In the headquarter of the council, there is a specialized library that contains many different books, references, periodicals, in addition to laws and regulations.



## Allied Administrations

In exercising its duties through its laws and internal regulations, and the rules of duties and committees, The Shura Council agrees with its counterpart councils in other countries in the world. In addition, its organizational frame is not different from any parliamentary council, as all parliaments are similar in objectives and duties.

Following are the most important allied administrations of the council's duties:

1. The Allied General Secretary of Sessions' Affairs
2. The Allied General Secretary of Committees' Affairs
3. The General Administration of Consultants
4. The General Administration of Information and Social Communication
5. The General Administration of Relations and Protocol
6. The General Administration of Parliamentary Affairs' Relations
7. The General Administration of Members' Affairs
8. The Administration of Planning and Development
9. Shura Research Center
10. The General Administration of Financial and Administrative Affairs
11. The General Administration of Information Technology
12. The General Administration of Women's Section



## Independency

The council law ensures the independence of The Shura Council in taking decisions. It has given the council its independence in financial and auditing affairs.

The law has given the member the freedom in opinion, concerning topics that are subject to voting in public sessions. This was clear in many decisions that were issued in the council without a great majority, which indicates that some members have views that oppose such decisions.

According to the Law of The Shura Council, the council has its own budget, which is approved by the king. The council is not subject to any observation from other bodies, as there is an administration, prior to expenditures, and another administration for post expenditures.

Besides, the council is independent in scheduling its sessions, and putting the schedule and mechanisms of its duties, on the basis of what may be appropriate to its needs and objectives.



## The Period of the Term

The Shura Council term is four Hijri years, effective from the specified date in the royal decree issued for its formation. The period of the term starts on the day of the royal decree.

A new council is formed at least two months prior to the end of the current council. In case the term of the current council ends before a new formation, the current council will remain active until the new formation is accomplished. Numbers of the newly selected members shall not be less than half of the current council, as set in Article 13.



## Council's Relations with Citizens

Within the framework of the council's efforts to instill the principle of Shura in the kingdom, and in accordance with the directions of its wise leadership, the council is concerned with communicating with citizens, and updating them with the way, in which the duties are performed. The council gives the citizens the opportunity to attend its sessions, and listen to the discussions of its members about topics raised in the public sessions. Halls of the council are provided with lodges for citizens and guests, to enable them to attend the public sessions.

The council is concerned with receiving views and suggestions of citizens, through the Petitions department. This represents a link between the council and citizens. The council's specialized committees study these petitions carefully, and take resolutions in the light of the council's law and regulations.





## Council's Participation in Regional and International Parliamentary Conferences and Meetings

The council has actively participated in the idea of founding the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, where two of its members have membership in the parliamentary union. One of them is a member in its executive committee.

The Shura Council is a member in the Arab Parliamentary Union, and it sends delegates of its members to attend the Union's sessions. In 1424 A.H - 2003 A.D, the council joined the Inter-Parliamentary Union, where the kingdom was accepted by the majority of votes to join the Union.

The council is a member in the following regional and international parliamentary councils and unions:

1. A founding member in the countries of the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.
2. A member in the Arab Parliamentary Union.
3. A member in the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
4. A founding member in the Asian Parliamentarians' Union.
5. A member in the African and Arab Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development.
6. A founding member in the Inter-Parliamentary Union for Social Service.
7. A member in the Secretary Generals of Arab Parliamentary Union.
8. A member in the Inter-Parliamentary Union of Information Technology.
9. A member in Senate Councils' Union and Similar Councils in Africa and the Arab World.
10. A member in the Secretary Generals of International Parliaments.
11. A member in the Arab Parliament.
12. A member in the G20 International Group.

The council participates in these meetings as a permanent member, either at the Speaker's level, or as delegates of its members or its Secretary General.

## The Shura Council Relations with Other Councils

One of the main principles of The Shura Council is strengthening relations with other councils in Arab, Islamic, and friendly countries. This is the policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: to enhance relations with Arab and Islamic countries, in particular, and friendly countries, in general; and to increase the channels of communication with apparatuses, organizations, and officials in these countries.

The council has strong relations with most legislative and parliamentary councils in the world. This is clearly observed in the exchanged visits and meetings, and in the formation of parliamentary friendship committees between them.







## The Council's Headquarter

Riyadh City is the site of The Shura Council. The Shura Council may convene in other locations in the kingdom if the king deems it appropriate, as set in Article 12 of the council's law.

The headquarter of the council was founded in the north-west part of Riyadh on (138,000 cubic meter), as a total size of land, according to the most modern architectural designs, that joined between originality and the Islamic design to be a cultural feature of the Saudi Capital's features.

The council headquarter includes the following:

1. The size of buildings 65,385 meters.
2. Seven entrances.
3. Seven emergency exits.
4. Size of yards 45,000 meters.
5. The grand hall which includes 456 seats for members, and 152 seats for audience on the second floor.
6. The weekly session hall which includes 152 seats for members, 50 seats for guests, and 10 seats in the main stage.
7. The private meeting hall which includes 90 seats for members, 6 seats for the stage of the chairmanship.
8. Hall of media which includes 82 seats.
9. The headquarter has 46 small halls, and each has between 14-30 seats.
10. The headquarter has 186 offices in the ground floor, 155 offices in the first floor, and 177 offices in the second floor.
11. The headquarter has 22 service rooms.
12. The headquarter has 35 store rooms.
13. It also has 57 public toilets.









With regards of the General Administration  
of Information and Social Communication -  
Department of Publications in cooperation with Translation Department  
P. O. Box 63393 Riyadh 11516  
Tel. : 00966 11 4821666 Fax : 00966 11 4806915  
Website: [www.shura.gov.sa](http://www.shura.gov.sa)  
Email: [webmaster@shura.gov.sa](mailto:webmaster@shura.gov.sa)  
Twitter: @ShuraCouncil\_SA