



Association of Professional Flight Attendants

*Proudly Representing the **Flight Attendants** of American Airlines*

Office of the National President

April 2, 2015

Dear Ms. Kidman,

The 25,000 members of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants greatly admire and appreciate your efforts to advance women's rights around the world as a UN Women Goodwill Ambassador. Using your profile and stature for such a noble endeavor is commendable. However, we believe those efforts are at odds with your prominent role in an advertising campaign for Etihad Airways. The United Arab Emirates and their airlines are well-known in our industry for their discriminatory labor practices and deplorable treatment of female employees. Therefore, the APFA must respectfully ask that you – as a leading advocate for women around the globe – not lend your voice, your image, and your good name to Etihad Airways, the second-largest airline in the UAE.

Last month, on March 8, International Women's Day, you said, "I envisage a world where all women and girls have equal opportunities and rights... Now is the time to step it up!" Later that very same week, we saw that you had begun appearing in a new campaign for Etihad, a company that the *Wall Street Journal* has publicly reported "may fire women if they become pregnant" and forces flight attendants to live in "confinement" in secure compounds. These are the types of conditions that APFA fought to eradicate decades ago in the United States. Indeed, Etihad is a regressive company that seeks to return our industry to its darkest ages.

Sadly, Etihad's abhorrent labor policies are hardly surprising when one considers the fact that the airline is wholly owned by the UAE, a country where the only thing that is being "stepped up" for women and girls is the level of abuse: According to a recent article by *Business Insider*, "the UAE is a country where husbands are permitted to beat their wives. There is no legal recourse for marital rape, and the UAE has imprisoned victims who report rape to authorities – including Western tourists." And Human Rights Watch says in its latest *World Report*, "The penal code gives men the legal right to discipline their wives and children, including through the use of physical violence," noting that the UAE's Federal Supreme Court has even upheld a man's "right to 'chastise' his wife and children with physical abuse."

When you were deservedly honored by *Variety* magazine in October 2013 for your work to advance women's and girls' rights, you asked us all to, "Imagine a world free from violence

against women and girls. A world where equality and respect and justice are not just ideals, or possible for only a few women and girls, but the norm for all of us. Each of us has a role to play to make that happen. Play your part.”

We urge you, on behalf of the women and girls that you spoke of so eloquently, *not* to play a part in promoting Etihad Airways, a company that imposes abusive labor practices on its female employees and whose sole owner is a government that stands against the very world that you imagine. The APFA – a union that represents 25,000 flight attendants, including nearly 19,000 female crewmembers – has long been a leading voice on the issue of discriminatory labor practices in our industry. We would gladly welcome your voice to our effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura R. Glading". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Laura R. Glading
National President, Association of Professional Flight Attendants