



**International Convention on  
the Elimination of All Forms  
of Racial Discrimination**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

**Combined seventeenth to twenty-first periodic  
reports submitted by Qatar under article 9 of the  
Convention, due in 2015\***

[Date received: 6 October 2017]

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



1. The State of Qatar has the honour to submit the present report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in accordance with article 9, paragraph 1, of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965 and with the Committee's guidelines and general recommendations. Qatar became a party to the Convention on 22 July 1976 and supports the principles and purposes set forth therein. The present report details the steps taken by Qatar to implement the Convention.

2. The report consists of three parts. Part I contains basic information about Qatar, specifically about the land, the people, general political structures and the legal framework for the protection of human rights. Part II provides information on measures taken to implement articles 2–7 of the Convention in Qatar and related developments. In part III, information is provided on the follow-up to the Committee's observations and recommendations regarding the State's previous report.

3. This is a joint national report, in that it was drawn up by an inter-agency governmental committee established pursuant to a decision of the Minister for Foreign Affairs in October 2016 and comprising representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Ministry of Public Health, and the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs. In accordance with treaty body reporting guidelines and recommendations, the report was forwarded to the National Human Rights Committee for comments and feedback. In submitting the present document, containing its combined seventeenth to twenty-first periodic reports, the State confirms its willingness to cooperate fully with the Committee by responding to any requests for clarification about the implementation of the Convention. The State furthermore wishes the Committee continuing success in its endeavours to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.

4. The State considers this joint report to be a continuation of the constructive dialogue it has established with the Committee. As it is to be considered in the light of previous periodic reports, the present report refrains from repeating information contained in previous reports, and contains information only on developments that have taken place during the reporting period.

## **I. Basic information about Qatar**

5. Further to the information provided in its combined thirteenth to sixteenth periodic reports, in the section entitled "Basic information about Qatar", the State wishes to communicate the following updated information:

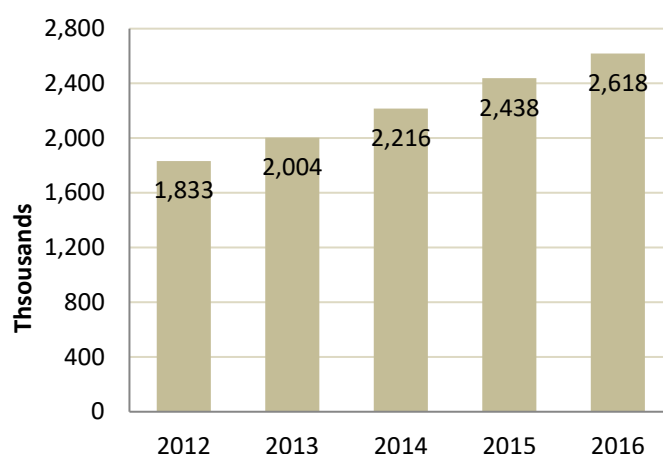
### **A. Geographical location and topography**

6. The State draws attention to the information provided in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the previous combined report.

### **B. Population**

7. The population of Qatar increased from 1,833,000 in 2012 to 2,618,000 in 2016. That increase was due to an influx of migrant workers to implement the country's development projects, as well as the country's economic boom. Figure 1 shows how the population has increased.

Figure 1  
Population of Qatar (in thousands), 2012–2016



8. Table 1 provides figures, disaggregated by age group, nationality and sex, on the population structure of Qatar in 2016. Figure 2 shows the population pyramid for Qatari and non-Qatari nationals combined, and reveals how the influx of migrant workers, most of whom are male, has altered the country's population pyramid. Figure 3 shows the pyramid for Qatari nationals alone, and reveals a natural age distribution and gender balance.

Table 1  
Population distribution by age group, nationality and sex (per cent, mid-year population estimates), 2016

| Nationality          | Sex           | Aged 14 and under | Aged 15 to 64 | Aged 65 and above | Total      |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|
| Qatari nationals     | Female        | 36.5              | 59.8          | 3.7               | 100        |
|                      | Male          | 38.9              | 57.8          | 3.3               | 100        |
| Non-Qatari nationals | Female        | 24.5              | 74.5          | 1.0               | 100        |
|                      | Male          | 6.9               | 92.4          | 0.7               | 100        |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>Female</b> | <b>27.3</b>       | <b>71.1</b>   | <b>1.6</b>        | <b>100</b> |
|                      | <b>Male</b>   | <b>9.2</b>        | <b>89.8</b>   | <b>0.9</b>        | <b>100</b> |

Figure 2  
Population pyramid (total population, thousands), 2016

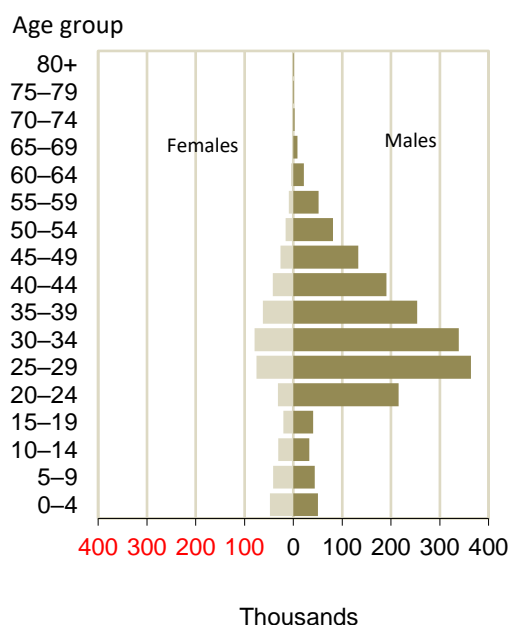
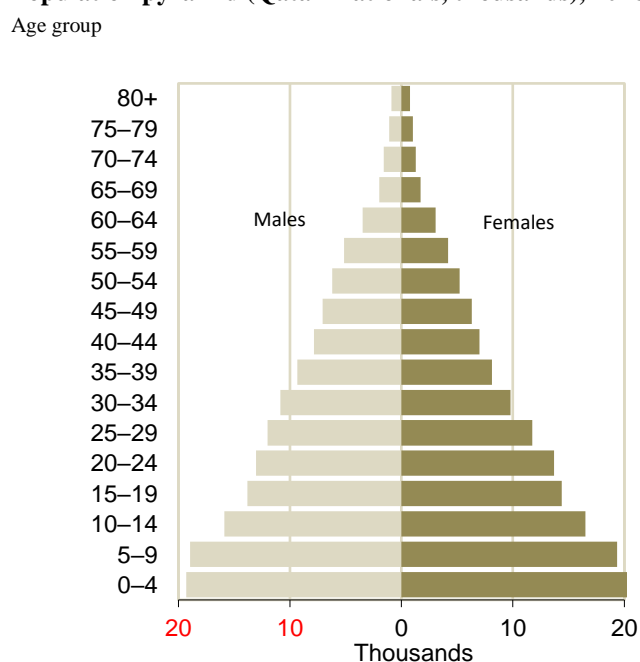


Figure 3  
Population pyramid (Qatari nationals, thousands), 2016



9. The non-Qatari population distribution is therefore atypical, while the population pyramid for Qatari nationals alone shows a normal age-gender distribution. Most of the population of the country is between 15 and 64 years of age, and the majority of persons in that age range are non-Qatari males. The pyramid for Qatari-nationals shows that Qatari society is a young society, comprising a high proportion of children and young people under 15 years of age and a low proportion of persons over 65.

### C. Social and economic indicators

10. Qatar is going through an outstanding phase of advancement towards full and comprehensive development. Real gross domestic product (GDP) estimates for Qatar

registered a 2.2 per cent growth rate in 2016, attaining Qatari riyals (QR) 796 billion, as compared with the estimates for 2015, which were QR 779 billion.

11. Qatar was ranked first in the Arab world and 33rd globally, and was classified as a country enjoying “very high human development” according to the 2016 United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report. That report, entitled “Human Development for Everyone”, underscored the significant human development achieved by Qatar, including in the social, economic and environmental domains, and highlighted key human development indicators and statistics, including the following:

- An improvement in Qatar’s overall human development index, which reached 0.856, compared with the 2015 Human Development Report figure of 0.855;
- An increase in Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, which reached \$129.94, compared with the 2015 Report figure of \$129.10;
- An improvement in the adult literacy rate for men and women, which reached 97.8 per cent, compared with the 2015 Report figure of 96.7 per cent;
- An increase in the higher education enrolment rate for university-age students, which reached 16 per cent, compared with the 2015 Report figure of 14 per cent;
- The labour force participation rate for persons aged 15 years and above stood at 84.6 per cent – a figure higher than that of Norway, which, in 2016, was ranked first in the world according to the human development index;
- A fall in the youth unemployment rate (for persons aged between 15 and 24), which fell to 0.8 per cent, compared with the 2015 Report figure of 1.1 per cent;
- An increase in the proportion of the population using the Internet, which reached 92.9 per cent, compared with the 2015 Report figure of 91.5 per cent. According to this indicator, Qatar compares well with Japan (93.3 per cent), Finland (92.7 per cent) and Sweden (90.6 per cent);
- A fall in the total fertility rate, which fell to 2.1 live births per woman in 2015; however, the country’s total fertility rate remains higher than that of Norway (1.8 live births) Hong Kong (1.2 live births) and Singapore (1.2 live births).

#### **D. Social spending as a proportion of total public expenditure**

12. In 2016, expenditure on education as a proportion of overall public expenditure stood at 10.5 per cent, while expenditure on health and on social protection stood at 10.8 per cent and 0.83 per cent, respectively.

#### **E. Qatar and global indicators**

13. As stated above, Qatar was ranked first in the Arab world and 33rd globally according to the 2016 Human Development Report, published by the United Nations Development Programme. Qatar was also ranked first in the Arab world and 14th globally according to Global Competitiveness Index, as highlighted in the 2015–2016 World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report. That index measures the factors driving productivity and fostering prosperity in 140 countries worldwide, and considers three key sub indexes with a view to evaluating States’ competitiveness, namely basis requirements, efficiency enhancers and innovation and sophistication factors. Qatar was also ranked first in the Arab world in terms of combating administrative corruption according to the 2016 Competitiveness of Arab Countries Report, published by the Arab Monetary Fund; that Report underscored that Qatar’s high rank was due to the steps taken by its Government to combat corruption, including its establishment of the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Center, which endeavours to raise awareness of those issues and seeks to forge partnerships with a view to disseminating knowledge of how to combat administrative corruption. Qatar was also ranked first in the Middle East and North Africa and 34th globally, and classified as a country enjoying a high level of peace, according to the 2016 Global Peace Index

Report, published by the Institute for Economics and Peace. Indeed, Qatar was the only Arab State included in the list of ten countries classified as free of conflict. Qatar was, moreover, ranked first among Gulf countries and second in the Middle East and North Africa region according to the 2017 Basel Anti-Money Laundering Index, which evaluates States' efforts to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism, as well as other related factors, such as financial transparency and the effectiveness of States' judicial systems.

## **F. Progress made towards the achievement of development goals**

14. Qatar is committed to assessing the progress made towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. It has issued five reports, the most recent one in January 2017. That report underscored Qatar's commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goal targets with a view to improve living conditions, and emphasized that the country has achieved significant progress in that regard. The following are the main findings of the fifth report:

- Goal 1 "Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty" poses no challenge for Qatar, which has managed to provide a decent living to all citizens in its territory;
- Qatar has nearly achieved Goal 2 "Achieve universal primary education" for boys and girls by 2015: school attendance rates in primary school for both sexes are over 91 per cent;
- Qatar has made great progress towards the achievement of Goal 3 on gender equality, with a higher education gender equality rate of 1.94;
- Qatar has successfully achieved Goal 4 "Reduce child mortality" by reducing the mortality of children under the age of 5 by two thirds;
- Qatar has surpassed the target of reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters;
- Qatar has achieved the Millennium Development Goal targets on malaria and infectious diseases; it has successfully halted the spread of malaria and the country has been declared malaria-free. Qatar has also reduced the prevalence of tuberculosis by fifty per cent, and succeeded in doing so ahead of schedule. Qatar, moreover, succeeded in providing universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS before the 2010 deadline, and antiretroviral therapy has been provided to all individuals infected with HIV/AIDS since 2007;
- Qatar has achieved most of Goal 7 "Ensure environmental sustainability": it included environmental considerations in its development planning under the National Development Strategy 2011–2016, and the State has provided the public with safe drinking water and proper sanitation. It has also managed to minimize the adverse effects of the loss of biodiversity;
- Qatar has contributed actively to the development of a global partnership for development. It is a major donor to, and a key partner in, international development initiatives and the provision of development aid and assistance is a key pillar of the country's foreign policy. In 2015, overseas assistance totalled 0.78 per cent of the country's GDP and was provided to more than 110 countries in Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. Between 2012 and 2016, the Qatari Government provided a total of QR 14,765,695,287 in development and humanitarian assistance.

## **G. Constitutional, political and legal structure of the State**

15. The State refers to the information provided in paragraphs 15 to 28 of the previous combined report.

## H. General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights

16. In addition to the information regarding the general framework provided in paragraphs 29, 30, 31, 32 and 34 of the previous combined report, the State wishes to highlight the following developments:

### Legal safeguards for human rights

17. Since the submission of its previous combined report, the State has promulgated a number of laws and other legislative instruments to promote the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Act No. 8 of 2010 amending certain provisions of the Criminal Code, promulgated by Act No. 11 of 2004;
- Act No. 15 of 2011 on combating trafficking in persons;
- Act No. 6 of 2013 on the Health and Education Fund, which provides sustainable financial resources to support health and education services and the institutions that provide them, in accordance with the State's higher interests, in addition to providing financial support for emergency situations;
- Act No. 7 of 2013 on social health insurance, which establishes a mandatory health insurance scheme to ensure the provision of basic health services to all Qatari nationals, citizens of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, residents and visitors;
- The Code of Criminal Procedure, promulgated by Act No. 23 of 2004;
- Decision No. 18 of 2014 of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, which determines the parameters of adequate housing for workers. The Decision complies with international requirements for workers' temporary or permanent accommodation;
- Act No. 1 of 2015 amending provisions of the Labour Code (Act No. 14 of 2004) regarding the protection of wages;
- Act No. 12 of 2015 amending certain provisions of Decree Law No. 17 of 2010 on the organization of the National Human Rights Committee, which strengthened the independence of the National Committee and provided robust legal safeguards and protections for the Committee and its members with a view to enhancing their capacity to perform their legally-sanctioned duties and activities in a transparent manner and within a considerable margin of freedom;
- Act No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers;
- The Civil Human Resources Act (Act No. 15 of 2016), which enshrines the principle of equality without discrimination among employees in terms of their rights and duties;
- Act No. 13 of 2016 on safeguarding the privacy of personal data;
- Act No. 16 of 2016 on mental health, which sets forth broad health care rights, including access to appropriate care in accordance with medically recognized standards, in addition to other rights involving the patient's autonomy and privacy;
- On 19 October 2016, the Cabinet approved a law amending certain provisions of the Labour Code (Act No. 14 of 2004) that would provide for the establishment of one or more committees to issue rulings in connection with all disputes relating to the interpretation of the Labour Code or work contracts;
- Act No. 1 of 2017 amending certain provisions of Act No. 21 of 2015, which regulates the entry and exit of migrant workers, concerning the freedom of individuals to leave the State;

- Act No. 15 of 2017 on domestic workers, which provides legal protections for domestic workers in line with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and applicable international standards.

#### **Accession to international human rights treaties**

18. Since the submission of its previous report, Qatar has ratified a number of regional and international agreements in support of human rights, including, most notably, the following:

- The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which Qatar ratified in 2009. This measure demonstrates political will to promote the values of tolerance and freedom of thought and expression and underscores the importance of culture in achieving social integration and fostering equality and non-discrimination;
- The Arab Convention on Combating Money-Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism, which Qatar ratified in 2012;
- The International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which Qatar ratified in 2014;
- The Arab Convention for the Protection of Copyright and Related Rights (the amended version of the Arab Convention for the Protection of Copyright, adopted in Baghdad in 1981), pursuant to Decree No. 20 of 2015;
- The State also looks forward to acceding to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

#### **Institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights**

19. In addition to the information provided in paragraphs 34, 44, 45, 46, 47 and 48 of the previous combined report, the State wishes to highlight the following developments:

- The National Human Rights Committee, which was established by Amiral Decree No. 38 of 2002, is an independent national body for the promotion and protection of human rights. It should be noted that, in Geneva in 2010, the National Human Rights Committee was accredited with A status for the first time by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. It was accredited with A status for a second consecutive time in December 2015;
- The Silatech organization, which was established in 2008 to create work opportunities for young Arabs, runs programmes in 16 Arab States, namely Algeria, the Comoros, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen;
- The Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilizations was established by virtue of Cabinet decision No. 8 of 2010 in order to combat intolerance and underscore the role of civilizations in promoting dialogue, resolving conflicts, consolidating the values of tolerance, solidarity and peace among the world's peoples, and furthering human development;
- The Standing Committee on Emergencies, which was established by virtue of Cabinet decision No. 14 of 2011, prepares studies and develops plans and procedures to tackle disasters, provide prompt disaster relief, ensure safe transportation and communications, and develop and disseminate outreach plans through the media;
- The National Committee for Occupational Health and Safety, established by virtue of Cabinet decision No. 16 of 2011, makes proposals regarding national occupational health and safety policies, programmes and regulations, conducts research on occupational health and safety and on international agreements and proposals in that area, and provides occupational health and safety advisory services;



- The Administrative Control and Transparency Authority was established by virtue of Amiral Decree No. 75 of 2011 to provide oversight, ensure transparency and integrity and combat corruption in all its forms and manifestations;
- The National Committee for International Humanitarian Law, established pursuant to Cabinet decision No. 27 of 2012, provides consultancy services to the Government and facilitates its efforts to implement and promote respect for international humanitarian law;
- The “Education Above All” initiative was launched in 2012 with a view to providing education to children in areas mired in poverty or affected by armed conflict;
- The Qatar Foundation for Social Action, established in 2013, is a high-level institution whose board of directors oversees and monitors entities within the State that are active in the area of social affairs. It formulates and develops plans, programmes, policies and strategies aimed at furthering the objectives of civil society institutions and following up on their implementation, in cooperation and coordination with Government ministries and agencies and with public and private entities at home and abroad. It includes the following components: the Social Protection and Rehabilitation Centre, which seeks to protect children and women from family violence, the Family Consulting Centre, the Centre for the Care of Orphans, the Centre for the Empowerment and Care of the Elderly, the Shafallah Centre for Persons with Special Needs, the Social Development Centre and the Best Buddies Qatar initiative;
- The National Committee on Human Trafficking was established in 2016 with a view to coordinating national efforts to monitor and combat all forms of human trafficking. Its responsibilities include preparing a national plan on human trafficking and preparing and publishing an annual report on the country’s efforts to combat that phenomenon.

### **Policies and strategies**

20. Qatar has in recent years dedicated increasing attention to human rights. It has taken numerous legislative, legal, administrative and other measures to give effect to those rights and to provide sufficient means to establish, develop and update such rights in the context of its efforts to promote comprehensive social development. This attention has been linked to national terms of reference, principally the Qatar National Vision 2030, the country’s 2011–2016 and 2017–2022 National Development Strategies and other sectoral strategies. The terms of reference provide a supportive, stable environment for the realization of human rights as called for in international instruments. The aforementioned strategies include the following:

- The Labour Market Sector Strategy 2011–2016, which strives to ensure that the workforce has the necessary skills and capacities to achieve national development priorities.
- The Family Cohesion and Empowerment of Women Strategy 2011–2016, which aims to:
  - Strengthen family cohesion;
  - Reduce dependence on domestic workers and minimize the repercussions of that phenomenon;
  - Reduce the incidence of family violence and establish a protection and support system for families affected by violence;
  - Establish an effective support mechanism for families in special circumstances, such as families caring for persons with disabilities or for elderly persons;
  - Support and empower families that are economically and socially marginalized, and promote financial responsibility and reduce indebtedness among Qatari families;

- Adopt a holistic approach to the welfare and security of children;
- Support women's efforts to achieve a balance between their professional and family responsibilities;
- Take action to empower women in all areas, particularly in the political and economic spheres;
- The National Health Strategy 2011–2016, which aims to introduce changes to the health-care system and to provide effective and affordable world-class comprehensive health care for all, taking into account the different needs of men, women and children. The strategy includes 35 projects;
- The National Primary Health-Care Strategy 2013–2018, which aims to address emerging health challenges by establishing a comprehensive, high-quality health-care system that provides integrated, patient-based preventive and community health-care services and facilitated access to appropriate treatment;
- The Education and Training Strategy 2011–2016 aims to establish an education system on a par with world-class education systems through the provision of educational curricula and training programmes that meet the current and future needs of the labour market, high-quality educational and training opportunities suited to the aspirations and capacities of every individual and life-long continuing education programmes for all. Moreover, the strategy seeks to provide advanced, independent educational institutions that manage their affairs efficiently in accordance with centralized guidelines and are accountable, in addition to an effective system for funding scientific research based on the principle of public-private sector partnership in cooperation with relevant international bodies and leading international research centres, as well as seeking to establish an active role for Qatar in international cultural and intellectual activities and scientific research;
- The Social Protection Sector Strategy 2011–2016 seeks to reaffirm Arab and Islamic values and principles with a view to safeguarding the Qatari family and ensuring its centrality in the social development process, and encourages citizens to realize their full potential through human development in a manner that fosters equity and upholds human rights;
- The National Road Safety Strategy 2013–2022 aims to reduce the number of traffic accident fatalities and severe injuries as a step towards achieving the long-term vision of Qatar for road safety. The strategy, which seeks to further the shared vision of relevant stakeholders, provides terms of reference and a framework for identifying steps to be taken as a matter of priority with a view to enhancing road safety. The strategy complements other strategies in Qatar, including the Comprehensive Planning, Sustainable Transport and Transportation Demand Management Strategy;
- The National Autism Plan 2017–2021, which was launched with a view to developing a comprehensive and integrated approach in the provision of care to autistic individuals of all ages.

### **International cooperation**

21. The State has continued to host international conferences and forums on development, democracy, human rights and the promotion of a culture of peace. The Government has convened the Doha Forum, the Conference on Interfaith Dialogue and the US-Islamic World Forum on an annual basis. It also hosted the Fourth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in 2011, and the Doha Meeting for Advancing Religious Freedom through Interfaith Collaboration in March 2014 within the context of the Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance, Discrimination and Incitement to Hatred and/or Violence on the Basis of Religion or Belief. In 2015, Qatar hosted the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which culminated in the Doha Declaration. Qatar has, moreover, provided \$49 million to the United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime to implement its training programmes on the Doha Declaration; those training programmes will continue until 2020. In January 2016, Qatar hosted a regional conference on the role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in promoting and protecting human rights in the Arab region and, in April 2016, hosted the 2016 Asia Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights. In February 2017, it hosted an international conference on human rights approaches to confronting conflict situations in the Arab region.

22. As part of its efforts to support and cooperate with international and regional mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, the State received a visit from the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants in November 2013 and a visit from the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers in 2014. It also received a visit from a delegation of members of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights in March 2014, and a visit from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in January 2016. The State has also received numerous visits from non-governmental organizations concerned with human rights, including Human Rights Watch, which visited the country in 2012 and 2014, Amnesty International, which visited in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, and the International Trade Union Confederation, which visited in 2014.

## **II. Comments on substantive articles of the Convention: measures taken by the State to implement the Convention**

23. This section describes the legislative, institutional, administrative and other measures that the State has taken to implement the Convention since the previous report was submitted in 2007 and considered by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2011.

24. The section begins with an analysis of the general legal framework in which racial discrimination, as defined in article 1, paragraph 1, of the Convention, is prohibited. The remainder of the section provides specific information on articles 2–7 of the Convention. The information is arranged by article and by the provisions set out therein.

### **Article 1**

25. State law, meaning the Constitution and domestic laws, defines discrimination in line with the definition provided in article 1, paragraph 1, of the Convention. The legal framework for State action includes the general rules underpinning the provisions of the Convention, in which the principles of equality and non-discrimination are essential elements.

26. As stated above, the Permanent Constitution was approved by a popular referendum held in April 2003 and was ratified by His Highness the Amir in 2004. It entered into force in June 2005. The legal framework in which the principles of equality and protection from discrimination are enshrined is in part II, articles 18 and 19, of the Constitution, concerning the fundamental components of society. Article 18 provides: “The pillars of Qatari society are justice, benevolence, freedom, high moral values and equality”. Hence, in article 18, equality is recognized as being one of the pillars of Qatari society. Support for the principles enunciated in article 18 is provided in article 19 of the Constitution, which affirms: “The State shall preserve the pillars of society and afford security, stability and equal opportunities to citizens”. It follows that all State policies must take account of and safeguard the principles that constitute the mainstays of society, as articulated in article 18 of the Constitution, including the principle of equality. Equality should be viewed as a noble principle that enjoys constitutional protection in Qatar; no law or statute may be enacted that undermines this principle. The establishment of the Supreme Constitutional Court by Act No. 12 of 2008 (promulgated on 18 June 2008) further boosted the protection provided for this principle under the Constitution, as the Constitutional Court adjudicates in disputes over the constitutionality of laws and regulations.

27. The general principle of equality cited in article 18 of the Constitution is spelled out in detail in articles 34 and 35, part III, of the Constitution, concerning general rights and

duties. Article 34 provides that “Citizens are equal in rights and duties”, while article 35 guarantees the right to equality before the law and non-discrimination, providing as it does that “All persons are equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination among them on grounds of sex, origin, language or religion”. As already mentioned, part III of the Constitution, in articles 34 to 58, guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms, espousing the principle that they are integrated, interdependent, interrelated and indivisible; it thus accords economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights on an equal basis, as will be explained in greater depth in the section on article 5 of the Convention. It furthermore lays down a constitutional guarantee of human rights by providing for public rights and freedoms at the heart of the Constitution, thereby giving them precedence over ordinary enactments and laws and treating them as mandatory.

28. Support for the constitutional right to equality and protection from discrimination is provided in a series of laws that will be reviewed and analysed in the section on articles 2–7 of the Convention.

29. It should be noted that Qatar did not make any reservations to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination upon its accession to that instrument in 1976.

## Article 2

30. Constitutional support for the right to equality and protection from discrimination was boosted by the State’s accession to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1976. In accordance with article 68 of the Permanent Constitution, which explicitly states that treaties and conventions acquire the force of law once they have been ratified and published in the Official Gazette, the Convention is enforceable in Qatar and has the force of law. There is nothing to stop the courts from applying its provisions. In addition, article 6 of the Permanent Constitution provides: “The State shall observe international treaties and covenants and shall take steps to implement all the international treaties to which it is a party”.

31. All citizens and foreign residents in Qatar are accorded the rights and freedoms set out in part III of the Permanent Constitution without any discrimination on grounds of sex, origin, language or religion. Article 52 of the Constitution explicitly provides: “All persons who are legally resident in the State are entitled to protection of their property and person by law”. The constitutional and legal framework in which equal rights and protection from discrimination are ensured has been strengthened through measures to promote the right of legal recourse, as explained later on in this section.

32. All State institutions and organizations are required to abide by the principle of equality and non-discrimination articulated in articles 18, 34 and 35 of the Permanent Constitution and to refrain from engaging in any act or practice that involves, encourages or fosters discrimination. This rule applies, regardless of the party which is the source of the act or practice. The Constitution and laws require all State institutions to uphold the principles of equality, justice and non-discrimination.

33. In addition to the constitutional safeguards already mentioned, numerous laws uphold the principle of non-discrimination. These include the following:

- Act No. 8 of 1979, promulgating the Printing and Publishing Act;
- Act No. 13 of 1993, promulgating the Code of Civil and Commercial Pleadings;
- Act No. 14 of 2004, promulgating the Labour Code, as amended;
- Act No. 23 of 2004, promulgating the Code of Criminal Procedure, which affirms the equality of all citizens and foreign residents in Qatar, without distinction or discrimination, in respect of initiating criminal proceedings, gathering evidence, conducting investigations, holding trials and enforcing judgments;
- Act No. 22 of 2004, promulgating the Civil Code, which makes no distinction among citizens or foreign residents in terms of their civil rights as provided in that Act;

- Act No. 22 of 2006, promulgating the Family Code;
- Act No. 7 of 2007 on the adjudication of administrative disputes;
- Act No. 12 of 2008, establishing the Supreme Constitutional Court;
- Act No. 19 of 2008, defining the amount of blood money (*diyyah*) due in cases of accidental killing;
- Act No. 11 of 2004, promulgating the Criminal Code, as amended by Act No. 8 of 2010;
- Act No. 15 of 2011, promulgating the Human Trafficking Act;
- Act No. 14 of 2014, promulgating the Cybercrime Act;
- Act No. 21 of 2015 on the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers, as amended;
- Act No. 13 of 2016 on safeguarding the privacy of personal data;
- Act No. 15 of 2016, promulgating the Civil Human Resources Act, which enshrines the principle of equality without discrimination among employees in terms of their rights and duties.

### Article 3

34. The State's efforts to make an effective contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights in the national, regional and international domains and to prohibit all forms of racial discrimination and racism are informed by the principles embodied in the Permanent Constitution. The Constitution states that the objective of Qatari foreign policy is to promote international peace and security and the observance of human rights, to repudiate violence and the use of force and to encourage the peaceful resolution of international disputes and cooperation between peace-loving nations.

35. Qatar is an active participant in all international and regional forums and meetings on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination.

36. Qatar hosts the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, which was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/153. The Centre, which is located in Doha, endeavours to undertake training and documentation activities according to international human rights standards and to support such efforts within the region by Governments, United Nations agencies and programmes, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations. The Centre carries out its activities under the auspices of the Geneva-based Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

37. Qatar has continued to host conferences on combating hate speech and extremism. In March 2014, it hosted the Doha Meeting for Advancing Religious Freedom through Interfaith Collaboration, within the context of the Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance, Discrimination and Incitement to Hatred and/or Violence on the Basis of Religion or Belief. On 15 and 16 September 2015, Qatar hosted the Third Arab-American-Iberian Dialogue of National Human Rights Institutions, which sought to develop mechanisms and a plan of action for countering hate speech and extremism.

38. Qatar views dialogue between religions and civilizations as an indispensable mechanism for establishing bridges of communication between societies and peoples, fostering mutual understanding and respect and promoting stability. In the light of the numerous challenges undermining global peace and coexistence, increasingly frequent acts of intolerance and hatred, and the spread of violent conflict and extremism, Qatar strongly supported the establishment of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, which is now playing an active role in promoting a culture of peace. Qatar has continued to support the Alliance with a view to enhancing its capacity to fulfil its mandate, and it hosted the Fourth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in Doha in December 2011. Reflecting the international community's recognition of Qatar's leading role in fostering rapprochement among peoples, civilizations and religions, a Qatari national was appointed to serve as the first High Representative of the Secretary-General for the Alliance of

Civilizations. Moreover, as part of the State's efforts to promote dialogue among peoples and cultures, the Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilizations, established by virtue of Cabinet decision No. 8 of 2010, is overseeing the development of an Alliance of Civilizations action plan. The Committee also monitors State efforts and initiatives in support of the Alliance, proposes topics for study, and convenes meetings and forums on the Alliance in coordination with relevant authorities.

39. To promote interreligious dialogue and combat discrimination on the basis of religion or belief, Qatar established the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue, which strives to promote a culture of dialogue, acceptance of others and peaceful coexistence among the followers of different religions. Qatar also hosts the annual Doha Interfaith Dialogue Conference, which is attended by intellectuals, scholars and representatives of various religions from around the world.

#### Article 4

40. In keeping with the purposes of the Permanent Constitution of Qatar, legislation has been enacted to deal with loopholes that could be used to fuel racism or discriminatory practices. Article 47 of the Printing and Publishing Act (Act No. 8 of 1979) prohibits the publication of material that is likely to stir up discord in society at large or to provoke confessional, racial or religious strife. Article 47 states that the penalties for breaching the Act are those set out in the Criminal Code, namely, a term of up to 6 months' imprisonment or a fine of up to QR 3,000. Article 2 (11) of the decision issued by the Minister of Information and Culture in 1992 on censorship criteria and rules states that censorship bodies of the Ministry of Information and Culture that scrutinize written, audio or visual material may not authorize the circulation, broadcast, display or publication of material portraying a racial or ethnic grouping in a manner that is designed to be derogatory, unless the intention is to create a positive impression for a noble aim (e.g. to combat racism).

41. Article 256 of the Qatari Criminal Code of 2004, as amended by Act No. 8 of 2010, makes it an offence to denigrate the revealed religions, to insult a deity or a prophet and to damage, vandalize or desecrate buildings used for the celebration of religious rites. The article provides: "A term of up to 7 years' imprisonment shall be imposed on any person who commits any of the following acts: denigrating a revealed religion that is protected under the Islamic sharia; insulting a prophet verbally, in writing, in an image or a message or by any other means; damaging, vandalizing, destroying or desecrating a building or any object found therein that is used to perform the religious rites of one of the revealed religions protected under the sharia".

42. In addition, article 263 provides: "A term of up to 1 year's imprisonment and/or a fine of up to 1,000 riyals shall be imposed on any person who produces, makes, sells, offers for sale, circulates, acquires, possesses or advertises products, goods, printed matter or cassettes containing images, slogans, words, symbols, signs or any other content that denigrates Islam or the revealed religions protected under the Islamic sharia. The same penalty shall be applied to anyone who distributes computer discs, programs or tapes containing material that defames Islam or the divinely revealed religions protected under the Islamic sharia".

43. Qatari legislation does not discriminate between Islam and the other religions that are protected under the sharia, namely, Christianity and Judaism. It makes it an offence to: defame Islam, Christianity and Judaism; insult a prophet; subject a place of Christian or Jewish worship to any kind of attack; or to defame Christianity or Judaism. It makes no distinction between Islam and the other revealed religions that are afforded protection in Islam.

44. Article 159 bis of the Criminal Code provides: "Whoever, being a public servant or any other person who acts in an official capacity, uses torture or instigates, agrees or consents to torture another person shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years ...". That article continues: "Torture is any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act that he or a third person committed or is suspected of having committed, or

intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind ...”.

45. Article 8 of the Cybercrime Act (Act No. 14 of 2014) provides: “A term of up to 3 years’ imprisonment and/or a fine of up to one hundred thousand riyals shall be imposed on any person who violates social principles or values, publishes news, images or audio or video recordings that infringe on the inviolability of the private or family life of individuals, even when the news, images or recordings in question are accurate or genuine, or uses the Internet or any other form of information technology to insult or defame any other person”.

46. Article 16 of Act No. 13 of 2016 on safeguarding the privacy of personal data provides: “Personal data relating to the ethnic origin, children, health, physical or psychological state, religious beliefs, marital relationship or criminal offenses of an individual shall be considered private. The Minister may classify other types of personal data as private if the misuse or disclosure thereof would cause serious harm to an individual”.

## **Article 5**

47. In addition to the information provided on this Article in paragraphs 64 to 69 of the previous combined report, the State wishes to draw attention to the following:

48. The Constitution enshrines the principle of the independence of the judiciary. Article 30 states that “The judiciary is independent; judicial power shall be exercised by the courts of various kinds at different levels”. The Constitution relies upon the honesty and impartiality of judges to ensure people’s rights and freedoms; article 131 stipulates: “Judges are independent and are subject to no authority other than the law. No authority has the right to interfere in the administration of justice”. The independence of the judiciary is also enshrined in Act No. 10 of 2003 through the promulgation of the Judicial Authority Act, article 2 of which provides that “Judges are independent and cannot be dismissed except in accordance with the provisions of this Act. The independence of the judiciary shall not be compromised nor shall there be interference in the administration of justice. Under the Judicial Authority Act, the national courts consist of the Court of First Instance, the Court of Appeal and the Court of Cassation. The Supreme Judicial Council was established under the Judicial Authority Act to uphold the independence of the judiciary, to express opinions on matters relating to the judiciary, to study and to propose legislation on the development of the judicial system and to express opinions on the appointment, promotion, transfer, secondment and retirement of judges in accordance with the Judicial Authority Act. In addition to those functions, the Council considers grievances relating to the administration of justice, on which its decision is final. The Judicial Authority Act guarantees the financial independence of the courts, by stipulating that the courts’ budget shall be annexed to the State budget.

49. The Constitution is designed to bring about central control over the constitutionality of laws and has left it to the law to regulate that control. Most modern constitutions also tend to favour that system as it is conducive to achieving a broad balance between the different arms of government. Act No. 12 of 2008 establishes the Supreme Constitutional Court as an independent, independently financed judicial body with the authority to adjudicate in disputes relating to the constitutionality of laws and regulations, in conflicts of jurisdiction and in disputes concerning the execution/enforcement of contradictory final judgements issued by judicial or other competent bodies. It is also competent to interpret laws when their application has provoked controversy and has the required weight to ensure uniform interpretation of the law when requested to do so by the Prime Minister or the President of the Advisory Council. In accordance with the provisions mentioned above, the Constitutional Court is competent to adjudicate in disputes relating to the constitutionality of laws and regulations, on its own motion or at the request of litigants; its judgments and decisions are final, not subject to appeal, and binding on all State authorities and persons in Qatar.

50. The independence of the judiciary was strengthened and enhanced by the promulgation of Act No. 7 of 2007 on the adjudication of administrative disputes. Under

this Act, abuse of power constitutes grounds for revoking an administrative decision or claiming compensation.

### **Right to liberty and security of person**

51. Article 36 of the Constitution states: “Personal freedom is guaranteed. No one may be arrested, imprisoned, searched, confined to a specific place of residence or subjected to restrictions on his freedom of residence or movement except in accordance with the law. No person may be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Torture is an offence which is punishable by law”. Article 37 of the Constitution provides: “Privacy is inviolable. No one shall be subjected to any intrusion in his personal or family affairs, his home or correspondence or any other intrusion that would damage his honour or reputation except in accordance with the law and the procedures established by law”. Article 40 provides: “There is no crime and no punishment except in accordance with law”.

52. Qatar compares favourably with other countries in terms of its successes in combating crime and promoting security, as revealed by numerous global indicators and statistics on peace and security in different States and on confidence in those States’ police services; these include indicators on serious offences, safety promotion, community partnerships, the prevalence of crime in society and the services provided by various authorities, as well as indicators on promoting awareness of security within society and community partnerships. To mention a few:

- Qatar was ranked first out of 70 countries surveyed according to the global terrorism index, as set forth in the GoldenVisa.ch World Safety Index 2015;
- Qatar was ranked second in the Arab world and 41st out of 162 countries according to the 2015 Positive Peace Index, published by the Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace;
- According to the 2016 Global Crime Index, which measures crime rates in 117 countries on a semi-annual basis and accords each country a crime index score ranging from 0 to 100, Qatar achieved a score of 22.34 and was ranked as the country with the lowest levels of crime in the Middle East and the seventh lowest levels of crime among the countries surveyed. Levels of crime in Qatar are therefore among the lowest in the world;
- Qatar was ranked as the country with the world’s lowest disaster risk, according to the United Nations University World Risk Report 2016;
- Qatar was ranked first in the Middle East and North Africa and 30th globally, according to the 2017 Global Peace Index Report, issued by the Institute for Economics and Peace, in consultation with an international team of experts, institutes and research centres and in cooperation with the University of Sydney Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. Qatar has thus maintained its position as first in the Arab world for the eighth consecutive year according to the global peace indicator, which uses 23 criteria to measure the state of peace internally and externally. The internal criteria on which the indicator is based include the number of murders, the proportion of prisoners, the availability of arms, and the level of organized crime per 100,000 inhabitants. The external criteria include the size of the army, arms exports and imports, the number of casualties in battles, support provided to United Nations peace-keeping efforts and relations with neighbouring countries.

### **Political rights**

53. As already mentioned, part III of the Constitution, in articles 34 to 58, guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms, espousing the principle that they are integrated, interdependent, interrelated and indivisible, and it thus accords economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights on an equal basis. With regard to political rights, article 42 of the Constitution grants the right to vote and to stand for election. In keeping with article 35 of the Constitution, these rights are afforded without discrimination on grounds of sex, origin,



language or religion. The Constitution also recognizes the right to political participation and to access to public employment. These political rights should be read in the light of article 34 of the Constitution, which provides: “Citizens have equal rights and duties”. Moreover, article 146 of the Constitution provides that these rights may not be regulated or modified in such a way as to limit or impair them.

54. In order to promote and safeguard political rights, the Elections Department was established within the Ministry of the Interior pursuant to Minister of the Interior Decision No. 1 of 2003. The Department oversees the organization and administration of elections and monitors the electoral process in coordination with relevant bodies and committees. It also develops procedures and regulatory mechanisms for conducting elections.

55. The first elections in which women and men participated on an equal footing took place in 1999, when both men and women participated as voters and candidates in the first Central Municipal Council elections. Some 77.4 per cent of registered female voters and 81.5 per cent of registered male voters participated in those elections and six female candidates stood, unsuccessfully, for election. The percentage of registered voters of both sexes who participated in the elections for the second term of the Council was significantly lower, however, with only 27 per cent of female voters and 36.2 per cent of male voters taking part. Nonetheless, a significant milestone for women was achieved in those elections, with the election of the first female candidate to the 29-member Council. Participation rates rose in the elections for the third term of the Council, held in 2007, with 51.8 per cent of female voters and 47.5 per cent of male voters taking part. Furthermore, one of the three female candidates in those elections was elected to the Council. In the elections for the fifth term of the Council, held in 2015, voter turnout increased further for both sexes, with 70.3 per cent of registered female voters and 65.2 per cent of registered male voters taking part in the vote.

Table 2

**Participation in elections to the Central Municipal Council disaggregated by sex (2003–2015)**

|                        |                    | <i>Second term 2003</i> |              | <i>Third term 2007</i> |              | <i>Fourth term 2011</i> |              | <i>Fifth term 2015</i> |              |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Data expressed</i>  |                    | <i>Females</i>          | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i>         | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i>          | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i>         | <i>Males</i> |
| <i>In figures</i>      | Voters             | 11 055                  | 13 124       | 13 608                 | 14 531       | 16 331                  | 16 441       | 9 704                  | 12 031       |
|                        | Voter turnout      | 2 985                   | 4 757        | 7 054                  | 6 905        | 6 120                   | 7 486        | 6 826                  | 7 844        |
|                        | Candidates         | 1                       | 83           | 3                      | 113          | 4                       | 97           | 5                      | 131          |
|                        | Candidates elected | 1                       | 28           | 1                      | 28           | 1                       | 28           | 2                      | 27           |
| <i>As a percentage</i> | Voters             | 45.7                    | 54.3         | 48.4                   | 5.6          | 49.7                    | 50.3         | 44.6                   | 55.4         |
|                        | Voter turnout      | 38.6                    | 61.4         | 50.5                   | 49.5         | 45.0                    | 55.0         | 46.5                   | 53.5         |
|                        | Candidates         | 1.2                     | 98.8         | 2.6                    | 97.4         | 4.0                     | 96.0         | 3.7                    | 96.3         |
|                        | Candidates elected | 3.4                     | 96.6         | 3.4                    | 96.6         | 3.4                     | 96.6         | 6.9                    | 93.1         |

### Civil rights

56. The Qatari Constitution accords a number of civil rights that are recognized under international human rights law. These include the right to freedom of movement, the right to leave and to return to the country, the right to a nationality, the right to inherit, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

### Freedom of movement

57. The Qatari Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of movement, residence and travel outside the State for both citizens and expatriates. Article 36 of the Constitution

states: “Personal freedom is guaranteed. No one may be arrested, imprisoned, searched, confined to a specific place of residence or subjected to restrictions on his freedom of residence or movement except in accordance with the law”. The constitutional protections referred to above have been strengthened by the enactment of Act No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers, and its amendments, pursuant to which a migrant worker may leave the State without obtaining permission to leave from his employer.

58. The Qatari legislator guarantees to persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, the right to move freely inside and outside the country at any time and the right to reside in or move away from any location, to travel outside the country temporarily and to return thereto. Persons with disabilities may not be expelled from the country or prevented from returning. In that connection, spaces reserved for persons with disabilities have been designated and marked in all public parking areas in markets and commercial centres and at government offices. With regard to measures taken to provide training in mobility skills for persons with disabilities and for specialist staff, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, through the associations and institutions that it oversees pursuant to the Private Associations and Institutions Act No. 12 of 2004, as amended by Act No. 10 of 2010, is playing an active role in helping persons with disabilities to enhance their mobility skills and in providing staff to assist them therein.

59. The Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs has championed the “barrier-free city” project, the purpose of which is to ensure that accessible entrances and exits are provided for persons with motor disabilities in private and public areas, including hospitals, markets, government premises and hotels, along with special parking spaces designated for persons with disabilities in cooperation with the Traffic Department of the Ministry of the Interior. A further objective is to verify that building permits are in compliance with the requirements pertaining to accessibility, the availability of specially equipped hotel rooms and the installation of lifts suitable for use by persons with disabilities. The project is also seeking to ensure the availability of appropriately equipped taxis and a facility in which vehicles can be adapted for use by persons with disabilities.

60. Article 38 of the Constitution provides: “No citizen may be expelled from the country or prevented from returning thereto”.

### **Right to a nationality**

61. Article 21 of the Constitution lends constitutional authority to the Nationality Act No. 38 of 2005, article 1, of which states: “A Qatari national is any person born to a father who has Qatari nationality”. Article 4 of the Act provides: “Qatari nationality shall be granted to the children of naturalized citizens who are living with these citizens in Qatar at the time that they are naturalized and to children born to these persons thereafter. It shall be granted to minors living abroad who are the children of naturalized citizens five years from the date on which the children first take up residence in Qatar, provided that they have not already reached their majority when they submit their application”. The Act gives priority for the purposes of naturalization to the children of Qatari women: under article 25 of the Act, both men and women have the same right to transmit their nationality to their children. The Act furthermore provides that children of unknown parentage who are found in Qatar will be given Qatari nationality. This measure is intended to prevent statelessness and to give effect to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which establish that every child is entitled at birth to an identity and to other forms of recognition.

62. Citizenship is granted on the basis of a blood relationship. (Children acquire the nationality of their fathers). This is an established international norm that is reflected in the legislation of most States. The Nationality Act prohibits dual nationality, which leads to dual loyalty; Article 2 of the Act gives priority for the purposes of naturalization to the children of Qatari women.

63. Article 41 of the Constitution of Qatar provides: “Qatari nationality and the provisions governing it shall be prescribed by law. Those provisions shall have constitutional status”. The procedures for amending the Nationality Act are therefore the

same as the procedures that must be followed in order to amend the Constitution, which, as is well-known, are very different, both procedurally and in terms of their time frames, from the procedures that must be followed in order to amend ordinary laws. This underscores the Qatari legislator's desire to solidify and entrench the provisions governing Qatari nationality in view of their sovereign nature and the structure of Qatari society, in which foreign residents in the country far outnumber Qatari nationals.

64. At its meeting on 2 August 2017, the Cabinet passed the Permanent Residency Card Act, which will allow the children of Qatari women married to non-Qatari men, non-Qataris who have performed great services for the State and non-Qataris with special skills required by the State to acquire permanent residency. In accordance with the implementing decisions that will be promulgated by the Cabinet pursuant to that Act, individuals holding permanent residency cards will enjoy a number of privileges in the fields of education and health care, as well as privileges related to military and civil service appointments and the right to own property. The Act also provides for the establishment of a standing committee within the Ministry of the Interior, named the Permanent Residency Card Granting Committee, to consider permanent residency card applications.

### **Right to inherit**

65. The State refers to the information provided in paragraphs 80 and 81 of the previous combined report.

### **Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion**

66. Article 50 of the Constitution recognizes the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion in the following terms: "Freedom of worship is guaranteed to all by law, subject to the need to protect public order and public morals". Article 35 of the Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion.

67. This constitutional protection has been boosted by the growing and explicit attention accorded to this issue by the Qatari political leadership, who continue to facilitate efforts to promote religious freedom and tolerance in Qatar. In that regard, the State has continued to support the construction of the so-called "Church City" complex in the Masaymir area for eight Christian denominations and has allowed adherents to other sects to worship under the auspices of one of those denominations. Relevant governmental bodies also facilitate the importation of religious scriptures and other religious materials for the personal or collective use of non-Muslim religious groups and individuals.

68. Moreover, the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue, which was established by the State with a view to promoting and disseminating a culture of dialogue and peaceful coexistence, has organized numerous activities on freedom of worship and religious tolerance.

### **Economic, social and cultural rights**

69. The Constitution and laws of Qatar guarantee internationally recognized economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to work, the right to an education and the right to health.

### **Right to work**

70. In addition to the information provided in paragraphs 84 to 91 of the previous combined report, the State wishes to underscore that a number of legislative and institutional developments relevant to the right to work have taken place since the consideration of that report. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The promulgation of Act No. 1 of 2015 amending provisions of the Labour Code (Act No. 14 of 2004) regarding the protection of wages. The new Act aims to ensure that workers' wages are paid in a timely manner and establishes an electronic auditing mechanism to identify offenders and impose penalties on employers who fail to pay workers' wages on time;

- The establishment of the Labour Inspection Department Wage Protection Section, which monitors the wage protection system in accordance with Decision No. 4 of 2015 of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs on regulations for the wage protection system for workers subject to the Labour Code;
- The promulgation of Act No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers, which abolished the sponsorship (kafalah) system and replaced it with a contract-based system. This new Act provides greater flexibility and freedom for migrant workers, including migrant workers helping to build Qatar's infrastructure, and strengthens protections for their rights;
- Pursuant to article 4 of Act No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers, the Government has contracted VFS Global to establish e-portals in labour-sending countries with a view to enhancing protections for workers prior to their recruitment and tightening control of recruitment practices;
- In September 2015, the Qatar Development Fund signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Organization for Migration in connection with a project to facilitate the repatriation of stranded Nepalese migrants;
- Act No. 15 of 2016, promulgating the Civil Human Resources Act, which enshrines the principle of equality without discrimination among employees in terms of their rights and duties;
- On 19 October 2016, the Cabinet approved a law amending certain provisions of the Labour Code (Act No. 14 of 2004) that would provide for the establishment of one or more committees to issue rulings in connection with all disputes relating to the interpretation of the Labour Code or work contracts;
- The National Committee on Human Trafficking, established by virtue of Cabinet decision No. 15 of 2017, is composed of officials from each of following bodies: the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Public Health, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the Government Communications Office, the National Human Rights Committee and the Qatar Social Work Foundation. The Committee is chaired by an official from the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, and an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is appointed vice-chair. Article 4 of the aforementioned decision provides: "The Committee shall act as the national coordinator for the monitoring, prevention and combating of human trafficking by collaborating with relevant stakeholders in that area. To achieve that goal, the Committee shall:
  - Develop the national plan for combating human trafficking and draw up programmes and mechanisms for its implementation in coordination with the national entities concerned;
  - Develop a database of international legislation relating to human trafficking, trafficking methods and relevant studies;
  - Review relevant national legislation and ensure its consistency with the international conventions and covenants ratified by the State;
  - Prepare and publish an annual report on the country's efforts to prevent, monitor and combat human trafficking;
  - Study regional and international reports on preventing, monitoring and combating human trafficking and take any necessary follow-up action;
  - Collaborate with the competent authorities and entities concerned with protecting and providing support to victims of human trafficking, including the protection and rehabilitation programme, with a view to facilitating their social reintegration;
  - Raise awareness of issues relating to human trafficking by holding conferences and seminars, issuing publications, designing training courses and taking other action that can facilitate the achievement of the Committee's objectives;

- Share information and experience and strengthen ties with national Arab, regional and international organizations and committees concerned with combating human trafficking;
- Participate with relevant State authorities in international conferences and forums on human trafficking;
- Carry any other activities entrusted to the Committee with a view to combating human trafficking;
- Act No. 1 of 2017 amending certain provisions of Act No. 21 of 2015, which regulates the entry and exit of migrant workers, concerning the freedom of individuals to leave the State;
- Act No. 15 of 2017 on domestic workers, which provides legal protections for domestic workers in line with the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and applicable international standards.

### **Right to housing**

71. Qatar attaches particular importance to the provision of adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living for both citizens and foreign residents. That right is protected by the Housing Act No. 2 of 2007, pursuant to which Qatar provides housing with mortgages to individuals who are able to repay an agreed loan as well as housing for individuals in need who are covered by the social security system. Inter alia, the Act also provides for long-term financing with convenient repayment plans, the cost-free provision of land for construction, approved engineering blueprints, basic electricity and water services, and the demolition, reconstruction and renovation of social housing for citizens with disabilities.

72. Decision No. 18 of 2014 of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs determines the parameters of adequate housing for expatriate workers in accordance with recognized international standards, and establishes minimum health and housing standards for workers' accommodation. Workers' accommodation is subject to periodic unannounced inspections by the Ministry's Labour Inspection Department to ensure that it meets established minimum standards. The State is currently constructing several housing complexes that comply with those standards and, in 2015, issued a manual on adequate housing requirements in cooperation with the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the National Human Rights Committee, the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Municipalities and Urban Planning.

73. Within the context of the State's efforts to support development projects that address the concrete needs of the country's labour force and improve workers' living standards, Barwa al-Baraha, the country's first workers' city, was inaugurated and began operating in 2016. The project, which covers 1.8 million square meters, is the largest workers' city in the Arabian Gulf and can accommodate 53,000 manual and professional workers. The city boasts a recreational and commercial area, the largest cricket stadium in the country, four cinemas and a 17,000-seat theatre that can be used for a wide range of events. The city was built in accordance with international norms and the highest safety standards and is equipped with early warning systems, fire exits and sprinkler systems, guard rooms and maintenance rooms. The city also boasts food halls and kitchens providing healthy meals, recreation halls, gymnasiums, houses of worship and medical clinics.

### **Right to education**

74. Article 25 of the Constitution of Qatar provides: "Education is one of the fundamental pillars of social progress and the State shall provide, foster and endeavour to disseminate it". Article 49 furthermore provides: "All citizens have the right to education. The State shall endeavour to make education compulsory in accordance with the regulations and laws in effect in the State." The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is developing a world-class education system with a view to achieving the

objectives set forth in the Education and Training Sector Strategy 2011–2016, which was formulated to facilitate the achievement of the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030.

75. Human development is the cornerstone of Qatar National Vision 2030, as no development or progress can be achieved without advanced and high-quality education and training programmes that address the needs of the labour market and are in line with the aspirations and abilities of each individual.

76. Qatar ranked first in the Arab world and fourth globally according to the World Economic Forum education quality index 2015–2016.

77. Qatar has, moreover, striven to ensure that all children on its territory receive an education; a number of steps have been taken to achieve that objective, including the following:

- The Compulsory Education Act (Act No. 25 of 2001) has been amended by Act No. 25 of 2009, which contains 13 articles that prescribe the procedures for enrolling a child in school, the authorities responsible for implementing the amended Act and penalties and sanctions imposed in cases of non-compliance. In that regard, the amended Act prescribes a penalty ranging from a minimum of QR 5,000 to a maximum of QR 10,000 for failing to enrol a child in compulsory education without a good reason;
- Ministerial decision No. 10 of 2010 establishing a committee to examine violations by parents under the Compulsory Education Act has been adopted. Article 8 prescribes the tasks and functions assigned to the committee, which consist of enumerating cases, studying the reasons why some parents prevent their children from attending school, taking appropriate action, identifying the role of the authorities represented in the decision and developing proposals and procedural steps;
- Act No. 6 of 2013 on the Health and Education Fund has been promulgated. The Act aims to provide sustainable financial resources to support health and education services and determines which authorities are responsible for administering the Fund.

78. Education is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Qatari Constitution which considers education to be one of the fundamental pillars of social progress that the State must provide, foster and endeavour to disseminate. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has therefore developed a number of regulatory policies to promote human rights principles. The most important of those policies include the School Admissions and Registration Policy, the Student Assessment Policy, the School Student Behavioural Evaluation Policy, the Code of Professional Conduct for Educators, and the Charter of Ethics for Educators.

79. Qatar endeavours to provide education to all expatriate children, who can attend both government and private schools, according to the wishes of their parents or guardians. There are also schools for different communities within society, international schools and private national schools; these comprise 160 schools and 85 kindergartens, and provide an education to more than 58 per cent of children enrolled in school.

80. In light of the increasing mobility of the population and in order to meet its demand for education services, a number of new government and private schools open in Qatar each year. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education seeks to provide suitable educational opportunities for all students in the State on a non-discriminatory basis and has enacted a number of favourable policies for private schools, which are, for example, exempted from electricity and water charges and customs clearance fees. The Ministry also provides land for private schools that obtain local, national or international accreditation, and ensures implementation of agreements concluded with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior in order to uphold Qatari children's right to education. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education also closely supervises the registration of expatriate students in Qatar once the registration deadline has passed and helps them with registration procedures with a view to ensuring that the education authorities can provide all students with the educational services they desire.

81. As part of the educational development process under way in the State, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misnad issued a decision in 2007 facilitating the establishment of a number of outstanding foreign schools in the country with a view to meeting the increasing demand for such schools. The following tables illustrate that the State ensures equal access to schooling:

Table 3

**Number of students in government education at each education stage disaggregated by sex and nationality, 2015/16 academic year**

| Education stage | Qatari nationals |               |               | Non-Qatari nationals |               |               | Total          |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
|                 | Males            | Females       | Sub-total     | Males                | Females       | Sub-total     |                |
| Pre-primary     | 3 439            | 3 920         | 7 359         | 452                  | 495           | 947           | 8 306          |
| Primary         | 12 679           | 14 443        | 27 122        | 11 106               | 11 803        | 22 909        | 50 031         |
| Intermediate    | 6 374            | 7 250         | 13 624        | 5 462                | 5 761         | 11 223        | 24 847         |
| Secondary       | 6 802            | 7 320         | 14 122        | 5 433                | 5 257         | 10 690        | 24 812         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>29 294</b>    | <b>32 933</b> | <b>62 227</b> | <b>22 453</b>        | <b>23 316</b> | <b>45 769</b> | <b>107 996</b> |

Table 4

**Number of students in private education at each education stage disaggregated by sex and nationality, 2015/16 academic year**

| Education stage | Qatari nationals |               |               | Non-Qatari nationals |               |                | Total          |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
|                 | Males            | Females       | Sub-total     | Males                | Females       | Sub-total      |                |
| Pre-primary     | 3 715            | 3 356         | 7 071         | 15 806               | 14 765        | 30 571         | 37 642         |
| Primary         | 9 546            | 6 953         | 16 499        | 37 688               | 34 497        | 72 185         | 88 684         |
| Intermediate    | 2 867            | 1 887         | 4 754         | 12 233               | 11 229        | 23 462         | 28 216         |
| Secondary       | 1 897            | 1 035         | 2 932         | 8 032                | 7 398         | 15 430         | 18 362         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>18 025</b>    | <b>13 231</b> | <b>31 256</b> | <b>73 759</b>        | <b>67 889</b> | <b>141 648</b> | <b>172 904</b> |

### Right to health

82. Qatari legislation establishes the right to access medical services without any discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, belief, language, age or disability. A charter of the rights and responsibilities of patients and their families was drawn up by the Hamad Medical Foundation, establishing the principles for ensuring the right to health, including the right of access to medical services without discrimination, the right to appropriate medical care, protection of privacy and the confidentiality of information. The notable provisions of the charter include the following:

- Access to primary health care services, regardless of race, religion, national origin, belief, values, language, age or disability;
- Access to health care services with no unjustified delay;
- Access to necessary care that is provided at all times in an appropriate and respectful manner that safeguards the dignity of the patient;
- The provision of an appropriate and effective support mechanism that patients can resort to in the event of any grievance or complaint;
- The right to receive immediate attention in order to assess or control pain;
- The prohibition of patient isolation or the placing of restrictions on patients unless this is medically necessary.

83. The Ministry of Public Health, in cooperation with Hamad Medical Foundation, the Primary Health Care Corporation and related authorities, is implementing the National

Health Strategy, which was adopted with the aim of achieving the objectives set forth in Qatar National Vision 2030 through the realization of seven key goals, namely the establishment of a comprehensive health-care system providing high-quality services to the entire population, the provision of high-quality integrated health-care services, the provision of preventive health-care services that address the different needs of men, women and children, the creation of a skilled national workforce that can deliver high-quality health care, the implementation of a national health policy that establishes and monitors standards, the provision of efficient affordable health services, and the carrying out of high-quality research with a view to improving the quality and effectiveness of health care. Over the past year, the National Health Strategy has made significant progress in delivering on those goals and the Strategy is estimated to have achieved some 71 per cent of its objectives since its inception. The coming years will witness significant improvements in services as Qatar moves towards its goal of establishing a world-class health system. These achievements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The launching of the social and health insurance system, which ensures the provision of public and private treatment and encompasses 280 health-care providers in the public and private sectors;
- The formulation of an infrastructure master plan: the Ministry of Health launched the Qatar Healthcare Facilities Master Plan in 2013, and 25 health centres, 11 hospitals and 82 other new or refurbished facilities will open in the country by 2022. These include all types of health-care facility and will facilitate the country new approach to the provision of care;
- The establishment of the Qatari Council for Medical Specializations, which monitors all health practitioners and supports clinical staff by developing training programmes to facilitate the provision of the best possible health-care services;
- The National Health Strategy has provided the necessary guidelines for action in priority areas. In 2011, the Ministry of Health launched the National Cancer Strategy 2011–2016, which set forth 62 recommendations. In 2012, the Ministry launched the National Cancer Research Strategy, which provided 31 recommendations. In 2013, it launched the National Laboratory Integration and Standardization Strategy 2013–2018, which sets forth a plan of action under National Health Strategy Project 2.6 as well as 46 recommendations. In June 2013, the Primary Health Care Corporation launched the first comprehensive primary care strategy, namely the National Primary Health Care Strategy 2013–2018. In 2013, the Ministry of Health also launched the National Mental Health Strategy 2013–2018, which includes a plan of action in line with the National Health Strategy Project and sets forth 10 commitments;
- In June 2014, the Primary Health Care Corporation obtained platinum accreditation from Accreditation Canada, which certifies that the Corporation provides services that meet the highest international quality and safety standards.

## Article 6

84. The Constitution recognizes that everyone has the right to seek a legal remedy. This is spelled out in article 135, which states: “The right of legal recourse is guaranteed to all. The law shall specify the procedures and conditions for exercising this right”. Laws such as the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure, the law on the settlement of administrative disputes and the Family Code regulate the procedures for recourse to the judiciary. In the event of proven harm, the court shall grant the injured person fair compensation for his injury. Article 19 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, promulgated by Act No. 23 of 2004 and its amendments, provides: “Any person who suffers direct harm as a result of an offence may sue for damages during the investigation stage or before the court hearing the criminal case”. This is in addition to the general rules guaranteeing that right provided in the Civil Code. Articles 32 to 60 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which regulate the procedures for conducting inquiries, gathering evidence and carrying out preliminary investigations to help the Office of the Public Prosecutor and the courts to uncover offences and prosecute and convict criminals, make no



distinction between different citizens or between citizens and foreign residents. Moreover, crime victims have the legal right to sue for damages in criminal proceedings pursuant to article 19 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

85. The Qatari judiciary carries out its duties in accordance with article 130 of the Constitution, which provides: “Judicial authority is independent and is vested in different types and levels of courts, which issue judgements in accordance with the law.”

86. The Ministry of the Interior Human Rights Department, which is part of the national human rights system, was established by Minister of the Interior Decision No. 26 of 2005, which stipulates that the Department shall “receive, study and investigate complaints submitted to the Ministry of the Interior by individuals or through the National Human Rights Committee; look into background issues in connection with those complaints; and make relevant recommendations to the Minister”. The Department also works to ensure implementation of international human rights treaties by conducting visits to penal institutions, deportation centres and security departments to verify compliance with the laws and regulations in force in Qatar and submitting periodic reports to the Minister in that regard, and by conducting training and awareness-raising activities for Ministry departments that deal with human rights. The Department also represents the Ministry at national, regional and international conferences and seminars on human rights. The Department is also competent to investigate and take action to resolve any complaints it receives from migrant workers. In the case of proven exploitation by an employer, necessary measures are taken and the employee is permitted to change his or her employment without obtaining the employer’s consent, in accordance with article 22 of the Act No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers.

Table 5

**Number of migrant workers whose requests to change employment were approved in 2016 without their employers’ consent**

| <i>Employment change</i> | <i>No. of workers</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Permanent                | 2 132                 | 61%               |
| Temporary                | 1 335                 | 39%               |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>3 467</b>          | <b>100%</b>       |

87. Within the context of its efforts to uphold the rights of migrant workers, Qatar has approved a law amending certain provisions of the Labour Code (Act No. 14 of 2004) so as to provide for the establishment of one or more committees to issue rulings in connection with all disputes relating to the interpretation of the Labour Code or work contracts. Those committees’ rulings have the power of a writ of execution. Each committee is presided over by a judge from a court of first instance, and also includes two officials from the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs. Each committee issues its rulings within a period not exceeding three weeks in any dispute arising from the Labour Code or a contract of employment that is brought before it by the competent department, if mediation by that department has failed to lead to an amicable settlement of the dispute in question. Legislators for the parties concerned may lodge appeals against final rulings handed down by a committee with a tribunal named the Appeals Committee for the Settlement of Labour Disputes, which is presided over by a judge from the Court of Appeal and also includes two members who are nominated by the Minister. The aforementioned law also stipulates that the courts shall continue to adjudicate cases brought before them prior to the date on which that law came into effect, and also that procedures for the consideration of cases, and the rules and procedures to be followed by the committees and the mechanism employed to implement their rulings shall be established by Cabinet decision. By establishing these committees, the Government aims to provide redress and achieve justice for migrant workers and enable them to avoid lengthy and complex litigation proceedings. Furthermore, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs works with embassies to follow up on disputes considered by the committees, and represents workers before those committees if they are no longer in the country. The foregoing does not prejudice the right of the workers to make use of regular

judicial procedures and to appeal decisions handed down by the Appeals Committee for the Settlement of Labour Disputes before the Court of Cassation. The process by which a worker may seek a remedy is thus as follows:

- The worker files a complaint with the competent department at the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs against the employer and claims damages under the terms of the employment contract or the provisions of the Labour Code;
- The competent department examines the complaint and attempts to resolve the dispute amicably. If the parties accept an agreement reached through mediation by that department, a settlement is drawn up on that basis, signed by the parties and by the representative of the department, and executed automatically;
- If it is not possible to reach an amicable agreement through mediation by the department, the dispute is referred to the Committee for the Settlement of Labour Disputes, which shall issue a decision within three weeks;
- Unless it is appealed against, the decision issued by the Committee is final and enforceable;
- Legislators for the parties concerned may lodge appeals against final decision handed down by the Committee with a tribunal named the Appeals Committee for the Settlement of Labour Disputes, which is presided over by a judge from the Court of Appeal and also includes two members who are nominated by the Minister.

88. According to article 2, paragraph 3, of Decree-Law No. 38 of 2002 establishing the National Human Rights Committee, that Committee has the power to investigate infringements of human rights and freedoms and can suggest ways to deal with and prevent those infringements.

#### **Article 7**

89. The State attaches considerable importance to human rights training and education. Various governmental and non-governmental organizations have run training courses on the promotion and protection of human rights, including the elimination of racial discrimination. The following are just a few of the courses that have been organized:

#### **General education**

90. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen respect for human rights as part of the Human Rights Programme for Students, Teachers and School Administrators, which aims to raise awareness and disseminate knowledge of human rights issues. The Programme has included the following components:

- Creating human rights associations in schools;
- Providing training to teaching staff to help them disseminate a culture of human rights;
- Commemorating Human Rights Day in schools;
- Delivering lectures to students;
- Facilitating visits by students' rights associations to Government agencies;
- Organizing human rights-themed competitions.

91. As part of its broader human-rights activities and awareness-raising campaign, the National Human Rights Council and a group of schools introduced a contest entitled "Know your rights". The schools that participated in the contest and the winning students were honoured. Furthermore, in collaboration with the National Human Rights Committee, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has held a series of training programmes and workshops for students, teachers and administrators to raise awareness of human rights among those groups and transform their knowledge of human rights issues into practical skills. Qatar also conducted a media campaign, in which advertisements were placed in newspapers, on the radio and on television and signs erected in shopping malls and on

roads, with the aim of strengthening awareness of human rights principles among all groups within society.

92. Human rights concepts have been integrated into school curricula in various ways, including as self-standing units and as the subjects of such activities as drawing or other graphic arts. Various human rights issues are addressed, including political and civil rights, economic rights, the rights of the child, women's rights, social and cultural rights, the rights of older persons and the rights of persons with disabilities.

93. The National Human Rights Committee, in collaboration with the Arab Institute for Human Rights, has formulated guidelines for the integration of human rights concepts into the educational curricula for all education stages. A general framework for ethics education has also been designed in order to encourage students between kindergarten and secondary level to think about moral values and their practical application with respect to themselves, others, the society around them and the world in general. The ethics curriculum also aims to deepen their sense of responsibility and encourage them to live healthy lifestyles, build good relationships, take an interest in others and develop self-confidence. It fosters the values of respect and concern for others and promotes cooperation, caring, equality, love, peace and tolerance. It also encourages such social and civic values as respect for the law, good citizenship, involvement in community activities, truthfulness, integrity and honesty. It further fosters respect for the culture and civilizational heritage of Qatar and awareness of the need to preserve both the cultural heritage and the environment.

### **Higher education**

94. In 2016, Qatar University signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Human Rights Committee to promote joint research, training and education initiatives that can promote, strengthen and protect human rights.

95. Qatar University runs the following five academic programmes with curricula that include a course on human rights:

- Sociology Programme — Course: Human Rights;
- Social Work Programme — Course: Society and Human Rights;
- Law Programme — Course: Human Rights;
- Spiritual Leadership Programme — Course: International Organizations and Human Rights;
- International Relations Programme — Course: Crises and Human Rights.

96. The Qatari Armed Forces Ahmad bin Mohammed Military College offers curricula on human rights, national and international legal mechanisms to safeguard those rights, human rights under Islam and how the Islamic approach to human rights compares with other human rights approaches. The College also facilitates field visits by students to relevant institutions including the National Human Rights Committee, penal institutions and workplaces with a view to providing field training on human rights. Educating Ministry of Defence officers and staff about human rights is accorded particular importance. Officers and staff are obliged to attend human rights programmes and courses as part of their training or if they wish to be promoted.

### **State and non-State training programmes**

97. Several State authorities provide training on human rights. The Legal and Judicial Studies Centre at the Ministry of Justice regularly organizes compulsory courses for assistant judges, assistant public prosecutors, trainee lawyers and jurists on subjects such as raising awareness of human rights issues and the legal mechanisms required to uphold those rights.

98. One of the key objectives of the Ministry of the Interior Human Rights Department is to disseminate a human rights culture among members of the Qatari law enforcement community with a view to ensuring that members of the police force carry out their duties in accordance with the law and fully respect human rights. The Department has therefore

striven to promote tolerance, non-discrimination, and a culture of human fraternity and openness to others in its initiatives to raise awareness of human rights in law enforcement, as well as in its other awareness-raising initiatives, which include:

- Eight training workshops on the human rights of prisoners and detainees, preventing torture, combating human trafficking, human rights in police work, international humanitarian law and a humanitarian culture, and human rights and the police in the light of the OHCHR Manual on Human Rights Training for the Police. Those workshops were held in cooperation with The United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Kuwait, the Human Rights Office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East, Beirut, the Qatari Red Crescent Society and the Police Training College in Doha;
- Training modules administered in departments of the Ministry of the Interior on human rights in police work, laying special emphasis on that issue in the work of these departments, including juvenile police, passports, penal and correctional institutions, traffic, emergency services, airport security, airport clearance, southern [border] security, and criminal investigations, with 14 modules administered since 2009;
- Public lectures on the twin topics of human rights and combating human trafficking, held by members of the Training Department of the Police Training College for military and civilian members of the police force, including both men and women. Study groups have also been held on the police curriculum at the Ahmad bin Mohammed Military College, with more than 250 public lectures held since 2006;
- Seven training courses organized by the Ministry of the Interior Human Rights Department at its headquarters in 2013 and 2014 for individuals working in the legal and judicial fields and who were attending courses at the Ministry of Justice Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies, including assistant judges, assistant public prosecutors, legal researchers and trainee lawyers. The courses, which provided training to some 200 individuals, dealt with the topic of human rights in police work, with special emphasis on the theoretical and practical work of the Human Rights Department;
- An annual training programme run by the Police Training College, which includes training and awareness-building programmes and workshops for all military and civilian staff of the Ministry of the Interior, including officers and non-commissioned officers, police officers, recent recruits and civilian personnel, on the following topics: human rights in police work; human rights in the Permanent Constitution of Qatar; managing security postures within the framework of human rights, combating all forms of hatred, exclusion and intolerance; acceptance of others, regardless of their sex, colour, religion or political beliefs; and international human rights law and the Arab Charter on Human Rights;
- The Ministry of the Interior Human Rights Department has issued numerous human rights manuals and other documents, including the following:
  - Guideline matrices and manuals, including a guideline matrix on empowering migrant workers to lodge complaints, published in May 2014 on International Workers' Day, a guideline matrix for the treatment of prisoners in accordance with Act No. 3 of 2009, regulating penitentiaries and correctional institutions and relevant humanitarian, legal and professional norms, and a manual on the human rights of prisoners pursuant to Act No. 3 of 2009, regulating penitentiaries and correctional institutions as well as relevant humanitarian, legal and professional norms, which affirms the need to uphold the rights of prisoners to freedom of belief, the need to respect their cultural norms and the need to allow them to communicate with representatives of their home countries, including consular and diplomatic staff, with a view ascertaining their needs and status;

- A series of articles published in al-Shurta ma'ak (Police with you) magazine — a monthly journal issued by the Ministry of the Interior Public Relations Department — regarding the promotion of a human rights culture. Those articles addressed a number of values and concepts, namely: fostering dialogue and tolerance in order to promote and protect human rights and the motives for commemorating Arab Human Rights Day, held on 16 March 2013 (April 2013 issue); human rights in the overall strategy of the Ministry of Interior (May 2015 issue); human rights in the community policing strategy (September 2015 issue) and human rights and law enforcement ethics (December 2015 issue);
- A number of key international human rights instruments relevant to law enforcement, which have been issued as part of the rights and security library project launched by the Department. Those instruments emphasize values such as tolerance, equality, non-discrimination and uphold cultural diversity, and include the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- In March 2016, the Ministry of the Interior Human Rights Department, in partnership with the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre, held an event to commemorate Arab Human Rights Day under the slogan “Human Dignity for All”. The celebration, which took place at the Police College, aimed to raise awareness of human rights issues and was attended by the leaders of the Arab and expatriate communities.

#### **For the general population**

99. In 2015 and early 2016, the National Human Rights Committee carried out numerous training courses and workshops to enhance skills in the field of human rights and raise awareness of human rights issues.

100. In that context, the Committee collaborated with a number of government institutions and national civil society organizations to organize the following training courses, which targeted different groups of the State employees:

- A training session on mosque sermons, held on 7 and 8 October 2015;
- A workshop on international protection mechanisms for workers, held in partnership with the Lyon Institute of Political Studies on 9 and 10 November 2015;
- The first training session on Qatari legislation to combat human trafficking and mechanisms for its enforcement, held on 29 and 30 November 2015, which was attended by judges, police officers, members of the Search and Follow-up Department, members of the Monitoring and Visits Committee, the head of criminal investigations and public security officers;
- The second training session on Qatari legislation to combat human trafficking and mechanisms for its enforcement, held on 6 and 7 December 2015, which was attended by inspectors of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs;
- A regional workshop entitled “International Protection in Humanitarian Crises”, which was held in partnership with the Riyadh Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on 14 and 15 December 2015;
- A workshop on the right to work and mechanisms for the protection of workers’ rights, held in November 2016;
- The Committee also conducted numerous information and awareness raising campaigns in conjunction with human rights events, including Human Rights Day, Arab Human Rights Day, Qatar’s National Human Rights Day and other national and international events and celebrations;

- The Committee has, moreover organized a number of international conferences and symposia, including an international conference entitled “Freedom of Opinion and Expression in the Arab World, Reality and Aspiration”, held to coincide with Arab Human Rights Day on 22 and 23 March 2015, the Third Arab-American-Iberian Dialogue of National Human Rights Institutions, held in September 2015, which focused on ways to counter hate speech and extremism, and a regional conference on the role of OHCHR in the Arab region which was held in Doha on 13 and 14 January 2016 in cooperation with OHCHR, the League of Arab States and the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions. The Committee also organized an international conference entitled “Freedom of Expression: Towards Confronting Risk” on 24 and 25 July 2017, in cooperation with the International Federation of Journalists.

### III. Follow-up on the observations and recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

#### Recommendation 1

101. In addition to the information on Qatar’s population and its population distribution contained in Part I, paragraphs 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the present report, on population, the following paragraphs provide data on economic participation by sex and nationality.

102. The economic growth witnessed by the country and the requirements for sustaining that growth have had a positive effect on the economic participation rate of the population in past two decades. Table 6 reveals a remarkable rise in the economic participation rate, which reached 88.6 per cent in 2015. Qatar has also witnessed an increase in the female economic participation rate in recent years, and over 50 per cent of women aged 15 years and over participated in the labour market in 2015. The male economic participation rate has also increased, with 96.3 per cent of men aged 15 and over participating in the labour market in 2015. In recent years, an economic participation gender gap has persisted, and the female economic participation rate stood at 61 per cent of the male participation rate in 2015 for the population as a whole. The persistence of the gender gap can be attributed to the high proportion of males in the total population, which is related to a large influx of, mostly male, migrant workers who have contributed to the rapid development for the country and implemented large-scale development projects. As for Qatari nationals, the economic participation rate is higher for males than for females, and Qatari male and female participation rates stood at 68.6 per cent and 36.1 per cent, respectively, in 2015; although Qatar has witnessed a reduction in the economic participation gender gap, that gap has persisted, and the female participation rate stood at 52.6 per cent of the male participation rate in 2015. The gap can be attributed to the fact that a large proportion of economically inactive Qatari women are housewives.

Table 6

**Economic participation rate (persons aged 15 and above) disaggregated by sex and nationality, 2012–2015**

| Year | Qatari nationals |       |       |                           | Total population |       |       |                           |
|------|------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------|------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------|
|      | Females          | Males | Total | Gender equality indicator | Females          | Males | Total | Gender equality indicator |
| 2012 | 34.6             | 68.1  | 51.3  | 50.9                      | 52.4             | 95.7  | 86.5  | 54.8                      |
| 2013 | 34.7             | 70    | 52.1  | 49.6                      | 53.1             | 96.2  | 87.2  | 55.2                      |
| 2014 | 35               | 68.9  | 51.9  | 50.8                      | 53.7             | 96.1  | 87.6  | 55.9                      |
| 2015 | 36.1             | 68.6  | 52.1  | 52.6                      | 58.7             | 96.3  | 88.6  | 61                        |

#### Recommendations 2 and 3

103. As stated above, State law, meaning the Constitution and domestic laws, defines discrimination in line with the definition provided in article 1, paragraph 1, of the

Convention. The legal framework for State action takes account of the general rules underpinning the provisions of the Convention, in which the principles of equality and protection from discrimination are essential features.

104. The principles of equality and protection from discrimination are enshrined in part II, articles 18 and 19, of the Constitution, concerning the fundamental components of the society. Article 18 provides: “Qatari society is founded on justice, benevolence, freedom, high moral values and equality”. Article 19 builds on the principles enunciated in article 18 of the Constitution. It provides: “The State shall preserve the pillars of society and shall ensure security, stability and equal opportunities for citizens”.

105. The general principle of equality cited in article 18 of the Constitution is spelled out in detail in articles 34 and 35, part III, of the Constitution, concerning general rights and duties. Article 34 provides that “Citizens are equal in rights and duties”, while article 35 guarantees the right to equality before the law and non-discrimination, providing as it does that “All persons are equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination among them on grounds of sex, origin, language or religion”. As already stated, articles 34–58 of part III of the Constitution afford fundamental rights and freedoms based on the principle that all rights are integrated, interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Hence, the Constitution affords economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

106. The right to equality and non-discrimination guaranteed by the Constitution has been strengthened through the development of a body of other enactments and laws. To take just some examples, the Qatari Criminal Code criminalizes incitement of racial hatred (even if the Code does not refer to it in those terms) in part VII, entitled “Religious offences”. Article 256 of the Code makes it an offence to denigrate the revealed religions that are protected under the sharia, to insult a deity or a prophet by means of the spoken or written work or in an image or by any other means, and to damage, vandalize or desecrate buildings or objects therein that are used for the celebration of the religious rites of a revealed religion that is protected under the sharia. Article 159 bis of the Criminal Code provides: “Whoever, being a public servant or any other person who acts in an official capacity, uses torture or instigates, agrees or consents to torture another person shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years...”. That article continues: “Torture is any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act that he or a third person committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind.” The Printing and Publishing Act furthermore prohibits the publication of material that is likely to stir up social discord or cause confessional, racial or religious strife.

#### **Recommendation 4**

107. Article 9 of the Labour Code, promulgated by Act No. 14 of 2004 and its amendments, provides: “All contracts, other documents and written instruments provided for under this Act shall be drafted in Arabic. The Employer may attach to the original contracts, documents or written instruments, translations into other languages. In the event of inconsistency, the Arabic text shall prevail”. In practice, most labour contracts are translated into workers’ languages. Contracts must also be approved by the Ministry’s Labour Relations Department, which ensures that they comply with the Labour Code and the bilateral agreements that Qatar has concluded with the majority of labour-sending countries. In that regard, Qatar has concluded more than 35 bilateral agreements and five memorandums of understanding regulating the recruitment of workers. Furthermore, model labour contracts drawn up in line with Qatar’s Labour Code, which safeguards the fundamental rights of migrant workers, are translated into the languages of the labour-sending countries and annexed to those agreements.

108. The joint committees provided for in the bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding regulating the recruitment of workers encourage States to use recruitment agencies that have been approved by both the labour-sending country and Qatar. To facilitate that process, the Labour Code entrusts the Ministry’s Labour Relations Department with authority to approve employment contracts. The Ministry approved

511,723 contracts in 2016. Furthermore, an e-contract platform, which is being launched in ten languages, will allow migrant workers to read and review the details of their contracts, including details on their compensation, directly in their own languages. The platform will also facilitate the contract approval process and the process by which workers can obtain a copy of their contracts.

### **Recommendation 5**

109. Qatar has promulgated Act No. 15 of 2017 on domestic workers, which provides legal protections for domestic workers in line with the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and applicable international standards.

110. Female domestic workers in Qatar are recruited under bilateral agreements concluded between Qatar and other States. Those bilateral agreements have the force of law. Qatar has also promulgated Act No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers, which abolished the sponsorship (kafalah) system and replaced it with a contract-based system.

111. Furthermore, the Civil Code and the model contracts annexed to the bilateral agreements signed by Qatar and labour-sending States provide the necessary protections for domestic workers.

112. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs must approve the contracts of domestic workers with a view to ensuring that their contractual rights are protected. The Ministry monitors recruitment offices and conducts periodic unannounced inspections to make sure that workers are not being exploited and that their rights are being protected. Several such offices have been closed owing to violations of the Labour Code and of the ministerial decision regulating their operation.

113. With regard to criminal protection, this is regulated by the Criminal Code, promulgated by Act No. 11 of 2004, as amended, which stipulates that any person who behaves badly towards a domestic worker by inflicting physical harm on that worker, treating that worker harshly or subjecting him or her to economic exploitation shall be punished. Furthermore, a team composed of staff of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior has been established to ensure constant liaison regarding the situation of domestic workers in particular and to discuss the best possible ways of ensuring that their rights are protected.

### **Recommendation 6**

114. Qatar has promulgated Act No. 15 of 2017 on domestic workers, which provides legal protections for domestic workers in line with the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and applicable international standards. The most important aspects of that Act are as follows:

- **Rights and duties.** The Act regulates the relationship between employers and domestic workers, prohibits the employment of domestic workers until they have obtained a permit to work in the country, and prohibits the employment of domestic workers of either sex who are under 21 or over 60 years of age;
- **The employment of domestic workers.** A domestic worker may not be employed in the absence of written employment contract that has been approved by the competent department of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs. The contract is drawn up in three copies; each party must receive a copy of the contract and the third copy must be deposited with the competent department. The employment contract contains clauses that establish the working relationship between the parties and provide all other information that must be provided in an employment contract;
- **A commitment to the provision of decent work for domestic workers.** The Qatari legislator obliges employers and those who reside with them to provide suitable housing and food to domestic workers. They must also provide domestic workers with appropriate medical care, medicine, and medical equipment if they are unwell or are injured while performing their duties or as a result thereof, without imposing



any financial burden on the domestic workers concerned. They are also required to treat domestic workers well and in a manner which will safeguard their dignity and physical well-being, must avoid placing domestic workers' health or lives in danger, and must not harm them, either physically or psychologically, in any way whatsoever. They must not compel domestic workers to work during their sick leave, during their daily periods of rest or on their weekly rest days;

- **Leave and end of service compensation.** The Act stipulates that, for each Gregorian year of their employment, domestic workers are entitled to paid leave of three weeks. Workers are also entitled to paid travel tickets. The Qatari legislator also obliges employers to pay end of service compensation to domestic workers at the end of their employment as well as any other amounts due to them. The Act stipulates that domestic workers' end of service compensation shall be equal to three weeks wages for each year of their employment;
- **Termination of contract by domestic workers.** The Act provides for domestic workers to terminate their contracts early while retaining their entitlement to end of service compensation in the following instances:
  - Where the employer has failed to fulfil his obligations under the employment contract or the Act;
  - Where the employer or his representative acted fraudulently when agreeing the terms and conditions of employment;
  - Where the employer or a member of his family perpetrates a violent assault on the worker that causes the worker physical harm or places his life in danger;
  - Where the employer or a person residing with him was cognizant of a grave danger that threatened the worker's safety or health and failed to take action to eliminate that danger;
  - Where the employer employs the domestic worker outside the country without the worker's consent;
- **Settlement of disputes.** Disputes arising between the employer and the domestic worker relating to the application of the Act shall be subject to the provisions of the section on labour disputes contained in the Labour Code (Act No. 14 of 2004), as amended. The Act also stipulates that the employer must compensate the worker for any work-related injuries, in accordance with the Labour Code;
- **Penalties.** The Act prescribes financial penalties for violations of its provisions of between QR 5,000 and QR 10,000.

### Recommendation 7

115. The Department of Labour Relations of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs performs a number of tasks. These include receiving, registering and examining labour-related complaints, educating workers and employers about the provisions of labour legislation, providing advice to workers and employers, and resolving disputes between workers and their employers in the private sector or, if it is unable to resolve such disputes amicably, referring those disputes to the courts in accordance with the laws and regulations in force. The Labour Inspection Department of the Ministry also performs a number of functions, including monitoring the implementation of labour legislation and the General Labour Inspection Plan, and carrying out periodic unannounced inspections to workplaces to ensure that they are in compliance with the Labour Code and its implementing decisions.

116. Qatar seeks the rapid resolution of labour disputes and endeavours to simplify procedures. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs is bound to rule on labour disputes and complaints within one week of the lodging of the complaint, and to enable workers to exercise their legal rights, in accordance with article 6 of the Law on Civil and Commercial Litigation, Law No. 13 of 1990, and article 64 of the Labour Code.

117. Qatar has provided a number of apparatus for electronic self-service by which workers may lodge complaints with the relevant department, which makes things easier for workers located away from the city of Doha. The electronic complaint form has been translated into 10 of the main languages spoken by workers in Qatar.

118. Qatar has established offices of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs in various parts of the country to provide services needed by migrant workers. Complaints are resolved in the Ministry between workers and employers by calling in the employer and asking both parties to attend. The legal aspects are explained to both parties, as are the rights which the employer is bound to grant to the worker, as well as the duties of the worker towards the employer.

119. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs has launched a hotline service to receive complaints by telephone and email and to respond immediately to queries from workers. The Ministry received more than 20,000 queries through this hotline in 2015, and they were referred to the relevant departments. Accounts have also been opened on social media to facilitate communication between workers and the competent authorities and to ensure that they receive the information they need.

120. Qatar has established competent judicial offices to rule on labour complaints with a view to obtaining rapid decisions when examining such complaints. All complaints lodged by workers or their inheritors requesting enforcement of their rights arising from the provisions of the Labour Code or from employment contracts are examined rapidly and are exempt from judicial duties pursuant to article 10 of the Code.

121. An office of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs has been established in Qatari courts in order to help workers wanting to lodge judicial complaints; this office provides its services free of charge.

122. The State has recently undertaken substantial legislative reforms aimed at strengthening legal protections for migrant workers, upholding their rights and enabling them to obtain legal remedies. Those reforms have included the following:

- The promulgation of Act No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers, which entered into force on 13 December 2016. The Act abolished the sponsorship (kafalah) system and replaced it with a system based on contractual relationships between employers and workers. The Act provides the following privileges:
  - Granting workers the freedom to change employer: articles 21 and 22 of the Act stipulate when a migrant worker is permitted to change employment, namely:
    - (a) Prior to the expiry of the worker's employment contract by mutual consent of the worker and the employer;
    - (b) Immediately following the expiry of a fixed-term employment contract or after five years' employment if the contract is indefinite;
    - (c) In the event of the death of the employer or the expiration of that legal person for any reason;
    - (d) On a temporary basis, in the event of judicial proceedings between the worker and his employer;
    - (e) Where abuse of the worker by the employer has been established or where allowing the worker to change employer is in the public interest.
  - Counting time worked prior to the entry into force of the new Act: among the positive aspects of Act No. 21 of 2015 is the fact that, with a view to helping workers to change employer, the Qatari legislator takes into consideration all days worked by the worker for his employer prior to the entry into force of the Act on 13 December 2016;

- Granting workers three months to obtain a new employment contract: under article 24 of the Act, a worker has three months to complete the procedures related to his contract with a new employer;
- Abolishing the requirement that a worker remain for two years outside the country before taking up a new job: as was underscored in the February 2016 report of the Committee of Legal Experts, Act No. 21 allows migrant workers who have departed from Qatar and whose residency has been revoked to return to the country to take up a new job immediately upon their receipt of a new job offer, instead of having to wait for a period of two years, as had been required under Act No. 4 of 2009, which was revoked pursuant to the adoption of Act No. 21 of 2015;
- Requiring employers to provide bank guarantees: under article 20 of Act No. 21, an employer is required to present a bank guarantee that proves that he is able to fulfil his financial obligations to the migrant worker. This has significantly strengthened respect for the financial rights of migrant workers in Qatar;
- Increasing the penalty for withholding a passport or travel document: article 8 of Act No. 21 obliges employers to return workers' passports or travel documents following the completion of the procedures for obtaining or renewing their residence permits. Pursuant to article 39 of that Act, the confiscation of a migrant worker's passport or travel document is a criminal offence. While article 52 of Act No. 4 had prescribed a maximum financial penalty for that offence of only QR 10,000, Act No. 21 increases the maximum penalty to QR 25,000;
- Covering domestic workers: all the provisions of Act No. 21, as amended, are fully applicable to domestic workers, including those provisions concerned with changing employer, leaving the country and the confiscation of passports and travel documents;
- Requiring the employer and worker to enter into an employment contract before the worker can be granted a visa to enter Qatar: article 4 of the Act stipulates that an entry visa may not be granted to a foreign worker for the purposes of employment unless an employment contract has been entered into by that worker and his employer and approved and certified by the competent State authorities, in accordance with prescribed terms and regulations. The contract, which is signed in the labour-sending country and is replaced upon the worker's arrival in Qatar, protects the worker against certain forms of misconduct;
- The promulgation of Act No. 1 of 2017, amending article 7 of Act No. 21 of 2015, provided for the abolition of exit permits. Pursuant to that amendment, workers are no longer required to inform the competent authority of the Ministry of the Interior at least three days prior to their every departure from the State. A migrant worker is entitled to leave the country on vacation, because of an emergency or for any other reason after notifying his employer, in accordance to the terms of his employment contract. Qatar has thus definitively abolished the exit permit system provided by Act No. 4 of 2009. Act No. 1 of 2017 upholds the right of workers to leave the country at the end, or prior to the end, of their employment contracts after notifying their employers, in accordance with the terms of those contracts;
- On 19 October 2016, the Cabinet approved a law amending certain provisions of the Labour Code (Act No. 14 of 2004) that would provide for the establishment of one or more committees to issue rulings in connection with all disputes relating to the interpretation of the Labour Code or work contracts. That committee's judgments have the power of a writ of execution. The committee is presided over by a judge from a court of first instance and issues its rulings within a period not exceeding three weeks in any dispute arising from the Labour Code or a contract of employment that is brought before it by the competent department of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs when mediation by that

department has failed to lead to an amicable settlement of the dispute in question. Legislators for the parties concerned may lodge appeals against a final ruling handed down by the committee with the competent appeals tribunal within one month of the issuance of that ruling. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs works with embassies to follow up on disputes considered by the committee, and represents workers before that committee if they wish to leave the country. Workers, including domestic workers, may seek a remedy as follows:

- The worker files a complaint with the competent department at the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs against the employer and claims damages under the terms of the employment contract or the provisions of the Labour Code;
- The competent department examines the complaint and attempts to resolve the dispute amicably within one week of the date of its submission. A proposed agreement is presented to the two parties during the following week. If the parties accept that agreement, a settlement is drawn up on that basis, signed by the parties and endorsed by the competent department. The signed settlement has the power of a writ of execution;
- If it is not possible to resolve the dispute within the aforementioned period, or if one of the parties to the dispute rejects the settlement proposed by the competent department, or if the aforementioned period expires before both parties have voiced their acceptance or rejection of the proposed settlement, the competent department must refer the dispute within the following three working days to the Committee for the Settlement of Labour Disputes;
- The referral is accompanied by a memorandum containing a summary of the dispute, the arguments and documents of the parties and the observations made by the competent department;
- Within three working days of the date of referral of the dispute, the secretariat of the Committee schedules a hearing for the consideration the dispute, which must take place no later than seven working days from the date of referral. The date of the hearing is communicated to both the worker and the employer;
- A lawyer representing the worker, one of his inheritors or a person acting on the worker's behalf under an official power of attorney because the worker has left the country may submit the worker's dispute to the Committee;
- The Committee issues its decision ending the dispute within three weeks. The decision of the Committee has the power of a writ of execution and provides for expedited enforcement;
- The worker or the employer may appeal against the decision of the Committee before the competent chamber of the Court of Appeal within 15 days from the date of the Committee's decision if it is issued in their presence, or from the day following the announcement of the decision if it is issued in absentia;
- The competent chamber of the Court of Appeal shall consider the appeal promptly and shall issue its ruling within 30 days from the date of the first hearing before that Court.

### **Recommendation 8**

123. At its meeting on 2 August 2017, the Cabinet passed the Permanent Residency Card Act, which will allow the children of Qatari women married to non-Qatari men. In accordance with the implementing decisions that will be promulgated by the Cabinet pursuant to that Act, individuals holding permanent residency cards will enjoy a number of privileges in the fields of education and health care, as well as privileges related to military and civil service appointments and the right to own property. The Act also provides for the establishment of a standing committee within the Ministry of the Interior, named the Permanent Residency Card Granting Committee, to consider permanent residency card applications.

## Recommendation 9

124. There is political support in Qatar for accession to several international treaties, as the State is convinced of the importance of these treaties for the promotion and protection of human rights. In recent years, Qatar has acceded to and ratified numerous regional and international human rights instruments, and its accession to many instruments in a short period of time has placed considerable pressure on the national legislative authorities and increased their workload. Owing to a shortage of human and technical resources, Qatar is unable to accede to any additional treaties at the present time.

125. Although Qatar is not a party to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, it is committed, in application of the rules of general international law, to observing the basic protection standards guaranteed by the Convention as part of customary international law. Qatar also participates in the work of the joint committee of experts and representatives of ministries of justice and the interior of Arab countries to discuss the Arab Convention on Regulating Status of Refugees in the Arab Countries.

126. In the light of its keen interest in the situation of refugees, both within the region and beyond, Qatar has provided financial assistance to address their needs and launched a number of initiatives, which include the following:

- Humanitarian aid and development aid in 2010 on the Asian continent (Pakistan);
- Humanitarian aid and development aid in 2011 on the African continent (Libya, Egypt, Chad and Kenya) and in Asia (Pakistan), as well as the Reach Out To Asia programme;
- At the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Doha in 2015, Qatar announced the establishment of a fund for education and professional development for displaced persons, refugees and victims of conflicts in the Middle East, with a view to ensuring a decent future for a generation of children and young people, who will be needed by their countries as they rebuild and seek to promote sustainable development;
- Through the Education Above All Foundation, Qatar launched the Educate a Child programme in 2012 with a view to reducing the number of children deprived of their fundamental right to education throughout the world as a result of poverty, discrimination and conflict. The programme runs 45 projects in 40 countries, and has reached more than 6 million children unable to attend school. In December 2015, a new three-year partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was launched to provide education to some 450 thousand children affected by conflict and forced displacement in Africa and the Middle East;
- On the margins of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, held in New York in 2016, the Qatar Development Fund launched the QUEST initiative, which aims to provide education and training to approximately 400,000 Syrian refugees inside Syria as well as in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey over a period of five years. A number of Qatari charitable and humanitarian organizations, including the Education Above All Foundation, the Sheikh Thani Bin Abdullah Foundation for Humanitarian Services, the Qatar Charitable Society, the Reach Out to Asia programme and the Silatech organization have provided more than \$100 million to support the initiative, which will be implemented in collaboration with a number of partners, including, first and foremost, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and UNHCR;
- Qatar has sponsored 100 Syrian refugee students to study a range of subjects at Pantheon Sorbonne University, France. Furthermore, the Education Above All Foundation is working with UNICEF and UNHCR and has provided \$2.3 million to support initiatives to provide education to refugees in areas where they have sought refuge.

### Recommendation 10

127. Article 26 of the Constitution of Qatar provides: “Ownership, capital and work are fundamental constituents of the social structure of the State; they are all individual rights with social functions that are regulated by law”. Article 27 of the Constitution provides: “Private property is inviolable. No one may be deprived of his property except for the public good and in the circumstances and manner prescribed by law, provided that fair compensation is received in return.”

128. Pursuant to Act No. 17 of 2004 regulating the ownership and use of real estate and residential units by non-Qatari nationals, non-Qataris may own and use real estate and residential units in 18 districts of Qatar, subject to the conditions and regulations set out in Cabinet Decision No. 6 of 2006. The Act sets forth a number of privileges for usufructuaries of real estate, who enjoy ownership rights for the period that they use the property. The Act also grants foreign investors, owners and usufructuaries of real estate and residential units in Qatar the right to reside in the State in a home that they own or in a State-owned property that they use.

129. Furthermore, under the Permanent Residency Card Act, individuals holding permanent residency cards will enjoy a number of privileges, including the right to own property.

### Recommendation 11

130. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs has continued to organize workshops and educational seminars with a view to communicating with workers in their workplaces and homes, raising their awareness of their rights and duties, and receiving and addressing any complaints or observations. The Ministry also produces educational videos, publishes leaflets and pamphlets and distributes educational materials.

131. In order to ensure access to redress mechanisms, Qatar has established mechanisms for the submission of labour-related complaints. Qatar is, moreover, planning to increase the number of computer portals for the submission of such complaints from 10 to 90 portals within the coming year and will install those portals in different parts of the country. The State is also working to raise workers’ awareness of the many State-sponsored service centres across the country where complaints can be submitted and professional translators are on hand to provide assistance. The tables below provide information regarding the labour-related complaints that were submitted in 2016.

Table 7

#### Complaints received in 2016, disaggregated by reason for the complaint made by the complainant

| Reason for the complaint (top 6 reasons) | Sex    |       | No. of complainants | Percentage |
|--|--------|-------|---------------------|------------|
|  | Female | Male  |                     |            |
| Travel tickets                           | 66     | 4 569 | 4 635               | 89.03      |
| Leave allowance                          | 65     | 4 164 | 4 229               | 81.23      |
| End of service compensation              | 70     | 4 116 | 4 186               | 80.41      |
| Late payment of wages                    | 59     | 4 065 | 4 124               | 79.22      |
| Overtime pay                             | 11     | 309   | 320                 | 6.15       |
| Work-related injuries                    | 0      | 32    | 32                  | 0.61       |

\* Workers are entitled to state more than one reason in their complaint.

Table 8  
**Complaints received in 2016, disaggregated by outcome of the complaint**

| <i>Outcome of the complaint</i>  | <i>Sex</i>    |              | <i>No. of complainants</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
|                                  | <i>Female</i> | <i>Male</i>  |                            |                   |
| Resolved*                        | 31            | 3 071        | 3 102                      | 59.59             |
| Suspended*                       | 55            | 1 283        | 1 338                      | 25.70             |
| Referred to the courts           | 30            | 733          | 763                        | 14.66             |
| Discussion and follow-up         | 0             | 3            | 3                          | 0.06              |
| <b>Total No. of complainants</b> | <b>116</b>    | <b>5 090</b> | <b>5 206</b>               | <b>100.00</b>     |

\* Resolved: the complaint was resolved through conciliation between the employer and the worker.

\* Suspended: the complainant or the parties to the complaint failed to follow-up with the department.