



# International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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## Human Rights Committee

134th session

### Summary record of the 3837th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 28 February 2022, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Pazartzis

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### **Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant**

#### *Initial report of Qatar (CCPR/C/QAT/1; CCPR/C/QAT/Q/1; CCPR/C/QAT/RQ/1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Qatar joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Al-Hammadi** (Qatar), introducing the initial report of Qatar (CCPR/C/QAT/1), said that many improvements had been made to the national human rights framework since the accession of Qatar to the Covenant in 2018. A series of legislative and institutional reforms had been introduced to protect the rights of migrant workers; the *kafalah* (sponsorship) system had been abolished, and working conditions had been improved in accordance with international labour standards. The State had taken considerable measures to uphold the highest safety standards for workers contributing to the construction of infrastructure in preparation for the 2022 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup. The Government was in the process of finalizing an action plan on human rights, and a number of laws relating to human rights had been passed in 2018, including laws regarding permanent residence, the organization of political life, exit permits for migrant workers, property ownership by foreign nationals and the establishment of a support fund for migrant workers.
3. The laws and regulations governing the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking had been amended, and steps had been taken to strengthen the anti-trafficking units, departments and bodies attached to the Public Prosecution Service, the national police and various judicial agencies. A specialized anti-trafficking unit had been established within the Ministry of the Interior, and shelters had been built for trafficking victims. The steps taken to protect and promote women's rights included the provision of legal aid and free psychiatric rehabilitation services to women victims of domestic violence and free social assistance to widows and divorced women. A national committee specializing in the affairs of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities had been established, and a national campaign to promote the right to education had been carried out from 2018 to mid-2019.
4. Various special measures and policies had been adopted to uphold human rights during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Health care and medical services were available to all persons living in Qatar without discrimination on the basis of age or health status. Just over 6 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered throughout the country, bringing the vaccination rate among the Qatari population to 87.4 per cent. Distance learning platforms had been introduced to uphold the right to education, and remote court hearings had been held to ensure continuity in the administration of justice.
5. Through the application of the Qatar National Vision 2030 and sectoral strategies, the State had made significant progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and remained a regional leader in terms of a number of key indicators in such areas as education, peace and security, criminality and the participation of women in the workforce. The first-ever general election in Qatar had been held in October 2021, with a participation rate of just over 60 per cent. In line with Emiri Decree No. 4 of 2021, new ministries had been established to oversee labour issues and social development and family issues, and the mandate of the Ministry of Education had been expanded. Awareness of human rights standards among public officials continued to rise, and national human rights institutions continued to be strengthened.
6. **Mr. Furuya** said that he wished to thank the State party for its detailed and timely initial report. He hoped that the current dialogue would build a solid foundation for strengthening compliance with the Covenant in Qatar in the future. With regard to the constitutional and legal framework within which the Covenant was implemented in the State party, he would welcome clarification as to whether the Covenant was directly applicable in the domestic legal order of Qatar and whether domestic legislation was rendered null and void if it conflicted with the State party's obligations under the Covenant. In the light of the five interpretative declarations issued by Qatar regarding the Covenant, three of which related to Islamic sharia, it would be useful to learn how the State party would handle any conflict between domestic legislation based on sharia and the provisions of the Covenant. In that regard, it would be useful to know whether individuals could invoke the provisions of the

Covenant before the courts if they believed that their rights had been violated by measures taken by the State party.

7. He would be interested to learn what measures the State party had taken to ensure the independence of the National Committee for Human Rights, in particular with regard to the appointment and dismissal of its members, and would welcome further information on the steps taken to ensure pluralism and diversity among its members and staff. Moreover, further information on the Foundation for Social Action would be useful, including with respect to its structure, composition, funding and relationship to the Government, as well as clarification as to how it ensured that diverse views, including the opinions of minorities, were reflected in its work. He would welcome further information on the steps taken to promote the free and independent activities of civil society organizations and to increase their participation in the formulation of human rights policies.

8. **Ms. Sancin** said that she would like to know whether the State party had declared a state of emergency during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the light of reports received by the Committee that some measures taken by the State party in the context of the pandemic posed serious privacy risks, she would appreciate clarification as to whether there had been any derogations from the Covenant in connection with measures taken to stop the spread of the coronavirus and, if so, how the State party had met the strict requirements of proportionality to the exigencies of the public health situation outlined in the Committee's statement on derogations from the Covenant in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic (CCPR/C/128/2) and its general comment No. 29 (2001) on states of emergency. She would be grateful if the delegation could explain how the State party ensured that any restrictions it placed on Covenant rights met the strict requirements established in articles 12, 17 and 21 of the Covenant.

9. With regard to the voluntary termination of pregnancy, maternal mortality and reproductive rights, she wished to know whether abortion services were available to women victims of rape or incest and why abortions could be performed only in public hospitals, subject to the decision of a medical committee. She would welcome specific information on the measures adopted to ensure that women and girls had safe, effective access to legal abortion services and were not forced to undertake unsafe, clandestine abortion procedures or to travel abroad to access such services. Given the State party's indication in paragraph 40 of its replies to the list of issues in relation to its initial report (CCPR/C/QAT/RQ/1) that there were no plans to amend the existing legislation on abortion, she wondered whether the State party was willing to reconsider its stance in the light of the Committee's established position in that regard and the recommendations issued to Qatar by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women with regard to abortion in 2019 (CEDAW/C/QAT/CO/2).

10. It would be useful to receive further information on the legal framework governing the prohibition of torture, in particular with regard to the minimum sentence for torture offences. She would be particularly interested to learn how the State party had incorporated the absolute and non-derogable nature of the prohibition of torture into its domestic laws and whether it was considering adopting any specific anti-torture legislation. She also wished to know what kind of conduct was covered by the offence of "acts of cruelty" established in article 161 of the Criminal Code and how such conduct differed from the acts covered by the offences of torture defined in articles 159 and 159 bis of the Criminal Code. Despite the State party's statement in paragraph 80 of the replies to the list of issues that it had received no complaints of torture or ill-treatment and had not detected any such cases, the Committee had received reports regarding various acts that could indeed amount to torture, such as, for example, the alleged arbitrary detention of Sheikh Talal Al Thani for over nine years. In the event that the State party had in fact been made aware of alleged acts of torture, ill-treatment or cruelty, she would be grateful if the delegation could provide information on the number of investigations and prosecutions initiated and convictions secured in such cases since 2018, including information on any sentences handed down and any compensation or psychosocial support provided to the victims.

11. Lastly, she would welcome clarification from the delegation as to whether flogging and stoning could still be applied as criminal sanctions under Qatari law and, if so, whether the State party had any intention of reviewing and amending the relevant legal provisions. It

would also be useful to know whether the State party was considering adopting legislation that explicitly prohibited the corporal punishment of children.

12. **Mr. Gómez Martínez** said that he would like to learn about any planned amendments to Act No. 17 of 2002 concerning the protection of society, Act No. 5 of 2003 concerning the establishment of the State security apparatus and Act No. 3 of 2013, as amended in 2017, on combating terrorism that would bring the lengthy periods of pretrial detention provided for under those laws – which could last up to a year in some cases – into line with the periods generally allowed under the Code of Criminal Procedure. It would be helpful to know how many people had been arrested and held under the provisions of any of those three laws and how long they had been detained before being charged with an offence.

13. In the light of reports received by the Committee that five people had been put to death in the country between 2012 and 2018, he would appreciate updated information on the number of death sentences that had been carried out since 2005. He wished to know whether the State party intended to narrow the wide range of offences that were punishable by death so that the death penalty would be applicable only to “the most serious crimes” within the meaning of article 6 (2) of the Covenant and the Committee’s general comment No. 36 (2019). He would be interested to know whether the State party was planning to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the Covenant, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and to declare a moratorium on the death penalty pending its ratification. He wished to learn about any procedural mechanisms that were in place to facilitate the judicial review of death sentences.

14. **Mr. Muhumuza** said that he would like to know what steps the State party was taking to ensure that non-Qatari spouses and children of Qatari women had access to health and education services and what measures were in place to safeguard the political and social rights of foreign nationals. He wished to learn why women lost custody of their children upon remarriage and why sons were favoured over daughters in matters of inheritance. He also wished to know whether any restrictions were placed on the employment of women that did not also apply to the employment of men and, if so, what steps the State party was taking to address that situation. It would be helpful to know how the State party protected migrant workers from discrimination in the absence of regulations regarding their wages and employment rights and what measures it had adopted to prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities.

15. He wished to know whether the State party planned to conduct any further awareness-raising activities on trafficking in persons and, if so, whether it would continue to use a victim-centred approach as opposed to one focusing on perpetrators, which might be more effective. It would be useful to learn how the State party ensured that employment agencies protected migrant workers’ rights before they were employed, while they were employed and after their employment was terminated, and what steps it had taken to monitor migrants’ working conditions and safeguard their health during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. He wondered whether the State party was aware of cases of employers’ refusing to pay foreign workers, unlawfully withholding their passports, beating them or violating their rights in other ways and, if so, whether it had taken any steps to stop such violations, investigate the cases and punish those responsible.

16. **Ms. Bassim** said that she would be interested to learn about any measures that had been taken or were planned to remove obstacles to women’s access to the job market. It would be helpful to know whether women received equal pay for equal work, whether there were certain sectors in which the employment of women was not culturally accepted and whether it was true that a Qatari woman applying for a job must present a letter of consent from her husband or guardian. She would like to know whether women were legally entitled to establish businesses and, if so, whether they had access to training and loans to help them do so. It would be helpful to know whether women had access to day-care facilities, public transportation, and health-care and social services, whether they could work flexible hours and whether they were entitled to maternity leave. She wished to find out whether the State party planned to review laws that perpetuated stereotypes regarding the role of women, such as the Family Act (Act No. 22 of 2006), under which a wife was legally obligated to obey her husband and take care of the house and children, or to amend Act No. 38 of 2005 so as to allow Qatari women to confer their nationality upon their children. Information on the

status of the State party's implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would be appreciated. She also wished to know how the COVID-19 pandemic had affected women in the country.

17. Information would be appreciated on any steps or plans to criminalize all forms of violence against women, to adopt a national action plan to combat such violence and to protect all women, including foreign nationals, from violence at home and at work. She wished to know what measures had been adopted in an effort to raise victims' awareness of their rights and to encourage people to report cases of violence against women. It would also be helpful to know how the State party ensured that women victims of violence, including domestic workers, had access to justice, protective measures, support and reparation, as well as what measures had been adopted to ensure that perpetrators of such violence were prosecuted and that statistics on such cases were compiled. She would be interested to know whether the State party planned to ratify the International Labour Organization Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and to learn more about the role that the education system and the media played in increasing public awareness of the problem of violence against women.

18. She would appreciate information on any improvements in working conditions or safety measures to prevent heat-related illnesses and deaths among migrant workers. It would also be useful to know how many migrant workers had died on construction sites and, over the previous 10 years, how many migrant workers had arrived in the State party, how many had died and what the causes of death had been.

19. She wished to learn more about the steps that the State party was taking – whether on its own or in coordination with the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf – to fulfil its national and international obligations to counter trafficking in persons and to prevent the exploitation of women and girls in illicit activities.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.25 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.*

20. **Mr. Al-Jusaiman** (Qatar) said that the Covenant had the force of law in Qatar and that international treaties such as the Covenant ranked second in the hierarchy of laws, after the Constitution. Article 1 of the Constitution prevented the State from passing laws or ratifying international treaties that were in conflict with sharia. The provisions of the Covenant by which the State was bound were therefore compatible with sharia. There had been one case in which the Covenant had been directly invoked before the national courts. In that case, the complainant had sought and obtained compensation for unlawful detention under article 9 (5) of the Covenant.

21. **Mr. Al-Hammadi** (Qatar) said that the Constitution clearly stated that international treaties had the force of law. The provisions of the Constitution could not be amended without the approval of two thirds of the members of the Shura Council.

22. **Mr. Al-Mahmoud** (Qatar) said that the National Committee for Human Rights was an independent body chaired by the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers. Although the Committee included some representatives of government bodies, the members of the Committee enjoyed full immunity, and their work was not subject to government oversight. The Committee also had an administrative board that facilitated coordination with other relevant entities. The Qatar Foundation for Social Action enjoyed a degree of autonomy, but it was nevertheless part of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, a non-profit organization that was funded by the State.

23. **Mr. Al-Hammadi** (Qatar) said that some members of the Emir's family worked for the Qatar Foundation for Social Action as advisers. The government officials who were members of the National Committee for Human Rights did not have voting rights. Their role was simply to assist the Committee, for example by passing on complaints that had been submitted to government bodies.

24. **Mr. Al-Marri** (Qatar) said that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Qatar had ranked first among the countries of the Middle East for its provision of health services. It had come in fifteenth out of 154 countries in the ranking drawn up by *Der Spiegel* magazine based on how well countries had weathered the pandemic. Health considerations had been mainstreamed into all government policies, and all government bodies had worked together

in order to contain the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the health of all residents, whether Qatari or non-Qatari. Qatar had not declared a state of emergency on account of the pandemic. It had prepared a response plan in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and had followed international best practices. In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, it had run awareness-raising campaigns and had encouraged testing. It had also introduced a mobile application for contact tracing and other purposes, with due regard for data protection, which was an issue of concern at the international level. Thanks to its effective vaccination plan and its efforts to ensure the distribution of vaccines, almost 90 per cent of all residents had been vaccinated against COVID-19. The resilience of the country's health services was illustrated by the fact that only 0.2 per cent of COVID-19 patients had died from the disease. Although the Government had imposed some temporary restrictions during the pandemic, it had not violated the right to freedom of movement at any point.

25. **Mr. Al-Hammadi** (Qatar) said that Qatar had one of the lowest COVID-19 death rates in the world.

26. **Mr. Al-Mahmoud** (Qatar) said that the mobile application for contact tracing and other purposes had been introduced as a preventive measure in order to curb the spread of COVID-19. It was necessary to show proof of vaccination via the application in order to gain access to certain public places.

27. **Mr. Al-Hammadi** (Qatar) said that there had been no discrimination of any kind in the way in which the mobile application had been used. The grounds on which abortion was permitted by law did not include pregnancy outside marriage.

28. **Mr. Al-Muhammadi** (Qatar) said that torture was prohibited and punishable by law. Article 40 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stated that no person could be detained except by order of the competent authorities and that persons deprived of their liberty must be treated with respect for their human dignity and must be given the opportunity to contact a person of their choice. Several different bodies monitored places of detention to ensure that persons deprived of their liberty were not subjected to torture, including the National Committee for Human Rights, the Public Prosecution Service and the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of the Interior, which conducted unannounced visits to places of detention. In the course of its work, the Department had not detected any cases of torture.

29. More than 75 charges had been brought against Sheikh Talal Al Thani. He had been convicted of a number of offences, including defamation, and had been sentenced to a total of 30 years' imprisonment. He was being treated well in prison and had received visits from representatives of the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of the Interior and the National Committee for Human Rights.

30. Steps had been taken with a view to bringing nationality laws into line with international treaties such as the Covenant. Qatari women who were married to foreign nationals enjoyed the same rights as other Qatars in the areas of health, education and employment, and their children could obtain permanent residency. However, since a child acquired his or her father's nationality in accordance with the principle of *jus sanguinis*, the child of a non-Qatari man was not granted Qatari nationality because the State wished to limit the number of cases of dual nationality. In matters of nationality, it was important to take into account national interests and to avoid creating imbalances within the country.

31. **Ms. Al-Khater** (Qatar) said that the State was doing all that it could to ensure that schools provided a safe educational environment for all students, including those with disabilities. A ministerial decree prohibiting corporal punishment had been promulgated. School committees had been set up to promote good behaviour among students and to ensure that students were treated with respect.

32. **Mr. Al-Muhammadi** (Qatar) said that various counter-terrorism laws and decisions had been adopted in recent years, such as Act No. 27 of 2019 promulgating the Act on Combating Terrorism and a decision adopted in 2020 regarding the implementation of targeted financial sanctions in order to combat the financing of terrorism. The State had ratified many international conventions against terrorism, including the Convention of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf on Combating Terrorism. It had also signed bilateral agreements against terrorism with countries such as France and the United

States of America. A counter-terrorism centre had been established in Qatar in 2021 under a cooperation agreement with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and the State would be providing the centre with a substantial amount of funding over the next five years. The Shura Council worked to promote the role of parliamentarians in combating terrorism, and a centre for parliamentary cooperation had been set up in Qatar.

33. **Mr. Al-Jusaiman** (Qatar) said that various safeguards were in place to protect the rights of persons facing the death penalty. For example, a person on trial for a capital offence could be represented by a court-appointed lawyer free of charge; the Public Prosecution Service could file an appeal on behalf of a person sentenced to death; a death sentence could be handed down only by a unanimous decision of the court; a pregnant woman who had been sentenced to death could not be executed until two years after the birth; and the Emir had the power to commute a death sentence to life imprisonment with the agreement of the victim's family. The death penalty was prescribed only for extremely serious criminal offences such as murder and terrorist offences, not for homosexual acts.

34. Sharia prescribed set punishments for certain offences which had to be taken into account but need not necessarily be carried out in their original form. By design, it was nearly impossible to satisfy the conditions necessary for the execution of a sentence of death by stoning. That punishment was therefore never carried out in practice.

35. **Mr. Alali** (Qatar) said that several different centres worked to promote the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, and various ministries took part in the work of the national committee that had been established to improve the situation of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. The committee monitored the implementation of the international instruments that Qatar had ratified to protect the rights of persons belonging to those groups and ensured that new legislation was in line with those instruments.

36. **Mr. Al-Hammadi** (Qatar) said that the Government had not set a date for accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the Covenant, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. Issues relating to the death penalty were being discussed in special committees. It was important to exercise patience in that regard, as every society was different. In any case, the Government regularly reviewed its position in the light of the international instruments to which Qatar was a party.

37. **Mr. Al-Obaidli** (Qatar) said that contracts between migrant workers and their employers were regulated. All migrant workers were protected by the law and enjoyed the same rights without discrimination on the basis of race, colour, social origin or nationality. Exit permits were no longer necessary, and the *kafalah* system had been abolished. All workers could leave the country or change jobs without their current employer's permission. In recent years, over 200,000 workers had changed jobs with the help of a computer application set up to facilitate the process.

38. The Government had introduced a wage protection system to ensure that employees were paid directly at the beginning of each month. Over 95 per cent of workers were paid through the system, which was monitored by the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs. Non-payment or late payment of wages could lead to the imposition of penalties. Workers whose wages had not been paid could turn to a labour dispute settlement committee, which was required to resolve the dispute within three weeks. If a worker's employer was experiencing financial difficulties, the worker's wages could be paid out of the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund.

39. Employers were required to ensure that any accommodation provided for workers was of a decent standard. In 2021, the Inspection Department of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs had carried out over 4,000 inspections to ensure compliance with that requirement. Over the previous decade, several towns had been constructed to provide accommodation for migrant workers. It was against the law to confiscate an employee's passport, and inspections were regularly carried out to uncover violations, which were punished.

40. Efforts had been made to improve access to justice for domestic workers who were victims of violence. Complaints could be submitted through a dedicated telephone hotline or

the “Amerni” smartphone app. It was possible to submit an anonymous complaint. In accordance with the laws and regulations in force in Qatar, employers were required to treat domestic workers in a decent and dignified manner that ensured their physical integrity, preserved their health and did not expose them to physical or mental harm.

41. The Government worked with the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf to implement plans and strategies aimed at combating trafficking in persons, and the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking coordinated those efforts role at the national level. A special prosecutor’s office had been set up to handle cases of trafficking in persons. Together with the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking and the Qatar Red Crescent Society, a humanitarian shelter had been established to provide psychosocial support to migrant workers who had been trafficked. Numerous seminars and workshops had been organized with international partners, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Embassies of the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Memorandums of understanding had been signed with the United Kingdom and the United States of America to build capacity in that regard. In cooperation with UNODC, an international centre had been established in Doha to provide training on combating human trafficking which was to begin operating in March 2022. In 2021, 37 complaints of trafficking in persons had been received, and 35 persons had been charged.

42. Qatar had voted in favour of the adoption of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) at the 100th International Labour Conference and had passed a law on domestic workers that was in line with the provisions of that treaty.

43. **Mr. Al-Siddiqi** (Qatar) said that, in accordance with new rules introduced in May 2021 to protect workers from extreme heat, outdoor work was banned between 10 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. from 1 June to 15 September and whenever the temperature exceeded 32.1°C. In addition, employers were required to perform risk assessments, develop comprehensive mitigation strategies and provide annual medical check-ups for employees who worked outdoors. To raise awareness of the new rules, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs had launched a campaign together with ILO and had issued explanatory publications in several languages. In the summer of 2021, labour inspectors had visited approximately 2,500 sites to monitor compliance with the new rules, and operations had been suspended at over 100 sites. The number of cases of exposure to extreme heat reported in 2021 had been significantly lower than in previous years.

44. The National Policy on Occupational Safety and Health had been adopted in 2020. Together with the Ministry of Public Health and the Hamad Medical Corporation, and with the support of ILO, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs had taken steps to improve the collection of data relating to occupational safety and health. The Government published an annual report on the topic which included comprehensive data on the number of fatal and non-fatal incidents and their causes. A training plan had been developed to ensure that labour inspectors were familiar with international standards. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs was working to improve investigation procedures, health insurance coverage and the provision of compensation for work-related deaths. A complaint was automatically filed whenever a worker died, and family members of the deceased worker could take legal action through their embassy.

45. **Ms. Al-Suwaidi** (Qatar) said that Qatar had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2009. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had considered the country’s second periodic report ([CEDAW/C/QAT/2](#)) in 2019. Qatar had helped to organize an event to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Women in Qatar did not experience any discrimination with regard to salaries or professional duties. In fact, legislation had been passed some years previously to introduce various employment benefits specifically for women. For example, women had the right to take paid leave if their child had special needs or an illness that required the mother to stay with him or her. They also had the right to take breastfeeding breaks for up to two hours per day over a two-year period.

46. **Mr. Al-Hammadi** (Qatar) said that the percentage of migrant workers who died in work-related incidents was extremely low. Doha was seen as a regional hub for international

organizations and hosted offices of several such organizations. With regard to gender equality, the Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council, the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations in New York and the Ambassadors of Qatar to Indonesia and Sweden were all women. Hundreds of women worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

47. **Mr. Al-Mahmoud** (Qatar) said that there were no barriers standing in the way of women's access to work. Many women received financial support for launching their own business ventures. Women were also employed in the military.

48. **Mr. Al-Hammadi** (Qatar) said that, as social attitudes had shifted, restrictions on women's ability to travel had been lifted. Women had been allowed to drive in Qatar since the 1980s. They could not be prevented from working by their husbands or other family members.

49. **Mr. Furuya** said he hoped that, before its next dialogue with the Committee, the State party would have the opportunity to review the reservations that it had entered and the declarations that it had made upon accession to the Covenant, since the Islamic sharia was in harmony with its provisions. He wished to know how many non-governmental organizations had applied to the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs for a licence, how many of those applications had been successful and what measures had been taken to expand the civic space.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*