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Qatar*


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I. General information

A. Demographic, economic, social and cultural features

Geographical location and topography

1. The State of Qatar is a peninsula situated midway along the western coast of the Arabian Gulf, between latitudes 24° 27' and 26° 10' north and longitudes 50° 45' and 51° 40' east. The peninsula extends northward, covering an area of approximately 11,572 square kilometres. The territory includes several islands, reefs and shoals along the coast. The best-known of these islands are Halul, Sharauh, Ishat and Bushayriyah. The peninsula is 185 kilometres long and 85 kilometres wide and is almost completely surrounded by the waters of the Gulf. A 60-kilometre land border separates Qatar from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, while the United Arab Emirates lies to the east. Qatari territorial waters extend approximately 95 nautical miles eastward and 51 nautical miles northward into the Arabian Gulf.

2. The terrain consists of low-lying rocky plains, with elevated limestone formations and hills in the Dukhan region to the west and Jabal Fuwayrit in the north. Numerous inlets, coves and depressions are features of the flat landscape and rainwater-draining basins (*rawdhat*) are found in the fertile northern and central regions; these are rich in natural vegetation.

Population

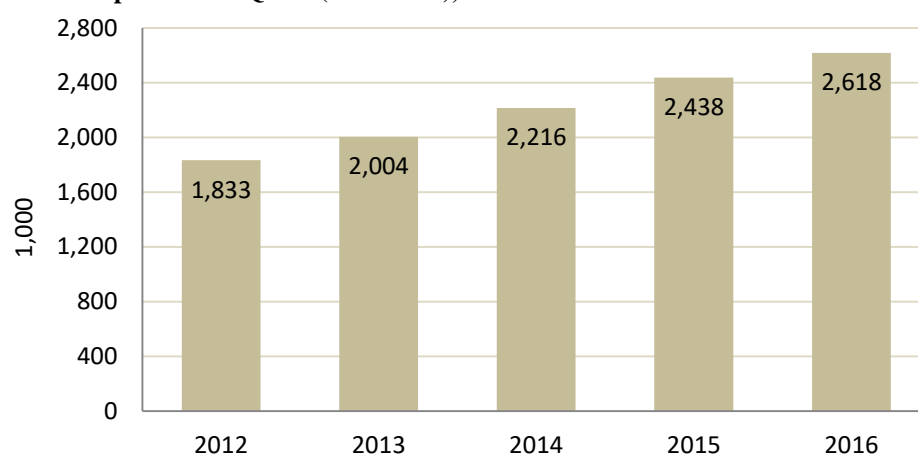
3. As of the end of September 2017, the population of the State of Qatar stood at 2,634,234, comprising 1,974,041 males (75 per cent) and 660,193 females (25 per cent). This represents an annual increase of 3.2 per cent. The reason for the high proportion of males is that most of the population are migrant workers, the majority of whom are males. Table 1 shows the increase in mid-year population in the State of Qatar, disaggregated by gender, between 2010 and 2017. The high rate of population growth is due to the influx of migrant workers arriving in response to the needs of large infrastructure and development projects and is a reflection of increased investment and development in the State. Figure 1 shows the population (in 1,000s) between 2012 and 2016.

Table 1
Increase in mid-year population (2010–2017)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
2010	1 296 110	418 988	1 715 098
2011	1 288 590	444 127	1 732 717
2012	1 355 199	477 704	1 832 903
2013	1 477 632	526 068	2 003 700
2014	1 652 037	564 143	2 216 180
2015	1 840 643	597 147	2 437 790
2016	1 975 536	642 098	2 617 634
2017	2 046 047	678 559	2 724 606

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: Population and Social Statistics (Annual Statistical Abstract, 2017).

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



Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

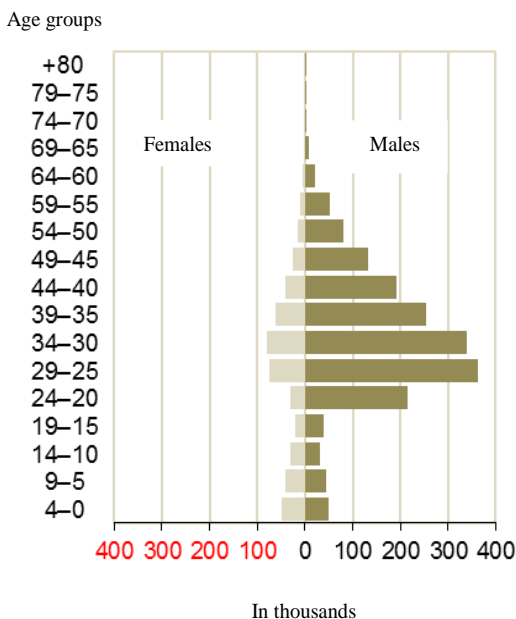
4. Table 2 shows the age makeup of the Qatari population in the year 2016. The population pyramid in figure 2 shows the total number of Qataris and non-Qataris in the population and the distorting effect of the increase in the numbers of migrant workers, especially non-Qatari males. The population pyramid in figure 3 shows the gender balance in the Qatari population.

Table 2
Relative distribution of inhabitants by broad age group, nationality and sex (mid-year population estimates) in 2016

Nationality	Sex	Age 0–14	Age 15–64	Age 65 and older	Total
Qataris	Females	36.5	59.8	3.7	100
	Males	38.9	57.8	3.3	100
Non-Qatari	Females	24.5	74.5	1.0	100
	Males	6.9	92.4	0.7	100
Total	Females	27.3	71.7	1.6	100
	Males	9.2	89.8	0.9	100

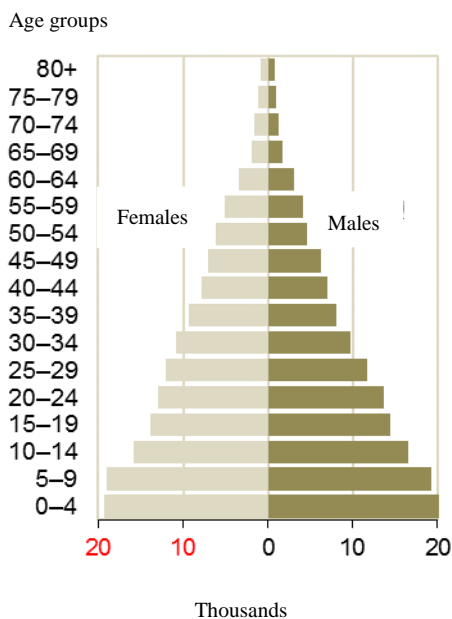
Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

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



Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

Figure 3
Population pyramid (Qatari nationals, thousands) 2016



Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

5. A comparison of figures 2 and 3 shows that the non-Qatari population distribution is therefore atypical, while the population pyramid for Qatari nationals alone shows a normal age-gender distribution. The majority of the inhabitants are aged between 15 and 64 and the majority of those persons are non-Qatari males. The age distribution for the Qatari population shows that Qatar is a young society with a high number of children and young people under 15 years of age and a low number of persons over 65. Table 3 shows the 2017 population by age group.

Table 3
Population by age group (2017)

Age group	Male	Female	Total
0	13 992	13 561	26 553
1–4	58 875	57 445	116 320
5–9	64 510	63 477	127 987
10–14	50 830	49 670	100 500
15–19	56 516	36 041	92 557
20–24	237 357	47 023	284 380
25–29	389 213	92 780	481 993
30–34	361 510	95 603	457 113
35–39	271 350	76 365	347 715
40–44	204 770	52 592	257 362
45–49	144 520	34 966	179 486
50–54	89 760	23 409	113 169
55–59	58 221	15 351	73 572
60–64	25 299	9 169	34 468
65–69	10 862	4 708	15 570
70–74	4 452	2 984	7 436
75–79	2 141	1 639	3 780
80+	1 869	1 776	3 645

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: Population and Social Statistics (Annual Statistical Abstract, 2017).

6. The statistical data in table 3 indicate that in 2017 the highest concentration of males in the population, at 389,213, was in the 25–29 age group, while the figure for the female population in the same age group was 92,780. The highest concentration of females in the population, at 95,603, was in the 30–34 age group.

7. Among males, the numbers were lowest in the 80+ age group, standing at 1,869, while among females they were lowest in the 75–79 age group (1,639).

Table 4
Population disaggregated by gender and age group
(third quarter 2017)

Age group	July 2017			August 2017			September 2017		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<1	9 548	9 032	18 580	9 662	9 121	18 783	11 120	10 542	21 662
1-4	44 331	42 407	86 738	46 030	44 435	90 465	56 092	53 787	109 879
5-9	47 203	45 414	92 617	51 931	50 047	101 978	66 648	64 071	130 719
10-14	37 178	35 166	72 344	40 611	38 519	79 130	50 983	48 601	99 584
15-19	40 810	27 839	68 649	41 421	29 121	70 542	44 857	33 724	78 581
20-24	232 616	40 361	272 977	228 697	40 074	268 771	225 745	42 159	267 904
25-64	1 494 963	337 162	1 832 125	1 442 043	347 681	1 789 724	1 501 086	396 344	1 897 430
65+	17 284	10 605	27 889	16 497	10 438	26 935	17 510	10 965	28 475
Total	1 923 933	547 986	2 471 919	1 876 892	569 436	2 446 328	1 974 041	660 193	2 634 234

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: Population and Social Statistics (Third quarter bulletin, 2017).

8. Table 4 shows the population in the third quarter of 2017 disaggregated by gender and age group. The largest age group in the period July to September 2017 was the 25-64 group, which reached a total of 1,832,125 in July, 1,789,724 in August and 1,897,430 in September.

Fertility rate

9. The data indicate that the total fertility rate of Qatari females has remained constant at 3.2 in recent years. In other words, an average Qatari woman of childbearing age gives birth to three children. The indicator is associated with educational level and higher average age at first marriage, as well as increased economic activity.

Table 5

Total fertility rate

<i>Year</i>	<i>Rate</i>
2012	3.2
2013	3.2
2014	3.2
2015	3.2
2016	3.0

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: (Annual bulletin of vital statistics: births and deaths, 2017).

Table 6

Rate of population growth (2007–2016)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Rate of growth</i>
2007	1 218 250	16.8
2008	1 448 479	18.9
2009	1 638 626	13.1
2010	1 715 098	4.6
2011	1 732 717	1.0
2012	1 832 903	5.8
2013	2 003 700	9.3
2014	2 216 180	10.1
2015	2 437 790	9.5
2016	2 617 634	7.1

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: Population and Social Statistics (Qatar in figures, 2017).

Table 7

Population density (2015)

<i>No.</i>	<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Population density km²</i>
1	Doha	4 354.3
2	Rayyan	247.2
3	Wakra	116.0
4	Umm Salal	285.2
5	Khor and Dakhira	126.1
6	Shamal	10.2

<i>No.</i>	<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Population density km²</i>
7	Daayen	187.2
8	Shahaniya	56.7
Total		206.8

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: Population and Social Statistics (Qatar in figures, 2017).

10. Table 7 shows a sharp rise in population density in 2015, to 4,354.3, due to a number of economic and development factors in Doha municipality. At the same time, population density increased in Rayyan city (247.2) and Umm Salal (258.2), due to the fact that these have become popular residential areas. Population density distribution rates are converging in the other municipalities.

Table 8
Life expectancy at birth for Qataris (2016)

<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
78.0	82.3	80.5

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: Population and Social Statistics (Annual bulletin of vital statistics: births and deaths, 2016).

11. Table 8 shows that life expectancy at birth for Qataris was 78.9 years for men and 82.3 years for women in 2016.

Table 9
Infant mortality rate by gender (2007–2016)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
2007	7.1	7.9	7.1
2008	8.4	6.9	8.4
2009	7.7	6.5	7.7
2010	6.9	6.7	6.9
2011	8.9	6.2	8.9
2012	8.5	5.2	8.5
2013	8.1	5.2	8.1
2014	6.6	6.7	6.6
2015	7.5	7.3	7.5
2016	6.0	6.0	6.0

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: Population and Social Statistics (Annual bulletin of vital statistics: births and deaths, 2016).

12. The infant mortality rate is a good indicator of child development in that it is a record of the number of deaths of children under the age of 1 per 1,000 live births. It not only reflects the quality of prenatal and postpartum care but is also a sound measure of children's social, economic and environmental circumstances. The data show that the infant mortality rate in the period from 2007 to 2016 fell from 7.1 to 6.0 for both males and females.

13. Qataris profess the religion of Islam, and the overwhelming majority of the population are Sunni Muslims. Other faith groups are also present, as Qatar welcomes large numbers of workers every year to meet the demands of its ambitious development plans at all levels and in all spheres. These migrant workers, with their diverse faiths, cultures and

lifestyles, come from all over the world and live side by side with one another in Qatar. The experience of Qatar has shown that the high percentage of migrant workers and wide range of nationalities, religions and cultures pose no barrier to the establishment of positive coexistence among all segments of society. Indeed, Qatari society has become a model for coexistence among peoples of different faiths and cultures.

Historical overview

14. The Al Thani family has ruled Qatar since the beginning of the 18th century. Sheikh Jasim ibn Mohammed Al Thani, who ruled from 1878 to 1913, is the founder of the modern State of Qatar. The country celebrates its national day every year on 18 December, the date on which Sheikh Jasim came to power. In 1916, following the outbreak of the First World War, the State signed a treaty with Great Britain providing for the protection of Qatari territory and nationals. British influence over Qatar was limited to administrative oversight in certain areas, until Qatar gained independence in 1971.

15. Qatar is a State that has come of age. In the area of education, for example, the first primary school for boys to be established based on a modern curriculum was opened at the start of school year 1950/51, teaching 190 pupils in four grades. At the start of school year 1953/54, the first primary schools for girls opened its doors. The Ministry of Education, the first ministry in the country's history, was created at the beginning of school year 1957/58, establishing the principles of free, universal education at all levels and introducing compulsory primary education. Beginning as a teachers' college in 1973 with some 150 male and female students, Qatar University – the national, government-run university – was founded in 1977. The University currently consists of seven colleges: arts and sciences, engineering, business and economics, sharia and Islamic studies, law, education and pharmacy.

16. As regards the health sector, the first hospital was opened in 1945, followed by the establishment of the Medical Department in 1951. Treatment has been provided free of charge by the Government since then. The Department of Public Health was established in 1953 to oversee all health-related matters. In 1954, three government clinics were established and all citizens and non-Qatari government employees were given the right to receive treatment abroad at government expense. The foundation of specialized government hospitals continued, although the Ministry of Health itself was not established until 1970.

17. Since 1995, the country has undergone a comprehensive process of development in all sectors and there has been a drive to build a modern State based upon strengthened consultation, democracy and the participation of citizens in determining their own affairs and national policy-making. Emiri Decision No. 11 was issued in 1999 to provide for the establishment of the Permanent Constitution Drafting Committee. The Committee completed its work in 2002 and in April 2003 the Qatari people, both men and women, took part in a referendum on the Permanent Constitution, which was approved by 96.64 per cent of voters.

18. The State of Qatar seeks to apply the principle of gender equality in practice, starting with the Constitution and translating a determined political will into reality in a gradual manner, taking into account the noble purposes of Islam and the demands of openness and development. The issue of the integration of women into the development process, both as contributors and beneficiaries, has been made a national priority. As a result, women now make up more than 36 per cent of the Qatari workforce, which is one of the highest female participation rates in the Arab world. Moreover, with the appointment of a number of Qatari women to ministerial positions, women have now reached the highest decision-making positions. The first of these women was Sheikha al-Mahmoud, who was appointed Minister of Education in 2003, a post she held until 2009, and who was the first woman in the Gulf region to hold a ministerial portfolio. Subsequently, a number of Qatari women have held ministerial portfolios, including those of public health and information and communications technology. Underlining the State's belief in the important role played by women in the judiciary, and in support of their constitutionally-affirmed rights, Emiri Decision No. 22 (2017) was issued appointing four Qatari women to sit on the Advisory Council.

19. Emiri Decision No. 44 (2008) provides for the endorsement and realization of the comprehensive vision of development set out in “Qatar National Vision 2030”. Published in the Official Gazette, the “Vision” focuses on turning Qatar into an advanced State, capable of achieving sustainable development. The document is based on the principles of the Constitution and directives of the political leadership and is designed to establish a society founded on justice, benevolence, equality, the protection of public freedoms and moral and religious values and traditions. It further seeks to achieve equality of opportunity and consolidate security and stability.

20. The Vision focuses on four key areas: (1) human development, enabling the population of Qatar to build a prosperous society; (2) social development, designed to create a just and safe society that upholds high moral values, delivers social welfare and is capable of dealing and interacting with other societies; (3) economic development, aimed at the creation of a diversified and competitive national economy capable of meeting the needs of the citizenry; and (4) environmental development, balancing socio-economic development and environmental protection. The Vision sets out the general framework for future action and includes implementation strategies and plans.

21. The National Vision and associated implementation strategies constitute a secure, supportive framework in which to achieve the human rights set out in international treaties and conventions. Chief among these strategies are the First National Development Strategy (2011–2016), the Second National Development Strategy (2018–2022) and other sector-based policies and strategies, as listed below:

- Labour Market Sector Strategy (2018–2022), designed to create a competitive labour market to enable all Qataris to participate in development, build a prosperous society and meet the needs of the present generation, without prejudice to those of future generations, by ensuring effective participation of the workforce in the labour market, increasing productivity and attracting and retaining highly skilled workers. The strategy also calls for the establishment of a modern, transparent information system to provide data on supply and demand for recruitment and training purposes;
- Family Cohesion and Women’s Empowerment Strategy (2011–2016), which is designed to strengthen family cohesion, rationalize the process for employment of domestic labour, reduce the number of cases of domestic violence, provide protection and support to affected families, support and empower economically and socially vulnerable families, assist women to achieve a balance between work-related and family responsibilities and empower women in all areas;
- National Health Strategy (2018–2022), designed to introduce changes to the health-care system and deliver 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;
- National Strategy for Primary Health Care (2013–2018), designed to address future health challenges by achieving eight goals, namely promoting: health, health check-ups, emergency care, treatments for chronic, non-infectious diseases, care in the home, mental health, mother and baby care; and child and adolescent care;
- Education and Training Strategy (2011–2016), designed to produce an education system that is on a par with the best in the world and meets the needs of citizens and Qatari society by putting in place curricula and training programmes that respond to the current and future needs of the labour market, provide high quality educational and training opportunities to match the aspirations and capacities of each individual and offer life-long continuing education programmes for all. The strategy is also designed to establish a national formal and non-formal education network to motivate and equip Qatari children and young people with the skills needed to take part in building their society and ensuring its progress. This involves efforts to strengthen the values and traditions of Qatari society, preserve the cultural heritage, encourage young people to be creative and innovative, build capacities, inculcate a spirit of citizenship and allegiance to the State and enable young people to participate in a wide range of cultural and sporting activities. A further goal of the strategy is to establish advanced, independent, well-managed educational institutions

that are accountable and operate in accordance with guidelines issued by the central Government and to create an effective system for funding scientific research based on public-private partnerships and cooperation with specialized international organizations and leading global research centres. All this is with a view to establishing an active role for Qatar in international cultural and intellectual life and scientific research;

- Social Protection Sector Strategy (2011–2016), designed to renew commitment to Arab and Islamic values and principles with a view to preserving the Qatari family and ensuring its central role in social development;
- National Traffic Safety Strategy (2013–2022), designed to reduce the number of traffic accident fatalities and severe injuries each year as a step towards achieving the country's long-term vision road safety vision. The strategy, which seeks to further the shared vision of stakeholders, provides a framework for determining commitments and terms of reference for implementing the highest priority and most effective road safety initiatives. The strategy complements existing strategies in Qatar, including the Comprehensive Planning, Sustainable Transport and Transportation Demand Management Strategy. It includes a national road safety action plan (2013–2017), currently being implemented by 13 State bodies with the aim of improving road safety in Qatar to make it one of the best performers in the world and to make the country's roads the safest in the world. This will be achieved by implementing an ambitious programme of activities and projects over the next five years;
- National Autism Plan (2017–2021), designed to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to the provision of care for autistic individuals of all ages;
- State of Qatar Population Policy (2017–2022), designed to control the high rate of population growth and limit the impact of the population imbalance. The policy includes a theme devoted to women and children, the primary goal of which is to support women's social participation and create suitable conditions to increase their participation in the workforce, as well as to preserve family cohesion and ensure a safe environment for children.

Social-economic indicators

22. Qatar takes care to provide up-to-date and reliable statistics. Emiri Decision No. 4 (2013), on the formation of a new cabinet, included the creation of the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics as the result of the merger of the General Secretariat for Development Planning and Qatar Statistics Authority. The Ministry is responsible for formulating and developing the State's comprehensive vision in cooperation with the appropriate bodies, preparing and monitoring the implementation of national development strategies in coordination with stakeholders, preparing studies on population strategy and policy, supporting the development process in government bodies, working on linking development priorities to the State budget, monitoring progress made in implementing plans, setting up an integrated statistical system, carrying out, organizing and overseeing official statistical activities, conducting censuses and surveys and publishing statistical data and reports.

23. The State of Qatar is going through a remarkable phase in its progress toward full and comprehensive development. Real gross domestic product (GDP) registered a 2.2 per cent rate of growth in 2016, rising to 796 billion Qatari riyals, compared with 779 riyals in 2015. Qatar is a country that enjoys a very high level of human development and was ranked 33rd in the world by the 2016 Human Development Report published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This ranking reflects the considerable and sustained progress achieved by Qatar in human development. The report shows that the country's human development index score improved from 0.855 in 2015 to 0.856 in 2016, reflecting the advances made in education, health and GDP. In the area of education, the report shows a rise in the adult literacy rate for both sexes, from 96.7 per cent in the 2015 report to 97.8 per cent in the 2016 report. There was also a rise in higher education enrolment for persons of eligible age to 16 per cent in the 2016 report from 14 per cent in the 2015 report. As regards gross national income per capita, the report indicates that the

State of Qatar saw a rise from 66.18 US dollars in 2015 to 57.82 US dollars in 2016. At the same time, the labour force participation rate for persons aged 15 and older rose to 84.6 per cent – ahead of Norway which, in 2016, was ranked first in the world on the human development index. The youth unemployment rate (young people aged between 15 and 24) fell from 1.1 per cent in the 2015 report to 0.8 per cent in the 2016 report. The report measured an increase in the percentage of Internet users from 91.5 per cent in the 2015 report to 92.9 per cent in the 2016 report. Despite a fall between 2010 and 2015 in the total fertility rate among women of childbearing age to 2.1 live births per mother, the country's total fertility rate remains higher than that of Norway (1.8), Hong Kong (1.2) and Singapore (1.2).

24. Qatar is keen to evaluate its progress toward achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and has issued five reports on the subject. The most recent report was published in January 2017 and showed that the State of Qatar has met most of the Millennium Development Goals and made tangible progress on those which have yet to be achieved. The key findings of the fifth report were as follows:

- Poverty has been eradicated; the State has been able to provide a life of plenty for all citizens and residents;
- Qatar is close to achieving the goal of 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 toward achieving the goal of gender equality, with a higher education gender parity rate of 1.94;
- Qatar has been able to achieve the goal of reducing the under-5 mortality rate by two-thirds;
- Qatar has surpassed the target of reducing the maternal mortality rate by three quarters;
- Qatar has been able to achieve the target of eliminating malaria and other infectious diseases;
- Qatar has been able to achieve most of the targets of the goal of ensuring environmental sustainability.

Gross and net enrolment rates

25. The gross enrolment rate at primary level in school year 2016/2017 was 106.2 for males and 106.0 for females; the parity index stood at 100 per cent in the same year. The net enrolment rate in school year 2016/2017 was 96.3 for males and 96.5 for females; the parity index stood at 100.2 per cent in the same year.

Table 10

Gross and net enrolment at primary level by gender (2011/2012–2016/2017)

Year	Rate of gross enrolment		Rate of net enrolment	
	Qatari	Non-Qatari	Qatari	Non-Qatari
2010/2011	94.5	102.3	86.8	92.7
2011/2012	96.9	105.9	89.4	96.4
2012/2013	98.0	101.3	89.9	92.5
2013/2014	100.8	102.7	91.9	93.0
2014/2015	102.5	100.4	92.9	90.4
2015/2016	103.3	103.9	93.7	94.1
2016/2017	102.1	108.0	92.7	98.1

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: Education in the State of Qatar, Statistical overview (2017);

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, Education statistics 2015/2016–2016–2017.

26. The number of teachers at preparatory level rose from 4,392 in school year 2010/2011 to 4,902 in school year 2015/2016. Of these, 14 per cent were Qatari and 86 per cent non-Qatari. In school year 2015/2016, some 1,691 male and female teachers were working in boys' schools, 1,652 in girls' schools and 1,559 in mixed schools.

Gross and net enrolment rates

27. The gross enrolment rate at preparatory level in school year 2016/17 was 104.1 for males and 102.6 for females; the parity index stood at 103.4 per cent in the same year. The net enrolment rate in school year 2016/17 was 84.8 for males and 84.8 for females; the parity index stood at 100 per cent in the same year.

Table 11

Gross and net enrolment at preparatory level by gender (2011/12–2016/17)

Year	Rate of gross enrolment		Rate of net enrolment	
	Qatari	Non-Qatari	Qatari	Non-Qatari
2010/2011	96.0	99.4	77.8	82.0
2011/2012	98.7	96.1	80.8	79.3
2012/2013	98.3	100.0	81.3	82.8
2013/2014	100.1	99.0	82.5	82.0
2014/2015	98.3	95.5	80.3	78.8
2015/2016	100.9	95.2	83.0	79.3
2016/2017	105.2	102.4	84.2	85.2

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: Education in the State of Qatar, Statistical overview (2017);

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: Education statistics 2015/2016-2016-2017.

Unemployment rate

28. According to the *Labour Force Sample Survey (2017)*, the rate of unemployment among the workforce stood at 0.1 per cent. The number of jobseekers, as defined by the International Labour Organization, stood at 2,736 in 2017, of whom men made up 37.9 per cent and women, 62.1 per cent. The rate of unemployment stood at 0.1 per cent in the third quarter of 2017, compared to 0.2 in the third quarter of 2016.

29. In 2017, the male unemployment rate stood at 0.1 per cent, compared to 0.6 per cent for females. The rate of unemployment among Qataris stood at 0.3 per cent (0.2 per cent of males and 0.6 per cent of females). The highest rate was recorded in the 20-24 age group, where it stood at 0.5 per cent, according to the *Labour Force Sample Survey (2017)*.

Rate of economic participation by age group

30. The rate of economic participation among Qataris peaks in the 35-39 age group and declines gradually thereafter with age, reaching its lowest level among the 59+ age group. This is perfectly natural and linked to age of retirement. It is a trend that applies to economically active Qatari men and women: the first segment of the population (under 25 years of age) is in full-time education, the second (25-59 years) is engaged in productive employment, while the third (60+ years) is retired and no longer economically active.

Table 12

Economically active population (15+ years) disaggregated by gender, nationality and age group (2017)

	Qatari			Non-Qatari			Total		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
15–24	13 603	5 576	19 179	181 591	34 684	216 275	195 194	40 260	235 454
25–34	21 893	16 368	38 261	684 692	99 233	783 925	706 585	115 601	822 186

	Qatari			Non-Qatari			Total		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
35–44	15 310	9 733	25 043	514 441	82 853	597 294	529 751	92 586	622 337
45–54	12 524	4 679	17 203	248 671	17 949	266 620	261 195	22 628	283 823
55+	3 641	939	4 580	82 974	5 569	88 543	86 615	6 508	93 123
Total	66 971	37 295	104 266	1 712 369	240 288	1 952 657	1 779 340	277 583	2 056 923

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics: Labour Force Sample Survey (2017).

Participation in the workforce

31. Participation in the workforce by those aged 15 and above stood at 88.4 per cent. The results of the *Labour Force Sample Survey (2017)* conducted by the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics show that the number of economically active workers increased from 2,055,359 in 2016 to 2,056,923 in 2017, with males making up 86.5 per cent and females, 13.5 per cent.

32. The data indicate that the level of economic participation of those aged 15 and over was 88.4 per cent (96.1 per cent among males compared with 58.5 per cent among females). The highest level of economic participation is to be found in the 25–34 age group, reaching 94.5 per cent. In the same year, the economic dependency ratio was 22.9 per cent.

33. The data further indicate that the rate of economic participation of Qataris stands at 52.2 per cent of the total Qatari population aged 15 and above. Males make up 64.2 per cent of the total Qatari workforce.

Average household size according to the 2015 census

- Average family size in 2015 was 4.7 members.

Percentage of urban and rural population

- Urban population: 100 per cent; rural population 0 per cent.

Percentage of population living below the poverty line (2012–2013)

- Percentage of population living below the poverty line: 0 per cent.

B. Constitutional, political and legal structure of the State

Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar

34. In 2004, the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar was promulgated to secure the foundations of Qatari society and engender grass-roots participation in decision-making. Comprising 150 articles, the Constitution sets out the guiding principles for State policy and the prerequisites for the exercise of power, including separation of powers, primacy of the rule of law, independence of the judiciary and guarantee of fundamental rights and freedoms.

35. Part I, article 1 of the Constitution, concerning the State and the foundations of governance, affirms that the State religion is Islam and that sharia is a principal source of law. The explanatory memorandum to the Constitution affirms that no legislation may be adopted in Qatar that conflicts with the absolute, definitive and fixed principles of Islamic sharia.

36. The system of governance of the State is hereditary in the family of Al Thani and the male line of Hamad ibn Khalifa ibn Hamad ibn Abdullah ibn Jassim.

37. Part II of the Constitution, concerning the guiding principles of society, states that Qatari society is founded on justice, benevolence, freedom, equality and high moral values. The Constitution establishes that the State is responsible for upholding these principles and

for guaranteeing security, stability, equal opportunity, solidarity and fellowship among citizens. It emphasizes the role of the family as the foundation of society whose mainstays are religion, morality and patriotism. It defines the State's obligations towards the family and evinces concern for young persons, stating that they must be shielded from immorality, protected from exploitation and the evils of physical, mental and spiritual neglect and provided with the conditions favourable to the development of their potential.

38. Part III of the Constitution is devoted to fundamental rights and freedoms. It affirms that citizens have equal public rights and duties before the law and that there can be no discrimination on grounds of sex, origin, language or religion.

39. The Constitution states that the foreign policy of Qatar is guided by a number of principles: consolidation of international peace and security; respect for human rights; rejection of violence and the use of force; promotion of the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means; and cooperation with peace-loving nations.

Organization of powers

40. In Qatar, the fundamental principle behind the organization of powers is that the people are the source of authority, which they exercise in accordance with the Constitution. The system of government is based on the separation of powers and the fullest cooperation between them. Legislative authority is vested in the Advisory Council, executive authority in the Emir, assisted by the Council of Ministers, and judicial authority in the courts. Court judgements are delivered in the name of the Emir. The following is a short summary of Part IV of the Constitution, which is devoted to this subject:

The Emir

41. The Emir of Qatar is the Head of State. His person is inviolable and must be respected by all. He is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and represents the State at home and abroad and in all international relations. He concludes treaties and conventions by decree and informs the Advisory Council thereof. Once ratified and published in the Official Gazette, these instruments acquire the force of law. The Emir draws up the general policy of the State with the assistance of the Council of Ministers and ratifies and promulgates laws. No law may be promulgated unless ratified by the Emir. He establishes, regulates and defines the functions of ministries, other governmental bodies and the consultative bodies that assist and advise him in the task of directing and overseeing higher State policy. He also performs such other functions as are regulated by the Constitution or law.

The legislature

42. Under the Permanent Constitution, the Advisory Council is vested with the power to legislate, approve the general budget and exercise oversight of the executive branch. Under article 77, Qatar does not have a bicameral system with one elected chamber and one appointed chamber. Rather, it has chosen a unicameral system with one chamber comprising both elected and appointed members in which the elected members form a clear majority. Article 77 states that the Advisory Council consists of 45 members, two thirds of whom are elected by direct, secret, universal suffrage. The other members are appointed by the Emir. The Elections Act shall be promulgated by a law defining the conditions for voting and nomination.

The executive

43. The Council of Ministers assists the Emir in performing his functions and exercising his powers under the Constitution and the law. In its capacity as the supreme executive body, the Council of Ministers manages all internal and external affairs falling within its purview under the Constitution and the law. It is responsible for proposing laws and decrees to be put before the Advisory Council for discussion. If approved, these are submitted to the Emir for ratification and promulgation in accordance with the Constitution. Among other functions, the Council of Ministers adopts regulations and decisions drawn up by

ministries, oversees law enforcement and monitors the conduct of the Government's financial and administrative affairs.

The judiciary

44. The Constitution espouses the principle of the rule of law. Article 129 stipulates: "The rule of law is the basis of government in the State. The honour, impartiality and fairness of judges serve as a guarantee of rights and freedoms". Article 130 stipulates: "The judiciary is independent and judicial authority is vested in courts of various kinds and levels". Article 131 stipulates: "Judges are independent and subject to no authority other than the law; there may be no interference in legal proceedings or in the administration of justice". Article 137 stipulates: "The judiciary shall have a supreme council to oversee the conduct of the work of the courts and their auxiliary bodies. The composition, powers and functions of the council shall be prescribed by law."

45. In accordance with the Judiciary Act No. 10 (2003), the court system in Qatar comprises the Court of Cassation, Court of Appeal and Court of First Instance. The Supreme Judicial Council was established under article 22 of the Act to ensure the independence of the judiciary. Article 23 of the Act sets out the Council's functions, which are to comment on issues relating to the judiciary; study and propose legislation on the development of the judicial system; offer its views on the appointment, promotion, transfer, secondment and retirement of judges; and examine grievances relating to the administration of justice, on which its decisions are final.

46. The Qatari Constitution also provides for centralized oversight of the constitutionality of laws, an approach espoused in most modern constitutions to ensure the balance of powers. As such, the Constitutional Court settles disputes relating to the constitutionality of laws and regulations, either at its own initiative or at the urging of litigants. Its judgements and decisions are final, may not be appealed and are binding on all State bodies. The independence of the judiciary has been further promoted by the promulgation of Act No. 7 (2007), on the settlement of administrative disputes, which recognizes abuse of authority as grounds for the annulment of an administrative decision or the award of compensation.

47. The Office of the Public Prosecutor is an independent judicial body charged with bringing public legal actions on behalf of society. It oversees criminal investigations and monitors law enforcement. It initiates and pursues criminal proceedings and takes all appropriate measures in accordance with the law. It also has powers to conduct investigations and bring charges.

Legislation regulating the recognition of non-governmental organizations

48. The Qatar Red Crescent Society was established in 1978 and the Qatar Charitable Society in 1980, followed by other non-governmental philanthropic associations and private foundations. Qatari society has long been open to the idea of voluntary charitable work, since Islamic culture supports charitable activities as the noblest type of work in which a Muslim can engage.

49. The right to form non-governmental associations and private foundations is regulated under Act No. 12 (2004), which limits the activities in which such organizations may engage to the humanitarian, social, cultural, scientific and charitable spheres. The Act states that such organizations must be non-profit making and may not engage in politics. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs is responsible for registering and monitoring non-governmental associations and private foundations. The Act states that the Council of Ministers, on the recommendation of the relevant minister, may grant an association financial assistance or a loan and may allow it to benefit from exemptions on customs duties, taxes and other fees in order to help it achieve its objectives.

50. Legislative Decree No. 21 (2006) regulates the establishment of philanthropic private foundations and assigns responsibility for issuing licences to such institutions to the Real Estate Registration and Documentation Department of the Ministry of Justice. The Legislative Decree defines these institutions as entities founded by one or more natural or corporate persons to pursue one or more philanthropic aims. The Council of Ministers may

extend all or some of the following privileges to these institutions: financial assistance and privileges in kind, including allocation of land to be used in the pursuit of their activities; exemption in whole or in part from taxes and fees; and a prohibition on the seizure of assets or property by prescription.

51. A number of private philanthropic foundations have been established by Emiri decision, including, for example, Decision No. 51 (2007), approving the establishment of the Arab Democracy Foundation; Decision No. 86 (2007), approving the establishment of the Doha Centre for Media Freedom; Decision No. 3 (2008), approving the establishment of the Silatech Foundation; and Decision No. 20 (2010), approving the establishment of the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue. Several organizations have been set up under the auspices of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, including Reach Out to Asia (ROTA) and the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development, both of which have been given consultative status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The Qatar Social Work Foundation was established in 2013 as a high-level body whose consolidated board of directors is responsible for supervising and monitoring the activities of social work organizations and centres in Qatar. The Foundation formulates and monitors implementation of plans, programmes, policies and strategies aimed at furthering the goals of civil society organizations, in cooperation and coordination with ministries, government agencies and public and private corporations and institutions at home and abroad. The Foundation's "family" consists of the following centres and initiatives: (1) the Protection and Social Rehabilitation Centre, (2) Family Consulting Centre, (3) Orphan Care Centre, (4) Centre for the Empowerment and Care of the Elderly, (5) Shafallah Centre for Persons with Disabilities, (6) Social Development Centre and (7) Best Buddies initiative (Qatar).

II. General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights

A. Acceptance of international human rights standards

Accession to international human rights treaties

52. With a view to promoting and strengthening the human rights legislative framework, Qatar has acceded to and ratified numerous international and regional human rights conventions, as follows:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2018);
- Arab Convention for the Protection of Copyright and Related Rights (2015);
- International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2014);
- Arab Convention on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (2012);
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2009);
- Arab Charter on Human Rights (2009);
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (2009);
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol, 2008);
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008);
- United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2008);
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (2007);
- Minimum Age Convention (2005);

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2002);
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2001);
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2001)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (2001);
- Forced Labour Convention (1998);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1995);
- Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation (1976);
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (2009).

53. The Emir shall conclude treaties and agreements by decree and refer them to the Advisory Council, accompanied by appropriate clarification. The treaty or agreement shall have the power of law after ratification and publication in the Official Gazette.

Reservations and declarations to international conventions

54. In recent years the State has initiated a strategic policy vis-à-vis general reservations to international conventions, resulting in a review of its general reservations to the human rights conventions to which Qatar is a party. Accordingly:

- The State has withdrawn its general reservation to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and partially withdrawn its general reservation to those provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which are inconsistent with Islamic sharia; the reservation shall continue to apply in respect of articles 2 and 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- The State has withdrawn its reservations to articles 21 and 22 in response to the recommendation of the Committee against Torture and amended and replaced its general reservation to the Convention with a partial reservation applying only to articles 1 and 16.

B. Legal and institutional framework for the protection and promotion of human rights nationally

Constitutional protection for human rights

55. The State of Qatar is keen for the subject of human rights to be at the heart of constitutional, political, economic, social and cultural reform and this concern is reflected in the development and strengthening of the legislative and institutional infrastructure of human rights. Part III (articles 34-58) of the 2004 Constitution is devoted to fundamental rights and freedoms, enshrining the principle of the integration, interconnection, interrelationship and indivisibility of rights. It thus provides equal guarantees of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. By way of example, the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution include: equality before the law; prohibition of discrimination; personal liberty; the criminalization of torture; freedom of the press and of expression; the establishment of associations; freedom of worship; the right to work; and the right to education. The Constitution affirms that these rights may not be restricted or diminished on grounds of amendment or restructuring. Thus article 146 stipulates that provisions relating to public rights and freedoms may only be modified for the purpose of granting additional safeguards for the benefit of the citizen.

Legal safeguards for human rights

56. The fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution have been further enhanced by the enactment of several pieces of domestic legislation including:

- Act No. 1 (1994), on juveniles;
- Act No. 38 (1995), on social security;
- Act No. 7 (1996), on the regulation of medical treatment and health services in Qatar;
- Act No. 25 (2001), on compulsory education;
- Act No. 24 (2002), on retirement and pensions;
- Act No. 10 (2003), the Judicial Authority Act;
- Act No. 2 (2004), on persons with special needs;
- Act No. 12 (2004), on private associations and institutions;
- Act No. 14 (2004), the Labour Law;
- Act No. 18 (2004), on public meetings and processions;
- Act No. 22 (2004), the Civil Code;
- Act No. 23 (2004), the Code of Criminal Procedure;
- Act No. 40 (2004), on custodianship of the property of minors (the Act contains a set of provisions to ensure that children's property is protected and that there is oversight of the actions of parents/legal guardians);
- Act No. 22 (2005), prohibiting the recruitment, employment, training and participation of children in camel racing;
- Act No. 38 (2005), on Qatari nationality;
- Legislative Decree No. 21 (2006), on private philanthropic foundations;
- Act No. 22 (2006), the Family Act;
- Act No. 2 (2007), on the housing system;
- Council of Ministers Decision No. 17 (2007), on housing system priorities and rules;
- Council of Ministers Decision No. 18 (2007), on housing system priorities and rules for the needy (free housing);
- Act No. 12 (2008), on the establishment of the Supreme Constitutional Court;
- Act No. 19 (2008), on determining the amount of blood money (*diyah*) payable for manslaughter;
- Act No. 3 (2009), on the regulation of penal and correctional institutions;
- Act No. 4 (2009), on regulating the entry, exit, residence and sponsorship of migrant workers;
- Act No. 8 (2009), the Human Resources Management Act;
- Act No. 15 (2011), on combating trafficking in persons;
- Act No. 12 (2013), amending certain provisions of Act No. 7 (2007), on rendering judgement in respect of administrative disputes;
- Act No. 7 (2013), on social health insurance;
- Act No. 6 (2013), on the Health and Education Fund;
- Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Decision No. 18 (2014), on determining standards and specifications for workers' housing; the Decision takes mandatory international standards for workers' housing into account;

- Act No. 14 (2014), promulgating the Cybercrime Prevention Act;
- Act No. 22 (2015), amending certain provisions of the Penal Code, promulgated by Act No. 11 (2004);
- Act No. 12 (2015), amending the provisions of Legislative Decree No. 17 (2010), on the regulation of the National Human Rights Committee, granting the Committee greater independence and giving its members immunity and legal assurances;
- Emiri Decision No.6 (2015), on restructuring the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority with a view to achieving higher indicators of impartiality and transparency in public office and combating corruption in all its forms;
- Act No. 1 (2015), amending certain provisions of the Labour Law, No. 14 (2014), on wage protection;
- Approval by the Council of Ministers, sitting on 19 October 2016, of a law amending certain provisions of the Labour Law, No. 14 (2014) and creating one or more committees responsible for rendering judgement in disputes arising from the provisions of the Labour Law and employment contracts;
- Act No.16 (2016), on mental health;
- Act No. 13 (2016), on protecting the privacy of personal data;
- Act No. 15 (2016), the Civil Human Resources Act, affirming the principle of non-discrimination and equality among employees in respect of rights and duties;
- Act No.15 (2017), on domestic workers;
- Act No. 1 (2017), amending certain provisions of Act No. 21 (2015), regulating the entry and exit of migrant workers and relating to the freedom to exit the country;
- Act No. 11 (2018), on political asylum;
- Act No. 10 (2018), on the permanent residence permit;
- Act No. 17 (2018), on the creation of the Migrant Workers Support and Insurance Fund;
- Act No. 13 (2018), amending article 7 of Act No. 21 (2015), regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers and abolishing exit authorization.

Institutional mechanisms to promote human rights

57. The concern of the State of Qatar with human rights has taken concrete form with the establishment of various governmental and non-governmental organizations focused on protecting and supporting the concept of integrated, interlinked and indivisible human rights. These include:

Independent mechanisms

National Committee for Human Rights

58. The National Committee for Human Rights was established by Legislative Decree No. 38 (2002) as an independent, national institution concerned with the protection and promotion of human rights. On 19 August 2010, Legislative Decree No.17 (2010) was issued, restructuring the Committee to grant it further safeguards and responsibilities in accordance with the Paris Principles, which regulate the status of human rights organizations around the world. The Committee was accredited “A” status by the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions in Geneva for the first time in 2010 and was re-accredited for the second time in a row in 2015. The National Committee seeks to:

- Propose ways of promoting and monitoring achievement of the objectives of international conventions and instruments on human rights to which the State of Qatar has become a party and to make recommendations on accession to other human rights conventions and instruments;

- Advise and make recommendations to the concerned authorities regarding human rights issues;
- Look into any abuses or violations of human rights, settle complaints reported to the Committee, coordinate with the authorities on necessary action to be taken and propose ways of addressing abuses and violations and preventing reoccurrence;
- Make suggestions regarding the compliance of existing legislation and bills with the provisions of international human rights conventions to which the State of Qatar is a party;
- Monitor and prepare reports on the human rights situation in the country and submit such reports, with comments, to the Council of Ministers;
- Monitor issues that may be raised concerning the human rights situation in the country and coordinate with the authorities to address such issues;
- Participate in the preparation of national reports on the conventions to which the State is a party, for submission to international human rights bodies and organizations;
- Cooperate with international, regional, and national organizations concerned with human rights and freedoms and participate in related international events;
- Raise awareness of the culture of human rights and freedoms and consolidate the principles thereof in theory and practice;
- Conduct field visits to penal and reform institutions, detention centres, workers' accommodation blocks, health institutions, and educational institutions in order to observe the human rights situation; visits are to be made by the Committee chairman and members;
- Coordinate and cooperate with human rights organizations in Qatar, in a manner appropriate to the responsibilities and mandate of each;
- Organize conferences, symposiums, courses and seminars on subjects relating to human rights and freedoms and coordinate with the authorities when necessary;
- Take part in the preparation and implementation of human rights education and research programmes.

59. Article 16 of Legislative Decree No. 17 (2010) stipulates that ministries, government agencies and public institutions and entities shall cooperate with the Committee in the performance its duties and responsibilities and provide the Committee with any data and information required. The Committee may invite a representative of these bodies to attend its meetings in a non-voting capacity.

60. The Committee reports regularly every six months to the Council of Ministers. Reports contain studies of human rights legislation and the human rights situation in the country, news of Committee activities and recommendations. Pursuant to the principle of transparency and to promote public awareness of human rights, the Committee posts its annual report online at www.nhrc-qa.org.

61. The Committee receives reports of a wide range of human rights violations and seeks to address most of these. The Committee also scrutinizes domestic legislation to assess its compliance with international conventions and charters and encourages the State to ratify or accede to international and regional human rights charters. Furthermore, it submits observations and views to the State after preparing the reports which the State is obliged to submit to United Nations bodies and committees and regional human rights organizations. The Committee takes the legal measures necessary to protect human rights and provides such legal assistance as is permitted under its mandate. It also plays an intermediary and conciliatory role between contending parties, with a view to reaching an amicable solution before the parties resort to the courts.

62. The Committee works in close cooperation with international organizations, especially the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Qatar Social Work Foundation

63. The Qatar Social Work Foundation was established in 2013 as a high-level body whose consolidated board of directors is responsible for supervising and monitoring the activities of social work organizations and centres in Qatar. The Foundation formulates and monitors implementation of plans, programmes, policies and strategies aimed at furthering the goals of civil society organizations, in cooperation and coordination with ministries, government agencies and public and private corporations and institutions at home and abroad. The Foundation's "family" consists of the following centres and initiatives: (1) the Protection and Social Rehabilitation Centre, (2) Family Consulting Centre, (3) Orphan Care Centre, (4) Centre for the Empowerment and Care of the Elderly, (5) Shafallah Centre for Persons with Disabilities, (6) Social Development Centre and (7) Best Buddies initiative (Qatar). The Foundation is focused on energizing the concepts of voluntary work and "development" and ensuring the right of everyone to fight back against stereotyping and social exclusion on grounds of disability or misfortune. It promotes social solidarity and the right of persons with disabilities to participate in the development process. It also seeks to address issues of domestic violence, the empowerment of women, capacity-building among young people and the empowerment of the elderly without condescension or viewing them as a burden. Furthermore, it aims to rehabilitate and integrate individuals in society by offering protection and prevention programmes in cooperation with various State institutions. The Foundation and the centres operating under its umbrella helped to prepare the eight sector-based strategies that make up the Second National Development Strategy (2017-2022). In addition, the Foundation has supervised the planning of some 55 development projects covering the various spheres of activity of its affiliated centres and aimed at achieving their strategic goals and serving the target social groups. These projects address extremely important issues in the fields of disability, family guidance, domestic violence and the welfare and empowerment of the elderly, orphans etc. The Foundation has concluded memorandums of understanding with the League of Arab States on boosting technical cooperation in order to achieve the goals of the Arab Decade of Civil Society Organizations, as well as a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Population Fund to promote joint cooperation. Memorandums of understanding have also been concluded locally with various government agencies and bodies and civil society organizations.

Governmental mechanisms**Competent departments in State ministries**

64. A number of departments have been created within the organizational structures of government ministries and agencies. By way of example, these include:

Department of Human Rights (Ministry of Interior)

65. Given the concern of the Permanent Constitution with rights and freedoms and keen to promote human rights in all areas of its activity, the Ministry of Interior created the Department of Human Rights within its organizational structure, pursuant to Decision of the Minister of State for Interior Affairs No. 26 (2005). The Department is the principle channel of communication between the National Human Rights Committee and Ministry of Interior, on the one hand, and between members of the public and the Ministry, on the other.

66. The Department's duties include working in coordination with relevant ministerial agencies to achieve the goals of international human rights conventions as these concern the Ministry of Interior. The Department receives, studies and investigates complaints received by the Ministry from individuals or through the National Human Rights Committee; it examines background issues and makes recommendations on cases. It visits penal institutions, deportation centres and security facilities to ascertain compliance with the operative laws and regulations and ensure that human rights are not being infringed. It submits regular reports to the Minister and seeks to raise the human rights awareness of ministerial agencies by issuing bulletins and circulars and organizing seminars and lectures. Furthermore, it represents the Ministry at international, regional and local conferences on

human rights. In August 2010, the Human Rights Department received an ISO certificate of excellence (2008–2009), having met all the requirements for ISO certification.

Department of Human Rights (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

67. The Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established by Decision of the Minister for Foreign Affairs No. 16 (2003). It comments and offers advice on human rights matters and issues referred to it and expresses a view on draft international conventions to which the State wishes to become a party. Working in conjunction with the Ministry's Department of Legal Affairs and other State bodies, the Department helps to prepare the human rights reports required under international conventions for submission to international monitoring bodies. In coordination with the appropriate bodies, it prepares replies to reports by international organizations and non-governmental organizations on the human rights situation in Qatar for submission to those organizations. It drafts replies to reports by foreign Governments on human rights cases in Qatar. It briefs the Governments concerned and informs overseas diplomatic and consular missions on recent developments in the human rights situation. The Department monitors local and international human rights issues. It attends human rights conferences and participates in activities organized by regional and international human rights organizations, seeking to involve ministerial and other bodies in these activities. It refers complaints about human rights violations received from abroad to the authorities and follows up on these. It also formulates plans and proposals on ways of utilizing the advisory and technical assistance services offered by international human rights organizations. It represents the Ministry in the human rights bodies set up by the State.

68. By Decision of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs No. 44 (2017), three departmental subsections were established in 2018, as follows:

- Regional human rights affairs section, principally concerned with monitoring human rights cases within the framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council, League of Arab States and Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and scrutinizing regional human rights conventions;
- International human rights affairs section, principally concerned with monitoring cases relating to the various mechanisms of the United Nations Human Rights Council, United Nations General Assembly Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and United Nations specialized agencies. The section also scrutinizes draft international human rights conventions and formulates plans and proposals on ways of utilizing the advisory and technical assistance services offered by international human rights organizations;
- Human rights treaty committees section, principally concerned with monitoring and reporting on cases relating to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and United Nations monitoring committees on the international human rights conventions to which Qatar is a party, in coordination with the relevant administrative units in the Ministry and other State authorities. It submits these reports to the appropriate international monitoring bodies. The Section prepares for the discussion of reports submitted under the UPR and those submitted to international and regional monitoring bodies. It considers whether to accept or reject the recommendations of the UPR Working Group. In collaboration with the relevant State bodies, the Section puts forward plans for implementing the recommendations of the UPR Working Group and monitoring committees.

National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking

69. The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking was established in 2017 to coordinate national efforts to control, prevent and combat human trafficking. As the national coordinating body responsible for monitoring, preventing and combating human trafficking, the Committee is chaired by the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs; members include representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (deputy chairperson), Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public

Health, Office of the Public Prosecutor, Government Communications Office, National Human Rights Committee, Qatar Social Work Foundation and the Protection and Social Rehabilitation Centre. The Committee seeks to coordinate the national effort to control, prevent and combat human trafficking. Its duties include, *inter alia*, the preparation of national plans to combat human trafficking and the preparation and publication of an annual report on the country's efforts in this area. It also works in coordination with the authorities and stakeholders to ensure victim protection and support. The Committee has prepared a draft National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2017-2022) and, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and League of Arab States, launched an Arab initiative to combat human trafficking (2011-2014). To this end, the State provided the sum of six million US dollars to build national capacities in combating human trafficking in the Arab region by organizing training courses for judges, inspectors and police officers working to combat human trafficking. The last of these courses was held in 2017.

National Committee for International Humanitarian Law

70. The National Committee for International Humanitarian Law, established pursuant to Ministerial Decision No. 27 (2012), makes recommendations to the Government on implementing and spreading awareness of international humanitarian law.

Standing Committee on Emergencies

71. The Standing Committee on Emergencies, established pursuant to Council of Ministers Decision No. 14 (2011), prepares studies and develops plans and procedures to tackle disasters, provide prompt disaster relief and ensure safe transportation and communications; it also formulates and disseminates outreach plans through the media.

National Committee on Climate Change and Clean Development

72. The National Committee on Climate Change and Clean Development, established pursuant to Council of Ministers Decision No.15 (2011), seeks to follow up recommendations adopted by meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol and to ensure implementation of commitments made under the Convention and its Protocol.

National Committee for Occupational Health and Safety

73. The National Committee for Occupational Health and Safety, established pursuant to Council of Ministers Decision No.16 (2011), proposes national policies, programmes and regulations on occupational health and safety.

Administrative Control and Transparency Authority

74. The Administrative Control and Transparency Authority was established pursuant to Emiri Decree No. 75 (2011) to provide oversight, ensure transparency and impartiality and combat corruption in all its forms and manifestations.

Non-governmental mechanisms

Arab Democracy Foundation

75. In May 2007, Qatar hosted the Second Forum on Democracy and Political Reform in the Arab World, which led to the establishment of the Doha-based Arab Democracy Foundation pursuant to Emiri Decision No. 51 (2007). The Foundation is the first of its kind in the Arab world and its goal is to promote a culture of democracy in the region. Qatar has donated 10 million US dollars to support the work of the Foundation, which published its first report on democracy in the Arab world in 2008, based upon 17 national reports. For more information, see www.adf.org.qa.

Doha Centre for Media Freedom

76. Freedom of opinion and expression, guaranteed by the Constitution, is a fundamental pillar of a modern democratic society. As such, the media are a basic component of the State. Furthermore, the media play a significant role in promoting dialogue, fostering mutual understanding, encouraging tolerance and coexistence and creating an environment hostile to terrorism and the incitement of hatred. In this context, Emiri Decision No. 86 (2007) was issued, approving the establishment of the Doha Centre for Media Freedom as a private philanthropic institution. The principles of freedom, credibility, independence, accountability and transparency provide strategic underpinning for the goals of the Centre, which consist in safeguarding the media in a manner consistent with international standards, conducting media research and building a database to serve the various media sectors. In addition, the Centre plans to erect a memorial in honour of those from around the world who have fought and died for freedom of the media. The Centre also provides assistance to journalists whose rights have been violated in the exercise of their profession, particularly in crisis situations. It should be noted that in January 2008 the Centre signed a protocol of cooperation with “Reporters without Borders”. For more information, see www.dohacentre.org.

Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue

77. The Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue was established on the recommendation of the Fifth Doha Interfaith Dialogue Conference, held in May 2007, and the Centre was inaugurated in May 2008 during the Sixth Interfaith Dialogue Conference. The goal of the Centre is to promote and spread the culture of dialogue and peaceful coexistence. For more information, see www.dicid.org.

Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilizations

78. The Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilizations was established pursuant to Council of Ministers’ Decision No. 8 (2010) with the aim of combating intolerance and instilling the values of tolerance, solidarity and peace among the peoples of the world and developing human potential.

Silatech

79. The Silatech organization was founded in 2008 with the aim of providing a wide range of job opportunities for Arab youth, promoting entrepreneurship, enabling access to capital and markets and facilitating participation in social and economic development. Silatech has programmes in 17 Arab States.

Education above All Foundation

80. The Education above All Foundation was established in 2012 with the aim of providing children in areas affected by poverty or armed conflict with an education. The Foundation’s three programmes seek to provide educational opportunities, particularly in areas suffering from poverty or armed conflict.

81. The Foundation’s goal is to reach out to ten million out-of-school children and provide them with quality education. The Foundation aims to collect 1 billion US dollars to support education and promote programme sustainability. To date, it has enabled 7.1 million of the most marginalised out-of-school children to access quality education. The Foundation is the only one in the world focused solely on supporting such children and works by establishing partnerships with local and global organizations to remove the obstacles preventing children from having a quality education, including poverty, conflict and strife and gender discrimination. The Foundation has been invited to join the UNESCO 2030 Education Steering Committee to represent the efforts of organizations around the world working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on education. It has also been invited by the President of the United Nations General Assembly to participate in the High-Level Meeting on Education.

Dissemination of human rights instruments

Spreading and promoting awareness of international human rights conventions

82. Human rights organizations have organized specialized seminars, workshops and training courses on the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities and workers, as well as other topics, targeting a wide range of government employees, including staff of the Ministry of Interior, Office of the Public Prosecutor, judges and doctors.

83. The State has implemented various programmes on the incorporation of human rights concepts and numerous studies and research papers on human rights have been published. Local seminars, workshops and training courses have also been organized.

84. The National Human Rights Committee organizes a range of human rights training and outreach courses and programmes, including ongoing programmes to raise awareness of women's rights among male and female students in schools and universities through training courses, workshops and seminars. In 2015 and 2016, the Committee held a number of symposia targeting female preparatory and secondary school students. The Committee also organized a "legal clinic" with students of Qatar University's Faculty of Law to familiarize them with the Convention.

85. Civil society organizations, in cooperation with the National Human Rights Committee, organize ongoing training courses and workshops to promote implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Protocol on the suppression of human trafficking, raise awareness of the provisions of those conventions and train personnel working in law enforcement, the public prosecution service, courts and police, as well as lawyers and media workers. In February 2016, for example, the Committee delivered a training course for the Qatari Armed Forces General Command on a number of human rights-related issues, including women's rights. In April 2016, it held a workshop on national legislation, including legislation concerning women, and the perspective of the National Human Rights Committee on such legislation; the workshop was designed for law enforcement personnel in the police, public prosecutor's office and courts.

86. Qatar hosts the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, established pursuant to A/Res/60/153. The aim of the Centre is to regulate human rights training and documentation activities in line with international standards and support efforts to protect and promote human rights in the region, working under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva and in cooperation with governments, United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Promotion of human rights awareness through educational programmes and government media

87. Human rights concepts are incorporated into the curriculum in various forms. They are presented as separate subjects or as curricular or extracurricular activities and drawings and diagrams. School curricula and textbooks include material on a range of rights, including political, civil and economic rights, the rights of children and women, social and cultural rights and the rights of the elderly and persons with disabilities. Note here that the civics curriculum is designed to promote cooperation, empathy, equality, love, peace, tolerance and other values that are bound up with social and civil responsibilities, such as respect for the law, good citizenship, civic participation, honesty, integrity and trustworthiness. The curriculum also promotes the values of respect for and preservation of the cultural heritage and environment of Qatar.

88. Since January 2017 Qatar Television, in cooperation with the National Human Rights Committee, has been broadcasting a weekly programme to raise awareness of disability. Greater focus is being placed on the rights of women with disabilities, with a view to combating stereotypes.

89. Qatar accords considerable importance to the subject of human rights education and training and a number of governmental and non-governmental bodies organize training courses on the protection and promotion of human rights.

State development aid

90. Qatar accords considerable importance to the delivery of development assistance, as can be gauged from the directives of His Highness the Emir supporting charitable efforts and initiatives focused on human development. Accordingly, the State has provided development aid to developing countries around the world and contributed to the achievement of several of the development goals of those countries. Qatari development aid is provided on an impartial basis and without any political conditions imposed on beneficiary countries. Aid is flexible and the process for obtaining it from governmental and non-governmental organizations is straightforward.

91. Qatar actively contributes to the development of a global partnership for development. It is a major donor to, and key partner in, international development initiatives and the provision of development aid and assistance is a key pillar of the country's foreign policy.

92. In addition to providing humanitarian and development aid, the State also undertakes international humanitarian and development initiatives. The State has launched a number of initiatives, including but not limited to the following:

- "HOPEFOR", in operation since June 2010 in New York, aims to improve the effectiveness and coordination of military and civil defence resources for natural disaster response;
- "Protecting Education in Insecurity and Armed Conflict" (formerly the Education Above All Foundation) has, since 2008, sought to protect, support and promote the right to education in current or potential zones of crisis, conflict and war;
- "Al-Fakhoora" has, since 2009, sought to support and protect students and schools in conflict zones around the world, especially in Gaza;
- "Educate a Child" seeks to reduce the number of children around the world deprived of the right to education because of conflict, war and natural disaster, as well as children living in urban slums or remote, rural areas and groups that face particular challenges in accessing education, such as girls, persons with disabilities and minorities;
- Qatari-Mauritanian Social Development Foundation, whose activities include establishing literacy programmes to educate and qualify children and setting up micro enterprises to help them;
- Qatar Development Fund aims to boost economic growth in Arab and other developing countries by implementing development programmes;
- Qatar made a substantial contribution to the launch of the South Fund for Development and Human Circumstances, officially established by the Group of 77 and China at the second South Summit (Doha, 2005).

C. The reporting process at national level

93. Qatar is committed to meeting its obligations under all the international conventions to which it is a party. Both the Council of Ministers and Ministry of Foreign Affairs form joint committees to draft the State's reports on the implementation of these conventions. Membership of these committees consists of representatives of key government bodies. Once the drafting process is complete, the National Human Rights Committee is invited to present its views and suggestions.

94. The Council of Ministers or Ministry of Foreign Affairs form the delegations which present and discuss the reports with the human rights treaty bodies. Qatar is keen to ensure that delegations are sufficiently high-level and represent all the bodies which took part in

the drafting process. Furthermore, the State follows up the concluding observations made by the treaty bodies. As the main stakeholder, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates discussion of the concluding observations with all concerned bodies. Ministries and other organizations are encouraged to take these observations into account when formulating their annual plans and programmes.

95. Furthermore, the Council of Ministers approved the formation of a standing committee responsible for drafting reports under the Universal Periodic Review and following up recommendations made after the submission of each report. Formed pursuant to a decision of the Council of Ministers Decision adopted at ordinary session no. 33 (24 November 2010), the committee consists of the bodies which prepared the first report under the chairmanship of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and with a membership drawn from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Advisory Council, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Culture and Sport and Ministry of Education.

III. Information on non-discrimination, equality and effective means of redress

A. Non-Discrimination and equality

96. The legal framework enshrining the principles of equality and protection from discrimination is adopted in part II, articles 18 and 19 of the Permanent Constitution, on “the guiding principles of society”. Article 18 stipulates: “Qatari society is based on the values of justice, benevolence, freedom, equality, and high morals.” The principles contained in article 18, one of which is equality, are given support by article 19 of the Constitution, which affirms: “The State shall safeguard the foundations of society and ensure security, stability and equal opportunities for all citizens.” Accordingly, all State policies must embrace and ensure the guiding principles enshrined in article 18 of the Constitution, including the principle of equality. Equality must be viewed as a noble principle, enjoying guaranteed constitutional protection in Qatar; no law or legislation may be enacted that undermines this principle. The establishment of the Supreme Constitutional Court by Act No. 12 (2008), promulgated on 18 June 2008, further boosted the protection accorded the principle of equality under the Constitution. The Court adjudicates in disputes over the constitutionality of laws and regulations.

97. The general principle of equality stated in article 18 of the Constitution is elaborated in detail in part III, articles 34 and 35, on public rights and duties. Thus article 34 stipulates: “Citizens shall be equal in respect of rights and obligations.” Article 35 affirms the right to equality before the law and non-discrimination, stipulating: “All persons are equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination between them on grounds of sex, origin, language or religion.” Articles 34–58 of the Constitution guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms based on the principle that rights are integrated, interrelated, interlinked and indivisible. Accordingly, the Constitution provides guarantees of equal economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. Part III of the Constitution further guarantees human rights in Qatar by enshrining public rights and freedoms as legal provisions at the very heart of the Constitution, according them primacy over ordinary laws and making them binding.

98. The aforementioned constitutional protection of the right to equality and non-discrimination has been strengthened by accession to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1976. Under article 68 of the Permanent Constitution, which explicitly states that treaties and conventions shall have the force of law once they have been ratified and published in the Official Gazette, the provisions of the Convention acquired the force of law in the State of Qatar with no obstacle to their application by the courts. Furthermore, article 16 of the Permanent Constitution explicitly states: “The State shall respect international agreements and charters and strive to implement all international treaties and conventions to which it is a party.”

99. In addition to the aforementioned constitutional protection, there are a number of laws whose provisions are consistent with the principle of non-discrimination. These include:

- Publications and Publishing Act No. 8 (1979);
- Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure No. 13 (1993);
- Labour Law No. 14 (2004, amended);
- Code of Criminal Procedure No. 23 (2004), which affirms equality between all persons on the territory of the State, whether citizens or residents, in respect of criminal litigation, collection of evidence, investigation, trial and enforcement of judgment, without any distinction or discrimination whatsoever;
- The provisions of the Civil Act No. 22 (2004) do not discriminate between citizen and resident in respect of the civil rights provided for under the Act;
- Family Act No. 22 (2006);
- Act No. 7 (2007), on the settlement of administrative disputes;
- Supreme Constitutional Court Act No. 12 (2008);
- Act No. 19 (2008), on determining the amount of blood money (*diyah*) payable for manslaughter;
- Penal Code No. 11 (2004), as amended by Act No.8 (2010);
- Act No. 15 (2011), on combating human trafficking;
- Act No. 14 (2014), on the prevention of cybercrime;
- Act No. 21 (2015, amended), regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers;
- Act No. 13 (2016), on protecting the privacy of personal data.

100. The Civil Human Resources Act No. 15 (2016), affirms the principle of equality and non-discrimination among employees in respect of rights and duties.

101. Qatari legislation seeks to close any loopholes that could be used to fuel racial conflict or promote racist practices. Thus article 47 of the Publications and Publishing Act No. 8 (1979) prohibits the publication of anything designed to spread discord in the community or incite racial, sectarian or religious strife. Under article 47, offences carry a term of up to six months in prison or a fine of up to 3,000 riyals, as stipulated in the Penal Code. Article 2 (11) of a decision of the Minister of Information and Culture in 1992, on the guidelines and rules for censorship, stipulates that no censorship body in the Ministry of Information and Culture dealing with printed and audiovisual materials may permit the circulation, broadcast, display or advertising of any work depicting a human being or ethnic group in a derogatory manner, unless necessary to create a positive impression for a noble purpose, such as combating racial discrimination.

102. Furthermore, article 256 of the Qatari Penal Code (2004) as amended by Act No. 8 (2010), makes it an offence to insult the revealed religions, commit blasphemy, traduce the prophets or damage, vandalize or desecrate buildings used for the performance of religious rites. The article explicitly provides for a term of up to 7 years' imprisonment for committing any of the following acts:

- Insulting a revealed religion protected by Islamic sharia;
- Traducing or making allegations against one of the prophets whether verbally, pictorially, in writing or otherwise;
- Damaging, vandalizing, destroying or desecrating buildings or any object found therein used in the performance of the religious rites of any of the revealed religions protected by sharia.

103. Article 159 (bis) stipulates that any public servant or other person acting in an official capacity who uses torture or incites or agrees to the use of torture or is silent in the

face of torture shall be sentenced to a term of up to 5 years' imprisonment. Torture is held to be any act resulting in severe physical or mental pain or suffering inflicted on purpose by one person against another to obtain information or a confession from that person or another person or to punish him or another person for an act he committed or is suspected of committing or to frighten or force him or another person or when such pain or torment is inflicted for a reason based on any type of discrimination.

104. The Constitution espouses the principle of the independence of the judiciary. Article 130 stipulates: "The judiciary is independent and judicial authority is vested in courts of various kinds and levels." Article 131 stipulates: "Judges are independent and subject to no authority other than the law; there may be no interference in legal proceedings or in the administration of justice". The independence of the judiciary is also enshrined in the Judicial Authority Act, promulgated by Act No. 10 (2003), article 2 of which states: "Judges are independent and cannot be dismissed save in accordance with the provisions of this Act. The independence of the judiciary shall not be compromised and there shall be no interference in the administration of justice." Under the Judicial Authority Act, the Qatari court system consists of Court of First Instance, Court of Appeal and Court of Cassation. The Supreme Judicial Council was established under the Judicial Authority Act to uphold the independence of the judiciary, express an opinion on matters relating to the judiciary, scrutinize and propose legislation on the development of the judicial system and to express an opinion on the appointment, promotion, transfer, secondment and retirement of judges in accordance with the Judicial Authority Act. In addition, the Council considers grievances relating to the administration of justice, on which its decision is final. The Act ensures the financial independence of the courts, stipulating that court budgets shall be annexed to the State budget.

105. The Constitution espouses the notion of central oversight of the constitutionality of laws and leaves it to the law to regulate that oversight. This is the approach adopted by most modern constitutions as it is conducive to achieving a broad balance between the different branches of government. Act No. 12 (2008) established the Supreme Constitutional Court as an independent judicial body with its own budget and the authority to adjudicate in disputes relating to the constitutionality of laws and regulations, disputes over jurisdiction and disputes concerning the enforcement of contradictory final judgements handed down by judicial bodies or bodies with a judicial mandate. The Court is competent to interpret laws whose application is controversial and has the required weight to ensure uniform interpretation of the law, when requested to do so by the Prime Minister or President of the Advisory Council. Pursuant to the foregoing, the Court is competent to adjudicate in disputes relating to the constitutionality of laws and regulations at its own initiative or at the urging of litigants; its judgments and decisions are final, not subject to appeal and binding on all State bodies and persons on Qatari territory. The independence of the judiciary was further strengthened by the promulgation of Act No. 7 (2007), on the adjudication of administrative disputes. Under this Act, abuse of power constitutes grounds for the annulment of an administrative decision or the award of compensation.

106. Part III (articles 34–58) of the Constitution is devoted to fundamental rights and freedoms, enshrining the principle of the integration, interconnection, interrelationship and indivisibility of rights. It thus provides guarantees of equal economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. As regards political rights, article 42 guarantees the right to vote and stand for election without discrimination on grounds of gender, language or religion, in keeping with article 35. The Constitution also guarantees the right to participate in the political process and hold public office. These constitutionally-guaranteed political rights must be read in the light of article 34, which states that citizens are equal in respect of rights and duties. Note that article 146 of the Constitution stipulates that rights may not be restricted or diminished on grounds of amendment or restructuring.

107. To guarantee and promote political rights, the Elections Department was established within the Ministry of Interior pursuant to Minister of Interior Decision No. 1 (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 the procedures and regulatory mechanisms for conducting elections.

108. The first elections in which women and men participated equally was for the first term of the Central Municipal Council in 1999, when both men and women took part for the first time as voters and candidates. There was a high voter turnout, with some 77.4 per cent of registered female voters and 81.5 per cent of registered male voters casting their votes; six female candidates stood unsuccessfully. However, the percentage of registered voters of both sexes who voted in the elections for the second term of the Council was significantly lower, with only 27 per cent of female voters and 36.2 per cent of male voters taking part. Nevertheless, a significant milestone for women was achieved in the second round with the election of the first female candidate to the 29-member Council. Voter turnout 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 was elected to the Council. In the elections for the fifth term of the Council, held in 2015, voter turnout among both sexes increased further, with 70.3 per cent of registered female voters and 65.2 per cent of registered male voters taking part.

Table 14
Participation in elections to the Central Municipal Council disaggregated by sex (2003–2015)

<i>Data expressed</i>	<i>Second term 2003</i>		<i>Third term 2007</i>		<i>Fourth term 2011</i>		<i>Fifth term 2015</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

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

109. The Qatari Constitution guarantees many of the civil rights recognized under international human rights law. These include the right to freedom of movement, the right to leave and return to the country, the right to nationality, the right to inherit and the right to freedom of thought, belief and religion.

110. The Qatari Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of movement, residence and travel outside the country for both citizens and expatriates. Article 36 of the Constitution states that personal freedom is guaranteed and that no-one may be arrested, imprisoned, searched, confined to a specific place of residence or subjected to restrictions on freedom of residence or movement except in accordance with the law. These constitutional safeguards have been strengthened by the adoption of Act No. 21 (2015, amended), regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers, under which the authorities must be informed at least three working days in advance of a migrant worker's departure from the country; a migrant worker may therefore leave the country without his employer's permission.

111. The Qatari legislature guarantees that persons with disabilities have the same right as others to move freely inside and outside the country at any time, to reside in or relocate from any place and to travel outside the country temporarily and return. Persons with disabilities may not be expelled from the country or prevented from returning. Designated spaces are reserved for persons with disabilities in public car parks in markets, commercial centres and government offices. Regarding measures taken to provide specialist staff and training in mobility skills for persons with disabilities, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, through the associations and institutions it oversees pursuant to Act No. 12 (2004), on private associations and institutions, as

amended by Act No. 10 (2010), plays an active role in helping persons with disabilities to enhance their mobility skills and provides staff to assist them.

112. Education is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Qatari Constitution. It is one of the fundamental pillars of social progress, which the State is obliged to guarantee, foster, extend and make universal. Thus article 25 of the Constitution stipulates: "Education is one of the fundamental pillars of social progress, which the State shall guarantee, foster and endeavour to spread". Article 49 further stipulates: "All citizens have the right to education. The State shall endeavour to make education compulsory in accordance with the regulations and laws in force." On this basis, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has formulated a number of regulatory policies designed to promote human rights principles. These include the School Admissions and Registration Policy, Student Assessment Policy, School Student Behavioural Evaluation Policy, Code of Professional Conduct for Educators and Charter of Ethics for Educators.

113. Keen to ensure that all children in the country receive an education, Qatar has taken a series of measures, including:

- The Compulsory Education Act No. 25 (2001), amended by Act No. 25 (2009), contains 13 articles clarifying school enrolment procedures, identifying the authorities responsible for implementing the Act and setting out penalties and sanctions in cases of non-compliance. The amended Act sets out penalties ranging from a minimum of 5,000 riyals to a maximum of 10,000 riyals for failing to enrol a child in compulsory education without good reason;
- Article 8 of Ministerial Decision No. 10 (2010), on the formation of a committee to monitor violations by parents/guardians under the Compulsory Education Act, sets out the tasks and functions of the committee. These consist of identifying cases, studying the reasons why some parents/guardians prevent their children from attending school and taking appropriate action, defining the role of the authorities represented in the decision and formulating proposals and procedural measures;
- Act No. 6 (2013), on the Health and Education Fund, aims to provide sustainable financial resources to support health and educational services; the Act also determines the authorities responsible for administering the Fund.

114. Qatar is keen to provide an education for all expatriate children, who have the opportunity of attending either government or private schools, in accordance with the wishes of their parents/ guardians. Schools for different communities, international schools and private national schools have also been opened. In total, there are 160 such schools which, together with 85 kindergartens, serve more than 58 per cent of all children enrolled in school.

115. In view of the increasing mobility of the population and in order to meet the demand for education services, a number of new government and private schools open in Qatar each year. Keen to provide suitable educational opportunities for all students in the country on a non-discriminatory basis, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education offers private schools favourable treatment by, for example, exempting them from electricity and water charges and customs clearance fees and making land available to private schools that obtain local, national or international accreditation. The Ministry also seeks to implement agreements concluded with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior to ensure that Qatari children obtain their right to education. Furthermore, the Ministry closely supervises the registration of expatriate schoolchildren after the deadline for registration has passed and facilitates the process for them with a view to ensuring that the education authorities provide all students with the educational services desired.

116. As part of the initiative to develop education in Qatar, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Misnad issued a decision in 2007 to attract a number of outstanding foreign schools to the country with a view to meeting the growing demand for such schools. The following tables illustrate equality of access to schooling:

Table 15
Number of students in government education at each stage of education, disaggregated by sex and nationality (school year 2015/16)

Education stage	Qatari			Non-Qatari			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
Total	29 294	32 933	62 227	22 453	23 316	45 769	107 996

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

Table 16
Number of students in private education at each stage of education, disaggregated by sex and nationality (school year 2015/16)

Education stage	Qatari			Non-Qatari			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
Total	18 025	13 231	31 256	73 759	67 889	141 648	172 904

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

117. Qatari law guarantees the right of access medical services without discrimination on grounds of race, religion, national origin, belief, language, age or disability. A charter of the rights and responsibilities of patients and their families was adopted by the Hamad Medical Foundation, enshrining the fundamental principles which guarantee the right to health, including the right of access to medical services without discrimination, the right to appropriate medical care and the safeguarding of privacy and confidentiality of information. The key elements of the charter are:

- 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 proper care, provided at all times in an appropriately respectful manner to ensure patient dignity;
- Availability of an appropriate and effective support mechanism in the event of grievance or complaint;
- The right to receive immediate pain assessment and control;
- No patient may be isolated or restrained unless medically necessary.

118. Keen to observe the rights of migrant workers, Qatar amended certain provisions of Act No. 14 (2004) – the Labour Law – to provide for the establishment of one or more committees to render judgement in disputes arising from the provisions of the Labour Law or employment contracts. Committee rulings have the power of a writ of execution. Each committee is presided over by a Court of First Instance judge, with two officials from the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs as members. Summary judgements are made within not more than three weeks in any dispute brought before the

committee by the relevant department, if mediation has failed to bring about an amicable settlement. The law allows the parties to appeal final rulings handed down by a committee before an appeals board, called the Appeals Committee for the Settlement of Labour Disputes, which is presided over by a Court of Appeal judge and includes two members nominated by the Minister. The Labour Law further stipulates that the courts shall continue to have jurisdiction in respect of cases brought prior to the date on which the Law came into effect. The Council of Ministers will determine the procedures for hearing claims, the rules and procedures to be followed by committees and the mechanism for enforcing rulings. In establishing these committees, the Government seeks to provide redress and achieve justice for migrant workers in disputes arising from the application of the Labour Law or employment contracts and enable them to avoid lengthy and complex litigation proceedings. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs works in coordination with embassies to monitor disputes and represent workers who have already left the country. The foregoing does not prejudice a worker's right of resort to regular judicial procedures and to appeal decisions handed down by the Appeals Committee for the Settlement of Labour Disputes before the Court of Cassation. Accordingly, the procedures for obtaining redress available to a worker are as follows:

- A complaint is filed with the appropriate department of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs against the employer and a claim made under the provisions of the Labour Law or terms of the employment contract;
- The competent department examines the complaint and attempts to resolve the dispute amicably; if the parties agree to mediation by the competent department, an instrument of settlement is drawn up, signed by the parties and the representative of the department and executed automatically;
- If mediation by the competent department fails, the dispute is referred to the Committee for the Settlement of Labour Disputes, which will issue a decision promptly, within three weeks;
- Unless appealed, the Committee's decision is final and must be enforced;
- The law allows the parties to appeal a final ruling before the Appeals Committee for the Settlement of Labour Disputes, which is presided over by a Court of Appeal judge and includes two members nominated by the Minister.

119. Under article 2 (3) of Legislative Decree No. 38 (2002), establishing the National Human Rights Committee, the Committee has the power to investigate violations of human rights and propose ways of dealing with them to prevent reoccurrence.

120. There are multiple ways of seeking redress in the State of Qatar, including the right of the individual to resort to the courts or the National Human Rights Committee. Resort to litigation is a constitutional right, guaranteed and protected by the Permanent Constitution, article 135 of which states: "The right of litigation is inviolable and guaranteed to all. The law shall specify the procedures and manner of exercising this right." The Code of Criminal Procedure, the Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure, the Settlement of Administrative Disputes Act and the Family Act all regulate the litigation process. If damage is proven to have been caused, the court will grant the aggrieved party fair compensation for the damage sustained. Thus article 19 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, Act No. 23 (2004, amended), states that anyone who suffers direct personal damage as a result of a crime may sue the defendant for civil damages during the investigation stage or before the court hearing the criminal case. This right is also guaranteed by general rules 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 uncover crime and apprehend and convict offenders, make no distinction between one citizen and another or between citizens and residents. Furthermore, pursuant to article 19, victims of crime have the right to sue for civil damages.

121. The Qatari judiciary carries out its duties in accordance with article 130 of the Permanent Constitution, which states: "The judiciary is independent and judicial authority

is vested in courts of various kinds and levels, which shall issue their judgements in accordance with the law.”

122. The Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Interior, which is part of the national human rights system, was established by Minister of Interior Decision No. 26 (2005). The Decision stipulates that the Department shall “receive, study and investigate complaints submitted to the Ministry of Interior by individuals or through the National Human Rights Committee, look into background issues in connection with complaints and make recommendations to the Minister”. The Department oversees implementation of international human rights treaties, visits penal institutions, deportation centres and security departments to ascertain compliance with laws and regulations, submits periodic reports to the Minister and conducts training and outreach activities for ministerial bodies concerned with human rights. The Department also represents the Ministry at national, regional and international conferences and seminars on human rights. Furthermore, the Department examines and seeks to resolve complaints received from migrant workers. If an employer is proven to have exploited a worker, the proper measures are taken and the employee is free to change employment without the employer’s consent, in accordance with article 22 of Act No. 21 (2015), regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers.
