



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Seventy-fourth session

### Summary record (partial)\* of the 44th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 3 October 2023, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Crăciunecan-Tatu

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### Consideration of reports (*continued*)

- (a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (*continued*)

### *Initial report of Qatar (continued)*

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\* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports (continued)**

**(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (continued)**

*Initial report of Qatar (continued) (E/C.12/QAT/1; E/C.12/QAT/Q/1; E/C.12/QAT/RQ/1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Qatar joined the meeting.*
2. **Ms. Al-Muftah** (Qatar), resuming her delegation's replies to the questions raised at the previous meeting, said that her country had implemented an occupational health and safety strategy to reduce workplace deaths by creating healthy working environments. Under the strategy, training was provided for both employers and labour inspectors. According to data collected by the Ministry of Public Health, there had been 66 workplace deaths in 2020 and that number had been steadily falling ever since. The figures that had appeared in the media concerning deaths of migrant workers in the context of the 2022 World Cup were not accurate and had not been corroborated by the United Nations or any other international organization. For 10 years, migrants working on construction projects for the World Cup had enjoyed decent working conditions. Any deaths of workers that had occurred over that period had been caused by factors unrelated to working conditions, such as traffic accidents or old age. As a matter of course, investigations were carried out into all workplace accidents that resulted in injury or death, and the Ministry of Public Health monitored any related legal proceedings to ensure that victims and their families received adequate compensation.
3. **A representative of Qatar** said that the reports that the Government received from mechanisms of the United Nations human rights system were forwarded to the competent ministry or department for consideration. The reports were examined closely and any proposals for legislative amendments were given due consideration. Official replies from the State required the formal approval of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Government also received recommendations from civil society.
4. **A representative of Qatar** said that the visa centres that the Government had set up in labour-sending countries were a joint initiative between the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Public Health. The centres gave those ministries the opportunity to complete formalities with workers before they travelled to Qatar. For example, workers underwent medical examinations and their fingerprints were taken. The centres also provided workers with a number of free services, including the opportunity to read their contract in their mother tongue and further information about what awaited them in Qatar. They also received assurances that their transport arrangements were legal and safe and that their journey to Qatar would be monitored.
5. The International Labour Organization had supported the Ministry of Labour in organizing campaigns to raise workers' awareness of Ministerial Decree No. 21 of 2019, under which employers and workers in any establishment employing 30 or more workers could select representatives and establish joint labour committees. Anyone selected to become a member of a joint labour committee received special training on the issues that they were likely to come across, such as health and safety standards and productivity. The aim of the committees was to ensure that workers had a platform to express their opinions and claim their right to decent working conditions.
6. In recent years, a number of progressive amendments had been made to the Labour Code, which had resulted in the abolition of the *kafalah* system. Although not all employers had welcomed the changes, the State had made every effort to explain the improvements that the new legislation had been designed to bring about. There remained a feeling among certain employers that the Government had moved too fast, however, and certain concessions had therefore been made. For example, the Government had eliminated the recruitment fees payable by employers when replacing a departing member of their migrant workforce; those costs were now met by the State.

7. The role of labour inspectors was to ensure that employers were fulfilling their legal obligations and that workers were provided with decent working conditions and protected against harassment. Inspectors were not required to give employers prior notice of their visits. They had the power to request samples of any goods suspected of being dangerous and were authorized to monitor conditions at the housing provided for workers. Inspectors issued recommendations to employers on bringing their practices and operations into line with labour rules, and they also offered advice to workers on how to file complaints regarding working conditions. The Ministry of Labour currently employed 258 inspectors, and approximately 72,000 inspections had been carried out between 2020 and 2022.

8. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Office of the Public Prosecution and the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of the Interior were responsible for ensuring that the rights of persons deprived of their liberty were upheld, in accordance with the relevant provisions of Act No. 3 of 2009 regulating penal and reform institutions. A standing committee comprised of representatives of prisons and correctional institutions had also been put in place to facilitate coordination between different organizations in relation to conditions of detention. All prisons in Qatar abided by the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).

9. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Criminal Code penalized violence in all its forms, regardless of the gender or nationality of the victim. Although the term “domestic violence” did not explicitly appear in the Code, such offences were covered under the sections on social crimes and crimes affecting the life and safety of the person. Article 291 of the Code specifically criminalized all forms of indecency against women, including remarks and gestures.

10. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Criminal Code provided for heavier penalties for crimes of a sexual or violent nature when the victim was a child, and a juvenile prosecution service had been set up to ensure that perpetrators of such acts were brought to justice. A number of institutions had also been established to provide support to victims of sexual harassment and violence, including the Aman Protection and Rehabilitation Centre. All the women and children who arrived at the Aman Centre were interviewed so that the staff could identify the nature of their needs, and children identified as victims of domestic violence were transferred to care institutions where they were looked after by specialized personnel. All measures concerning the treatment of child victims had been formulated in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

11. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Supreme Council of the Judiciary had established a special court to hear cases of domestic violence. The court sought to reach an amicable settlement for all cases within two weeks of their referral. In general, legislators and judicial authorities in Qatar were keenly aware of the risks and dangers associated with domestic violence, and it was the Government’s conviction that promoting a safe and stable family environment was the most effective way to achieve a more stable society.

12. Extramarital sexual relations were not permitted under sharia, which formed the basis of domestic legislation in Qatar. Although criminal legislation provided for the use of flogging to penalize such acts, there were nonetheless tight restrictions placed on that form of punishment and, in reality, it was very seldom imposed.

13. **A representative of Qatar** said that the importance his country placed on family matters had been reflected in the creation of a new government department, the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs. Domestic violence was one of the issues that had been placed under the responsibility of the new Ministry, while its social care department was tasked with designing and implementing social protection programmes for women and children. Other institutions providing services for families included the Wifaq Centre for family counselling and the Aman Protection and Rehabilitation Centre. The Aman Centre offered women and children a number of social services, including psychological support, legal advice and referrals to shelters and residential care. In 2021, its hotline had received more than 10,000 calls. In total, more than 300 cases of physical violence and nearly 130 cases of psychological violence had been reported to the Aman Centre.

14. **A representative of Qatar** said that each year, between 330 and 350 individual cases of suspected child abuse were dealt with under a national programme to protect children from

violence and neglect. In around 30 per cent of cases, the child was proven to have been subjected to violence and was offered the appropriate support. In 10 per cent of those cases, the child was found to have been a victim of sexual violence. Staff at hospitals and other institutions dealing with children had received training on children's rights and child protection, and around 50 public sector employees had been trained to interview child victims. The Government organized an annual conference on the protection of children from violence and neglect and, in 2020, Doha had hosted the Congress of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

15. Awareness-raising activities were organized at schools, universities, embassies, sport clubs and other venues as part of the national programme aimed at protecting children from violence and neglect. A hotline had also been set up for the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse. Approximately 20 per cent of the calls received were from children under the age of 18 years, while 10 per cent of calls were from people who were not related to the suspected victim. As part of the programme, a seminar on sexual health had been held for schoolchildren and a website had been launched to provide information on the risks that social media and the Internet posed for children. The website contained details of how to report cases of online abuse, links to relevant hotlines and information on victim support services.

16. **A representative of Qatar** said that, in the area of housing, Qatar had introduced Act No. 17 of 2020 on the adoption of a minimum wage, which also covered the right to decent housing and set a monthly housing allowance of 500 Qatari riyals (QR). Amendments to the Labour Code under Decree No. 18 of 2020 had increased obligations on employers to provide decent housing and introduced more severe punishments for violations: up to 6 months in prison and a fine of up to QR 200,000, which could be doubled for repeat offenders. The Decree had also introduced reforms to make labour inspections more effective and ensure prompt action to rectify violations. In recent years, Qatar had established housing complexes to provide expatriate workers with a decent environment that included access to all required services and amenities, including health-care, social and leisure facilities.

17. Migrant workers faced no discrimination whatsoever on the grounds of nationality in obtaining housing. All residents of Qatar were free to choose their place and region of residence, subject to the rules of supply and demand. Landlords were held responsible for any violations of housing standards and health and safety rules, including overcrowding. In such cases, dwellings were vacated. Housing for expatriate workers could be found in all regions of Qatar.

18. **A representative of Qatar** said that Act No. 22 of 2021 guaranteed access to health care to all segments of the population without discrimination. All people in Qatar could obtain treatment and health care on presentation of their health card, health insurance card or any identity document, such as a passport.

19. The Ministry of Health had signed an agreement with the Red Crescent National Society to establish more health centres and expand health services for expatriate workers and those without health documents. The health centres had general and specialized clinics, as well as support services and emergency medical care provision. The health-care sector in Qatar was working to improve services and facilitate access to health care, including by providing health resources in multiple languages and detailing the various services provided by health centres on official websites. Multilingual specialized psychological clinics were also available, and Qatar had been collaborating with the Red Crescent National Society to improve access to specialized psychological support during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. To support accessibility and minimize unnecessary visits to hospitals, urgent health advice was available over the phone in various languages, and arrangements could be made for direct referral services, assessments for treatment and the dispensation of medication.

20. Early 2023 had seen the roll-out of a new digital appointments system which had given hospitals more control over scheduling, enabled them to avoid unnecessary delays and increased the role of medical teams in appointment management. There were also initiatives to support speedier access to health care in specialities such as ophthalmology; ear, nose and throat medicine; and bladder surgery.

21. Qatari law required employers with between 5 and 25 workers to ensure the availability of first aid administered by trained personnel. Those employing more than 100 workers were required to have an on-site nurse, and those who employed more than 500 workers were required to provide a dedicated clinic with at least one doctor and one nurse, which would be subject to regular inspections by the Ministry of Public Health to ensure regulatory compliance. All expatriate workers had the right to independently obtain health care without limitations and to enjoy medical treatment in Qatar.

22. **Mr. Caunhye** (Country Task Force) said that, given the concerning lack of access to education for non-Qatari children, especially those from low-income families, he would be grateful if the delegation could provide updated statistics on the percentage and number of Qatars and non-Qatars attending public and private primary schools and secondary schools, disaggregated by age, gender, disability, nationality and origin. He would appreciate information on measures taken to ensure the availability and accessibility of free primary and secondary education to all non-Qatari children, especially those from low-income migrant families. He wished to know of any efforts to develop and adopt a detailed plan of action for the progressive implementation of compulsory free education for all, in compliance with article 14 of the Covenant. He would like to hear about measures taken to remove legal and administrative barriers to the enrolment of undocumented migrant children and children of non-Qatars who did not have a Qatari identity card or residence permit. He was curious as to what measures were in place to reduce dropout rates and support the completion of secondary and higher education, in particular by non-Qatars from low-income families and by children with disabilities or learning difficulties. He would appreciate information on measures to ensure that quality preschool education was available and accessible to all children without discrimination.

23. The Committee wished to understand the impact of measures taken by the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of education and to address the linguistic and cultural needs of students whose mother tongue was not Arabic. Information would be appreciated on efforts to improve the contents of the curriculum, the availability of appropriate learning materials and the quality of teaching through suitable training programmes in languages other than Arabic, as well as to incorporate human rights into the curriculum of all schools.

24. He wished to know what had been done to address the high concentration of girls in traditionally female fields of study and to encourage the study of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) among girls.

25. He would also like to hear about what corrective measures were being taken or contemplated to rectify reported salary disparities between foreign and Qatari teachers in public schools and universities and to ensure that foreign teachers were not discriminated against on account of their nationality or origin.

26. He would like to know about measures to reduce the concerningly high rate of illiteracy among low-wage migrant workers and to provide them with professional vocational training, as well as to address illiteracy and low educational attainment among women, girls and children of migrants or from low-income families who did not attend or complete primary or secondary school. He would also appreciate information on actions to ensure that married or pregnant girls and women were not prevented from attending school. He wished to understand the impact of inclusion measures for children with disabilities, particularly children of migrants and children from disadvantaged groups, in the regular school system. He would be grateful for information, supported by statistical data disaggregated by age, sex and national origin, on students who had entered the labour market following the launch of the secondary-level vocational and technical syllabus for students with disabilities.

27. Could the delegation provide information on measures to ensure non-discriminatory access to cultural, leisure and sports facilities for all population groups, with a particular focus on migrants from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa? What steps had been taken to protect linguistic and cultural diversity and to safeguard the cultural identities of non-Qatars?

28. What policies existed for the conservation, development and dissemination of culture and science? What measures and public funding were devoted to ensuring the realization of the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, particularly for girls and women, persons with disabilities and disadvantaged groups? Could the delegation

provide information on measures to address unequal access to and use of digital technology? What steps had been taken to close the digital divide by expanding Internet access and digital connectivity to all segments of the population? What was being done to improve digital literacy, in particular for older persons, persons with disabilities and low-income families?

29. In the light of reported restrictions on public worship and the display of religious symbols by non-Muslim religious minorities – including on the basis of the Criminal Code – could the delegation provide information on measures to effectively protect religious practice, including the imparting of religious education by such minorities?

*The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.10 p.m.*

30. **Ms. Al-Muftah** (Qatar) said that Qatar respected and upheld religious freedoms and there were no explicit legal, societal, procedural or other restrictions on the right to freedom of religion. Interfaith dialogue was a pillar of Qatari foreign policy and various institutions promoted respectful interfaith dialogue. Followers of faiths other than Islam were completely free to perform religious rites and customs under the regulations in force. The Government facilitated access to essential services for all residents regardless of their religion and without any restrictions or discrimination. Any restriction of the right to freedom of worship was punishable under the Criminal Code as a criminal offence involving racism and religious insult.

31. **A representative of Qatar** said that education was considered a constitutionally protected human right. Qatar used the maximum of available resources to provide compulsory free education to all legal residents. Education occupied a key position in the Qatari National Vision 2030 and the National Development Strategy. The country had been ranked twenty-fifth worldwide in the 2017–2018 Global Competitive Index, as well as first in the Arab region and fourth worldwide in the 2021 World Education Quality Index.

32. A number of policies had been adopted to strengthen equality in education, including the establishment of national committees to increase enrolment in government schools in order to meet international and domestic targets. In the previous three years, there had been an annual increase in student enrolment. Specialized schools had been established to integrate out-of-school children. Seven new schools had been established to provide remote teaching in order to achieve higher student enrolment. Schools were flexible and supportive and endeavoured to facilitate the enrolment of pupils, including those without residence permits. Pregnant or married women had the option of attending evening classes.

33. There were comprehensive study programmes within the national curriculum promoting a culture of coexistence, tolerance and dialogue and combating hatred, violence and extremism. A memorandum of understanding had been signed between the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the National Human Rights Committee in 2019 to incorporate human rights in curricula. A guide for that purpose had been developed and disseminated to all schools in Qatar.

34. Regarding gender equality in STEM education, the Qatari Constitution upheld equality between men and women in all areas of life, and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education encouraged girls to study sciences. In 2023, 48 per cent of girls were studying science, a higher proportion than among boys. There were special science and technical schools for girls and a national strategy to increase the number of schools specializing in STEM subjects to meet labour market needs.

35. The State provided education for persons with disabilities through tailored syllabi and the establishment of inclusive schools. There were 70 such schools in Qatar, as well as specialized schools for children with intellectual disabilities, autism or visual or hearing impairments. More than 39 per cent of pupils with disabilities were enrolled in a specialized school, and there were plans to increase the number of such schools by 3 per cent over the coming years. New technical and vocational tracks had been introduced for children with disabilities in public secondary schools in order to prepare them for the labour market. Qatar had also strived to involve students with disabilities in national and international competitions and activities suited to their abilities.

36. **A representative of Qatar** said that there were no restrictions preventing certain groups from entering sports or cultural venues, and the National Human Rights Committee

had recorded no incidences of individuals being denied their right to enjoy sports and cultural activities.

37. A guide on cultural diversity had been issued in 2023, outlining the services available for individuals who faced language barriers or preferred to carry out tasks in person rather than online. Cultural rights were protected under the Constitution and had been integrated into national development programmes. The Government had ratified the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Significant financing had been earmarked for measures to strengthen the cultural sector; specific funds had been established to support sports, social and charitable activities.

38. **A representative of Qatar** said that Qatar was consistently ranked as one of the safest and most secure countries in the Arab world. A number of State bodies were responsible for identifying and addressing cases of racism, including the National Human Rights Committee and the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of the Interior. Criminal complaints relating to racism were handled by the Prosecutor General and the judiciary.

39. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government sought to ensure that cyberspace was free and safe for everyone and that all groups had the right to use the Internet, without discrimination. Digital rights had been integrated into the Qatar National Vision 2030, as part of which projects had been set up to support such rights. A legal framework had been established to protect digital rights, including a law on the protection of personal data in the digital sphere.

40. The Better Connections Programme had been launched to bridge the digital divide in the country, with support from around 500 digital entrepreneurs. It had provided Internet-equipped computers to 1.5 million migrant workers to improve their access to the digital world. More than 15,000 computers had been refurbished by some 700 volunteers. Unemployed women had been given the technological equipment they needed to pursue remote employment opportunities. Equipment had also been distributed to persons with disabilities. Other programmes were in place to bridge generational gaps in digital access.

41. The SafeSpace platform had been created to improve cybersecurity, focusing on prevention, protection and empowerment. It had 250,000 subscribers and was available in Arabic and English. It offered awareness-raising activities and educational material on human rights in the digital age.

42. **Ms. Al-Muftah** (Qatar) said that the Government had given effect to several resolutions of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council on raising awareness of human rights. Her country was home to the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, which was mandated to run human rights training and awareness-raising activities with partners in the region.

43. The Government had adopted a number of laws providing for freedom of religion, banning the publication of any material promoting sectarianism or religious sedition and prohibiting the depiction of any community in a derogatory or racist way.

44. **Ms. Ravenberg** (Country Task Force) said that she would appreciate an answer to the question she had raised the previous day regarding whether steps had been taken to ensure that stateless individuals and undocumented migrants had access to essential health-care services.

45. She would like to know what had been done to tackle non-communicable diseases, which were estimated to be behind 66 per cent of deaths in the State party.

46. The delegation might describe the measures taken to ensure that all Qatari women, whether married or unmarried, had access to sexual and reproductive health services and were able to receive treatment without needing to provide a marriage certificate or obtain permission from a male guardian.

47. **Mr. Windfuhr** said that he would like to know whether the housing and free medication provided to migrant workers was financed by the Government or the workers' employers.

48. He would be interested to hear whether the significant labour reforms introduced by the State party had been the subject of contentious debate and whether it had been difficult to reach a consensus on the matter.

49. **Mr. Caunhye** said that it was his understanding that many non-Qatari children lacked access to free schooling or, in the case of undocumented children, to any schooling at all. The extent of that problem was unclear. He would welcome information on any adjustments made to the curriculum for non-Arabic-speaking children and on whether teachers had been trained to ensure delivery of a high-quality education to such children.

50. He would be grateful for a reply to his earlier question regarding the steps taken to ensure that foreign teachers received the same salary as their Qatari counterparts.

51. He wondered why pregnant women were required to attend evening classes to continue their education, rather than being able to participate freely in the standard education system.

52. **Mr. Nonthasoot** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would be grateful for an answer to the questions put to the delegation the previous day on whether the wage protection system covered domestic workers and whether labour inspectors had the mandate to inspect the workplaces of such workers.

53. He wished to commend the State party on its decision to treat drug use as a disease and on its efforts to establish a dedicated treatment centre and a national committee to combat drugs. It would be interesting to hear how effective that system had been.

54. He had received information that the number of individuals serving prison sentences for drug-related offences had stood at around 1,900 in 2021; he wondered how effective the State party had been in diverting drug users away from the criminal justice system and into harm reduction and treatment programmes.

55. **Ms. Al-Muftah** (Qatar) said that all individuals in Qatar had the right to access health care and education, without discrimination. Anyone in need of medical care, whether urgent or non-urgent, would receive treatment without being required to present official identity documents.

56. Teachers in Qatar received regular human rights training. The country was home to children of more than 120 nationalities, which meant that it was not feasible to adapt the curriculum to the specific needs of each child. Respect for cultural diversity was promoted at all levels of education and in extracurricular activities.

57. **A representative of Qatar** said that the principle of equality was enshrined in the Constitution, in line with the Covenant and other international instruments. Women required the permission of a male guardian for certain medical procedures, but not for emergency care. Women had the right to access sexual and reproductive health care throughout the country with full respect for their independence and for patient confidentiality. However, the husband's permission was needed for sexual and reproductive health interventions, particularly those involving the termination of pregnancy.

58. **A representative of Qatar** said that under sharia, men were considered the guardians of their children because they were breadwinners and responsible for providing for their children's needs. However, in his country, mothers could initiate legal proceedings to gain sole guardianship over their children if the father did not fulfil his responsibilities. Women had health cards and could authorize health care for their children.

59. **A representative of Qatar** said that the provision of detoxification centres was regulated in law. Access to the centres was upon request from the individual, their guardian or a close associate. The centres followed modern treatment models and the severity of the addiction was taken into account.

60. Under legislation on drug trafficking, enforcement of the law was a priority. Of the 1,900 prisoners mentioned by Mr. Nonthasoot, 1,822 were serving sentences for non-drug-related offences.

61. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government provided housing for workers. Under the labour legislation, employers had to pay their workers at least QR 500 per month.

That amount was higher for skilled workers. Towns where workers lived in decent conditions were built by private companies in line with occupational safety and health standards. The Government provided incentives for building such towns by allocating land free of charge and facilitating the operational side of the construction. If enterprises did not pay workers the legal minimum wage on the grounds that their accommodation was free of charge, they were prosecuted by the State.

62. **A representative of Qatar** said that private schools for non-nationals promoted diversity in the education system by bringing together pupils from different cultures. The schools were often funded by embassies and various languages of instruction were used.

63. **Ms. Al-Muftah** (Qatar) said that the wages of Qatari teachers were governed by different regulations to those of non-Qatari teachers. Employers were obliged to provide comprehensive social security benefits to their workers, including by paying for any health-care costs. The minimum wage was applied for domestic workers.

64. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Ministry of Education invested in teacher training, including in-service training. Training programmes that were consistent with international standards were developed in coordination with teachers' trade unions. In public schools, where the language of instruction was Arabic, 51.6 per cent of pupils were non-Qatari. Technical and vocational schools had been established to improve capacity.

65. **A representative of Qatar** said that labour inspections were not conducted in homes to verify that the rights of domestic workers were being respected. However, those workers could lodge official complaints if they considered that they had been the victim of an offence. An investigation would subsequently be conducted and the provisions of the Criminal Code would be applied.

66. **A representative of Qatar** said that sexual and reproductive health services were provided in all health centres. It was mandatory to provide pregnant women with information on sexual and reproductive health during pregnancy and after childbirth. Regular screening for breast and cervical cancer was provided in all health centres.

67. **Mr. Windfuhr** said that, according to the National Human Rights Committee, the Publications and Publishing Act No. 8 (1979) provided for administrative control over artistic and cultural activities without the oversight of the judiciary. He would like the delegation to elaborate on that point and indicate whether some oversight of administrative decisions might be considered.

68. **Ms. Al-Muftah** (Qatar) said that the Publications and Publishing Act was still under review by the relevant ministry. The amendments had not yet been presented to the Council of Ministers or the Shura Council.

69. **Mr. Nonthasoot**, thanking the delegation for the constructive dialogue, said that the State party had made good progress in fulfilling its obligations under the Covenant. Opportunities for improvement included the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Covenant and of other international instruments, as well as the adoption of a comprehensive legal framework against discrimination.

70. **Ms. Al-Muftah** (Qatar) said that Qatari nationals were a minority in their own country not for political reasons, but because Qatar was a particularly welcoming country.

71. The Committee's remarks and recommendations would inform national strategies and policies. Efforts would be made to build capacities to implement the Covenant and raise awareness. The Committee was encouraged to consider the specificities of different States parties in its work.

*The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 5.30 p.m.*