



**Convention on the Rights  
of Persons with Disabilities**

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**Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**Consideration of reports submitted by States  
parties under article 35 of the Convention**

**Initial reports of States parties due in 2010**

**Qatar\***

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## Introduction

1. Qatar has the honour to submit this initial report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under article 35, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and in accordance with the Committee's guidelines. Qatar, which acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 13 May 2008, reaffirms its commitment to the principles and purposes of the Convention. The present report details the measures taken by Qatar to implement the Convention.

2. The report comprises three parts:

- Part I: Basic information about Qatar: land and population; constitutional, political and legal structure of the State; and general framework for the protection and promotion of human rights;
- Part II: Information on measures relating to the implementation of articles 1 to 33 of the Convention in Qatar;
- Part III: Challenges and future directions.

3. This is a joint national report prepared by a national committee established pursuant to a decision adopted by the Council of Ministers at its twenty-eighth ordinary meeting in 2010. Presided over by the Office of Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the committee comprised various government stakeholders, specifically the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Supreme Education Council, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, the Supreme Council for Health and the Shafallah Centre. In accordance with treaty body recommendations, the present report was transmitted to the National Human Rights Committee for comment and feedback. In submitting this initial report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Qatar affirms its willingness to cooperate fully with the Committee and respond to any questions or requests for clarification in connection with the implementation of the Convention. Qatar wishes the Committee continuing success in its endeavours to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

4. This report was prepared shortly after the State had compiled and submitted its national report on the human rights situation in Qatar, in accordance with article 5 (e) of General Assembly resolution 60/251 on the establishment of the Human Rights Council and with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 on institution-building. In that report, the State sought to give a comprehensive and transparent account of the human rights situation in Qatar and the progress achieved on the ground, and to highlight the difficulties and challenges encountered by the State in working towards the greater realization of those rights in the required manner, as well as intended future steps, including the ratification of various instruments to which Qatar is not yet a party.

## I. Basic information about Qatar: Land and population; constitutional, political and legal structure of the State; general framework for the promotion and protection of human rights

### A. Basic information about Qatar: Land and population

#### (1) Geographical location and topography

5. Qatar is a peninsula located 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 northwards, covering a total surface area of 11,521 km<sup>2</sup>. The territory includes several islands and rocky hills and the shallow waters along the shores of the country's best-known islands: Halul, Shara'uh, Ashat, Bushayriyah, Aliyah and Safiliyah. The peninsula is 185 km long and 85 km wide. It is mostly surrounded by the waters of the Arabian Gulf and its land border with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is approximately 60 km long. The United Arab Emirates lies to the east of Qatar. Qatari territorial waters extend roughly 95 miles eastwards and 51 miles northwards into the Arabian Gulf, occupying a surface area of around 10,500 km<sup>2</sup>.

6. The terrain is rocky and flat with some low-rising outcrops in the Dukhan area in the west and the Jabal Fuwayrit area in the north. It features numerous inlets, coves, depressions and surface rainwater-draining basins, known as rawdat, which are found in the north and centre of the peninsula. These areas have the most fertile soil and are rich in natural vegetation.

#### (2) Population

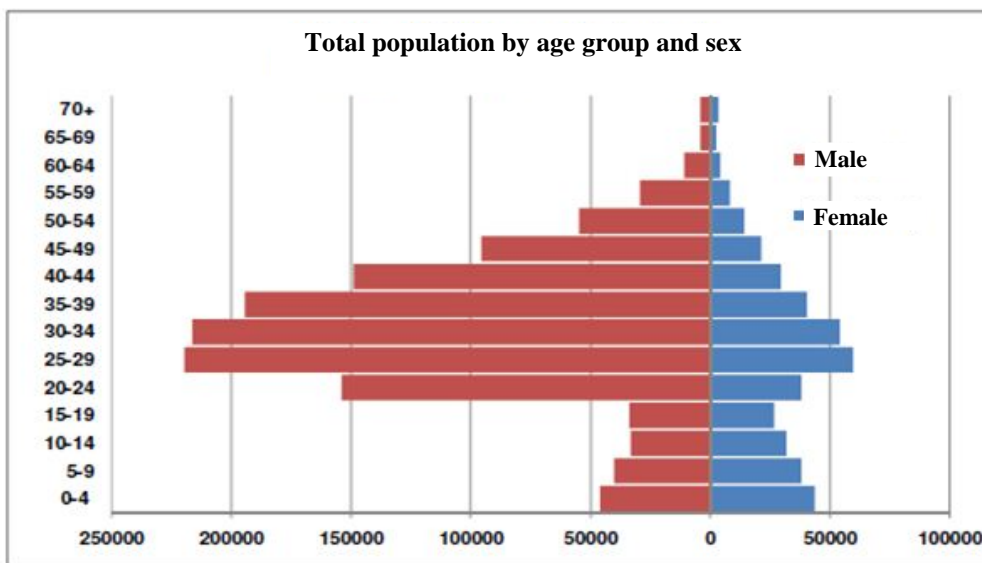
7. As at 31 December 2011, Qatar had a population of 1,707,756 persons, comprising 1,271,194 males (74.4 per cent) and 414,696 females (25.56 per cent). The high number of males is explained by the fact that most of the country's inhabitants are migrant workers, the majority of whom are males. Table 1 sets out sex-disaggregated data on population growth in Qatar from 1986 to 2010, while figure 1 shows the population pyramid for Qatar.

Table 1  
Population growth in Qatar by sex

<i>Year</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
1986	250 095	122 336	<b>372 431</b>
1997	342 459	179 564	<b>522 023</b>
2004	496 382	247 647	<b>744 029</b>
2010	1 284 739	414 696	<b>1 699 435</b>

*Source:* Qatar Statistics Authority, 2010 census.

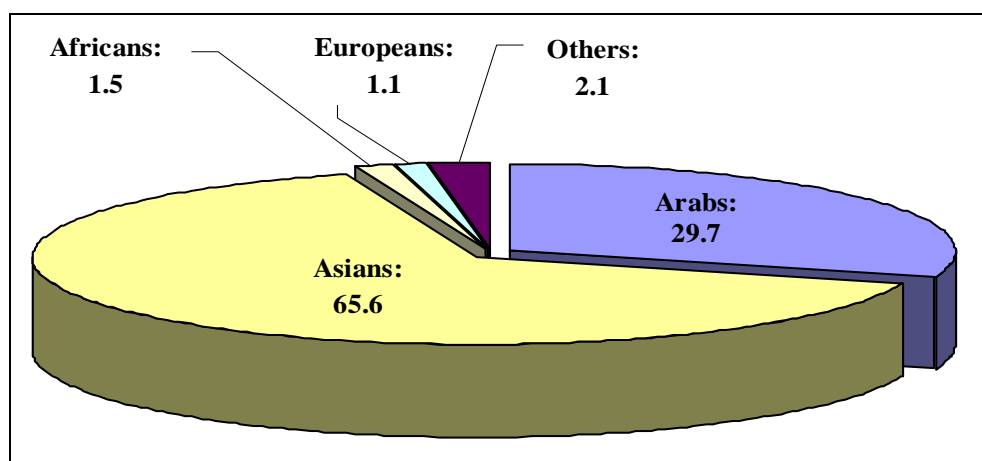
Figure 1  
**Population pyramid for 2010**



Source: Qatar Statistics Authority, 2010 census.

8. Arabic is the official language in Qatar. Qataris are followers of Islam and the vast majority are Sunni Muslims. Other faith groups are also present, as Qatar receives large numbers of workers every year in order to meet the requirements of its ambitious development plans at various levels and in numerous spheres. Accounting for over four fifths of the country’s population, these migrant workers come from different parts of the world with diverse faiths, cultures and lifestyles and live side by side. The country’s experience has shown that the high percentage of migrants and their wide range of nationalities, religions and cultures pose no barrier to the positive coexistence of the various segments of society. Indeed, Qatari society is now a model for the coexistence of persons of different faiths and cultures.

Figure 2  
**Diversity of groups in Qatar in 2009**



Source: State of Qatar, 2010: State plan for the Alliance of Civilizations, Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilizations, 2010.

**(3) Historical overview**

9. The Al Thani family has ruled Qatar ever since the early eighteenth century. Sheikh Jasim bin Mohammad Al Thani, who ruled the country from 1878 to 1913, was the founder of the modern State of Qatar. Every year on 18 December, the date on which Sheikh Jasim acceded to power, Qatar celebrates its national day. In 1916, as a result of the outbreak of the First World War and its consequences, the State signed a treaty with the United Kingdom providing for the protection of Qatari territory and nationals. The United Kingdom's influence in Qatar was limited to administrative oversight in certain spheres until Qatar gained independence in 1971.

10. Since 1995, when His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani took up the reins of power, Qatar has experienced comprehensive development in all sectors. His Highness the Amir has worked to complete the construction of a modern State by strengthening the role of consultation and democracy and by engaging citizens in deciding their own affairs and formulating their country's policies. Pursuant to Amiri Decree No. 11 of 1999, a committee was established to draft the Permanent Constitution, which was finalized in 2002. In April 2003, the Qatari people, both men and women, took part in a referendum on the Constitution, which was approved by 96.64 per cent of all Qataris entitled to vote. His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the beloved Amir, also recently announced that the first elections of the Advisory Council would take place in the second half of 2013.

11. His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the beloved Amir, issued Decree No. 44 of 2008 adopting the Qatar National Vision 2030, which offers a comprehensive view of development aimed at transforming Qatar into an advanced State capable of achieving sustainable development. The National Vision is based on the principles enunciated in the Constitution and the guidelines provided by the political leadership for the establishment of a society founded on justice, benevolence, equality, the protection of public freedoms and moral and religious values and traditions, the achievement of equality of opportunity and the consolidation of security and stability.

12. The National Vision is built on four pillars, the first of which concerns human development for enabling the population to sustain a prosperous society. The second concerns social development for a just and safe society that is founded on high moral values, provides social well-being and is able to communicate and interact with other communities. The third pillar is economic development for building a competitive and diversified national economy capable of meeting the needs of citizens. The fourth pillar is environmental development for harmonizing socioeconomic development with environmental protection. The National Vision also defines general future directions and the preparation of implementation strategies and plans.

13. The National Development Strategy for the period 2011–2016 was the culmination of in-depth consultations, discussions and analyses undertaken by stakeholders from the governmental and private sectors and civil society organizations. Covering 14 sectors, including health, education, training, workforce, family cohesion and social protection, the Strategy comprises a series of initiatives, programmes and projects, some of which relate to persons with disabilities.

**(4) Socioeconomic indicators**

14. The latest statistics show that Qatar is going through a remarkable phase in its history, making rapid progress as it is towards the achievement of full and comprehensive development. Indeed, Qatar has attained unprecedented rates of economic growth and prosperity: gross domestic product (GDP) increased by between 7.6 per cent and 26.8 per cent annually during the period 2004–2009 (at constant 2004 prices). In addition,

general government spending has increased: the State budget grew from around US\$ 95 billion between 2009 and 2010 to US\$ 127.5 billion between 2010 and 2011. Qatar is among the countries with a very high level of human development, ranking thirty-third in the world according to the human development index contained in the Human Development Report 2009 published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This new ranking reflects the considerable and sustained progress achieved by Qatar in the area of human development. The report shows that Qatar's human development index score jumped from 0.875 to 0.910 as a result of advances made in education, health and GDP. It also indicates that the illiteracy rate fell to 6.9 per cent and that the school enrolment ratio rose to 80.4 per cent from 77.7 per cent in the previous year. In the field of health, life expectancy increased from 75 years in the previous year to 75.5 years. The report further indicated that Qatar's per capita income rose sharply to US\$ 74,882 in 2009.

15. Qatar does its utmost to assess progress made towards attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Issued in August 2010, the most recent of its three reports on the subject shows that it has achieved most of the Goals and made tangible progress on those yet to be achieved. The key findings of the third report are as follows:

- There are no instances of poverty (inhabitants with an income of less than US\$ 1 per day);
- In 2011, workers accounted for 47 per cent of the total population, down from no higher than 60 per cent in 2004;
- During the period 2006–2010, the net enrolment ratio in primary education ranged between 92 per cent and 94 per cent for males and between 91 per cent and 93 per cent for females;
- In 2010, 96 per cent of males and 98 per cent of females between the ages of 15 and 24 knew how to read and write;
- Qatari women accounted for 82 per cent of the total number of students enrolled in Qatar University in the 2009/10 academic year;
- In 2010, the ratio of females to males in the 15–24 age group who knew how to read and write was 102 per cent;
- Women's participation in economic activity rose from 30.3 per cent in 2004 to 34.1 per cent in 2011;
- The neonatal mortality rate fell from 5.50 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 4.6 in 2010;
- The under-5 mortality rate dropped from 10.4 per 1,000 live births in 2008 to 8.5 in 2010;
- Ninety-eight per cent of children aged 1 year and over were vaccinated against measles in 2010;
- One hundred per cent of births now take place under medical supervision;
- The total fertility rate fell from 3.9 children per Qatari woman in 2005 to 3.6 in 2010;
- The number of births among Qatari women in the 15–19 age group fell to 12 per 1,000 in 2009, down from 43 per 1,000 in 1986, 21 per 1,000 in 1997 and 13 per 1,000 in 2004;
- No cases of HIV/AIDS were recorded among the 15–29 age group in 2009;



- The incidence of malaria fell from 18.98 per 100,000 population in 2007 to 14.91 in 2009;
- One hundred per cent of the population has access to safe drinking water;
- One hundred per cent of the population has access to safe sanitation facilities;
- There are no deprived districts or marginalized population groups;
- During the period 2005–2009, development assistance amounted to approximately US\$ 2.01 billion overall, accounting for 0.49 per cent of total GDP on average for the same period.

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

### **(1) Permanent Constitution of Qatar**

16. In 2004, with the aim of completing the framework for the development of democratic governance, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, following the conduct of a popular referendum, promulgated the Permanent Constitution of Qatar in order to strengthen the foundations of Qatari society and bring about 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 the separation of powers, the primacy of the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and the guarantee of fundamental rights and freedoms.

17. Part I of the Constitution, concerning the State and the basis of government, affirms that the State religion is Islam and that sharia is the main source of law.

18. 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 opportunities, solidarity and fellowship among citizens. It emphasizes the role of the family, which it considers to be the foundation of society, built on religion, morality and patriotism. It defines the State's obligations towards the family and shows concern for young persons, stating that they must be shielded from immorality, exploitation and the evils of physical, mental and spiritual neglect and that conditions favourable to the development of their potential must be provided.

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

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

### **(2) Organization of powers**

21. In Qatar, the key principle behind the organization of powers is that the people are the source of power, which they exercise in accordance with the Constitution. The system of government is based on the separation of powers and the fullest cooperation among them. Legislative power is vested in the Advisory Council, executive power in the Amir, assisted by the Council of Ministers, and judicial power in the courts. Part IV of the Constitution is devoted to the organization of powers. Its main points are summarized below.

(a) *The Amir*

22. The Amir of Qatar is the Head of State. His person is inviolable and he must be respected by all. He is Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and represents the State at home and abroad and in all international relations. He also concludes treaties and conventions by decree and transmits them to the Advisory Council. Once ratified and published in the Official Gazette, these instruments acquire the force of law. The Amir draws up the general policy of the State, with assistance from the Council of Ministers, and ratifies and promulgates laws. He establishes, organizes and defines the functions of ministries and other government bodies, likewise establishing, organizing and defining the functions of consultative bodies that assist and advise him in the task of guiding and overseeing the major policies of the State. He also performs such other functions as are regulated by the Constitution or law.

(b) *The legislature*

23. As provided for in the Constitution, the Advisory Council is vested with the power to legislate, approve the general budget and exercise oversight of the executive branch. In accordance with article 77 of the Permanent Constitution, the idea of having two chambers, one elected and the other appointed, was not taken on board. The chosen option was instead that of a single chamber comprising both elected and appointed members but with the elected members forming a clear majority. Article 77 of the Constitution states that the Advisory Council consists of 45 members, two thirds of whom are elected by direct, secret, universal suffrage. The other third are appointed by the Amir.

(c) *The executive*

24. The Council of Ministers assists the Amir in performing his functions and exercising his powers in accordance with the Constitution and the law. In its capacity as a supreme executive body, the Council of Ministers manages all internal and external affairs falling within its purview pursuant to the Constitution and the law. It is charged with proposing laws and decrees to be tabled before the Advisory Council for discussion. If approved, the texts are transmitted to the Amir for ratification and promulgation in accordance with the Constitution. Among other functions, the Council of Ministers also adopts regulations and decisions drawn up by ministries, oversees law enforcement and monitors the conduct of the Government's financial and administrative affairs.

(d) *The judiciary*

25. The Constitution espouses the principle of the rule of law, with article 129 stating that: "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 provides: "The judiciary is independent and judicial power is vested in the courts of various kinds and levels." Article 131 states: "Judges are independent and are subject to no authority other than the law and there can be no interference in legal proceedings or in the administration of justice." Article 137 states: "The judiciary shall have a supreme council to oversee the conduct of work of the courts and their auxiliary bodies. The composition, powers and functions of the council shall be prescribed by law."

26. In accordance with the Judiciary Act No. 10 of 2003, as amended, the courts in Qatar comprise the Court of Cassation, the Court of Appeal and the Court of First Instance. The Supreme Judicial Council was established under article 22 of the Act in order to work for the independence of the judiciary. Article 23 of the Act spells out the Council's functions, which are to comment on matters 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 judicial complaints, concerning which its decisions are final.

27. The Qatari Constitution also provides for centralized oversight of the constitutionality of laws, an approach espoused in most modern constitutions inasmuch as it primarily achieves the balance of powers. Hence, the Constitutional Court settles disputes relating to the constitutionality of laws and regulations, either at its own initiative or at the request of a party to the proceedings. Its judgements and decisions on the matter are final, unappealable and binding on all parties and authorities in the State. Promulgated with a view to promoting the independence of the judiciary, the Judicial Disputes (Settlement) Act No. 7 of 2007 recognizes abuse of authority as grounds for the reversal of an administrative decision or for the award of compensation.

28. The Office of the Public Prosecutor is an independent judicial body charged with bringing proceedings on behalf of society. It oversees criminal investigations and monitors law enforcement. It initiates and pursues criminal proceedings, taking all measures relating thereto in accordance with law. It also has powers to carry out investigations and bring charges.

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

### **(1) Constitutional protection of human rights**

29. Ever since assuming the reins of power and embracing a policy of comprehensive reform, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani has sought to place the matter of human rights at the centre of constitutional, political, economic, social and cultural reforms, a concern reflected in the measures taken to develop and strengthen the human rights infrastructure at the legislative and institutional levels. Part III of the Constitution (arts. 34–58) is devoted to fundamental rights and freedoms, adopting the principle that rights are universal, interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. It thus guarantees economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights on an equal basis. Fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution include but are not limited to equality before the law; prohibition of discrimination; personal liberty; criminalization of torture; press freedom and freedom of expression; freedom of association; freedom of worship; the right to work; and the right to education. The Constitution affirms that these rights must be neither regulated nor modified in such a way as to curtail or diminish them. Article 146 provides that: “Provisions concerning public rights and freedoms may be amended only for the purpose of affording additional safeguards for the benefit of citizens.”

### **(2) Legal safeguards for human rights**

30. The fundamental human rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution have been strengthened through the enactment of various pieces of domestic legislation, such as:

- Act No. 1 of 1994 concerning juveniles;
- Act No. 38 of 1995 concerning social security;
- Act No. 7 of 1996 regulating medical treatment and health services in Qatar;
- Act No. 25 of 2001 concerning compulsory education;
- Act No. 24 of 2002 concerning retirement and pensions;
- Act No. 10 of 2003 promulgating the Judicial Authority Act;
- Act No. 2 of 2004 concerning persons with special needs;

- Act No. 11 of 2004 promulgating the Criminal Code;
- Act No. 12 of 2004 concerning private associations and institutions;
- Act No. 14 of 2004 promulgating the Labour Code;
- Act No. 18 of 2004 concerning public meetings and processions;
- Act No. 22 of 2004 promulgating the Civil Code;
- Act No. 23 of 2004 promulgating the Code of Criminal Procedure;
- Act No. 40 of 2004 concerning custodianship of the assets of minors;
- Minister for Civil Service and Housing Affairs Decision No. 15 of 2005 concerning activities in which minors may not be employed;
- Act No. 22 of 2005 prohibiting the recruitment, employment, training and participation of children in camel racing;
- Act No. 38 of 2005 concerning Qatari nationality;
- Act No. 21 of 2006 concerning private associations of public benefit;
- Act No. 22 of 2006 promulgating the Family Code;
- Act No. 2 of 2007 concerning the housing scheme;
- Act No. 17 of 2007 concerning priorities and rules for access to the housing scheme;
- Council of Ministers Decision No. 18 of 2007 concerning priorities and rules for access to the housing scheme for disadvantaged persons;
- Act No. 12 of 2008 establishing the Supreme Constitutional Court;
- Act No. 19 of 2008 determining the amount of blood money (diyah) payable for manslaughter;
- Act No. 3 of 2009 regulating penal and correctional institutions;
- Act No. 4 of 2009 regulating the entry, exit, residence and sponsorship of migrant workers;
- Act No. 15 of 2011 combating human trafficking.

**(3) Accession to international human rights treaties**

31. With a view to strengthening the legislative framework for the realization of human rights, Qatar has acceded to and ratified numerous international and regional human rights treaties and conventions, as follows:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1976);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1995);
- International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 29 concerning forced or compulsory labour (1998);
- 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);

- ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour (2000);
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2002);
- ILO Convention No. 138 concerning minimum age for entry into employment (2005);
- ILO Convention No. 105 concerning the abolition of forced labour (2007);
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008);
- United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2008);
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Palermo Protocol) (2009);
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2009);
- At the regional level: Qatar has ratified the Arab Charter on Human Rights (2009).

32. Article 68 of the Constitution provides that the Amir concludes treaties and conventions by decree and transmits them to the Advisory Council, together with an appropriate statement. The treaty or convention will have the force of law once it has been ratified and published in the Official Gazette. The human rights treaties to which the State has acceded have all been published in the Official Gazette.

**(4) Institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights**

33. The State's concern for human rights has been borne out by the establishment of various governmental and non-governmental institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, which are universal, interrelated and indivisible. At the governmental level, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and a number of ministerial human rights departments have been created. Private institutions of public benefit have been established in addition, such as the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking and the Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women. At the non-governmental level, the National Human Rights Committee and several civil society organizations dealing with human rights and development issues have been established. Furthermore, in the light of the country's booming economy and flourishing development, the role of Ministry of Labour in ensuring the required protection for migrant workers was augmented with the promulgation of Amiri Decree No. 35 of 2009 concerning the organizational structure of the Ministry of Labour, pursuant to which the following three labour departments were established:

- The Department of Employment: Issues, renews and cancels work permits in accordance with the provisions of the law and maintains a database on migrant workers in coordination with the relevant departments;
- The Labour Relations Department: Receives and considers labour-related complaints and disputes; resolves them amicably or otherwise refers them to the courts; raises awareness among workers of the provisions of the Labour Code; and provides related advice;
- The Labour Inspectorate: Periodically inspects workplaces in order to verify compliance with the Labour Code and its implementing decisions; checks that employers are making regular wage payments; and carries out monitoring and follow-up to ensure that occupational health and safety measures are in place to protect workers from occupational hazards.

**Ministry of Social Affairs – Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities**

34. The Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities was established pursuant to Amiri Decree No. 40 of 2009 concerning the organizational structure of the Ministry of Social Affairs. In accordance with article 14 of the Decree, the Department's functions are as follows:

- To contribute to the implementation of national strategies, plans and policies relating to persons with disabilities and older persons;
- To develop and carry out programmes and services for the care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and older persons, in cooperation with relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions;
- To raise awareness and educate the public about the rights of persons with disabilities and older persons and implement training programmes for those who work with them, in cooperation with relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions;
- To join in representing the State at conferences and workshops to discuss issues relating to persons with disabilities and older persons;
- To organize seminars and conferences and workshops to discuss issues relating to persons with disabilities and older persons.

**Supreme Council for Family Affairs**

35. The establishment of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs by Amiri Decree No. 53 of 1998 reflects the long-standing official concern to create a high-level national body for dealing with the family, its needs and its future aspirations. Amiri Decree No. 15 of 2009, which regulates the Supreme Council, was promulgated in support of that approach and in keeping with the overall vision of development articulated in the Qatar National Vision 2030, placing the Council under the direct authority of His Highness the Amir and providing that it must be composed of a president, a vice-president and between five and seven members appointed by Amiri decree. The Council is currently headed by Her Excellency Sheikha Hessa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

36. As the supreme authority in charge of all family-related matters, the Council aims to promote the status of the family and its role in society, work for the advancement of families and their members, and safeguard families as strong and cohesive units that care for children and uphold moral and religious values and the highest ideals. The Council exercises all the necessary powers and functions to that end, including those needed to develop strategies, policies and programmes for improving the quality of life for families and their members and for guaranteeing family security and stability; accomplish the goals set out in international instruments relating to family matters; follow up all efforts to implement international instruments relating to family matters and to the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities to which Qatar is a party; provide input on draft conventions on the protection of the family and family members; build women's capacities and empower women to participate in economic and political life, particularly in decision-making; increase employment opportunities for Qatari women; support women in their professional lives; propose draft legislation relevant to the family and its members; cooperate with international and regional bodies and organizations concerned with matters affecting families and their members; represent Qatar in regional and international conferences and committees dealing with issues that affect the family, children, women and persons with disabilities; organize conferences, seminars and panel discussions; and conduct research on family-related topics.

37. The Council attaches considerable importance to coordination and cooperation with all governmental agencies and to the support and engagement of civil society organizations. It affords particular attention to volunteer work, encouraging the involvement of the private sector and an effective contribution from target groups, namely, families, children, women, young persons, persons with disabilities and older persons.

38. In addition to the legislative measures that it has helped to implement as part of the State's fulfilment of its international human rights obligations, the Council has taken numerous executive decisions. During her presidency of the Council, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser established a number of public benefit foundations that have played a part in promoting and protecting the rights of the groups with which they are concerned, namely: the Shafallah Centre for Children with Special Needs, founded in 2001; the Cultural Centre for Maternity and Childhood, founded in 2003; the Family Counselling Centre, founded in 2003; the Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women, founded in 2003; the Qatar Foundation for the Care of Orphans, founded in 2003; the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking, established in 2005; the Social Rehabilitation Centre, established by the Supreme Council for Family Affairs in 2007; and the Qatar Foundation for the Care of Older Persons, established in 2003.

#### **Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking**

39. Set up in 2005, the Office of the National Coordinator for Combating Human Trafficking was replaced in 2008 by the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking, a private institution of public benefit engaged in making policy proposals, developing national action plans and promoting laws to combat human trafficking. It also supervises the Qatar Home for Shelter and Humanitarian Care, which was established in 2003 by a decision of the Council of Ministers to provide assistance and protection for victims of trafficking and work for their social rehabilitation and reintegration. The Foundation has run information and awareness campaigns targeting all sectors of society in order to alert them to the different aspects of human trafficking. It has also produced numerous publications and organized meetings and discussions. With respect to capacity-building, the Foundation has worked with stakeholders to organize training courses and workshops, chiefly for law enforcement officers, on trafficking and victim identification. In cooperation and coordination with the Department of Labour, it has launched awareness campaigns focused on migrant workers in Qatar. It has also published a multilingual handbook for migrant workers.

#### **Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women**

40. The Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women was established as a private institution pursuant to the Private Associations and Institutions Act No. 8 of 1998. It was subsequently turned into a private institution of public benefit pursuant to Supreme Council for Family Affairs Decision No. 4 of 2007. The overall goal of the Foundation is to protect target groups from violence in the family and society and to deal with the problems that result from such violence. In particular, the Foundation's objectives are to:

- Assist in providing shelter and integrated care for target groups;
- Protect target groups from deviant practices in the family and in society;
- Raise awareness of the social and legal aspects of human rights among target groups, families and communities;
- Provide legal assistance to those in the target groups who are without means;
- Assist and rehabilitate victims of violence in the target groups and reintegrate them into society.

41. The Foundation provides social services such as guidance and counselling, in addition to a full range of reintegration and rehabilitation services and programmes for victims of abuse and violence. It also provides legal services, such as legal assistance, and psychological health services, such as testing and cognitive-behavioural and support-group psychotherapy for victims and, as necessary, for other concerned parties. A special office catering to women and children has been opened at the Capital Security Department to make it easier for them to report complaints and have them acted upon and for victims to be put in contact with the police so that they can be protected from violence, abuse and threatening behaviour. Since 19 July 2009, the Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women has been in charge of this office, which it has staffed with its own female social workers, who attend to victims and deliver all of the aforementioned services provided by the Foundation.

42. The Foundation has established a number of facilities such as Dar al-Aman, a shelter where homeless child and women victims of abuse and violence can stay for a certain time until their situation is resolved. It additionally provides psychosocial rehabilitation services for victims. In 2011, the Foundation took in 30 children and 42 women. In July 2010, it also opened an office in the accident and emergency department at Hamad General Hospital, working in coordination with the competent authorities in order to provide support, protection and follow-up for child and women victims of abuse and violence who turn up at the hospital. In 2011, the office dealt with the cases of 344 children and 452 women. The Foundation additionally opened a special office in the Capital Security Department. With respect to training, the Foundation has held a number of seminars, workshops and courses for those working in the education, health and civilian sectors. It has also organized and conducted several awareness and education campaigns to promote a culture of protection in society and publicize its own hotlines. It produces various booklets, pamphlets and publications, such as the magazine *Aman*.

#### **Qatar Foundation for the Care of Older Persons**

43. The overall aim of this Foundation, a private institution of public benefit, is to play a part in ensuring a decent life for older persons in Qatar and in developing an integrated system catering to every aspect of their needs, including through the delivery of care in the home or in hospital, the provision of sheltered housing and the organization of clubs. Its particular objectives are to:

- Provide sheltered housing for older persons whose families are unable to care for them or who have no family to take on that role;
- Deliver appropriate health and psychosocial care services for older persons;
- Provide care services for older persons in their homes and in the family setting;
- Sensitize families to the need to take care of older persons and provide guidance concerning the best ways of doing so;
- Teach older persons to address and adjust to problems associated with older age;
- Promote the social integration of older persons through personalized assistance.

44. Social services offered by the Foundation include those of:

- Studying and following up cases of older persons of both sexes;
- Making home visits and continuously following up cases officially discharged from the Foundation;
- Working to strengthen relations between older persons and their families;
- Delivering social activities and programmes;



- Providing sheltered housing for older persons of both sexes on a permanent, temporary or intermittent basis.
45. Other health care services offered by the Foundation include:
- Monitoring the diet of in-patients;
  - Providing essential treatment and medication;
  - Involving the health team in drawing up and implementing treatment plans.
46. The Foundation also provides the following physiotherapy services:
- Testing and diagnosis for all age-related diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease, osteoporosis, rheumatism and hemiplegia;
  - Use of assistive equipment and devices as part of treatment;
  - Development of a weekly group activity plan for older persons who are able to participate;
  - Involvement of the Foundation's other sections in devising leisure programmes for older persons.

#### **National Human Rights Committee**

47. The National Human Rights Committee was established by Amiri Decree No. 38 of 2002 as an independent national body for the promotion and protection of human rights. The objectives of the Committee are to:

- Promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Enrich and propagate a culture of human rights derived from the Islamic sharia and all international human rights instruments;
- Work for the promotion and realization of all rights and freedoms set forth in the Permanent Constitution of Qatar;
- Eliminate all violations to which persons under the jurisdiction of Qatar may be subjected;
- Develop relations and forms of cooperation between the Committee and all international, regional and local organizations, whether governmental or non-governmental.

48. Under Decree Law No. 38 of 2002, the Committee was accorded many of the functions referred to in the Paris Principles. Given that the country's human rights infrastructure and civil society were both new at that time, the Committee was composed of seven members from government bodies and five from civil society, in accordance with article 3 of the Decree Law. It must be said that Decree Law No. 38 of 2002 was subsequently amended by Decree Law No. 25 of 2006 in order to ensure consistency and compatibility with the Paris Principles. As a result, the Committee now comprises a minimum of seven members of civil society and five representatives of government bodies, who have no voting rights. For the purposes of ensuring transparency and raising public awareness of human rights, the Committee publishes its annual reports on its website ([www.nhrc-qa.org](http://www.nhrc-qa.org)). The Government pays due attention to the Committee's recommendations and takes measures to act on them. The Committee's terms of reference were also amended by Decree Law No. 17 of 2010 regulating the organization of the Committee, which received A status accreditation in 2010 from the Geneva-based International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

**Shafallah Centre**

49. The Shafallah Centre for Children with Special Needs was opened in 1999 at the behest of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, wife of His Highness the Amir, in response to requests from Qatari society for the establishment of a pioneering and non-profit integrated specialist centre catering to children from the age of birth to 27 years who have mild or moderate intellectual disabilities or autism. The Shafallah Centre is a private institution of public benefit subject to the provisions of Decree Law No. 21 of 2006 concerning such institutions. Operating under its aegis are the Shafallah Centre for Children with Special Needs, the Noor Institute, the Shafallah Medical Genetics Centre and Best Buddies Qatar. Through a specialized medical team, the Centre offers educational and support facilities in the areas of special education, rehabilitation, social services, child and adult psychotherapy, cognitive assessment, behavioural analysis, counselling, music therapy, functional therapy, physiotherapy and therapy for speech and language disorders. Other aims of the Centre are to:

- Provide educational, rehabilitative, social, recreational and vocational services for children and adults with special needs;
- Provide support and counselling services for children and adults with special needs, including individual and group sessions;
- Raise community awareness of issues involved in dealing with children with special needs and foster acceptance and understanding of the nature of disability;
- Provide training opportunities, conduct research and establish a national and global alliance specializing in disability;
- Work to create and develop a body of laws affirming the need to ensure opportunities for the delivery of appropriate educational and learning services to children and adults with special needs.

**Noor Institute for the Blind**

50. Built on the vision of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser and founded in 1998, the Noor Institute for the Blind provides educational and rehabilitative services for persons with visual impairment in order to help them overcome their disability and prepare them for a socially productive role in the community. The Institute delivers its services to individuals of between 3 and 21 years of age. It implements various programmes for educating blind and visually impaired persons, enabling them to adjust to life and maintain contact with their communities, starting from birth, and provides various psychosocial and health facilities. The Institute's objectives are to:

- Detect visual impairment in the Qatari community;
- Eliminate difficulties and obstacles inhibiting the education of persons with visual impairment;
- Deliver comprehensive care for persons with visual impairment, covering all aspects of education, culture and health;
- Provide psychosocial care for persons with visual impairment through the support service;
- Prepare and help students with visual impairment to adapt to life, as well as work for their social integration;
- Assist persons with visual impairment in accessing appropriate jobs;

- Offer classroom and extracurricular activities focused on achieving the integrated development of students with visual impairment.

51. The Institute delivers a number of programmes, in particular:

- An early childhood programme;
- A kindergarten programme;
- A primary level programme;
- An integration programme;
- A special classes programme;
- A vocational training programme.

#### **Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs**

52. Founded in 1992, this Society has three branches: the Social and Cultural Centre for Persons with Special Needs; the Learning Centre; and the Education Centre for Mothers. It works to set up and provide access to accommodation for persons with disabilities as a first step in their care, education and vocational training. It also works to produce, manufacture and import the various educational materials and prosthetic limbs needed for those under its care. Its overall aim is to rehabilitate persons with disabilities, whether Qataris or non-nationals, and provide them with the maximum possible health care. Its particular objectives are to:

- Set up places and centres to care for persons with disabilities and provide them with vocational training, education and psychological, behavioural and social support;
- Supply all medical, prosthetic and assistive equipment, instructional and explanatory materials, devices and apparatus that assist the progress of persons with disabilities;
- Raise awareness and inform the public about the problems faced by persons with special needs and about disease prevention;
- Conduct research and studies, produce books, publications and other works, edit journals spotlighting the services provided for persons with disabilities, organize seminars, talks and conferences, and participate actively in national and international conferences and seminars;
- Arrange for psychosocial workers to interview persons with disabilities, consider all domestic, social, medical and psychological aspects of their situation and assess their mental capabilities.

#### **Qatar Cultural and Social Centre for the Deaf**

53. This is the first centre of its kind in Qatar to be involved in education, awareness-raising and leisure with respect to persons with hearing impairment. The idea of creating a special entity for deaf persons in Qatar was a dream pursued over the past several years by deaf persons and their supporters. This dream has since come true, thanks to their untold efforts to bring various stakeholders on board, which culminated in success when His Excellency Sheikh Saud bin Khalid Al Thani promulgated Decision No. 11 of 2005 establishing a centre for deaf persons in Qatar named the Qatar Cultural and Social Centre for the Deaf. The Centre's objectives are to:

- Familiarize the public with the capabilities, potential and skills of Qataris with deafness;

- Promote development of the thinking and culture of its deaf members through a range of targeted programmes and activities;
- Provide social, cultural and recreational activities and programmes for occupying deaf members in their spare time and create an entertaining and relaxing atmosphere to break routine and boredom;
- Instil the spirit of competition, cooperation and communal activity in its members and allow them to take full responsibility for organizing their own activities;
- Promote relations with other centres and entities involved in working with persons with hearing disabilities at the Gulf, Arab and international levels;
- Build contacts and communication with various institutes and entities in the country and strengthen joint cooperation with them in all fields;
- Strengthen family ties among deaf persons and work for the social integration of such persons;
- Run sign language courses for different segments and age groups in the community in order to disseminate deaf culture and facilitate channels of communication;
- Provide the necessary support for deaf members and help them to overcome the obstacles and problems facing them, within the limits of available resources;
- Work on behalf of its members for privileges and facilities that help as much as possible to alleviate the burdens in their lives;
- Represent deaf persons at all conferences, seminars, meetings and the like at the national, Arab and international levels;
- Communicate the needs and requirements of deaf persons to the various entities in the State;
- Work for recognition of the rights guaranteed to deaf persons under domestic laws and Arab and international treaties and instruments.

## **II. Measures relating to implementation of the Convention in Qatar**

### **Articles 1, 2, 3 and 4 General provisions of the Convention**

54. Premised on Qatar's commitment to non-discrimination, the Qatari Constitution provides that all citizens have equal rights and duties, regardless of sex. The Constitution also guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities, protecting them from all forms of discrimination by providing opportunities for them to develop their capabilities and be involved in the development of society. Enunciated in the Constitution are key precepts that spell out the principle of equality, including in particular:

- Article 18: "Qatari society is founded on the values of justice, benevolence, liberty, equality and high morals."
- Article 19: "The State shall safeguard the pillars of society and guarantee security, stability and equal opportunities for citizens."
- Article 23: "The State shall promote public health and provide means of preventing and treating diseases and epidemics, in accordance with the law."

- Article 34: “Citizens are equal in public rights and duties.”
- Article 35: “All persons are equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination among them on grounds of sex, origin, language or religion.”
- Article 42: “The State shall guarantee to citizens the right to vote and stand for election, in accordance with the law.”
- Article 44: “The right of assembly shall be guaranteed to citizens, in accordance with the law.”
- Article 46: “All individuals shall have the right to challenge public authorities.”
- Article 49: “Education is the right of all citizens and the State shall work to ensure that public education is compulsory and free of charge, in accordance with the regulations and laws in force.”
- Article 135: “The right to bring legal proceedings is inviolable and guaranteed to all persons. The law shall prescribe the procedures and conditions for the exercise of that right.”
- Article 146: “Provisions concerning public rights and freedoms may not be amended other than for the purpose of granting additional rights and guarantees in the interest of citizens.”

55. Governmental and non-governmental efforts for the advancement of persons with disabilities are also ongoing with a view to implementation of the laws pertaining to persons with disabilities and their application in practice, in accordance with the Qatar National Vision 2030, the aim of which is to transform Qatar, by 2030, into an advanced State capable of sustaining its development and continually ensuring a decent standard of living for its people, from one generation to the next. The National Vision is based on four pillars: human development; social development; economic development; and environmental development.

56. In order to translate the Qatar National Vision into action, the National Development Strategy was developed in 2011 and launched in March of that year. The National Strategy for the Family (2011–2016) was also launched as part of the national development plan, in December 2010, with the aim of empowering, protecting and ensuring the welfare of the family and its members. Disability issues have been incorporated into the core components of these strategies.

57. In the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004, the Qatari legislator defines a person with disabilities as “any person totally or partially incapacitated on a permanent basis owing to any loss of sensory, physical, psychological or intellectual capacities that limits the person’s potential for learning, rehabilitation or employment”. The law categorizes disability into various levels on the basis of whether it is full or partial and on the further basis of whether it is physical, psychological or intellectual. It also specifies that disability must be permanent or identified as being long-term, as opposed to disability or the inability to perform physical activities for a limited or short-term period that has no lasting impact on the affected person or on his relationship with the community. The law states that disability is not a matter of temporary physiological impairment but rather one of the psychological, social and economic impact on the social order. It additionally states that permanent disability is where the person is consequently “unable to learn, undergo rehabilitation, work or perform any physical activity”.

58. The law further provides for the creation of an appropriate physical environment for persons with disabilities through accessibility measures. It also stipulates that mobility-friendly and hazard-free housing and public spaces must be provided for persons with disabilities.

59. In accordance with the provisions of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004, a committee with a membership comprising the Supreme Council for Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Labour, the Shafallah Centre and the Qatar Centre for Persons with Special Needs was established by the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, which serves as its president. The aims of the committee are to:

(a) Draw up criteria for the accreditation of special education institutes, in coordination with the competent authorities, as provided for in article 1 of the aforesaid Act No. 2 of 2004;

(b) Work in collaboration with the competent authorities and all stakeholders to guarantee delivery of their services and programmes to persons with special needs in the spheres provided for in the aforesaid Act No. 2 of 2004, in accordance with article 3 thereof;

(c) Determine the particulars to be included in the qualification certificates and identity cards issued by education institutes for persons with special needs, in accordance with article 4 of the aforesaid Act No. 2 of 2004;

(d) Put forward as job candidates persons with special needs who hold qualification certificates or identity cards or nominate others for such jobs in the event that none of those persons is eligible for appointment, in accordance with article 5 of the aforesaid Act No. 2 of 2004;

(e) Draw up samples of registers and notifications and set the dates for their submission, which are determined by a decision of the President of the Council, in accordance with article 8 of the aforesaid Act No. 2 of 2004;

(f) Propose the monthly allowance categories determined by the Council of Ministers for persons with special needs who are incapacitated for work, in accordance with article 9 of the aforesaid Act No. 2 of 2004;

(g) Establish priorities and rules for the accommodation provided by the competent authorities for persons with special needs, in accordance with article 10 of the aforesaid Act No. 2 of 2004.

60. The various recommendations adopted by the above-mentioned committee established by its president, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, to ensure application of the provisions of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 have been given effect through decisions pertaining to implementation of the Act in the fields of health, education, sports, culture, employment and housing.

## **Article 5**

### **Equality and non-discrimination**

61. The legal framework in which the principle of equality and non-discrimination is found in part II, articles 18 and 19, of the Constitution concerning the fundamental principles of society. Article 18 provides that: "Qatari society is founded on the values of justice, benevolence, liberty, equality and high morals." Hence, in accordance with article 18, the principle of equality is one of the pillars on which Qatari society rests. The principles articulated in article 18, including that of equality, are reinforced by article 19, which provides: "The State shall safeguard the pillars of society and guarantee security, stability and equal opportunities for citizens." All State policies are thus bound to incorporate and safeguard the pillars of society referred to in article 18, including the principle of equality, which, as set out in the Qatari Constitution, is a supreme constitutional principle afforded the protection required under the Constitution to ensure

that no law or legislation can interfere with it. This constitutional protection has been promoted and strengthened by the establishment of the Supreme Constitutional Court pursuant to Act No. 12 of 2008, promulgated on 18 June of that year, which is competent to settle disputes relating to the constitutionality of laws and regulations.

62. The principle of equality enunciated in article 18 of the Constitution is detailed in part III, articles 34 and 35, of the Constitution concerning public rights and duties. Article 34 provides that “Citizens are equal in rights and duties”, while article 35 guarantees the right to equality before the law and non-discrimination, providing as it does that “All persons are equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination among them on grounds of sex, origin, language or religion”. As already mentioned, part III of the Constitution, in articles 34 to 58, guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms, espousing the principle that they are universal, interdependent, interrelated and indivisible, and it likewise guarantees economic, social, cultural and civil rights. It furthermore lays down a constitutional guarantee of human rights by providing for public rights and freedoms at the heart of the Constitution, thereby giving them precedence over ordinary enactments and laws and treating them as mandatory. The right to equality and non-discrimination guaranteed by the Constitution has been strengthened through the development of a body of other enactments and laws and through ratification of the Convention.

63. The principle of equality and non-discrimination articulated in articles 18, 34 and 35 of the Permanent Constitution governs all State institutions and machinery, which must operate in accordance with this principle and eschew all acts or practices involving, encouraging or protecting discrimination, regardless of the entity responsible for such acts or practices. Under the constitutional and legal system, the State and all its institutions are required to respect the principles of equality, justice and non-discrimination.

## **Article 6**

### **Women with disabilities**

64. In accordance with the aforementioned principles and provisions of the Constitution, girls and women with disabilities enjoy all the same rights and freedoms as boys and men with disabilities. The provisions of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 incorporate the principle of equality and non-discrimination, with article 2 stating that: “In addition to the rights afforded to them under other legislation, persons with special needs shall enjoy...” The provision is therefore general and absolute, meaning that all persons with special needs of both sexes, without discrimination between boys and girls or men and women with disabilities, enjoy the following rights, without distinction as to sex:

- Education and rehabilitation, on the basis of their respective capacities;
- Medical, psychological, cultural and social care;
- Access to tools, equipment, transport and devices that assist their learning, rehabilitation, mobility and travel;
- Delivery of support, assistance and other aid services;
- Employment commensurate with their capabilities, aptitudes and rehabilitation in the government and private sectors;
- Pursuit of sports and leisure activities in accordance with their capabilities;
- Accommodation in which they can move about safely;
- Assurance of dedicated facilities in public places;

- Guarantee of participation in decision-making on matters affecting them, as provided for in article 2 of the Act.

65. Pursuant to Council of Ministers Decision No. 18 of 2007 concerning priorities and rules for access to the housing scheme for persons with special needs, women with disabilities are afforded the same right of access to the scheme as non-disabled women. Article 2 of the Decision states: "Qatari males and females shall have access to the scheme in accordance with the following rules: They must belong to a category in need of social care, such as persons with disabilities, persons incapacitated for work and older persons." The Qatari legislator also afforded to women with disabilities the right to early retirement, with all of their rights intact.

66. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs has run several training courses with the aim of enabling women with disabilities to access their rights, as set out in legislation, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

67. Rehabilitation International for the Arab Region organized a workshop on the empowerment of Arab women with disabilities, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and with the support of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and the National Human Rights Committee. Held on 7 and 8 June 2011, the workshop addressed a number of topics relating to policymaking, awareness-raising and ways of facilitating the involvement of women with disabilities in the community, in conformity with the Convention. This workshop complemented an earlier workshop run by the same organization, also with the support of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and in cooperation with the League of Arab States. The aim of the workshop was to translate the objectives and provisions of the Convention into action for promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in the Arab world and empowering those persons in general and Arab women with disabilities in particular in all areas of community life. Attesting to the success of workshops of this kind, substantial numbers of women with disabilities of various kinds readily took part; some 25 participants attended from abroad and participants from disability-related entities in Qatar amounted to over 30.

68. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Shafallah Centre for Children with Special Needs have recruited a number of women with disabilities after first training them.

## **Article 7**

### **Children with disabilities**

69. Qatar has worked to improve the situation of its children, raise them to feel pride in their national identity, equip them for a life of freedom and responsibility, afford them care and protection, disseminate a culture of children's rights, involve children appropriately in all matters affecting them and ensure that children's rights are upheld and promoted in the child's best interest.

70. Having ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Qatar enshrined the right of children with disabilities to the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children, in accordance with their best interests.

71. The Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 is a cornerstone for realization of the rights of children with disabilities, who are provided for therein by the legislator, with a focus on disability prevention measures, health, education and learning.

72. The Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs was established in 1992 with the aim of providing the maximum possible health, social,



psychological and cultural care for rehabilitation purposes. The Society supplies medical, prosthetic and assistive equipment to all its members, on the basis of their need and the nature of their disability, and helps with the recruitment of persons with special needs, in fruitful cooperation with all concerned ministries, institutions and entities. It also develops training, educational and self-development programmes for persons with special needs, offers counselling and psychosocial, educational and vocational guidance for their benefit, and additionally organizes workshops and training sessions for families on coping with children with special needs.

73. The Society has four centres involved in working with persons with special needs: the Social and Cultural Centre, which aspires to integrate persons with special needs into the community by way of arranging social activities, developing friendly cultural and social relations with other centres and clubs and organizing vocational training workshops for members and their families throughout the year; the Learning Centre, which offers various training facilities for persons with special needs stemming from intellectual or multiple disabilities; and two centres providing facilities for the full vocational, psychological and social rehabilitation of both sexes, namely the Boys' Rehabilitation Centre and the Girls' Rehabilitation Centre.

74. The aforementioned Shafallah Centre for Children with Special Needs offers treatment and educational facilities for persons with disabilities, without discrimination on the basis of sex, and works to achieve optimal social integration, raise public awareness and provide support and advice to families. Its services are available to children and adults between the ages of birth and 27 years.

## **Article 8**

### **Awareness-raising**

75. The Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities at the Ministry of Social Affairs delivers programmes for raising awareness among the public and persons with disabilities about the latter's rights. Taking the form of workshops, these have included a workshop organized by the Department of Human Resources to inform persons with disabilities about the rights afforded to them under Act No. 8 of 2009. Television spots are also used to heighten awareness of the measures in place for accessing those rights. For the past three years, moreover, the Department has organized a public awareness campaign aimed at reducing disability caused by vehicle accidents.

76. Learning centres for persons with disabilities, such as the Noor Institute, the Shafallah Centre and the Auditory Education School, and mainstream government schools (for integrated students) also run public awareness programmes, in particular for the guardians of such persons, the aim being to deliver the best facilities and care for students with disabilities. These programmes consist in family training courses, talks and regular meetings, in addition to communication-building activities at school open days. Thanks to these meetings and encounters, it is possible to follow up on students, assess their academic attainment and discuss their difficulties, involve guardians in treatment plans and advise them on appropriate ways of dealing with their children. A planning committee at the Noor Institute also publishes a periodical designed to enhance awareness of different types of disability.

77. For its part, the Shafallah Centre organized five campaigns in 2000 to raise awareness of Down syndrome and four autism awareness campaigns in 2005, 2006, 2009 and 2010.

78. The policy of additional learning support spells out the role of parents, which entails being involved in and supporting their children's education. Parents also furnish up-to-date

information on their children's evolving capacities in the light of the policy's emphasis on engaging and working closely with parents in their efforts to support their children's learning. Emphasis is furthermore placed on informing parents of their rights and supporting them as they help their children to learn, as well as on collaboration and ongoing contact between school learning support teams and parents, the participation of parents of children with disabilities in school governing boards so that they can communicate their children's needs, and use of the media for awareness and guidance purposes.

79. Qatari television has continued to ensure access to all information for persons with disabilities by providing expert sign language interpretation for various programmes and news bulletins. It has also continued throughout its daily and weekly programmes to support all national campaigns organized by the State and to throw the spotlight on all activities relating to persons with special needs, including social communication through educational and media institutions. The attention it devotes to persons with disabilities as a group extends to its children's programmes, taking care as it does to involve all children in such programmes and allow them every opportunity to express their creativity and ideas as active members of Qatari society. Its religious programmes also focus on ways of interacting with persons with disabilities and the need for sensitivity.

80. Qatari radio constantly strives to cover activities relating to persons with disabilities in its live programmes, inviting organizers of those activities to appear as guests and also talking to persons with disabilities and providing information on their rights.

81. A study conducted by Al Jazeera on its own view of and role towards persons with disabilities found that most media reporting of public events and activities involving persons with disabilities was appropriate but failed to tackle issues affecting such persons or to allocate adequate time to highlighting them by raising awareness of the whole concept of disability and persons with disabilities. The aim of this study was to identify the potential role of media outlets in serving the interests of persons with disabilities, with a focus on the vision and role of Al Jazeera in that domain, the strategies employed by Al Jazeera in its bulletin for deaf persons and the media's role in increasing the use of sign language, especially given the view of that particular bulletin as a model to emulate, Al Jazeera being the first channel to offer a news bulletin in sign language. The study produced a set of recommendations for promoting the relationship between the media and persons with disabilities with the aim of enhancing public awareness of their situation.

## **Article 9 Accessibility**

82. The creation of an enabling environment is undoubtedly of vital importance for the integration of persons with disabilities into public life. The Qatari legislator therefore took the step of promulgating the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004, article 2 of which provides that persons with disabilities must enjoy an appropriate physical environment.

83. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs also compiled a sign language dictionary, which has greatly helped deaf persons to enrich their vocabulary and speeded up the communication of information and ideas by teachers of deaf students, particularly in the subjects of Arabic language, Islamic education, science and sociology, and by interpreters. This dictionary has also enriched the vocabulary of deaf students of both sexes the Arab world over through the addition of 423 new signs to the language.

84. As part of the Qatar for All campaign, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs furthermore cooperated with Rehabilitation International in organizing a workshop on guaranteeing rights of access for persons with disabilities, at which the discussion focused

on modification of the building regulations and specifications to that end. The campaign is also directed at creating in the community a user-friendly environment for all persons, including those with disabilities, and at providing all information and data relevant to enabling persons with disabilities to access all facilities, without restrictions or barriers. Other objectives are to compile and publish a comprehensive guide to all accessible locations for circulation to all State institutions generally, develop a permanent mechanism for monitoring compliance with special building specifications, and enable access for persons with disabilities to public transport and the media.

85. The Supreme Council for Information and Communication Technology also took the initiative to establish Mada (Qatar Assistive Technology Centre) with the aim of promoting digital inclusiveness through connecting persons with disabilities to assistive technology that improves the quality of their daily lives and enhances their social integration. Mada is a non-profit organization set up to empower persons with hearing, visual, motor or intellectual disabilities of various kinds through its interactive environments, which are equipped with the latest assistive technologies. Persons with disabilities who visit the Centre receive advice from staff on the use of integrated assistive technology solutions. The Centre also runs training courses for individuals and institutions to familiarize them with the use of such technology, functioning as an integrated training centre for persons with disabilities and those who work with them. It offers various types of training, among others individual user training, group training, e-learning and specialized training for groups or organizations, with the assistance of first-rate trainers recruited locally or regionally to cover issues relating to assistive technology for persons with disabilities. The Centre also has a digital library containing various resources particular to this field.

86. In 2010, Mada worked with the country's communication enterprises to launch "Unhindered communication", an initiative aimed at connecting persons with disabilities to information and communication technology. It also guaranteed that the use of such technology would incur no higher costs for persons with disabilities than for others, despite the special needs aspect.

87. In early 2011, the Centre cooperated with the Bookshare website in launching another new initiative involving access for persons with disabilities to e-books, thereby continuing its efforts to build ample ecological information and communication technology systems in Qatar. Unprecedented in the Arab Gulf region, this initiative is intended to provide access to e-books in English for all those living with disabilities of one kind or another. Over 23,000 e-books have been made available free of charge and 500 e-books in Arabic are to be added by the end of 2011.

88. In 2011, the Supreme Council for Information and Communication Technology launched a policy for facilitating digital access and web accessibility, constituting an important step towards guaranteeing the realization of an inclusive society in Qatar in which all members enjoy the benefits of digitization and the opportunities it provides. The longer-term aim of this policy is to guarantee ease of access for persons with disabilities in Qatar to technology that enriches their lives in the same way as others.

## **Article 10**

### **Right to life**

89. All the divine religions recognize the right to life of all persons, without distinction. Qatari legislation accordingly guarantees this right to all individuals and ensures its protection through article 21 of the Constitution, which provides that: "The family is the foundation of society, built on religion, morality and patriotism. The law shall govern the means for guaranteeing its protection, supporting its structure, strengthening its ties and

safeguarding children, mothers and older persons within its fold.” With laws in place to guarantee means of protection for all, the Qatari legislator has afforded to persons with disabilities the same right to life as others, including through the Criminal Code, which punishes offences involving attempts on human life, including the life of persons with disabilities. Article 305 of the Code provides that: “Any person who in any way incites or assists a person to commit suicide shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 7 years if suicide occurs as a result. If the person who committed suicide was under 16 years of age or of diminished capacity, the offender shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 10 years. If the person who committed suicide was incapable of exercising choice or reason, the offender shall be liable to the penalty for premeditated murder, which is imprisonment for not more than 7 years, if the next of kin pardons him or accepts blood money.” This provision criminalizes and punishes any act leading to an attempt on the life of a person with disabilities.

## **Article 11**

### **Situations of risk and human emergencies**

90. While the Qatari legislator devoted no specific law to the protection of persons with disabilities from situations of risk or human emergencies, such protection is amply covered in various laws, such as the Social Insurance Act No. 38 of 1995, which includes persons with disabilities among the groups at which article 3 thereof is directed. Article 19 of the Act states that, in the event of disaster, the Ministry of Social Affairs must organize emergency relief and provide cash and in-kind assistance for disaster-affected families and individuals. The Minister is also required to issue a decision setting out the rules and conditions relating to assistance provided by the Ministry in the event of death, serious injury or loss of property in disaster situations.

## **Article 12**

### **Equal recognition before the law**

#### **(a) Constitutional provisions**

91. The Qatari Constitution lays emphasis on giving effect to the principle of equality among all citizens, proceeding from the noble principles enshrined in the Islamic sharia, which guarantees the equality of all citizens in right and duties. In Qatari legislation, the word “citizen” unquestionably encompasses all Qatari citizens, irrespective of their knowledge, health, socioeconomic or other status in any aspect of their lives, as follows:

(1) Article 27 of the Constitution provides that: “Private property is inviolable. No one may be deprived of his property except for the public good and in the circumstances and manner prescribed by law, provided that fair compensation is received in return.”

(2) Article 35 of the Constitution provides that: “All persons are equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination among them on grounds of sex, origin, language or religion.”

#### **(b) Legal texts**

92. The Qatari legislator enacted various laws setting out the criteria and rules relating to legal capacity. Article 189 of the Family Code (Act No. 22 of 2006) provides that: “Any person having attained majority, at 18 years of age, has full legal capacity and no restrictions placed on him.”

93. The Qatari legislator also provided for the mechanism needed for persons with disabilities to manage their assets and for measures guaranteeing this right. Article 34 of the Guardianship (Assets of Minors) Act No. 40 of 2004 provides that: “Persons under guardianship for reasons of irresponsibility or ineptitude may take over the management of all or some of their assets, with the permission of a judge and after the Authority has been consulted. In this event, the provisions on minors authorized to manage their own assets shall apply to them.”

94. The aforesaid Guardianship (Assets of Minors) Act also includes persons with disabilities among the groups of minors whose guardians act on their behalf in concluding legal transactions and taking care of their financial affairs, as protected and prescribed under article 9 thereof, which provides: “No guardian may perform any of the following transactions without the permission of a judge: 1. Dispose of property; 2. Lend or borrow against a minor’s assets; 3. Lease a minor’s property for a period of more than one year or extending to one year after the minor has attained majority; 4. Accept or refuse a gift or bequest to a minor that entails specific obligations; 5. Mortgage or gift a minor’s assets; 6. Continue a business that has reverted to the minor. The judge shall give his permission after he has consulted the Authority.” Article 41 of the same Act also provides that: “The judge shall authorize the chosen guardian to sell a minor’s property if it is ascertained that:

- The sale is necessary or in the minor’s interest;
- The property is more suitable for sale than another property;
- The sale price is the highest attainable;
- Permission shall be given by the judge after he has consulted the Authority.”

95. Article 42 of the above-mentioned Act provides that: “The judge may authorize the chosen guardian to sell a minor’s property if it is ascertained that the sale of such property is in the minor’s interest. The judge shall give his permission after he has consulted the Authority.”

96. Inheritance is defined by the Qatari legislator in article 43 of the Family Code (Act No. 40 of 2006) as: “Irrevocable transfer of the financial assets, benefits and rights on the death of their holder to whomsoever is entitled to them.” Under article 246 of the Code, entitlement to inheritance is restricted to heirs who are living or believed to be living. The Qatari legislator made no distinction between non-disabled persons and persons with disabilities with respect to the attainment or acquisition of this right and was also intent on safeguarding the estate of persons with disabilities, having provided in article 43 of the Guardianship (Assets of Minors) Act No. 40 of 2004 that: “If the estate or some of its chattels consist in a commercial company or investment property and the heirs of legal age agree that the estate should not be divided, the judge may give permission for the minor’s share to remain in the estate if it is in the minor’s interest. The chosen guardian must comply with the obligations provided for in article 23 of the Act.”

97. Concerning physical incapacity, article 127 of the Civil Code (Act No. 22 of 2004) provides that: “If a person has a severe physical impairment that makes it difficult for him to acquaint himself with the conditions for concluding a contract or to express his views, particularly if he is deaf, mute, blind and deaf or blind and mute, the court may appoint a legal support person to assist him in transactions where it is believed that such assistance is in his interest.” Article 128 of the Code provides that: “Any transaction for which legal assistance has been prescribed shall be liable to invalidation if performed without that assistance by the person concerned after the decision relating to such assistance has been placed on record, unless the court has authorized him to conclude the transaction on his own.” Article 129 also provides that: “If, on account of his physical or pathological

condition, a person is unable to conclude a transaction, even with assistance, or if he desists from doing so, the court may authorize the legal support person to conclude the transaction alone, on his behalf, where failure to do so would jeopardize his interests.”

98. Article 10 of the Social Insurance Act No. 38 of 1995 provides that: “Allowances shall be payable from the first month following the decision approving the application. If it is established that the recipient is mishandling his allowance for reasons giving rise to concern, the Department may decide that the allowance should be disbursed to a member of his family or a reliable person who shall take charge of spending it for the benefit of the recipient.” Article 16 of the Act also provides that: “No allowance may be made over to others or withheld.” On the basis of those two provisions, the Ministry of Social Affairs worked in coordination with the General Authority for Minors’ Affairs to make the necessary arrangements for establishing a social security allowance mechanism to guarantee access to the funds concerned by the recipients themselves, without an intermediary and without documentation requirements that pose additional burdens on recipients or prevent their full legal enjoyment of this right.

**(c) Banking directives**

99. In addition to the above legislative provisions, Qatar Central Bank elaborated a number of rules and criteria for guaranteeing the smooth delivery of banking and financial services to persons with disabilities in the same way as to others, taking into account their particular circumstances. These measures are encapsulated in the following:

- Circular No. 73 of 2009, addressed to all banks operating in the country and regulating dealings with blind customers, which notes the need to develop special regulations and procedures for such dealings, taking into consideration the rights of those customers, establish appropriate precautionary, safety and security measures and introduce the use of Braille forms;
- Circular No. 9 of 2000 concerning the implementation of all requirements set out in the letter of the President of the Arab Union for the Blind, Chairperson of the Gulf Association for Human Rights, especially those relating to technical issues (Braille);
- Directives issued by Qatar Central Bank, in May 2010, instructing all banks operating in the country to install and signal the location of special service counters for persons with disabilities, allocate special parking spaces for those persons and ensure that entrances are accessible to them;
- Qatar Central Bank’s issuance of banknotes with protruding features so that blind persons can easily identify them by touch.

100. Concerning support available to persons with disabilities in the realm of exercising their legal capacity and managing their financial affairs, as set out in article 12 of the Convention, the Ministry of Social Affairs has on several occasions followed up with Qatar Central Bank on the subject of a mechanism for enabling persons with disabilities to manage their own financial affairs.

## **Article 13**

### **Access to justice**

101. The Qatari Constitution guarantees to all individuals (citizens and residents) the right of access to justice, providing as it does in article 135 that: “The right to bring legal proceedings is inviolable and guaranteed to all persons. The law shall prescribe the procedures and conditions for the exercise of that right.” On that basis, the Code of Criminal Procedure guarantees to individuals all of their rights with respect to criminal

proceedings, legal recourse in that context and the enjoyment of various guarantees protecting these rights. Under article 31 of the Code, law enforcement officers must take on board reports and complaints made to them concerning any offences committed. Persons with disabilities are not excluded under the Code from these guarantees and rights. Article 5 of the Code states how complaints are to be filed in the case of offences for which criminal proceedings can be instigated only on the basis of a complaint by the victim. Set out in article 3, these include offences involving bodily harm, threat to cause injury, verbal abuse, defamation and invasion of privacy. In the case of persons with intellectual disabilities, their guardian or tutor, as the case may be, is entitled to file a complaint on their behalf.

102. Article 6 of the Code of the Criminal Procedure provides another important guarantee for persons with intellectual disabilities in that the Office of the Public Prosecutor may stand in for the victim if there is a conflict between the interests of the victim and those of his representative or if the victim has no representative. Article 7 of the Settlement of Administrative Disputes Act No. 7 of 2007 likewise guarantees to individuals the right of legal recourse in the case of administrative disputes, without discrimination.

103. By virtue of the functions vested in it under article 14 of Amiri Decree No. 40 of 2009, the Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities of the Ministry of Social Affairs also takes executive measures with a view to the development and implementation of programmes and services for the care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and older persons, in coordination with the investigating authorities, in order to ensure that such persons are able to cope with the situation of being a witness or subject of investigation and with other eventual legal procedures.

104. The Qatari legislator provided in article 72 of the Code of Criminal Procedure that, in the case of litigants or witnesses who do not understand Arabic, the public prosecutor must hear their statements through an interpreter after the latter has sworn under oath sincerely and faithfully to perform his task. Hence, when questioning deaf or mute persons as either suspects, witnesses or victims, the public prosecutor must employ the services of a sign language interpreter.

105. As part of its constant efforts to develop its activities towards meeting the needs of persons with disabilities, the Office of the Public Prosecutor has produced Braille copies of the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure and presented them to the Qatar Association for the Blind so that they can be consulted by blind persons.

106. Other measures taken to facilitate matters for persons with disabilities in the context of criminal proceedings can be summed up as follows:

- An investigation room is set aside especially for persons with disabilities in order to spare their feelings, facilitate procedures involving them and complete those procedures as quickly as possible;
- Security agents are under standing instructions to treat criminal procedures involving persons with disabilities as confidential;
- If a report is received from a person with disabilities who is unable to travel to the police station, officers pay a visit to the person in order to proceed with the necessary legal formalities;
- The services of a sign language expert are employed, as necessary;
- An appropriately equipped vehicle is designated to transport persons with disabilities to the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the court or any other entity before which they are required to appear by law;

- Specific parking spaces are reserved for vehicles used by persons with disabilities and special medical equipment is made available to those persons, such as wheelchairs to aid their mobility;
- Police stations have special entrances and exits, as does the Office of the Public Prosecutor, to make it easier for persons with motor disabilities to enter and leave the premises;
- Specially adapted areas are reserved in courtrooms for persons with disabilities.

107. The Qatari legislator furthermore provided special guarantees for persons with intellectual disabilities, with articles 209, 210 and 212 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stating that such persons may not be subjected to criminal proceedings or trial.

108. Persons with intellectual disabilities are absolved of criminal responsibility under article 54 of the Criminal Code, which explicitly provides that they are not liable for criminal offences that they commit. In article 355 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Qatari legislator also covered the situation of a person serving a custodial sentence who is later affected by intellectual disability by providing that the sentence must be deferred until he has recovered, that he must be placed in a treatment facility and that the period spent in the facility must be deducted from his sentence. In addition, article 283 of the Code of Civil Procedure provides that: “A person who is incapable of speech may give testimony, if he is able to convey his wishes, in writing or using sign language.”

109. The Qatari legislator also provided another guarantee for victims with intellectual abilities in article 213 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which states that such persons may be temporarily placed in a treatment facility or in the care of a reliable person, depending on the circumstances, until the case is settled.

## **Article 14**

### **Liberty and security of the person**

110. In article 36 of the Constitution, the Qatari legislator recognized that: “Personal liberty is guaranteed. No person may be arrested, imprisoned, searched, compelled to reside at a given location or have his freedom of residence or movement curtailed, except in accordance with the law.”

111. Article 37 of the Constitution provides that: “Personal privacy is inviolable. No person may be subjected to any interference with his privacy, family affairs, home or correspondence or to any attacks on his honour and reputation, except in accordance with the provisions of the law and in the manner prescribed therein.” Persons with disabilities are thus afforded the opportunity to choose their place of residence, their home and the persons with whom they live, on an equal basis with others, and they are not compelled to have a special living arrangement or to leave or return to the country.

112. As a guarantee of these rights and freedoms, the Constitution provides in article 146 that: “Provisions concerning public rights and freedoms may not be amended other than for the purpose of granting additional rights and guarantees in the interest of citizens.”

113. Concerning measures taken to improve the situation of persons with disabilities, article 3 of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 provides: “The Council, in coordination with the competent entities and all stakeholders, shall work to guarantee the delivery of services and programmes for persons with special needs by those entities and stakeholders in the areas provided for in article 2, in particular those of:



- Providing medical, preventive, treatment, health and psychological services, as well as special medical reports, free of charge, to persons not covered by any other health insurance scheme;
- Ensuring access to employment opportunities in competent entities for persons with special needs on the basis of their capabilities and rehabilitation;
- Raising public awareness of the rights of persons with special needs and working to provide them with the necessary assistance and ensure that they are well treated and socially integrated;
- Providing appropriate educational, rehabilitative and special education programmes, in addition to providing trained staff qualified to deal with persons with special needs;
- Providing opportunities for engaging in sports and leisure activities so as to meet their needs and develop their capacities;
- Providing facilities for their benefit in the areas of welfare, care, support, vocational training and family-related, technical, sports and leisure services.

114. Article 4 of the same Act additionally provides that: “Special education institutes shall award a certificate to all persons who complete their rehabilitation and issue identity cards for persons with special needs requiring no rehabilitation services, at their request or that of their relatives. The Council shall determine the particulars to be included on the qualification certificate and identity card.”

115. Article 5 of the Persons with Special Needs Act provides that: “A minimum of 2 per cent of the total number of jobs in competent entities shall be reserved for persons with special needs who do not hold the certificates or identity cards provided for in article 4. Appointments shall be made on the basis of the capabilities and aptitudes of the persons nominated for such jobs by the Council, in conjunction with the competent entities. Every private sector employer employing 25 workers or more must designate a minimum of 2 per cent of jobs for persons with special needs, of whom there must be at least one. In no circumstances may persons without special needs be appointed to these jobs, unless there is no one with special needs who is qualified for the appointment and provided that the Council gives its written approval.” Priority in making appointments to jobs designated for persons with special needs is given to those whose condition resulted from a surgical operation or arose during or on account of the performance of military service.

116. The competent entities also provide persons with special needs with accommodation that meets particular specifications, on the basis of the priorities and rules laid down by the Council in accordance with article 10. Article 12 of the same Act provides that: “Care centres for persons with special needs and institutions attached to those centres shall be exempted from the payment of registration fees for such accommodation.” Article 6 guarantees the right of personnel with special needs to combine their salary with any pension that they receive.

117. The Department of Penal and Correctional Institutions furthermore provides special health care for inmates with disabilities through the medical clinics in place at such institutions. It also supplies wheelchairs and commode chairs and offers assistance for attending to various needs in certain circumstances. Those inmates also enjoy all guarantees provided for in the Penal and Correctional Institutions (Regulation) Act No. 3 of 2009 and in the Code of Criminal Procedure with respect to their ability to seek legal redress and file grievances. Health permitting, inmates with mild disabilities may also enrol in the institution’s vocational and technical rehabilitation courses. As to inmates with disabilities who need special care, are unable to see to their daily needs unassisted or require specialist nursing, the institution transfers them under guard to hospital for reasons of humanity and

health and, where applicable, takes the steps set out in the above-mentioned Act for their release on health grounds.

## **Article 15**

### **Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

118. Article 36 of the Qatari Constitution guarantees the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It also criminalizes torture, providing as it does that: “Personal liberty is guaranteed. No person may be arrested, imprisoned, searched, compelled to reside at a given location or have his freedom of residence or movement curtailed, except in accordance with the law.”

119. The protection offered under article 36 of the Constitution has been strengthened and enhanced through detailed provisions in the Criminal Code and in the Code of Criminal Procedure, pursuant to which torture is prohibited and treated as a criminal offence. It is worth noting here that, in order to implement the recommendation of the Committee against Torture concerning the adoption of a definition of torture consistent with article 1 of the Convention against Torture, various provisions of the Criminal Code promulgated by Act 11 of 2004 were amended by Act No. 8 of 2010, as follows:

(a) Article 159 of Act No. 11 of 2004 was replaced with the following text:

“Any public official who uses or orders the use of torture, force or threats against an accused person, a witness or an expert for the purpose of obtaining a confession to an offence, coercing the person into making a statement or providing information about an offence or covering up an offence shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to 5 years. If the victim sustains an injury leading to permanent disability as the result of an act committed by a public official, the offender shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to 10 years. If the victim dies as a result of the act, the offender shall be liable to the death penalty or life imprisonment.”

(b) A new article 159 *bis* was added, as follows:

“Any public official or any other person acting in an official capacity who uses or instigates torture or agrees or acquiesces to the torture of any person shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to 5 years. If the victim sustains a permanent disability as a result of being tortured, the offender shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to 10 years. If the victim dies as a result of being tortured, the offender shall be liable to the death penalty or life imprisonment.

“Torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act that he or a third person is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind. It does not include pain or suffering arising solely from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.”

120. The Code of Criminal Procedure contains a number of articles prohibiting torture, including article 40, which provides that: “No person may be arrested or imprisoned except pursuant to a warrant issued by the competent authorities under the conditions specified by law. Such persons shall be treated in a manner conducive to the preservation of their human dignity and may not be subjected to physical or mental harm. Law enforcement officers shall inform the accused of his right to remain silent and to contact a person of his own

choosing.” In addition, article 232 of the Code of Criminal Procedure explicitly states that confessions extracted from suspects as a result of torture are inadmissible as evidence.

121. Article 68 of the Qatari Constitution clearly provides that treaties and conventions acquire the force of law after they have been ratified and published in the Official Gazette. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was ratified by Decree No. 27 of 2001 and published in issue No. 11 of the Official Gazette during the same year. It is therefore applicable in Qatar, where it has the force of law. Moreover, article 6 of the Constitution expressly states: “The State shall abide by international instruments and treaties and shall endeavour to implement all the international conventions, instruments and treaties to which it is a party.”

122. While there are no explicit legislative provisions for actively protecting persons with disabilities from medical or scientific experimentation without their consent, the above-mentioned article 37 of the Constitution guarantees personal privacy. Article 269 of the Criminal Code (Act No. 11 of 2004) also states that: “Anyone who endangers a person under 16 years of age or a person who is incapable of self-protection on account of his physical, psychological or intellectual condition shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to two years and a fine of up to 10,000 riyals, or either penalty. If the offence involves leaving the victim in a deserted place or is committed by a person charged with his safekeeping or care, the penalty shall be imprisonment for a term of up to 3 years and a fine of up to 5,000 riyals, or either penalty.”

123. Articles 2 and 3 of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 also provide for access to medical services, support, aid and other facilities and rights. It is worth mentioning here that a Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities, adopted by Hamad Medical Corporation, has been published and circulated to all hospitals and health centres. This Charter guarantees various rights to patients, without discrimination, providing in article 1 for the right of patients to “access health care facilities, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, place of origin, belief, values, language, age or disability”. Rights covered by the Charter include but are not limited to the right to health care; the right of access to appropriate care; the right to accept or refuse any medication; the right to appoint a person to take decisions concerning a patient’s care and treatment in cases where the patient is unable to make such decisions; the right to privacy and confidentiality; and the right to safety and security. Concerning medical research, the Charter guarantees a number of rights to patients, including:

- The right to information concerning medical treatment being used for research purposes;
- The right of prior consent to participation in the conduct of such research;
- The right to refuse participation in the conduct of research activities and the guarantee that such a refusal will have no negative impact on the patient’s medical care.

124. With respect to effective protection for persons with disabilities from medical or scientific experimentation conducted without their free and informed consent, the above measures apply to the Medical Research Centre run by Hamad Medical Corporation, in association with the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, which supervises medical, therapeutic and laboratory experimentation. In the case of persons with intellectual disabilities and minors, written consent is required (after explanations and clarifications have been provided) from the person concerned or from relatives or a representative, in accordance with the regulations governing the country’s treatment centres, before the person can take part in research involving any medical examination, laboratory testing, radiography, treatment or surgical intervention. A person with disabilities has the right, which may also be exercised on his behalf by his

representative, to refrain from or refuse participation in such research from the outset. In that case, he continues to receive treatment in the same way as other persons receiving treatment in the facility, without discrimination or differentiation.

## **Article 16**

### **Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse**

125. Article 22 of the Qatari Constitution provides that: “The State shall care for young persons, shield them from immorality and protect them from exploitation and the evils of physical, mental and spiritual neglect, creating conditions favourable to the development of their potential in all domains, guided by a sound education.” Article 36, paragraph 2, also provides that: “No person shall be subjected to torture or degrading treatment. Torture is an offence punishable by law.” These provisions affirm that the Constitution is committed to the protection of citizens from violence and abuse, without discrimination on grounds of disability.

126. Qatar’s accession to various international instruments, such as the Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, is another demonstration of its concern to protect citizens from all forms of violence and abuse.

127. The Criminal Code (Act No. 11 of 2004) also guarantees protection from violence, harm and exploitation, as prescribed in its articles listing the types of offences punishable by law. A special section is devoted to offences involving murder and physical assault.

128. Penalties are laid down in articles 300 to 302 for deliberate offences and in articles 304 to 305 for suicide-related offences. Article 305 is particularly relevant to persons with disabilities, providing as it does that: “Any person who in any way incites or assists a person to commit suicide shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 7 years if suicide occurs as a result. If the person who committed suicide was under 16 years of age or of diminished capacity, the offender shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 10 years. If the person who committed suicide was incapable of exercising choice or reason, the offender shall be liable to the penalty for premeditated murder, which is imprisonment of up to 7 years, if the next of kin pardons him or accepts blood money.”

129. Articles 306 to 310 cover offences that cause permanent disability or incapacity. Penalties are laid down in articles 311 and 312 for offences arising out of neglect or recklessness; in articles 318 and 319 for offences relating to human trafficking and enslavement, such as the sale or offer for sale of a human being; and in article 322 for offences relating to forced labour. By criminalizing such acts, all of these articles guarantee protection for persons with disabilities from violence, abuse and exploitation.

130. In accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure (Act No. 23 of 2004), the Office of the Public Prosecutor is the entity tasked with the investigation and prosecution of offenders (arts. 63–156).

## **Article 17**

### **Protecting the integrity of the person**

131. The Qatari legislator devoted a section of the Criminal Code (Act No. 11 of 2004) to abortion, which carries the penalties for an act harmful to human life and the integrity of the person, these being unassailable and without compromise. Article 315 of the Code provides that: “Anyone who intentionally beats or otherwise assaults a woman in the knowledge that

she is pregnant shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to 10 years in the event that the assault results in her miscarriage.” Article 316 also provides: “Anyone who wilfully performs an abortion on a pregnant woman by administering medication to her or using other means in order to induce miscarriage shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to 7 years. The penalty shall be imprisonment for a term of up to 10 years if the offence is committed without the woman’s consent or if the person who performed the abortion is a doctor, pharmacist or midwife or a medical or pharmaceutical assistant.” Article 317 provides that: “A woman who consents without medical grounds to the administration of medication or the use of means for the purpose of inducing a miscarriage shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to 3 years if the result is miscarriage.” These articles criminalize abortion of all forms, making no distinction between one woman and another.

## **Article 18**

### **Liberty of movement and nationality**

132. Under articles 36 and 37, the Constitution accords liberty of movement to persons in general and to persons with special needs, without discrimination. The Qatari legislator guarantees to persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, the right to move freely inside and outside the country at any time and the right to reside in or move away from any location, to travel outside the country temporarily and to return thereto. Persons with disabilities may not be expelled from the country or prevented from returning. The right of movement is consequently a constitutional right that can be neither abolished nor modified to the point of being abolished by the ordinary legislator, which is empowered only to regulate and prescribe measures for the exercise of that right by persons with disabilities, without any risk or restriction that prevents or is inconsistent with its exercise.

133. Persons with disabilities have the right to Qatari nationality, on an equal basis with others, without discrimination on disability grounds, in accordance with the Permanent Constitution, which provides in article 18 that: “Qatari society is founded on the values of justice, benevolence, liberty, equality and high morals.” Article 19 also provides that: “The State shall safeguard the pillars of society and guarantee security, stability and equal opportunities for citizens.”

134. Article 41 provides that: “Qatari nationality and the rules pertaining thereto shall be defined by law. Those rules shall have the same status as the Constitution.” The Qatari Nationality Act No. 38 of 2005 begins in article 1 by defining those who are Qataris, restricting them to four categories and making no exceptions on account of disability.

135. Qatar also acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has now acquired the force of law. Its provisions are therefore in effect, including those of article 7, which states: “The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.” As the competent entity at the Ministry of the Interior, the Department of Nationality and Travel Documentation takes the necessary measures accordingly to guarantee that every child is registered at birth, irrespective of any disability, and is given a name and nationality.

136. The right of persons with disabilities to enter, leave and reside in the country is regulated by the laws in force, which apply to all individuals (citizens and expatriates), including those persons. As a group, moreover, they receive special attention from the Ministry of the Interior, which put in place arrangements for the General Department for Passports, Borders and Expatriate Affairs and its various sections to deliver their services to members of that group, as well as to older persons, in a separate building. Such services include passport and identity card issuance and renewal, residence and visa formalities,

business registrations and so on. The Department has made a conscious effort to concentrate its services for older persons and persons with disabilities in a single location. It has also provided training for the personnel whose job it is to complete all the paperwork in that location.

137. The Ministry of the Interior employs this approach to the delivery of services to persons with disabilities in its centres across the country, where a service known as Amir is performed by special police officers who greet persons with disabilities on their arrival at the centres and assist them in obtaining the services they require.

138. Concerning measures taken to ensure that every infant with disabilities is registered at birth and given a name and nationality, it goes without saying that, in accordance with article 34 of the Qatari Constitution, births are registered without any discrimination between those infants and others. Similarly, no explicit provision is made for children with disabilities in the Qatari Nationality Act No. 38 of 2005, pursuant to which they have the right to acquire Qatari nationality. A child's disability does not constitute grounds for denial or grant of Qatari nationality.

139. Article 18 of the Births and Deaths Registration (Regulation) Act No. 5 of 1982 provides for the establishment of a committee composed of doctors and administrators and performing the functions vested in it under the Act. The Act also prescribes measures for ensuring that every child with disabilities is registered at birth and given a name and nationality, the aim being to guarantee the lawful rights of such children and protect their human rights. The Births Registration Division expedites and facilitates the registration process for all births and the prompt issuance of birth certificates.

140. The Births Registration Division of the Supreme Council for Health is responsible for giving effect to the implementing measures adopted to ensure that every infant with disabilities is registered at birth and given a name and nationality. The Division makes every effort to ensure the immediate registration of all live births without exception, which is a human right, and issues birth certificates containing the infant's particulars.

141. The Department of Nationality and Travel Documentation allocates a personal (national) number to every newborn child, regardless of whether the child has a disability, and grants Qatari nationality on the basis of the father's nationality. Persons with disabilities are exempted from the payment of fees for the issuance and replacement of a Qatari passport and Qatari identity card.

## **Article 19**

### **Living independently and being included in the community**

142. Concerning the right of persons with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community, the decision adopted by the Council of Ministers at its first ordinary meeting of 1997, held on 1 January, provides that: "Appropriate proposals for assisting older persons, the incapacitated and persons with disabilities shall be submitted in the light of the Islamic sharia." Pursuant to Council of Ministers Decision No. 18 of 2007 concerning priorities and rules for access to the housing scheme for persons with special needs, women with disabilities are afforded right of access to the scheme on an equal basis with non-disabled women. Article 2 of the Decision states: "Qatari males and females shall have access to the scheme in accordance with the following rules: They must belong to a category in need of social care, such as persons with disabilities, orphans, persons incapacitated for work and older persons." Article 2 of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 also provides: "In addition to the rights afforded to them under other legislation, persons with special needs shall enjoy the following rights: ...

7. Accommodation in which they can move about safely and the assurance of dedicated facilities in public places.”

143. With respect to the delivery of services to persons with disabilities in the home, the Amirni service was set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs to assist older persons and persons with special needs who are unable to make their way to the Ministry or to its social security offices in order to complete their business. Through the home visits organized by Amirni, the Ministry is able to maintain contact with these persons, fulfil their requirements and ensure their access to the services available to them.

144. The Ministry has a number of dedicated telephone lines in its communication centre for answering queries during official working hours, in addition to its own website. Customers can also contact the Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities through an e-mail address publicized in the local press.

## **Article 20**

### **Personal mobility**

145. Article 2 of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 provides as follows: “In addition to the rights afforded to them under other legislation, persons with special needs shall enjoy the following rights: Access to tools, equipment, transport and devices that assist their learning, rehabilitation, mobility and travel.”

146. Parking spaces for persons with disabilities are indicated by special signs and markings in all public parking areas, car parks, shopping centres and government premises.

147. The Supreme Council for Information and Communication Technology also established a centre specializing in assistive technology for persons with disabilities. The centre carries out needs assessment and training, provides information resources and seeks appropriate solutions for enabling persons with disabilities to use and benefit from information technology and digital access.

148. Concerning measures taken to provide training in mobility skills to persons with disabilities and to specialist staff, the Ministry of Social Affairs, through the associations and institutions that it oversees pursuant to the Private Associations and Institutions Act No. 12 of 2004, as amended by Act No. 10 of 2010, plays an active role in helping persons with disabilities to enhance their mobility skills and in providing staff to assist them in that endeavour.

149. The Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs has championed the “Barrier-free city” project, the aim of which is to ensure that accessible entrances and exits are provided for persons with motor disabilities in private and public areas, including hospitals, markets, government premises and hotels, along with special parking spaces designated for persons with disabilities in cooperation with the Traffic Department of the Ministry of the Interior. Another of the project’s aims is to ensure that building permits comply with the requirements pertaining to accessibility, the availability of specially equipped hotel rooms and the installation of lifts suitable for use by persons with disabilities. It is also seeking to introduce a service for supplying vehicles adapted for persons with disabilities.

150. For its part, the Shafallah Centre has taken various steps to promote ease of mobility and training, as follows:

- Conclusion of a partnership agreement with the General Authority for Tourism and Hotels, with the result that criteria are now in place concerning the right of access for persons with disabilities;

- Inclusion of mobility skills in the training provided for its students, covering all settings from childhood to the world of work;
- Supply of personnel to provide training in mobility skills for students at various levels;
- Supply of mobility equipment and assistive technology to improve skills.

151. The Shafallah Centre has also been involved in encouraging the production of mobility equipment and assistive technology, taking into consideration the mobility needs of persons with disabilities, as follows:

- It hosted the ninth forum of the Gulf Association for Persons with Disabilities on the theme “Technology and assistive technology for persons with disabilities”;
- It organized its own exhibition of technology and assistive technology for persons with disabilities;
- It worked in association with the Supreme Council for Information and Communication Technology to find electronic solutions for communicating with persons with disabilities and increasing their productivity at work.

## **Article 21**

### **Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information**

152. In article 47, the Qatari Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and research to all individuals in accordance with the terms and conditions prescribed by law.

153. It is deemed both essential and imperative to empower students with disabilities through the use of communication media and the learning of life skills, which is attainable only by implementing the following measures:

- Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of deaf persons;
- Creating environments that maximize academic and social development.

154. Educational institutions for students with disabilities now offer an array of services catering to more than one type of disability. Teachers at these institutions have attended training courses at home and abroad in order to better their qualifications and they also have at their disposal all of the educational tools and materials needed to assist them in teaching students.

155. Communication takes place using the method most appropriate to each student. Sign language is therefore used with deaf students and Braille with blind students. In order to help them in educating their children, families are provided with a Braille learning toolkit and other relevant materials, such as the Ibsar and Virgo software programmes, scientific calculators and Pronto! organizers. The Noor Institute for the Blind also produces the Qatari Cubarithm, a prototype slate with raised markings used for making arithmetic and geometric calculations.

156. The Auditory Education School uses sign language, which is treated as a mother tongue and is the conduit for enabling students to communicate with others, express themselves and their feelings, understand the world around them and receive education and training.

157. The student parliament programme being implemented in all schools is a vehicle for enabling students to express their views and ideas and engage in the learning process. The aim of these parliaments is to involve students in democratic practices at school, build in



them an independent character founded on constructive dialogue, develop their problem-solving capacities and deepen their ethos of loyalty and belonging to the country, community and school. There is a student parliament in each of the country's schools.

158. Television and radio programmes also worth mentioning include *al-Muqaddimah* (Introduction), aired on the Bara'im channel, *al-Qirar li-ka* (The decision is yours) and *al-Dar* (The Home). School radio programmes are another medium used by students to express their views and ideas.

## **Article 22**

### **Respect for privacy**

159. The Qatari legislator guaranteed personal privacy, without exception, under article 37 of the Constitution, which applies to all groups in the community, with no discrimination on grounds of disability.

160. Together with all its administrative offices and treatment centres, the Supreme Council for Health is careful to maintain the confidentiality of personal and health information pertaining to persons with disabilities, which is seen by no one other than those concerned, this being one of the Council's key policy principles (Policy No. OP 4042). Ministries, institutions and centres working with persons with disabilities, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Shafallah Centre, are equally careful to maintain the confidentiality of that information and ensure that only interested parties have sight of it. Measures taken by the Shafallah Centre to protect the confidentiality of information concerning its students, which is likewise one of its principles and rules, are as follows:

- Its staff sign an undertaking to maintain the confidentiality of information pertaining to students;
- Students may not be photographed during activities or in classrooms without the written permission of their families;
- Information on its students is provided to the concerned authorities on the basis of an official letter of request and only with the family's consent.

## **Article 23**

### **Respect for home and the family**

161. The Family Code (Act No. 22 of 2006) provides that premarital examinations are compulsory for Qataris and non-Qataris, pursuant to article 18: "The official performing the marriage may not complete the marriage certificate unless both parties provide a certificate confirming that they have undergone a medical examination." Scrupulously carried out, this examination is aimed at the early identification of certain diseases in order to ensure a healthy marriage and minimize risks to which spouses may be exposed after their marriage owing to the fact that one of them has a genetic or serious disease. The diseases tested for are divided into three categories: genetic diseases that could be passed down to children; communicable diseases that could be passed from husband to wife, such as hepatitis and immunodeficiency disorders; and chronic diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes.

162. Article 1 of the Social Security Act No. 38 of 1995 guarantees a social security allowance to enable persons with disabilities and vulnerable families to live decently. Various means of rehabilitation are also guaranteed under article 17 of the same Act, which concerns the provision of appropriate accommodation, social security and allowances for domestic helpers, as detailed in Council of Ministers Decision No. 8 of 1997 fixing the

amount of allowances payable to the categories provided for in the Social Security Act No. 38 of 1995 and determining the rules for the award of such allowances.

163. Measures taken to avoid the institutionalization of boys and girls with disabilities whose parents are unable to care for them consist in ensuring that such children are provided with alternative care by the extended family or otherwise by a family within the wider community.

164. Health institutions and various non-governmental foundations organize talks and circulate advice booklets to raise public awareness of matters relating to marriage, starting a family and common diseases.

## **Article 24**

### **Education**

165. The articles of the Constitution provide for equality on the basis that all persons are equal, without discrimination among them, as in the case of the two articles on education: article 25, which provides: "Education is a fundamental pillar for social progress. The State shall guarantee, promote and expand education and work to make it available to all"; and article 49, which states: "Education is a right of every citizen. The State shall strive to make public education compulsory and free of charge, in accordance with the applicable regulations and laws."

166. At the legislative level, the Compulsory Education Act No. 25 of 2001 provides in article 2 that education is compulsory and free for all children from the beginning of the primary stage until the end of the preparatory stage or the attainment of 18 years of age. Article 2 of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 also provides for a number of rights, including the right to education, training and rehabilitation on the basis of capability. At the global level, all international instruments and treaties ratified by Qatar, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, affirm the equality of the sexes. The education plan and programmes delivered are the same for both sexes.

167. Measures implemented include those of:

- Integrating numerous students with disabilities into mainstream education;
- Opening schools and centres for students with disabilities;
- Ratifying the recommendations of the World Education Forum, held in Dakar in 2000, preparing the National Education For All Plan comprising the six goals adopted at Dakar and presenting a mid-decade report evaluating progress made in achieving the indicators outlined in the Plan;
- Creating an appropriate school environment and facilities for persons with disabilities;
- Elaborating a policy on additional learning support for students with disabilities or learning difficulties;
- Providing fair education opportunities for all, which has been borne out by the enrolment rates;
- Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, as well as facilitating peer support and mentoring;

- Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;
- Guaranteeing the delivery of education to blind or deaf persons, persons with intellectual disabilities or autism, particularly the children among them, in the most appropriate languages and mode and means of communication for the individual, and creating environments that maximize academic and social development.

168. A total of 1,487 students with disabilities were enrolled in mainstream schools. The following table provides a breakdown of those students in the different stages of education.

Table 2

**Breakdown of students by stage of education for the school year 2010/11**

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Number</i>
Kindergarten	82
Primary	841
Preparatory	324
Secondary	240
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 487</b>

Table 3

**Number of students by type of disability in independent and private schools teaching in Arabic for the school year 2010/11**

<i>Type of disability</i>	<i>Total</i>
Dual disability (deaf-blind)	31
Speech and language disorders	546
Autism spectrum disorders	66
Visual impairment	213
Physical and motor disability	217
Intellectual disability	308
Hearing impairment	17
Multiple disability (physical and intellectual)	89
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 487</b>

169. The number of students with disabilities registered in the country's 10 learning centres for persons with disabilities in Qatar is 5,886, of whom 2,231 are female and 3,655 are male.

Table 4  
Number of students registered in learning centres

<i>Centre</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Shafallah Centre	335	188	<b>523</b>
Auditory Education Centre	43	32	<b>75</b>
Noor Institute for the Blind	233	187	<b>420</b>
Doha International Centre for Special Needs	61	21	<b>82</b>
Tamakun International School	30	19	<b>49</b>
Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs	2 449	1 544	<b>3 993</b>
Qatar Cultural and Social Centre for the Deaf	120	72	<b>192</b>
Qatar Sports Federation of Persons with Special Needs	239	97	<b>336</b>
Qatar Social and Cultural Centre for the Blind	54	46	<b>100</b>
Awsaj Academy of Education – Qatar Foundation	91	25	<b>116</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 655</b>	<b>2 231</b>	<b>5 886</b>

170. Various measures have been taken to ensure access to education for all children in Qatar, including the aforementioned legislative measures providing for the right to free education. The State furthermore supplies all of the school materials, including textbooks, needed for each student and likewise all of the teaching materials needed for use in schools, laboratories, sports halls and so on. Transport is also laid on to take students to and from school and teaching equipment and aids are provided on the basis of their types of disability.

171. The Supreme Education Council has worked hard to create an appropriate learning and school environment for students with disabilities. Mainstream schools are therefore fully equipped to meet the needs of students with disabilities in terms of access, facilities and the like.

172. Training and learning facilities are provided for children, their families and teachers who need to master augmentative and alternative modes of communication and the use of communication tools appropriate to the individual. Training is also provided to teach those working in mainstream education about disability and the integration of persons with disability into mainstream schools. Measures applied by these schools in order to cater to students with special needs include the following:

- Helping the individual to achieve psychological and social stability;
- Encouraging students to talk about their social difficulties;
- Gathering preliminary information;
- Identifying psychosocial problems in students;
- Using assistive tools and techniques to support students with special needs and promote their academic attainment;
- Integrating students with special needs into school groups, activities and competitions;
- Using all ways and means of encouragement for students who show behavioural improvements;
- Organizing workshops on the theme of psychosocial care;

- Training teachers to interact with persons with special needs;
- Organizing individual or group sessions for students with disabilities;
- Appointing a psychologist and promoting the psychologist's role;
- Promoting the role of the educational advisor;
- Implementing a programme for communicating with parents of students with disabilities;
- Using the services of centres for the rehabilitation and care of persons with disabilities;
- Ensuring that the situation of students with disabilities is monitored by the school, its deputy administrator and its social worker.

173. In addition to organizing a series of vocational and first-aid workshops, learning institutions for persons with disabilities implement programmes for enhancing the knowledge of students, promoting upstanding behaviour, teaching etiquette for interacting with others in different situations and circumstances, and developing practical skills and knowhow in such areas as leatherwork, carpentry, handicrafts, sewing and sports. Efforts are likewise made to further the professional development of all teaching and administrative staff working in these learning institutions.

174. The Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women employs a range of measures for promoting active learning and full integration, including in particular:

(a) Helping to promote integration mechanisms in independent schools by referring cases of children with disabilities that it will be dealing with to the Supreme Education Council for the purpose of following up their registration and facilitating their entrance to independent or private schools;

(b) Referring individuals not included in the integration process to the Shafallah Centre for Persons with Special Needs so that the necessary care and attention can be devoted to their learning and rehabilitation;

(c) Communicating with schools to ensure that students with disabilities are diligently applying themselves and have access to the necessary facilities, in cooperation with the Supreme Education Council.

175. The Supreme Education Council has carefully organized a series of professional development workshops for teachers, covering *inter alia* teaching methods and strategies and classroom management. In addition, it has organized training workshops on the policy of additional support for students with learning difficulties or disabilities. Centres and schools catering to students in this category also offer various training courses for their staff. The Continuing Training Centre at the Noor Institute for the Blind, for example, makes great efforts to bolster the number of individuals qualified to work in the fields of special education and early childhood and to enhance the effectiveness of the services provided by:

(a) Delivering long- and short-term training programmes in accordance with trainee needs;

(b) Delivering courses for raising awareness, enhancing knowledge and improving the capacity for interacting with students with disabilities;

(c) Providing educational advice to special education institutions in order to help them develop their services;

(d) Undertaking scientific studies on issues relating to the development of educational programmes and assessment tools used in special education;

(e) Offering e-learning and distance learning programmes to teachers for whom it is difficult to attend courses.

176. Schools are responsible for assessing the needs and progress of deaf students as part of the process of integrating them fully into education, enabling them all to learn and participate effectively in regular classes, and promoting their right as learners to engage in the whole learning experience with a view to accentuating their knowledge and abilities.

177. The Supreme Education Council employs the term “measures and facilities” as a catch-all phrase for changes of any type introduced by schools to elevate the learning experience of students with hearing impairment to the same level as that of their colleagues.

178. Numerous school initiatives and programmes are in place for promoting the linguistic identity of deaf students, including a speech therapy programme for developing and strengthening their linguistic abilities and a standardized Arabic sign language programme so that they can understand the content of learning and other school activities translated into sign language. One-to-one speech lessons for students with hearing impairment are also provided by a team of speech therapists. Staff have received training in the standardized Arabic sign language in order to facilitate communication with students.

179. Measures to facilitate learning for students with hearing disabilities include:

- Pre-teaching the language and concepts needed to ensure that students are equipped in advance with the essential knowledge about the activity concerned;
- Ensuring that teachers can always be seen by students;
- Following interactions between deaf students and other members of the school community;
- Using assistive technology, such as frequency modulation systems and sound amplification;
- Providing speech therapy programmes for all students from the start of the school year in order to develop their verbal and linguistic abilities;
- Delivering a standardized Arabic sign language training programme for deaf students to enable them to understand sign language translations of various school courses and activities;
- Providing one-to-one speech therapy sessions (auditory training, auditory discrimination, phonetics, etc.), conducted by a team comprising a speech therapist, a teacher and a pronunciation coach, for students with hearing impairment;
- Delivering a standardized Arabic sign language training programme for new members of the community in order to facilitate their communication with deaf students and staff.

180. Concerning students integrated into mainstream schools, in accordance with the additional learning support policy adopted by the Supreme Education Council, three levels of learning support were identified, namely:

Level I (classroom-based): At this level, the support calls for planning measures and the establishment of teaching methods, assessment procedures and report preparation strategies consistent with the learning needs of all students, including those with disabilities. Further measures and facilities may be required to enable students with disabilities to participate fully in school life on the basis of their individual needs.

Level II: This level calls for a cooperative teaching method and consultation with school support staff working with students with disabilities who need more support in addition to that provided at level I. The support at this level must be consistent with the classroom learning programme.

Level III: In addition to the support provided at levels I and II, this level calls for intensive teaching methods, usually involving expert assistance.

181. Schools utilize all of the communication methods appropriate to students on the basis of their disability, as well as modern assistive technologies, and some entities make use of individual hearing aids, communal equipment, speech training programmes and hearing measurement equipment. Training programmes are also offered for blind students in use of the Ibsar screen reader, talking software programmes, Braille and a text magnification software programme. School learning resources centres are furthermore stocked with a variety of materials for developing students' self-learning skills and enriching the learning process.

182. Other measures include the organization of school awareness campaigns and the delivery of appropriate support to students with special needs in order to guarantee effective learning and full integration, as well as training and learning facilities for children and their families.

183. Teachers and experts participate in specialist courses and workshops organized in their respective fields by the Supreme Education Council, schools or the country's specialist training centres. The schools concerned produce plans and strategies for helping teachers to develop and improve their ability for interaction with students with disabilities through what are known as staff development programmes. Full integration into the education system is aimed at increasing the participation of all learners in school life and at making learning experiences relevant to their lives.

184. Full integration entails a set of measures designed to enable all students to learn and engage effectively in mainstream education, experience it to the full and have access to the learning opportunities offered by the school curricula.

185. Full integration is focused on the right of children to be involved in all learning experiences, something which schools must work to ensure. In order to ensure that this right is realized, the Supreme Education Council urges all schools to review all of their services for children and their parents in order to ensure that needs of these particular learners are fully met.

186. Other measures taken by schools in connection with the education of persons with disabilities (integration) include those of:

- Providing an additional learning support team;
- Determining the level of support to be provided to students through the classroom teacher and the support coordinator;
- Formulating a learning support plan for each individual subject area in line with student needs and delivering measures and facilities accordingly;
- Supplying an assistant teacher for certain students with disabilities, in accordance with their needs;
- Putting in place an efficient system for registering and producing academic progress reports on students;
- Developing a comprehensive school syllabus that responds to the needs of students with disabilities.

## Article 25

### Health

187. Concerning legislative and other measures offering protection from discrimination and guaranteeing access for persons with disabilities to the same quality health services as delivered to others, including services relating to sexual and reproductive health, the Supreme Council for Health, represented by its specialist treatment centres of all levels, makes no distinction between persons with disabilities and others in providing treatment, health examinations and, for those who so request, access to the family planning and reproductive health programme, subject to the approval of the medical committee that assesses whether or not a married couple is medically fit to start a family. Premarital examinations and family planning programmes are the same for persons with disabilities as for non-disabled users, as provided for by law, in accordance with the decision adopted by the Council of Ministers at its eighth ordinary meeting of 1997, held on 5 March of that year.

188. Hamad Medical Corporation also provides multidisciplinary rehabilitation programmes free of charge for hospitalized patients and for out-patients at specialist clinics, taking into account their special needs, as follows:

- A rehabilitation programme for persons with brain injuries;
- A rehabilitation programme for amputees;
- A prosthetics and orthotics programme;
- A seating and wheelchair programme;
- A medical and surgical rehabilitation programme;
- Child rehabilitation programmes;
- A spinal injury rehabilitation programme;
- A stroke rehabilitation programme;
- A neurorehabilitation programme;
- An early medical rehabilitation programme;
- A community-based rehabilitation programme;
- A community-based residential rehabilitation programme;
- A long-term rehabilitation care programme;
- A referral programme for completion of treatment at home;
- A therapeutic rehabilitation programme;
- A vocational rehabilitation programme;
- An assessment programme for students with disabilities.

189. All rehabilitation programmes are provided free of charge for Qataris and non-Qataris who are either hospitalized or out-patients at specialist clinics. At its genetic testing laboratory, Hamad Medical Corporation annually performs 7,000 diagnostic tests for disability in the context of programmes for early identification and early intervention at birth and in the first years of life in the case of autism or developmental, metabolic or genetic disorders, for example.

190. The Supreme Council for Health also delivers health services and programmes for early identification of disability by undertaking measures to:



- Provide diagnostic, therapeutic and rehabilitative services and develop existing health programmes in order to promote the advancement of persons with disabilities;
- Elaborate programmes for early identification of disability and early intervention during pregnancy and after childbirth;
- Establish health awareness and education programmes and provide means of specialist early intervention in the event of disability;
- Supply health personnel specializing in various types of disability and provide them with initial and further training;
- Conduct and circulate to the concerned entities medical studies on the causes, effects and prevention of disability.

191. The Supreme Council for Health furthermore works with persons with disabilities in carrying out awareness activities designed to promote an image of those persons as individuals capable of contributing to society who enjoy the same rights and freedoms as all others. These awareness programmes and activities consist in:

- Organizing conferences and activities to increase public awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and the importance of integrating those persons into society;
- Harnessing medical teams specializing in rehabilitation to disseminate awareness of all available treatments and health programmes, including among all children taking part in medical and community-based rehabilitation programmes from a very young age and their parents, with the aim of promoting positive social attitudes towards the rights of persons with disabilities;
- Encouraging all media outlets to portray persons with disabilities in such a way as to ensure that they ultimately participate in the community, exercise their individual rights as a socially active group and are properly integrated into the family setting and into the work environment;
- Promoting collaboration with persons with disabilities themselves and with the entities providing services for such persons in order to arrive at the best way forward to their proper and meaningful integration into society.

192. The Supreme Council for Health also selects and recruits foreign experts and specialist teams trained for dealing with all manner of disabilities. It further works to promote continuing development and training programmes for doctors and personnel working to implement rehabilitation programmes in urban and rural areas. These specialist teams typically carry out regular home visits and help to guide families and mothers in particular in such matters as how to care for children with disabilities, look after their health, take them through a physical exercise regime and assist their intellectual, social and psychological development.

193. Legislative measures for guaranteeing access for persons with disabilities to any health treatment on the basis of their free and informed consent were covered in the comments relating to article 15 of the Convention. In addition, the Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities adopted by Hamad Medical Corporation provides in article 1 for the right of patients to “access health care facilities, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, place of origin, belief, values, language, age or disability”. Persons with disabilities thus enjoy, on an equal basis with non-disabled persons, all of the rights set out in the Charter.

194. Concerning measures to increase awareness and provide information in accessible formats, including Braille, concerning HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention, the Noor Institute for the Blind endeavours to provide educational and information materials

appropriate for students who are blind or have a visual impairment. In that context, it creates the least complex and most natural possible environment and provides school textbooks and important medical papers in Braille for blind persons and large print books for persons with visual impairment, as well as audiobooks. The Institute also endeavours to stock resources rooms in integrated schools with essential materials and tools for students with visual impairment.

195. The Supreme Council for Health cooperates closely with the Noor Institute, exchanging expertise and specialist advice on the subject of disability. Training courses and symposiums are organized at the Institute for persons with disabilities and their parents. The Institute also directly refers persons with visual impairment to rehabilitation clinics if they need advice or more specialized rehabilitation, which is particularly true in the case of those with multiple disabilities.

196. The National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness was established by a decision of the Minister of Health and has espoused the Qatar National Vision 2030.

## **Article 26**

### **Habilitation and rehabilitation**

197. Numerous activities are implemented through stakeholders in the rehabilitation programmes for persons with disabilities, notably those of:

- (a) Providing continuing training for specialists and staff working in rehabilitation and treatment programmes;
- (b) Supplying assistive equipment and technology designed for persons with disabilities on the basis of their needs;
- (c) Hosting forums, meetings and exhibitions with the aim of improving the situation of persons with disabilities;
- (d) Organizing awareness campaigns for informing the public and employers about the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others;
- (e) Developing job programmes with a view to ensuring that persons with disabilities are fully and productively employed;
- (f) Working with the Supreme Council for Information and Communication Technology in order to arrive at electronic solutions for communicating with persons with disabilities and for increasing their productivity at work;
- (g) Integrating persons with intellectual disabilities into the mainstream job market;
- (h) Formulating regulations to prevent workplace harassment of persons with disabilities;
- (i) Raising awareness among doctors and other health professionals concerning disabilities and their early identification;
- (j) Delivering information, training and rehabilitation programmes for children at the early intervention stage and programmes for children cared for in the home;
- (k) Offering advice and training services for delegations from such countries as the Sudan, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassy of the country concerned.

198. Measures taken by the Job Qualification Centre at the Ministry of Labour include the development of programmes to prepare persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with non-disabled persons attending the Centre, to take on the responsibilities of jobs for which they are candidates. Through the Centre, the Ministry of Labour also delivers training courses for persons with disabilities, leading to a technical or vocational certificate that qualifies them for access to the job market.

## **Article 27**

### **Work and employment**

199. The country's domestic laws are non-discriminatory and in no way obstruct access for persons with disabilities to job opportunities in the public or private sector, recognizing their right to work on an equal basis with others. Non-discrimination between non-disabled persons and persons with disabilities is thus one of the legal principles governing the latter's employment and treatment in Qatar.

200. Section V of the Labour Code (Act No. 14 of 2004) sets out the disciplinary powers of employers, safeguards the rights of all workers, including those with disabilities, and protects them from unfair dismissal.

201. The Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Labour and the Supreme Council for Family Affairs are currently considering abolition of the requirement on private entities under Act No. 2 of 2004 to reserve 2 per cent of jobs for persons with disabilities. The thinking is that the removal of that restriction would open up more opportunities for higher percentages of such persons to be taken on by those entities.

## **Article 28**

### **Adequate standard of living and social protection**

202. Qatari legislation guarantees all of the services needed to ensure an adequate standard of living for citizens and residents alike. These services, notably housing and water, are provided to Qatari citizens free of charge.

203. In accordance with the Social Security Act No. 38 of 1995, persons with disabilities fall into the category of those entitled to receive allowances.

204. The conditions and rules applicable to persons with disabilities in order for them to benefit from the housing scheme are provided for in the Housing Act No. 2 of 2007 and Council of Ministers Decision No. 18 of 2007 concerning priorities and rules for access to the housing scheme for disadvantaged persons.

205. The following table shows the number of persons with disabilities who have thus far received a social security allowance for domestic help.

Table 5

#### **Number of persons with disabilities benefiting to date from a social security allowance for domestic help**

<i>Females</i>		<i>Males</i>		<i>Total</i>	
<i>Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>
479	383 200	532	425 600	<b>1 011</b>	<b>808 800</b>

*Source:* Social Security Department, Ministry of Social Affairs.

206. The following table shows the number of persons with disabilities benefiting from social security and the amounts paid.

Table 6

**Number of persons with disabilities benefiting from social security and amounts paid**

<i>Type of disability</i>	<i>Females</i>		<i>Males</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Physical	261	313 200	256	307 200	<b>517</b>	<b>620 400</b>
Intellectual	117	140 400	162	193 393	<b>279</b>	<b>333 793</b>
Physical and intellectual	140	168 000	175	211 326	<b>315</b>	<b>379 326</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>621 600</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>711 919</b>	<b>1 111</b>	<b>1 333 519</b>

*Source:* Social Security Department, Ministry of Social Affairs.

**Article 29****Participation in political and public life**

207. The Qatari Constitution guarantees to all citizens the right to vote and stand for election, freedom of association, freedom of opinion and scientific research, and freedom of the press, printing and publishing in articles 42, 44 and 45, which provide, respectively, that: “The State shall guarantee to all citizens the right to vote and stand for election, in accordance with the law”; “The right of association shall be guaranteed to citizens, as provided for by law”; and “Freedom of opinion and scientific research shall be guaranteed, in accordance with the conditions and circumstances prescribed by law”. Article 48 of the Constitution provides: “Freedom of the press, printing and publishing shall be guaranteed, in accordance with the law.” The Persons with Special Needs Act sets out in article 2 the rights of persons with disabilities, including political rights. These constitutional rights thus apply to persons with disabilities as Qatari citizens.

208. Article 2, paragraph 9, of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 guarantees the right of persons with disabilities to “participate in decision-making on matters affecting them”. Concerning political rights, Decree No. 17 of 1998 concerning the rules for the election of the Central Municipal Council guarantees to persons with disabilities the same right to vote and stand for election as others, with article 20 providing that: “... A voter who is unable to mark the voting card may communicate his choice orally in a voice audible only to the members of the committee. The voting card shall then be marked with the voter’s choice and placed in the ballot box.”

209. With respect to practicalities, voting cards bearing the names of candidates are prepared for each constituency and a Braille version is always provided. Sign language interpreters are also on duty at polling stations.

210. In order to guarantee the right of persons with disabilities to vote, article 19 of Decree No. 17 of 1998 concerning the rules for the election of the Central Municipal Council provides that: “Candidates are authorized to enter polling stations or may designate in writing a voter in their constituency to do so on their behalf.” The purpose of this provision is to enable candidates to monitor the voting and vote counting procedures.

211. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs established a committee tasked with promoting the participation of persons with disabilities in the elections for the Central Municipal Council (fourth session) in accordance with the provisions of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004. To that end, the committee organized a seminar on the

theme “Rights of persons with disabilities and the elections for the Central Municipal Council”, in cooperation with the National Human Rights Committee. It also organized a training and awareness workshop for deaf and blind persons. Election information materials were translated into sign language and a Braille version of the Central Municipal Council Act was also produced for the benefit of blind voters.

212. Concerning support provided to persons with disabilities in establishing and running organizations that uphold their rights and interests at the local, regional and national levels, the Ministry of Social Affairs lends its services to all citizens, without discrimination, particularly in connection with procedures for the registration of private organizations in accordance with the Private Associations and Institutions Act No. 12 of 2004, as amended by Act No. 10 of 2010.

### **Article 30**

#### **Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport**

213. In promulgating the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004, Qatar guaranteed the fundamental and legitimate rights of this important segment of society. The articles of the Act confer on persons with special needs many of the advantages and privileges essential to ensuring that they feel an integral part of the community. Article 2, paragraph 6, of the Act provides that persons with special needs enjoy the right to engage in sports and leisure activities in accordance with their particular capabilities. Article 3 also provides in paragraphs 5 and 6 that it is the responsibility of the competent entities to provide opportunities for persons with special needs to engage in sports and leisure activities as a means of fulfilling their needs and developing their capabilities and to provide special care, sports and leisure facilities for such persons.

214. The Qatar Sports Club for Persons with Disabilities was established in 1993 with the aim of holistically preparing young persons with disabilities, through the medium of sport, to adapt psychologically, socially and physically for integration into the community. The country’s Sports Federation for Special Needs, created in 2011, also participates in the activities of international, Asian and regional sports federations for special needs with which it is affiliated.

215. Among the services and facilities in place for persons with special needs are those designed to provide the material and human resources required to organize sports activities, afford to persons with disabilities the opportunity to participate in sporting events abroad and sports activities at the community level, ensure easy access to and use of sports facilities for persons with disabilities, and encourage their participation in sports activities by way of the Olympic Committee or the Qatar Federation. Persons with special needs are also appointed to serve on the Olympic Committee.

216. As part of the Olympic programme for schools run in cooperation with the Qatar Olympic Committee, persons with special needs play goalball and participate in goalball championships at home and abroad.

### **Article 31**

#### **Statistics and data collection**

217. Statistics and data on persons with disabilities are collected by various State agencies, primarily the Qatar Statistics Authority. Data are also produced by specialist institutions and centres providing services for persons with disabilities. National efforts to bridge the data gap include the conduct of specialist surveys, the most recent of which was a comprehensive survey of persons with disabilities carried out by the Supreme Council for

Family Affairs in association with the Statistics Authority. In addition, the annual abstract of statistics contains special sections on persons with disabilities, including data on those registered at centres for persons with disabilities, disaggregated by type of disability, gender, nationality and age group, and data on the occupation, sex and nationality of the staff working at those centres.

## **Article 32**

### **International cooperation**

218. Concerning measures taken to guarantee international cooperation that includes and is open to all persons with disabilities, Amiri Decree No. 15 of 2009 regulating the Supreme Council for Family Affairs states in article 4 that the Council's functions consist in:

- Elaborating strategies, policies and programmes to improve the quality of life for families and their members and to guarantee their social security and stability;
- Working to realize the objectives enunciated in international instruments relating to the family;
- Monitoring all efforts aimed at the implementation of international instruments relating to the family and the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities to which Qatar is a party;
- Cooperating with international and regional bodies and organizations concerned with families and their members, as well as representing the State in regional and international conferences and committees on matters relating to the family, children, women and persons with disabilities.

219. In accordance with article 6 of Amiri Decree No. 40 of 2009 on the organizational structure of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry's International Cooperation Unit is tasked with studying and following up the implementation of recommendations made by regional and international bodies, in coordination with the competent State authorities, and with reporting on the contribution of those bodies to the development and promotion of activities within the remit of the Ministry, in collaboration with the competent authorities. As part of its function, the Unit consequently registers the homes and services made available by the State to persons with disabilities in the context of international cooperation, in keeping with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and taking into account the recommendations of regional and international bodies and organizations registered by the Unit. The inclusiveness of persons with disabilities in such services on an equal basis with the country's other citizens is thus confirmed.

220. Several State entities offer specific programmes and projects for staff members with disabilities. The Training and Development Section at the Ministry of Finance, for example, runs on-site training courses to promote the professional development of deaf and mute persons. Other special courses of this type are also being organized in coordination with external training centres.

221. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs launched an initiative for finalizing the standardization of sign language, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, the Arab Federation of the Deaf and the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science. In that context, a workshop for Arab deaf persons and staff working with such persons was organized and a dictionary of Arabic sign language for deaf persons was published (2007). In 2008, the Supreme Council also organized a workshop on guaranteeing rights of access for persons with disabilities.

### **Article 33**

#### **National implementation and monitoring**

222. In accordance with article 2 of Decision No. 2 of 1999 of the President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, the committee tasked with implementing the provisions of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 elaborated criteria for the accreditation of special education institutions, in coordination with the competent authorities. It also worked with those authorities and all other stakeholders to guarantee delivery of their services and programmes for persons with disabilities, as provided by law.

223. No independent body has been established to monitor implementation of the Convention in accordance with article 33 thereof. As the governmental entity charged with that monitoring task, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs is currently formulating implementing decisions for submission to the Council of Ministers.

224. The National Human Rights Committee also monitors the situation of persons with disabilities and carries out field studies, using the provisions of the Convention as the basic criterion for monitoring and research. It conducted a study on application of the Convention in seven care centres providing medical, educational and social services for persons with disabilities and another study on deaf children who have cochlear implants. It also carries out regular on-site visits.

225. A joint committee of relevant State entities has been established to draft a law amending certain provisions of the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 with the aim of ensuring implementation of the Convention at the national level.

226. The State has taken care to integrate issues relating to persons with disabilities into its various strategies, notably:

- The population policy introduced on 1 October 2009, which includes several key components relating directly to disability, such as the economic and social empowerment of persons with disabilities.
- The general strategy for the family launched on 1 December 2010 by the Supreme Council for the Family, which includes a key component relating to persons with disabilities.
- The national development strategy for the period 2011–2016, part of which is specifically devoted to family cohesion and women’s empowerment. The education and training strategy and the health strategy also include goals, programmes and projects for persons with disabilities.
- The institutions concerned with persons with disabilities coordinate their efforts to implement and follow up their national action plans in order to achieve the goals articulated in these strategies.

### **III. Challenges and future directions**

227. For all the concrete developments at the legislative and institutional levels and in the area of awareness-raising and despite the political will in favour of implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the State faces a number of temporary difficulties and challenges in giving optimal effect to the rights and freedoms set out in the Convention. The essence of these difficulties and challenges lies in the fact that the country’s legislative and institutional development is so recent, in addition to which the technical capacities of its human resources are still being built and refined.

228. Notwithstanding the establishment of various governmental and non-governmental agencies and institutions for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, the challenge is to strengthen cooperation and coordination among these bodies in order to further the protection and promotion of those rights.

229. While the State has made substantial efforts to promote pragmatic measures in the interest of persons with disabilities, it must pursue those efforts further in order to facilitate their access to all public amenities.

230. The State is expecting to benefit from the activities and programmes of the Doha-based United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, opened in May 2009, in its efforts to alleviate some of these difficulties, train national personnel and build and develop their capacities. The State's continuing cooperation with treaty bodies, including the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, will also make a great contribution to overcoming these difficulties.

231. The National Development Strategy is a tool for achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030. It will reap practical benefits for all by improving and strengthening the economic environment for companies, investors and jobseekers, in addition to providing better opportunities for access to knowledge, learning, comprehensive health care and adequate and effective government services.

232. Translating the Qatar National Vision into specific activities and goals, the Strategy comprises four main pillars. The first is the economic pillar aimed at sustaining a high standard of living, building capacities for innovation, increasing business activities and synchronizing economic outcomes with economic and financial stability. Covering health, education and productive employment, the second pillar is that of human development aimed at empowering the population to sustain a prosperous society and meet the needs of the current generation without prejudicing those of the generations to come.

233. The social development pillar is aimed at the development of various programmes for target groups and the establishment of institutions with a social purpose, all within a single framework. It is also designed to turn Qatar into a more caring and cohesive society, founded on solid social principles, for the benefit of the current and future generations.

234. The fourth pillar (environmental development) is intended to square the growth of national prosperity with environmental determinants through the development of programmes for promoting cross-sectoral environmental and natural resources management.

235. The programmes and projects forming part of the National Development Strategy for the period 2011–2016 and aimed at promoting the rights of persons with disabilities are designed to:

- Establish the primary care system as the pillar of comprehensive care, with an emphasis on health and on bringing together all factors that promote health, such as early identification and early intervention;
- Provide appropriate learning options for students with disabilities;
- Create a working environment that promotes the empowerment of persons with disabilities;
- Roll out a comprehensive plan for the development of sporting talent in order to produce models for developing the sporting capabilities of persons with special needs.