



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

Distr.: General
3 December 2013
English
Original: Arabic

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

**List of issues and questions in relation to the initial report
of Qatar**

Addendum

Replies of Qatar*

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Observations of the Government of Qatar regarding the list of issues and questions in relation to the initial report of Qatar (CEDAW/C/QAT/1)

I. General

The initial report of Qatar (CEDAW/C/QAT/1) indicates that organized civil society activity in the State party is a new phenomenon and that to date no women's association has been formed in the State party (para. 45). According to the information before the Committee, there is no environment conducive to the establishment of non-governmental organizations in the State party, and national legislation imposes restrictions and heavy costs and therefore makes registration difficult for women's-rights organizations. Please indicate whether the State party has plans to amend its national legislation to create an enabling environment conducive to the establishment of women's-rights non-governmental organizations, which is important for the promotion of gender equality. Please indicate whether the report was adopted by the Government and presented to the Parliament.

1. Preparation and adoption of the initial report of Qatar

The initial report of Qatar provides information on how the report was prepared and adopted. In the report, it is stated that "a national drafting committee was established pursuant to a decision taken by the Council of Ministers at its thirty-ninth ordinary meeting of 2009, held on 30 December of that year. The committee was chaired by a representative of SCFA and members included representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Supreme Health Council, the Supreme Council for Education, the Secretariat for Development Planning, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking (QFCHT), the Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women (QFPCW), the Family Investment Centre, and the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC)".

It should be noted that such reports do not require the approval of the *Shura* (Advisory) Council. The report was instead adopted by the Council of Ministers at its thirty-second ordinary meeting of 2011, held on 5 October of that year, and submitted to the Committee in accordance with the relevant State procedures.

2. Please indicate whether the State party has plans to amend its national legislation to create an enabling environment conducive to the establishment of women's-rights non-governmental organizations, which is important for the promotion of gender equality

Act No. 12 of 2004 places no restrictions on the establishment of women's associations or organizations. Amended on several occasions, most recently in 2010, this Act stipulates that the Council of Ministers, acting in accordance with the public interest, may approve the establishment of associations that do not fulfil certain conditions set forth in the clauses regarding the number of founding members and the payment of association dues in the amount of 1,000 Qatari riyals (equivalent to \$274.64).

As for the assertion that the State's initial report indicates that the high costs associated with establishing associations or organizations makes it difficult to register women's rights associations or organizations, it should be noted that the fee for civil associations is only 1,000 riyals, and the Council of Ministers is allowed to give approval for establishment even if that condition is not met. The State, therefore, does not in fact impose large fees for establishing these types of associations.

II. Reservations

The report indicates that the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, the institutional mechanism with responsibility for the advancement of women, takes a rights-based approach to issues concerning women (para. 128). Please update the Committee on efforts of the State party, and the Council in particular, to review the reservations and declarations it entered into at the time of its accession to the Convention with a view to withdrawing and/or narrowing them, noting that some of them are considered incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. Please also provide information on whether it is working in collaboration with other countries with similar social, cultural and legal systems that have succeeded in withdrawing and/or considerably narrowing down their reservations to the Convention.

3. Update on efforts of the State party, and the Council in particular, to review the reservations and declarations it entered into at the time of its accession to the Convention with a view to withdrawing and/or narrowing them

Qatar affirms its long-standing policy on eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and its consistent attempts to promote equality and ensure that women benefit from various rights that are enshrined in domestic legislation, in accordance with the requirements of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In recent years, the State has begun to take practical steps regarding its general reservations to international conventions. This has resulted in a State review of general reservations to those international conventions on human rights to which it is a party. For instance, the State withdrew its general reservation to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and partially withdrew its general reservation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on any provisions that contravene the Islamic sharia, which now applies only to articles 2 and 14 of the Convention.

Qatar abandoned its practice of entering general reservations when it acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It chose instead to enter reservations regarding specific articles of the Convention and declared its reasons for entering those reservation.

No new measures are presently being undertaken to review the reservations the State entered and the declarations it made when it acceded to the Convention or to withdraw and/or narrowing them.

4. Information on whether the State party is working in collaboration with other countries with similar social, cultural and legal systems that have succeeded in withdrawing and/or considerably narrowing down their reservations to the Convention

In keeping with the State's commitment to the principle of partnership and cooperation with other countries, and in order to remain abreast of the most recent regional and international developments, Qatar strives to remain up to date on the latest developments concerning the implementation of international instruments. It also seeks to learn about the experiences of other States with regard to reservations and how to examine and withdraw them. It is doing so by participating in regional and international events and conferences on subjects relating to human rights and, in particular, women's rights.

III. Legal status of the Convention

The report indicates that, according to article 68 of the Constitution, "the Convention carries the force of law, due regard being had to the reservations and declarations set out in the instrument of accession" after being published in the Official Gazette (para. 1). Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that women in the State party are aware of their rights under the Convention and are able to invoke those rights, including through the lodging of complaints through the legal system when their rights have been violated. Please also provide information on cases brought before the courts on discrimination against women and the outcomes of those cases, and indicate whether the Convention has been invoked before the courts.

5. Measures taken to ensure that women in the State party are aware of their rights under the Convention

With regard to measures taken to ensure that women in the State party are aware of their rights under the Convention, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs (SCFA), as the competent authority on women's issues in Qatar, has made great strides towards awareness-raising, education and adopting a rights-based approach. SCFA has contributed to spreading awareness of women's rights in Qatar by organizing several national and regional programmes, conferences and forums and by signing a memorandum of understanding with NHRC in order to increase awareness and knowledge of women's political and civil rights, which are guaranteed by the Constitution and the law. In addition, civil society organizations also play active role in the promoting women's rights. For instance, QFPCW conducts awareness-raising programmes that review and explain the Convention and raise women's awareness of the rights enshrined therein. A number of workshops, forums and awareness-raising campaigns were held between 2009 and 2013, including the following:

- The "Stop the Silence" campaign was carried out as part of the 2010-2011 plan to combat sexual violence against women and raise women's and society's awareness of how to counter and address deviant practices and how to develop legal and procedural systems that guarantee comprehensive, integrated protection for women. The campaign's main events included a marathon along the Doha waterfront road and a series lectures at health centres and schools to

raise awareness of these problems in all their aspects and how to mitigate and avoid them.

- A workshop entitled “Protection of women in criminal law” (2011)
- A forum entitled “My right to work” (2011)
- A programme to celebrate International Women’s Day 2012 was prepared and carried out, with a view to highlighting young women’s potential, linking it to the history and achievements of women in Qatar and promoting the concept of inter-generational continuity
- A workshop entitled “Women’s issues in law and in practice” (March 2013)
- Cooperation with the Qatar Radio and Television General Authority on an awareness-raising radio programme entitled “Safety”, which was broadcast one hour a week on Qatar Radio and dealt with various children’s and women’s issues
- Several training courses and programmes on legal education were held in schools. Television and radio interviews were conducted and articles were published in local newspapers. Publications on promoting a culture of protecting women’s rights were drafted and distributed to all Government authorities and non-governmental organizations.

With a view to safeguarding the rights of women and their capacity to defend those rights, several specialized mechanisms were established in Qatar, such as NHRC, which is mentioned in further detail in section IV. This is in addition to the work of such civil society institutions as QFPCW that receive complaints from women and act on them. One example of such action is the establishment in July 2007 of Dar al-Aman, which provides shelter for women and children victims of abuse and violence, separates them from the perpetrator of the violence and ensures their physical and psychological safety and their protection from domestic or social neglect and abuse. The shelter also provides them with psychological, social and legal support in accordance with a treatment plan under the supervision of qualified staff.

IV. National human rights institutions

The report indicates that the National Human Rights Committee, which was established by Amiri Decree No. 38 of 2002 as an independent national body for the promotion and protection of human rights, has received complaints about abuses of human rights, including women’s rights, and has addressed most of them (para. 61). Please provide information regarding the number of such complaints obtained and the outcomes of such cases. Please also provide information on the gender composition of the Committee, as well as measures taken to raise awareness among women about the existence of the mechanism. Please also indicate whether assistance is available to women filing complaints.

6. The number of complaints about abuses of women's rights and the outcomes of such cases

A total of 389 complaints relating to women's rights were submitted to NHRC between January 2009 and October 2013.

Table 1
Number of complaints received between 2009 and 2013

<i>Year</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>
Number	7	6	26	71	279

7. Measures taken

Complaints are investigated promptly. A determination is made regarding credibility and one of the following measures is then taken:

1. The complaint is dismissed because the complainant is not deemed credible.
2. The complaint is dismissed because it was not made in earnest.
3. NHRC lacks the competence to consider the complaint, in which case the complainant is referred to the competent authority, such as QFPCW, QFCHT, the Labour Administration, etc.
4. The matter is resolved amicably, in accordance with the legal procedures followed by the NHRC Department of Legal Affairs.
5. In one of the complainant's rights has been violated, contacts the competent authority so that it can the necessary measures in accordance with the law.
6. In the event that the competent authority does not respond to the substance of the complaint, one of the attorneys working with NHRC will file a lawsuit to ensure that the complainants rights are upheld.

8. Gender composition of the National Human Rights Committee

As at November 2013, there were a total of 13 NHRC members, 10 of whom are men and three of whom are women.

9. Measures taken to raise awareness among women about the existence of the mechanism and the assistance available to women filing complaints

The mission of NHRC is to protect and promote the human rights of all persons subject to the legal jurisdiction of Qatar. In order to fulfil that mission, NHRC strives to raise awareness of those rights. It also protects and supports individuals and develops their capacities. Furthermore, it empowers them by offering opportunities to gain diverse knowledge and skills, including with regard to understanding, demanding and defend their rights. Since its establishment, NHRC has assiduously sought to ensure that all groups of society, including children, women and persons with disabilities, have access to its services. In that connection, we would like to draw attention to the following:

- Several activities and events have been held raise awareness of NHRC and to inform the members of the public on how they can avail themselves of its services. To that end, various media have been used and printed materials have been prepared and circulated.
- A hotline has been created to receive calls and complaints around the clock
- Any person may submit a complaint to NHRC headquarters either on his or her own behalf or on behalf of someone else; this means that a child may submit a complaint directly or through another person.
- The Committee has run several media campaigns in which people were encouraged to contact the NHRC by phone, fax or e-mail
- A website has been established to facilitate submission of complaints by all.

NHRC has also organized and participated in several events, activities and programmes aimed at achieving its strategic goals of educating and raising the awareness of various groups regarding human rights, including, in particular, raising women's awareness of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Those activities are set out in detail in the table below:

Table 2

Events and activities organized by NHRC or in which it participated from 2009 to 2013

2009			
<i>Event</i>	<i>Target group</i>	<i>Goals</i>	
1 NHRC visit to Wakrah primary school for girls	Female primary school students	Introduction to children's rights	
2 NHRC visit to Wakrah secondary school for girls	Female secondary school students	Introduction to the international covenants on human rights, including the Conventions, and to Qatari legislation	
3 NHRC visit to Wajbah independent school for girls	Female students	Lecture on violence against women	
4 NHRC participated in workshop for female students of the College of Law entitled "Know your rights"	Female law students	Introduction to women's rights	
5 Media campaign entitled "Discover the truth"	Women and children	Education on women's and children's rights	
6 Law enforcement seminar on the relevant international covenants on human rights	Law enforcement officials, including police, public prosecutors and judges	The course focused on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other conventions	

2010

<i>Event</i>	<i>Target group</i>	<i>Goals</i>
1 NHRC held a conference on Arab-European dialogue which focused on women's rights issues in the Arab world and Europe	Civil society organizations from 14 Arab and European countries participated	Review of relevant legislation, current situations, challenges and opportunities for change and the role of national institutions in advancing women's rights
2 NHRC held the first meeting of the working group on women's rights and gender equality established in implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Arab-European Human Rights Dialogue on women and gender equality.	Heads and representatives of national institutions in Arab and European countries	Introduction to priority issues relating to women's rights and gender equality set out in the Doha Declaration
3 Awareness-raising workshop on the culture of human rights	Employees of the Ministry of Social Affairs	The workshop addressed the rights of children, women, persons with disabilities and the aged in local legislation and international conventions
4 Signing of a memorandum of understanding between the NHRC and SCFA		Dissemination of and training on the international human rights covenants
5 The Committee held a celebration in Wajbah independent preparatory school for girls in honour of the winners of the "Know your rights" contest	Female students	Raise awareness of the culture of human rights
6 NHRC conducted a study on the status of the children of Qatari women in Qatari legislation that also examined comparable Arab legislation and the relevant international standards		The study aims to identify the legal guarantees required to strengthen the rights of this group and to explore the possibility of benefiting from the experiences of some Arab countries and the provisions of their legislation concerning the rights of the children of their female citizens
7 NHRC visited the research and follow up unit of the Ministry of the Interior	Detainees in the women's wing	Take stock of the situation of female detainees in the ward and the problems they face

2011

<i>Event</i>	<i>Target group</i>	<i>Goals</i>
1 Training workshop on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the historical evolution of women's rights	Representatives from the relevant departments of NHRC Representatives from the relevant departments of SCFA Employees in the relevant Government ministries and institutions Non-governmental organizations concerned with human rights and women's rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the most important milestones in the legal recognition of women's rights • Introduction to the principles of the Convention and its key provisions
2 Regional workshop on gender-based violence		<p>Identification of the fundamental concepts, forms of gender violence, gender-based violence and violence against women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing the specific situation of refugee women and children • Introduction to the national legal mechanism for addressing gender violence in Qatar
3 NHRC participated in a workshop on women's right to work entitled "My right to work", which was organized by QFPCW	Working women	Women's right to work
4 NHRC held its second and third meetings with the working group on women's rights and gender equality, established in implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Arab-European Human Rights Dialogue on women and gender equality	Heads and representatives of national institutions in Arab and European countries	

2012

<i>Event</i>	<i>Target group</i>	<i>Goals</i>
1 Training workshop on women's right to work in national legislation and international covenants	Decision makers in the Department of Labour and Human Resources Human resources directors of various ministries and foundations Human Resources Department of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers General Retirement and Social Insurance Authority Working women	Introduction to women's right to work in international covenants • Review of Qatari legislation and the extent of its compliance with the Convention • Discussion of proposed amendments to human resources law • Bringing the proposed amendments to the attention of the competent authorities
2 NHRC participated in the International Conference of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, which was held in Jordan and entitled "The Human Rights of Women and Girls"		
3 The first training event for the deaf, entitled "Have confidence in your ability"	Deaf women	Empowering deaf women and educating them about their rights
4 Seminar on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in line with the Islamic sharia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of the relevant departments of NHRC • Representatives of the relevant departments of SCFA • Employees of the relevant Government ministries and institutions • Non-governmental organizations concerned with human and women's rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of discrimination against women • Discussion of the Convention's provisions and how they relate to the Islamic sharia • Discussion of the reservations of Arab States to the Convention and how they relate to the Islamic sharia • Explanation of women's rights in international conventions and basic Islamic law

2013

<i>Event</i>	<i>Target group</i>	<i>Desired objectives</i>
1 Course on the promotion and protection of human rights in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of the relevant departments of NHRC • Media sector employees • Non-governmental organizations working in the area of human and women's rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting societal awareness of the rights of women and persons with disabilities • Supporting and operationalizing civil society efforts to entrench and protect the rights of those groups • Strengthening the commitment to regional and international standards regarding those groups • Informing workers in all sectors, especially the service sector, of their duties vis-à-vis those groups • Training in methods that are helpful in protecting the rights of those groups
2 Workshop for the women's programme on leadership and decision-making	Women	

10. Assistance available to women filing complaints with the National Human Rights Committee

A unit concerned with the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities was established within NHRC. The unit is tasked with the following:

- Consideration of reports and complaints received of violence and discrimination against women
- Consideration of reports and complaints received relating to the rights of children and persons with disabilities

V. Stereotypes and harmful practices

The report acknowledges the persistence of gender stereotypes in the country; however, it provides little information on concrete actions taken by the State party to eliminate prejudices and customary and all other practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women, including by ensuring that its policies and programmes do not perpetuate gender stereotypes. Please provide information on efforts undertaken, through awareness-raising and educational campaigns addressing religious and community leaders, parents, and teachers,

to counter stereotypical attitudes towards girls and women, including those who experience multiple forms of discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity, age, disability or other characteristics.

11. Efforts undertaken through awareness-raising and educational campaigns

Changing stereotypes about women is one of the goals that is included in national strategies and plans. Thus, the general strategic plan for 2006-2011 contained goals on changing such stereotypes. Those strategic goals include the following:

- Creating a social and cultural environment that helps to empower women and promotes their participation in society
- Promoting the role and position of women in the family and society

The executive plan that was adopted includes a number of projects and programmes, to be carried out by Government authorities and non-governmental organizations, aimed at achieving those goals. These projects include the following:

- A project to highlight Islamic principles, which affirm the rights of women and their role in shaping civilization
- A project on changing the cultural conceptions that give rise to discrimination against women and creating a culture that promotes the concepts of equality between and justice for both sexes
- A project on changing stereotypes that are prevalent in popular culture, specifically with regard to women's ability to make decisions on crucial issues
- A project to help women strike a balance between their role in the family and their professional duties. This project encompasses the following:
 - A programme to encourage entrepreneurship
 - A programme to encourage women in the private sector
 - A programme offering recruitment services, professional consultation and vocational guidance in the labour market
 - An ongoing programme of training courses in the professional training centre
 - An occupational training programme for prospective public- and private-sector employees
 - A skills development programme for Qatari nationals (part of the 2011-2016 labour market strategy)
 - A five-year private sector plan
 - A scholarship programme for university study in Qatar and abroad
 - A guidance and orientation programme for secondary school students, with school visits
 - A mechanism to monitor the application of the provision in the Family Act that prohibits registration of the marriage of girl or boy who is under legal age of marriage without the approval of a judge

- An awareness-raising campaign targeting workers responsible for enforcing women's rights laws, in order to ensure that they are enforced fully and consistently
- A programme aimed at empowering persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, with regard to their rights
- A training programme on participating in and contributing to discussion of issues concerning them
- A programme to prepare women social workers to train students' families to assist them or their representatives with decision-making
- Operationalization of the committee on applying human rights
- Formation of a committee to champion the rights of persons with mental disabilities
- A women's empowerment programme targeting women outside Doha
- A programme to promote day-care services in the private and public sectors
- Amending the rules and regulations that govern the operation of day-care centres
- The virtual working environment (an experimental study on teleworking)

The plan of action of SCFA also provides for the dissemination of the international conventions and covenants ratified by Qatar on human rights, in general, and on the family, in particular, including those instruments that pertain to women's rights, through various means. All relevant conventions and international reports related to Qatar's implementation thereof are available on the SCFA website. Training workshops are organized for groups working with and for the benefit of the family, women and children.

Following up on State efforts to raise awareness, SCFA, in conjunction with NHRC, has organized several activities to disseminate the international conventions on the family, in implementation of the memorandum of understanding concluded between the two bodies on 4 February 2010. Their aim is to raise awareness and deepen knowledge of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Following are some the activities that were organized with a view to encouraging families to avoid assigning stereotypical roles to boys and girls, including to those who are subjected to various forms of discrimination based on disability or age:

- A training course on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the historical development of human rights. The course covered milestones in the legal recognition of women's and provides an introduction to the principles and provisions of the Convention.
- A workshop on the relationship between the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The workshop addressed disabilities and the problems that children with disabilities and their families face and examines in detail the relationship between the two international instruments.

- A training course on the rights of persons with disabilities to form a family, as set out in the Convention and as they stand in reality. The aim of the course was to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities in that regard, introduce the relevant legislation and discuss the social obstacles that limit their exercise of that right.

12. Measures to raise awareness of the Convention and human rights and women's rights and information on the methodology of students, teachers and administrators and guardians and other carers and other relevant professional groups

In March 2010, the Supreme Council for Education launched a human rights programme aimed at students, teachers and school administrators. Its goal was to educate students at various levels. Contests in daily newspapers are used to enhance awareness of human rights, including the conventions on women and children. The programme include the following components:

- Creation of human rights associations in schools
- Teaching staff were trained to spread a culture of human rights in schools
- A human rights day was declared for schools
- Lectures were delivered to students
- Students' rights associations visited some Government agencies
- Human rights themed contests were been organized.

In the context of cooperation between the Supreme Council for Education and NHRC, a series of training programmes and workshops on human rights were conducted for students, teachers and school administrators. The aims were to educate those groups and transform their knowledge of human rights into practical skills. In that context, we highlight the following:

- In collaboration with NHRC, a training course was offered on integrating human rights into primary, preparatory and secondary school curricula
- NHRC, in conjunction with the Supreme Council for Education, put together an integrated package of training programmes on integrating human rights concepts into the primary, preparatory and secondary school levels
- A training course was held on the Human Rights Council and the presentation that NHRC made before the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
- A workshop was held on human rights through the right to education
- A workshop on the nature and characteristics of human rights was held, in coordination with NHRC

In line with its broader human-rights activities, and in the context of an awareness-raising campaign conducted in cooperation with a group of schools, NHRC held a contest entitled "Know your rights" in which 12 boys' and girls' schools participated. For detailed information, refer to section IV on the National Human Rights Committee.

It should be noted that civil society organizations play an important role in educating the public and raising awareness of international human rights

conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. They run many programmes and organize activities throughout the country in partnership with Government agencies and non-governmental organizations. For example, QFPCW has developed the “Friends of the Protection the Child” programme. The goal of this programme is to raise awareness of internationally recognized children’s rights; intensify national efforts to promote and protect the rights of children and train educators in how to give effect to those rights; develop comprehensive national programmes to foster the rights of children; and encourage the participation of civil society, including children, in efforts aimed at giving effect to and raising awareness of children’s rights. Meetings of the programme’s coordinators in participating schools have been held. Since its inception in May 2009, some 614 students at various stages of education from 153 schools have participated in the programme, which includes the following activities:

- Field and educational visits to more than 30 schools at all levels in order to disseminate information about and raise awareness of children’s rights
- An informational meeting on the “Friends of the Protection the Child” programme (March 2010)
- A training course for social workers and counsellors in independent schools on fostering a culture of children’s rights and responsibilities and on methods of responding to cases of abuse, violence and neglect (May 2011)
- A contest for schools participating in the above-mentioned programme and awarding of prizes for outstanding artistic and creative endeavours that promote children’s rights
- Visits to independent, private and foreign community schools to hold seminars on various forms of protection, including social, health, psychological and legal protection, and methods of filing complaints and reporting violations

For further information, please consult the relevant paragraph under item 5 on measures taken to ensure that women in the State party are aware of their rights under the Convention.

13. Introduction of items on understanding human rights in the school curriculum

Several guides on human rights in education have been developed, including:

- A guide on teaching values
- A guide on teaching human rights at the elementary level
- A guide on teaching human rights at the intermediate level
- A guide on teaching human rights at the secondary level

VI. Violence against women

The report indicates that the Supreme Court for Family Affairs has adopted a “bold policy” on violence against women (para. 153). It also indicates that the State party has no separate legislation on violence against women or domestic violence (para. 157), although the results of various surveys conducted

by the State party acknowledge the prevalence of violence against women, including domestic violence. Please provide information on the steps taken to adopt specific legislation to criminalize all forms of violence against women, including marital rape. Whereas the report indicates that there are no women's associations in the State party (para. 45), it also refers to the poor coordination between governmental and non-governmental organizations that are responsible for protecting women from domestic violence (para. 455). Please clarify what, according to the State party, is the role of non-governmental organizations in the protection of women against violence, and provide detailed information on the nature, status and number of those so-called non-governmental organizations.

14. Information on the steps taken to adopt specific legislation to criminalize all forms of violence against women and on the role of nongovernmental organizations in the protection of women against violence

No steps have been taken to adopt specific legislation to criminalize all forms of violence against women. Qatar has no legislation that specifically addresses violence against women or domestic violence. However, related offences are dealt with fully in a section of the Criminal Code on offences against the person. That section covers the offences of physical assault, indecent assault and rape, for which the maximum penalty is death. These provisions serve as significant deterrent to violence against women.

In respect of the role of non-governmental organizations in protecting women from violence, it should be noted that QFPCW is responsible for promoting cooperation and coordination among ministries and governmental agencies, public organizations and institutions, civil society organizations, individuals and all social groups with a view to facilitating the exchange of experience and information on giving effect to children's and women's rights. Acting on the basis a community partnership paradigm, QFPCW works with Government agencies and national and international non-governmental organizations to improve the quality of the services offered to vulnerable groups, and to support national efforts aimed at promoting the advancement of children and women and protecting their human rights. Following are some of the most important areas towards which QFPCW is directing its efforts:

- Case intake and referral to the relevant specialized agency once all procedures have been completed
- Facilitating provision of services to vulnerable groups by exchanging information and simplifying procedures
- Participation in activities to promote protection of children's and women's rights, in particular, and human rights, in general
- Exchanging experience and expertise by reviewing the most significant research, studies and reports on children's rights
- Participation in relevant international conferences and forums

QFPCW has also developed effective means of combating violence, including:

- Opening of support offices in health-care facilities and police stations to identify cases of abuse and provide social, legal and health services as well as counselling and shelter

- Increased cooperation with its contact points, which now number 38, in several governmental and non-governmental agencies, with a view to facilitating the provision of services
- Provision of pro bono legal aid services by a group of outstanding lawyers to victims of violence and abuse

QPFCW has also taken a number of important measures to provide protection. Following are some of the most significant of those measures:

1. Establishment of Dar al-Aman

Dar al-Aman, which opened its doors in October 2010, is a shelter for children and women who are victims of abuse and violence and have nowhere to turn. It provides victims with a secure temporary residence and strives to rehabilitate them through treatment, training and reintegration programmes. The shelter also offers practical assistance and health services, helps victims continue to work or study and provides psychological, social and legal support, in accordance with the treatment plans established. To date, the shelter has taken in 322 victims, of whom 175 were women.

The shelter conducts training courses for its residents, including classes in computer skills, and organizes athletic and recreational activities for them.

It also establishes a treatment plan for each resident that incorporates individual and group therapy, which is conducted under the supervision of the shelter's psychologist.

2. Opening of a QPFCW office at the Hamad Medical Corporation

In July 2007, QPFCW opened an office in the Emergency Department of Hamad General Hospital in order to offer support, care and protection to victims of violence and abuse who come to the hospital.

3. Opening of a QPFCW office at the Doha Police Department

This office opened in July 2009 and provides support, care and protection to victims who come to this and other police stations.

4. Opening of a QPFCW office at the Office of the Family and Juvenile Prosecutor

This office opened in March 2012 and its purpose is to facilitate communications with the Office of the Family and Juvenile Prosecutor and to follow up on and provide rapid intervention services in cases involving victims of violence that have been referred to the Public Prosecutor.

5. Establishment of a children's and women's support hotline 919

The 919 hotline was established in June 2010 and helps victims to contact QPFCW. Calls made to this hotline are free of charge. The call centre operates around the clock and receives complaints, reports and queries from children and women. Since its establishment, some 9,436 persons, of whom 6,164 were women, have made use of the line to report abuse and follow up on their cases.

VII. Human Trafficking

The Criminal and Labour Code of the State party contains some provisions related to human trafficking, but the State party lacks a specific law to address trafficking in persons and exploitation of prostitution. Please provide information on whether the State party is envisaging the adoption of a specific and comprehensive law on human trafficking and the establishment of procedures for victim identification and a mechanism for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of trafficking offenders. Please describe concrete activities undertaken under the national strategy to combat human trafficking, established since 2003.

15. The Human Trafficking Act and procedures and mechanisms established for victim identification and for investigating, prosecuting and punishing trafficking offenders

Qatar has promulgated Act No. 15 (2011) on combating trafficking in persons. This Act sets out a definition of the crime and specifies penalties for the commission thereof. It comprises 28 articles that are grouped into five chapters. The first chapter is entitled “Definitions”, the second “Human trafficking”, the third “Protection of victims”, the fourth “International judicial cooperation” and the fifth “Penalties”.

With regard to the forms, methods and purpose of human trafficking, article 2 of the Act provides that a person is deemed to have committed the crime of human trafficking if they have in any way exploited, transported, sheltered, hosted or received any natural person, whether inside the country or abroad, through force or violence or the threat thereof, abduction, deceit or subterfuge, abuse of power or by exploiting a condition of weakness or need, promising to give or receive money or other consideration in return for the consent of a person to allow the trafficking of another person under their control, when those acts are aimed at exploiting a person in any way whatsoever... including the exploitation of children in pornography, etc.

With regard to procedures and mechanisms established for victim identification and for investigating, prosecuting and punishing trafficking offenders, the State has taken many measures to protect victims of and/or witnesses to acts prohibited under the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children at every stage of the criminal justice process. Under Qatari law, the victims of and witnesses to human trafficking are afforded special protection, particularly during the investigation and trial phases. These protections are set out in Act No. 15 (2011) on combating trafficking in persons, article 20, which provides that any person who reveals the identity of a victim or a witness, thereby exposing the victim or witness to harm or causing the victim or witness injury, assists the perpetrators in contacting the victim or witness, or provides the victim or witness with inaccurate information regarding the his/her rights with the intention of harming him/her or threatening his/her physical, emotional or mental safety shall be imprisoned for a maximum term of two years and fined a maximum amount of 50,000 riyals.

Chapter III of the above-mentioned Act provides specific guarantees that protect victims and uphold their dignity. Following are some of those guarantees:

1. Protection of privacy and identity;

2. The opportunity to explain their situation and background;
3. Receive counselling with regard to their rights and information on the relevant legal and administrative procedures;
4. The right to remain in the country until investigation and trial procedures have been completed;
5. Legal assistance, including the services of an attorney;
6. Compensation for harm suffered;
7. The right to protection (physical and psychological) for victims;
8. Health care, education and social services.

It is also worth noting that an entire chapter of the above-mentioned Act is devoted to international judicial cooperation. The law enforcement authorities combat and suppress human trafficking by pursuing, capturing and bringing to justice offenders. This requires a concerted effort on the part of all national authorities, including the police, the prosecutors and the courts, in which they work as the complementary parts of a system aimed at suppressing and combating the trafficking of persons and punishing its perpetrators. However, some forms of human trafficking are of a transnational nature or have some foreign connection. For example, the preparation and planning for a crime may have been taken place in another country; the victims or witnesses are foreign nationals; one of the fundamental aspects of the crime may have been committed in the territory of another country; or the perpetrator may have fled to a third country. Such situations require the law enforcement officials of the relevant countries to coordinate and cooperate with each other, in order to capture the perpetrators and bring them to justice in the competent State. The preceding are but some examples of the judicial cooperation required to combat human trafficking, and for which Qatari law provides. Act No. 15 (2011) on combating trafficking in persons, article 11, provides that the competent judicial authorities shall cooperate with their foreign counterparts in combating human trafficking and prosecuting offenders. Such cooperation shall include, inter alia, exchange of information, collaboration in investigations, the provision of assistance, issuance of letters rogatory, surrendering items, recovering funds and other forms of judicial cooperation, in accordance with the rules set out in the Code of Criminal Procedure, bilateral or multilateral instruments that are in force or the principle of reciprocity, and in a manner that does not contravene the fundamental principles of the State's legal system.

The State also takes the measures required to protect the rights and interests of trafficked women and children and victims of sexual exploitation at all stages of criminal proceedings. Trafficked and exploited persons are given shelter in the Qatar Home for Shelter and Humanitarian Care, which is part of the Qatar Foundation to Combat Human Trafficking (QFCHT).

As part of its effort to provide training in the international human rights instruments and their protocols, including but not limited to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, QFCHT, in cooperation with the College of Law at Qatar University, organizes an annual legal clinic on the subject. This clinic is an educational/vocational programme that is part of the practical training component of the College of Law curriculum. Its purpose is to promote understanding of the rights enshrined in the

Constitution of Qatar, which guarantees the right of every person to defend himself/herself and the right of human trafficking victims to receive assistance. It is also an expression of the social responsibility of the law students and QFCHT. The legal clinic is held in the spring and autumn semesters and comprises 120 hours of training over 10 weeks. It also includes a series of introductory lectures regarding the act on combating trafficking in persons, a series of exercises in the skills needed to support victims of human trafficking, visits to the competent authorities and some training workshops, the most important of which involves the preparation of a draft law on the regulation of domestic service and a model contract for domestic workers. The students also work with counsellors and experts of QFCHT to provide legal assistance to victims of human trafficking.

Another noteworthy effort in this area is the national communication network to combat human trafficking, in general, and of women and children, in particular. The first national alliance to combat human trafficking in Qatar was established by Government agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector. The aim of this alliance is to promote coordination among all the relevant entities in the country, exchange information on victims of human trafficking, organize awareness-raising campaigns and provide support to victims.

QFCHT followed up on those efforts by, inter alia, developing preventive programmes aimed at protecting children and women from all the forms of exploitation specified in the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. These programmes were developed in the framework of the 2010-2015 national action plan to combat human trafficking and included, inter alia:

- The development of a guide on identifying victims of human trafficking and providing them with assistance and protection. This guide is significant because it specifies the steps that must be followed by those who work with human trafficking victims, including law enforcement officials, health-care workers, counsellors and social workers.
- The holding of a workshop on electronic human trafficking crimes. The aim of this workshop, which was organized in cooperation with relevant international agencies, including the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), was to raise awareness of the use of the Internet in human trafficking crimes, review best international practices in combating electronic human trafficking crimes, and improve participants' ability to detect Internet crime and make use of the latest technology. Working in cooperation and coordination with the Supreme Council for Education, QFCHT succeeded in introducing into the year-end examination for secondary school students a question on human trafficking that required students to write an essay on the subject. This examination was administered to 5,408 male and female students, of whom 2,163, or 40 per cent, answered the question correctly. The purpose of this exercise was to raise awareness of human trafficking and its grave consequences for society.

QFCHT constantly strives to achieve its aims and administer its rehabilitation programmes for victims of human trafficking. Following are some of the rehabilitation activities that it has carried out:

- Providing shelter to victims of human trafficking in the Qatar Home for Shelter and Humanitarian Care, which is operated by QFCHT
- Providing medical, psychological, educational and legal support and shelter, as well as health-care, to victims, with a view to ensuring their recovery and reintegration in society
- Providing training to social workers and psychologists who work with victims by holding courses on methods of dealing with child victims
- QFCHT has taken appropriate measures to protect the rights and interests of victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation at every stage of the prosecution of offenders and has provided victims with attorneys so that they can sue for compensation

In order to foster international cooperation against human trafficking, the Government of Qatar is committed to covering all costs of the Arab Initiative for Building National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking in the Arab Countries, in the amount of \$6 million. The Initiative is being implemented by QFCHT, a civil society institution, in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the League of Arab States. Its objectives are to build the capacities of senior staff involved in all aspects of combating human trafficking across the Arab region; to identify the victims, address their situation and repatriate or rehabilitate them; to provide them with appropriate protection, care and support; and, when investigating and interacting with the victims, to remain sensitive to gender and the special needs of vulnerable groups, including women and children. The Initiative is aimed at the following categories:

- Officials and senior staff at ministries of justice, labour, the interior, foreign affairs, social affairs, local affairs, trade, health and information
- Lawmakers and officials responsible for enforcing the penal code and combating human trafficking, including judges, prosecutors and their staff
- Senior officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the police, the security services, immigration, border crossings and customs
- Senior officials responsible for labour and licensing at the ministries of labour, local authorities, trade and the economy
- Civil society leaders of unions, guilds and professional, charitable and humanitarian associations, chambers of commerce and industry, major private-sector companies, and companies and offices that recruit and employ migrant labour
- Managers of social and humanitarian service centres and shelters, particularly for victims of human trafficking
- Audiovisual and print media directors

VIII. Participation in political and public life and decision-making

The report provides information on provisions made in the “Qatar National Vision 2030” document, for women’s capacity-building and the promotion of women’s participation in economic and political life, particularly

in decision-making (para. 133). The report also indicates that at the time of reporting, a general development strategy was being formulated for the period 2011-2016. In the light of the fact that there are no women in the State party's legislature, please provide information on concrete measures taken and/or envisaged by the State party to ensure women's political representation in that body, including through quotas. Please also provide information on the number of women in the judiciary, as well as on concrete measures to promote women in the judiciary and in senior positions in the Foreign Service, including as ambassadors and heads of missions abroad.

16. Measures taken to ensure women's political representation and information on the number of women in the State party's legislature

The Qatar National Development Strategy 2011-2016 is the mechanism that systematically translates the Qatar National Vision 2030 into facts on the ground. It identifies programmes and projects to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for the State of Qatar. Its 14 sector strategies include a strategy for family cohesion and the empowerment of women for 2011-2016. This strategy is aimed at protecting a strong family that enjoys support and social protection, in which women have a strong role in all aspects of life, including participation in economic and social decision-making. The sector strategy identifies eight development outcomes. One of these consists of increasing the empowerment of women by realizing two targets, namely increasing the number of women in leadership positions and establishing a civil society organization to promote women's issues.

The national strategies and plans include targets to promote the provision of services to women in the context of their participation in public life and decision making. The sector strategy on family cohesion and the empowerment of women for 2011-2016 includes the target of promoting women's participation in decision-making and empowering women to assume leadership positions. Its executive plan includes a range of projects and programmes for implementation by governmental and non-governmental actors in the country, including the following:

- A project to build the capacity of women to participate in local and parliamentary elections
- A project to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions
- A project to promote the participation of women in civil society institutions

17. Participation in political and public life

Over the last few years, it has become clear that there is political will to empower Qatari women and promote their voice in Government. As a result, several women have been appointed to decision-making roles. The first female Minister of Education and Higher Education served from 2003 to 2009, and the first female Minister of Health from 2008 to 2009. The following posts are currently held by women: Minister of Information and Communication Technology; Chair of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs; Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Qatar Museums Authority; Vice-Chair of the Supreme Health Council; Vice-Chair of the Supreme Council for Education; President of Qatar University; and the Chair of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. Numerous women participate on the boards of supreme councils, foundations and Government

bodies and are members of the standing committees that formulate policies and strategies, such as the Standing Committee for Population Affairs, as well as of the temporary committees that draft legislation.

Qatari women have held diplomatic posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In early 2010, a woman was appointed to the rank of ambassador for the first time. In 2011, a woman was appointed Permanent Representative of Qatar in Geneva. In 2013, a female ambassador to Croatia was appointed. Women hold other diplomatic posts in delegations abroad, and are members of numerous international organizations, particularly in the area of human rights and social development, including the following roles:

- United Nations Special Rapporteur on Disability (formerly)
- Special Envoy of the League of Arab States for Humanitarian Relief
- Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (formerly)
- Member of the international Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (formerly)
- Member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
- As of 2011, women accounted for some 13.7 per cent of Qatari lawyers. That proportion is encouraging; the first woman to join the profession did so only in 2000. In 2010, women entered the judiciary and public prosecutor's office, and they play a visible role in several departments of the Ministry of the Interior, including the Department of Traffic and Patrols and the Department of Passports.

Table 3
Qataris working as prosecutors, judges, judges' assistants and lawyers, disaggregated by sex

<i>Profession</i>	<i>2009</i>		<i>2010</i>		<i>2011</i>	
	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>
1 Prosecutors	2	62	3	96	3	78
2 Judges	0	97	2	103	2	200
3 Lawyers	41	84	18	99	71	701

IX. Nationality

The State party entered a reservation to article 9, paragraph 2, which prevents Qatari women married to foreign husbands from transmitting their nationality to their husband and children. Please provide information on the number of stateless persons/children as a result of the implementation of Nationality Act No. 38 of 2005, as well as information on measures taken to withdraw the reservation to article 9, paragraph 2, of the Convention, in order to provide women equal rights with men with regard to nationality. Please provide updated data, disaggregated by sex, and information on the number of applications for Qatari nationality and the number of foreign spouses granted

Qatari nationality since 2007. Please also provide information on whether the State party is working in collaboration with countries with similar social, cultural and legal systems that have succeeded in amending their legislation with regard to nationality in line with the Convention.

18. The number of stateless persons/children as a result of the implementation of Nationality Act No. 38 of 2005

The State has been working to ensure harmony between international instruments and national legislation. In coordination with the competent parties in the country, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs has reviewed the legislation regarding the rights of Qatari women married to non-Qatari men. It is examining the possibility of amending the legislation for the benefit of those categories. Act No. 38 of 2005 on Qatari nationality grants priority for naturalization to persons whose mother was Qatari. That provision exists in order to ensure that men and women are equal in handing their nationality down to their children. Owing to humanitarian considerations, the final paragraph of article 2 of the Nationality Act provides that persons born in Qatar of unknown parentage have Qatari nationality and have the same status as a naturalized citizen. It also states that foundlings are deemed to have been born in Qatar, unless there is evidence to the contrary (see also document [CRC/C/QAT/2](#) of 16 December 2008, paragraph 86).

The law also guarantees the rights of children born out of wedlock. In accordance with the Nationality Act, the State gives a name to children of unknown parentage and provides them with a birth certificate and a Qatari children's passport. In coordination with the Ministry of the Interior, the Family Court and the Supreme Health Council, QFCHT produces identity documents for children born out of wedlock. Such children are sheltered with their mothers at the Qatar Home for Shelter and Humanitarian Care, which is managed by QFCHT. That process is regulated by Act No. 2007 on births, amending Act No. 5 of 1982 on births and deaths.

As regards measures taken concerning women's rights with regard to nationality, the Supreme Council on Family Affairs, as the entity responsible for family affairs in Qatar, has coordinated with NHRC to submit joint recommendations to the secretariat of the Council of Ministers in order to promote the rights of the children of Qatari women married to non-Qatari men. The recommendations are being examined with a view to completing the established legislative measures.

X. Education

The report acknowledges that there are still no technical or vocational schools for women in the State party (para. 238). The report also indicates that the overwhelming majority of women graduates obtain degrees in literature and the humanities (para. 231). Please provide information on measures taken to provide technical and vocational training for women. Please also provide information on measures taken to encourage women to take non-traditional subjects. In addition, please provide information on plans to revise the school curricula to eliminate references that maintain or reinforce gender stereotypes, and indicate whether the State party intends to provide training to teachers to sensitize and raise awareness on the negative impact of stereotypes and ways in which it hinders the full enjoyment by women and girls of their human rights.

The report is silent on the access of immigrant women and girls to education at all levels. Please provide information and data on their access to education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

19. Measures taken to provide technical and vocational training for women and to encourage women to take non-traditional subjects

Act No. 8 (2009), promulgating the Human Resources Administration Act, provides for all graduates at all education levels to receive training and development. Chapter V, articles 53 to 61, of that Act stipulate the following:

Article 53:

Government authorities shall develop their human resources by providing staff with appropriate training and development opportunities, in order to strengthen their capacities and enable them to acquire new skills that will enhance their ability to carry out their duties and shoulder greater responsibilities.

Article 54:

Training needs are identified on the basis of the country's general strategic plan, Government objectives, performance reports, and after taking into account the views of staff and their managers.

Article 55:

The department, in collaboration with the competent authorities, shall analyze a Government agency's training needs by identifying the capacities, abilities, skill levels and knowledge that staff members require in order to enhance their performance and achieve the agency's objectives.

Article 56:

The department shall draw up an annual training and development plan after having performed an analysis of training needs. The plan shall set forth:

1. Training and development priorities;
2. Training and development methods;
3. An annual schedule of each training and development method;
4. Information on the authorities providing training and development programmes;
5. The budget required for execution of the training and development plan;

The department shall submit the annual plan to the administration for adoption by the end of December each year.

Article 57:

The department shall implement the annual training and development plan after the adoption of the budget. In coordination with the competent authorities, the department may amend the plan in the light of work requirements, provided that this does result in additional budgetary implications.

Article 58:

Training shall take place at training institutions located in the country. Training may take place at reputable expert institutions abroad when professional requirements necessitate this or when training courses are not available within the country.

Article 59:

Time spent in training shall be considered time at work. Staff members in training shall be entitled to all benefits to which they are entitled through their employment. Failure to attend training shall be considered a dereliction of professional duty.

Article 60:

Staff sent abroad for training for a period of one month or less shall be entitled to an allowance based their professional grade or salary that is equivalent to that allowance. When training courses are longer than one month, staff shall be entitled to half the established allowance for the additional period.

Article 61:

Government agencies may train Qataris who have recently graduated from educational institution at various levels to fill some of the vacancies that arise in those agencies. Such training shall take place in accordance with the rules, regulations and requirements set forth in a decision of the Council of Ministers and may be conducted within the country or abroad.

The State has endeavoured to foster opportunities for young women and encourages them to study non-traditional subjects and choose courses at various levels in a range of academic subjects, in accordance with their preferences. Women can study abroad or they may choose to study a range of subjects at Qatar University, the College of the North Atlantic, the Dutch Stenden University, where they study tourism and hospitality management, or at universities in Qatar's Education City, where several highly respected universities are located.

At the secondary school level, independent schools offer a range of educational programmes. Male and female students are thus able to choose the study programme that is most appropriate for them and most compatible with their interests. Schools also offer students a range of optional subjects.

The Education and Training Sector Strategy 2011-2016, formulated by the Supreme Council for Education, sets forth several objectives related to strengthening vocational education and training. These include improving vocational and academic guidance on skills that will be required in future work environments. All students at school receive vocational training, irrespective of whether they are enrolled at technical schools. Qatar's national curriculums now include mandatory vocational and technical components and school textbooks provide examples of different professional working environments. Students also take part in field visits and in-school training sessions and attend classroom presentations.

The Education and Training Sector Strategy also provides for training and continuing education programmes and activities to meet the needs of Qatari society, and establishes a regulatory framework designed to ensure that training and

continuing education address labour market needs. Examples of coeducational vocational training institutions include the Qatar Petroleum's Corporate Training Centre, the Hamad International Training Centre, which provides training in the field of medicine, and Michael DeBaKey High School for Health Professions.

Furthermore, to be eligible for graduation, students are required to do approximately 25 hours of accredited voluntary work. This provides an excellent opportunity for students to receive training and gain first-hand experience of various work environments.

20. Plans to revise the school curriculums

Qatari curriculums are based on national standards and are drawn up for each school subject in accordance with international norms. These curriculums address various human rights principles, including the equality of the sexes and non-discrimination. Student textbooks are, moreover, designed by publishing houses with global expertise and are carefully reviewed to ensure that they promote human rights principles, particularly equality of the sexes and non-discrimination, and reflect Qatari culture and Islamic values.

21. Numbers of Qatari and non-Qatari nationals studying at the various levels of education

Table 4
Numbers of students at independent schools, disaggregated by sex and nationality, 2011/12 academic year

<i>Educational level</i>	<i>Nationality</i>			
	<i>Qatari</i>		<i>Non-Qatari</i>	
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
1 Preschool	2 527	3 061	227	216
2 Elementary	12 196	13 647	8 238	8 742
3 Preparatory	6 591	7 156	4 000	4 167
4 Secondary	7 177	7 412	4 265	4 383
5 Total	28 491	31 276	16 730	17 508

Source: Qatar Annual Education Statistics 2011-2012.

Table 5
**Numbers of students at private schools, disaggregated by sex and nationality,
 2011/12 academic year**

<i>Education level</i>	<i>Nationality</i>			
	<i>Qatari</i>		<i>Non-Qatari</i>	
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
1 Preschool	3 132	2 408	9 692	8 977
2 Elementary	6 045	4 007	25 295	23 254
3 Preparatory	1 521	1 003	8 390	7 612
4 Secondary	1 114	705	6 109	5 236
5 Total	11 812	8 123	49 486	45 079

Source: Qatar Annual Education Statistics 2011-2012.

XI. Employment

The report indicates that at the time of reporting, the draft of a bill on domestic workers and persons in related occupations was being finalized and reviewed by a committee made up of representatives of several ministries and Government bodies (para. 305). Please provide updated information on the current status of the draft bill. Please also provide information on measures taken by the State party to improve the protection of migrant workers under the sponsorship system and to establish more effective complaints and dispute settlement mechanisms. In addition, please provide updated information on measures taken or envisaged by the State party to ensure flexibility for migrant workers in terms of changing their sponsor, and provide data on the number of migrant workers, including domestic workers, who have successfully applied for a change of workplace.

The report indicates that there are restrictions on the hours women are allowed to work, as well as a prohibition on their doing hazardous work (paras. 279 and 280). Please provide information on measures taken to address discriminatory practices in employment in order to improve women's participation in the labour market. Please also provide information on the obstacles preventing women from reaching leadership positions, as well as on measures taken to address the concentration of women in certain occupations and training courses.

22. Measures taken by the State party to improve the protection of migrant workers under the sponsorship system and to establish more effective complaints and dispute settlement mechanisms

Qatar has striven to promote and protect human rights, particularly for women. Act No. 4 (2009) concerning the regulation of the entry, exit, residence and sponsorship of migrant workers establishes rules and mechanisms to that end, thereby strengthening national security and stability. This Act sets forth the obligations of the sponsor and the sponsored person and the action to be taken if one

of the parties fails to fulfil their obligations, in order to ensure a balanced, more civilized and more respectful relationship between the two parties. Article 16 of that Act provides that residence permits may be granted to the wife of a resident, his male children who are no older than twenty-five years and have not completed their education and his unmarried daughters. The resident's parents may be granted residence permits at the discretion of the Minister or his appointed deputy, if they believe that there are grounds to do so. Such permits shall be granted in accordance with conditions regulating the issuance of residence permits and subject to the provisions of the two preceding paragraphs.

Act No. 4 also sets forth a number of benefits and protections, the most significant of which are:

- The transfer of a migrant worker's sponsorship: article 12 provides that a worker's sponsorship may be transferred on a temporary basis should legal action be pending between the sponsoring employer and sponsored migrant worker, and on a permanent basis should abuse by the sponsor be proven.
- The protection of migrant workers from human trafficking: the Act strictly prohibits the transfer of an entry permit to another person or for a third party to trade such a permit, regardless of whether that is done for consideration. Under article 51, that offence carries a penalty of up to three years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to 50,000 riyals. Penalties are increased for subsequent offences
- Preventing the exploitation of sponsored persons: passports or travel documents are required in order to conduct various legal procedures and transactions and when accessing public services. To protect sponsored persons from being exploited or subjected to arbitrary actions, sponsors are obliged, pursuant to part III, article 9 of the Act, to return a sponsored person's passport or travel document once residence formalities have been completed or after an application has been made for a residence permit to be renewed. To ensure that sponsors comply with the law, article 52 of the Act provides that a fine of up to 10,000 riyals may be imposed for any violations in that regard.
- Article 22 empowers the competent authority at the Ministry of the Interior to transfer the sponsorship of a sponsored person covered by the Labour Act to another employer provided that this is agreed in writing by the new and former employers and approval is obtained from the competent authority at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

With regard to efforts to establish more effective complaints and dispute settlement mechanisms, the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of the Interior works to address such complaints and petitions and its work constitutes the clearest example of the Ministry's efforts to protect migrant workers. Most complaints regard work disputes between sponsoring employers and sponsored migrant workers, including in connection with requests for temporary or permanent sponsorship transfers and requests for exit permits. To promote justice and non-discrimination between sponsoring citizens and sponsored residents and to uphold the dignity of all, the Department addresses cases using a simple mechanism and bases its decisions on the Labour Act, the Act regulating the entry, exit, stay and sponsorship of migrant workers, other relevant legislation and employment contracts. To ensure that it is providing high-quality services in this area, the Department is carrying out an

opinion survey to ascertain how satisfied migrant workers are with the services it provides and will use the results of that survey to improve its performance and reform its working methods. The Department is also publishing informational booklets to raise awareness among stakeholders on how to submit work-related complaints and petitions.

23. Updated information on measures taken or envisaged by the State party to ensure flexibility for migrant workers in terms of changing their sponsor, and provide data on the number of migrant workers, including domestic workers, who have successfully applied for a change of workplace

Qatar is continuing its efforts to protect and strengthen the rights of migrant workers. With a view to improving the sponsorship system, a committee has been established to review certain provisions of the Act regulating the entry, exit, stay and sponsorship of migrant workers, and related operational procedures, including the transfer of sponsorship, changing the place of employment and the granting of exit permits.

To that end, the Qatari Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has taken various legal and procedural measures, including:

- Initiating a project to improve the employment conditions for migrant workers and retain staff. Another project aims to enhance labour market legislation and institutional capacity-building, with a view to improving migrant workers' conditions
- Taking legal measures to compel employers to uphold the basic rights of migrant workers, in accordance with the Labour Act and relevant ministerial decisions
- Requiring employers to pay salaries of migrant workers in a timely manner and providing for administrative measures to be used against non-compliant companies, up to and including the automatic suspension of its business transactions
- Carrying out periodic and unannounced inspections of all companies that are subject to the provisions of the Labour Act and reviewing their records to ensure that workers have received all monies to which they are entitled
- Elaborating guidelines for inspections, in accordance with Amiri Decree No. 35 (2009), which provided for the establishment of a labour inspection department comprising a labour inspection division and an occupational health and safety division, and increasing the number of company inspections. A total of 46,624 unannounced visits took place in 2012 in response to complaints or to follow up on previous inspections
- Establishing a guidance and education team in 2012 to raise awareness among workers of their legally-sanctioned rights and duties, offer guidance regarding employment contracts and advise workers on how they should communicate with employers and the Ministry
- Enhancing the work of the Ministry by establishing three departments, namely the Department of Labour Relations, the Inspection and the Department of Employment, to protect the rights of workers by ensuring compliance with the Labour Act and the international labour standards established by the

International Labour Organization, on the basis of an integrated legislative framework to protect migrant workers from all forms of exploitation

- Setting up a hotline that migrant workers can call to make complaints and report their needs and problems
- Ensuring that the Labour Act contains provisions on the protection of workers from exploitation, in accordance with international human rights standards
- Establishing, in coordination with the Department of Labour Relations, an office of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs within courts to monitor case hearings, and to provide workers with rapid translations of all legal evidence submitted

The Ministry has also taken a number of measures specifically to protect female domestic workers, including:

- Elaborating a draft law on domestic workers that is in line with relevant international standards. That draft law is currently being reviewed in preparation for its adoption
- Establishing a working group that includes staff from the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to coordinate, on an ongoing basis, matters relevant to migrant workers, particularly those in domestic service, and to consider optimal ways to ensure that their rights are protected
- Certifying domestic workers' employment contracts with a view to guaranteeing the rights set forth therein. The Ministry of Labour endeavours to monitor recruitment agencies that hire domestic workers and carries out periodic and unannounced inspections to ensure that the recruited workers do not fall victim to any form of exploitation and that their rights are upheld. Those inspections have resulted in the closure of a number of non-compliant agencies.

24. Measures taken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to protect migrant workers and ensure that prompt action is taken to uphold their rights

1. Complaints submitted by workers against their employers are reviewed and an attempt is made to resolve them within one week. If an amicable settlement cannot be reached, the case in question is immediately referred to the competent court.

2. Labour complaints and enquiries and responses thereto may be submitted online and by calling a hotline.

For the convenience of workers, the Ministry has established an office within the labour division of the court with a view to:

1. Providing guidance and counselling to workers;
2. Translating experts' reports for workers and translating court documents, including the dates set for hearings, and any other enquiries.

25. Information on measures taken to address discriminatory practices in employment in order to improve women's participation in the labour market and on the obstacles preventing women from reaching leadership positions

Under Qatari law, no distinction is made between men and women in respect of employment. Neither Act No. 8 of 2009, promulgating the Human Resources Administration Act, nor Act No. 14 of 2004, as amended, promulgating the Labour Code, distinguish between men and women but rather provide for equality of opportunity for both sexes in respect of employment.

The State provides for equality of opportunity in employment and equal pay for men and women. Qatar encourages women's participation in joint ventures with other companies and sectors, either as full partners or partial stakeholders, and no obstacles prevent women's employment or their entry into the labour force or prevent them from engaging in any type of business activity.

As mentioned in section IX, paragraph 17, on participation in political and public life, there are no obstacles preventing women's appointment to leadership positions in Qatar.

Women's participation in the Qatari labour force

Qatari women's participation in the labour force is a priority and key component of the country's policies to promote development. The Qatar Labour Force Survey reveals that women's participation in the Qatari labour force increased from under 30 per cent in 2001 to 35 per cent in 2011.

Qatari women now work in the financial investment sector, and more than 50 per cent of those trading Qatari shares on the national stock exchange are women. Furthermore, it is now estimated that approximately 3,500 companies active in industrial investments, banking services, tourism and commerce are owned by Qatari businesswomen. This has altered Qatari women's traditional patterns of investment.

Qatari women are now catching up with Qatari men in the private sector. The 2011 Labour Force Survey indicates that gender disparities are decreasing and that more than a third (37 per cent) of Qataris working in the private sector are women, up from less than a quarter (23 per cent) in 2010, according to the 2010 census.

XII. Health

The report indicates that there are no official data on rates of contraceptive use in the State party, that knowledge of contraceptives may be limited and that the use of family planning methods (male condoms) is not more than 20 per cent (para. 336). Please provide information on measures taken by the State party to address low use of contraceptives, such as increasing their accessibility and availability and raising awareness among women and girls on modern contraceptive methods and family planning, as well as facilitating access to health services and reproductive health centres for women and girls, including women migrant workers.

The report indicates that the State party's Criminal Code prohibits "deliberate" abortion (para. 358). Please provide clarification as to the circumstances under which abortion is legally allowed.

26. Measures taken by the State party to address low use of contraceptives, such as increasing their accessibility and availability and raising awareness among women and girls on modern contraceptive methods and family planning, as well as facilitating access to health services and reproductive health centres for women and girls, including women migrant workers

In accordance with the National Health Strategy 2011-2016 and pursuant to the adoption of the primary health-care strategy, Governmental and private institutions in Qatar provide and facilitate universal access to comprehensive health-care services on a non-discriminatory basis. They also provide obstetric services and reliable, user-friendly information on family planning methods used by couples, encourage men to become actively involved in reproductive health and family planning, ensure that women have healthy and safe pregnancies and deliveries and promote child health. Units have been established in all health centres to provide health-care services to all women, regardless of their nationality. Women in Qatar therefore find it easy to access health services and reproductive health centres in the country.

To sustain public and reproductive health services and promote effective family planning methods, Qatar is intensifying its efforts to recruit, train and retain relevant medical and non-medical personnel and to integrate the concepts of prevention and early detection into all aspects of gynaecological care.

With regard to women's awareness of modern contraceptive methods and family planning, a study in 2008 revealed that contraceptives were increasingly used by Qatari women and that 94.6 per cent of Qatari women were aware of methods of birth control. However, that figure fell by half when women's approval and use of birth control methods were measured (46.9 per cent and 47.9 per cent respectively). The two most common methods of birth control are the intrauterine device (the loop) and the diaphragm. Qatar's family planning system provides birth control services so that mothers can space their pregnancies appropriately. Those services are currently offered by Government and private hospitals. However, Qatar is implementing an integrated strategy that provides for primary health-care centres to offer the aforementioned services, in addition to follow-up services to enable women to more appropriately space the birth of children. Starting in 2014, the strategy will focus on women with high-risk pregnancies and its scope will be extended over the following few years to all married women. Maternity and childhood services are provided free of charge to all women residing in Qatar.

With regard to abortion and women's reproductive rights, a specialized committee called the Ethics Committee at the Women's Hospital, a member of the Hamad Medical Corporation, brings together a number of specialists to study cases in which health considerations necessitate medical intervention in order to terminate pregnancy.

The results of the 2012 multi-indicator cluster survey show that, on average, 38 per cent of women use some form of contraception method (39 per cent of Qatari women and 37 per cent of non-Qatari women).

XIII. Equality before the law and in civil matters

Please provide information on formal and informal procedures for women travelling outside the State party. Please also provide information on whether women need to be accompanied by a male guardian when travelling abroad, whether they need a permission of a male guardian prior to departure, and measures taken to change existing perceptions regarding women's freedom of movement. In addition, please provide information on the authority of male guardians, such as with regard to education, employment, marriage and family relations.

27. Information on formal and informal procedures for women travelling outside the State party and on whether women need to be accompanied by a male guardian when travelling abroad, whether they need a permission of a male guardian prior to departure, and measures taken to change existing perceptions regarding women's freedom of movement

Qatari men and women enjoy equal rights with regard to freedom of movement and the ability to travel abroad and return to the country. The requirements established for the exercise of those rights are merely a type of normative code that stems from a universally approved and recognized national societal value system.

With regard to measures taken to change existing perceptions regarding women's freedom of movement, attention is drawn to the following legal instruments:

- In Act No. 5 (2009), amending Act No. 14 (1993) on passports, the condition whereby a woman could only be issued with a passport with her guardian's consent was revoked, while the condition requiring a guardian's consent in order to issue a passport to a person with diminished or no legal capacity was retained
- Decree-Law No. 19 of 2007 promulgating the Traffic Act, under which the same conditions for obtaining a driver's licence are applied both to men and women

28. Authority of male guardians, such as with regard to education, employment, marriage and family relations

(a) **Education:** Act No. 25 of 2001 on compulsory education, as amended, stipulates that education is compulsory. Article 2 of that Act provides that education is compulsory and must be provided free of charge to all children from the beginning of the primary stage up to the end of the secondary stage or the age of 18, whichever comes first, and that the Council will provide the requirements therefor.

Article 3 of that Act provides that an individual responsible for a child who reaches six years of age by the start of any school year or by the end of December of that year shall enrol that child in compulsory education and shall be responsible for the child's attendance during the aforementioned mandatory period."

The law prescribes a fine of between 5,000 and 10,000 riyals for any individual responsible for a child who breaches the provisions of that Act. In case of repeated violations, the lower and upper limits of that fine are doubled.

By Ministerial Decision No. 10 of 2010, a committee was established to follow up on cases where parents breach the Compulsory Education Act.

(b) **Employment:** Neither Act No. 11 of 2004, promulgating the Criminal Code, nor Act No. 8 of 2009, promulgating the Human Resources Administration Act, explicitly or implicitly refer to women's employment being contingent on the approval of a male guardian. Thus, under Qatari legislation, women may apply for and accept employment even without a male guardian's consent.

(c) **Marriage:** With regard to the authority of male guardians over females in connection with marriage, article 29 of the Qatari Family Act provides that a marriage may be concluded with authorization from a sharia judge in the following circumstances:

1. Where the women's closest guardian prevents her from marrying and/or her guardians of the same degree of kinship prevent her from so doing or they disagree with one another.

2. Where the closest guardian is absent and the judge decides that it is not in the woman's interest to delay the marriage.

The Family Court has contracted several marriages based on this provision of the article.

XIV. Disadvantaged groups of women

The report is silent on the situation of Bidoun (stateless) women. Please provide information on their situation in relation to access to health, education, employment and social benefits, as well as all other areas covered by the Convention. Please also provide information on the situation of migrant women workers in relation to access to health, employment and social benefits, as well as to freedom of movement.

29. The situation of Bidoun (stateless) women in relation to access to health, education, employment and social benefits, as well as all other areas covered by the Convention

Pursuant to Minister of the Interior Decree No. 1 (1984) on the granting of temporary resident permits to non-Qatari nationals, Qatar grants temporary residence permits to Bidoun (stateless) women that entitle them to health and education services.

Act No. 8 (2009), promulgating the Human Resources Administration Act, grants all persons holding Qatari papers priority in recruitment to public agencies within the country, irrespective of whether they hold Qatari nationality.

The Labour Act and Act No. 8 (2009), promulgating the Human Resources Administration Act, establishes basic rights for workers and employees, irrespective of sex, race, language or religion, in accordance with article 35 of the Permanent Constitution of Qatar. Those rights include the right to medical treatment, housing, compensation for overtime and bonuses. Employers are prohibited from dismissing women for marrying or for taking maternity leave. Under the Labour Act, female employees, irrespective of their nationality, are entitled to maternity leave, the same

pay as men for doing the same work and, for the period of one year, to an hour a day for breastfeeding purposes.

XV. Marriage and family relations

The report indicates that the consent of both parties and the girl's guardian and permission from a judge are required for the marriage of girls younger than 16 (para. 422). Please provide information and statistical data on how many marriages for girls younger than 16 are approved each year, the ages of the husbands in those marriages and the specific criteria used by judges to validate such marriages.

The report indicates that divorces are essentially initiated by men, on the basis of their wishes alone (unilateral *Talaq* divorce) and that a husband may authorize his wife to have a condition written into the marriage contract whereby she also has the right to ask him for a divorce (*Khula* procedure) (para. 438). Please provide information and statistical data on the percentage of unilateral divorce pronouncements, the amounts of compensation paid to women by men after divorce, and the amounts of compensation paid to men by women seeking *Khula* divorce. Please also provide information on the criteria used to determine the amount of *Khula* compensation women must pay, and on measures taken to limit the amount of *Khula* compensation required.

According to the information before the Committee, article 173 of the new Family Code stipulates that mothers lose custody of their children at predetermined ages (13 for boys and 15 for girls), while article 168 of the law specifies that mothers lose their right to custody if they remarry men who are not close relatives of the ward. Please provide information on whether the State party is considering granting mothers equal rights to legal guardianship of children.

The report indicates that at the time of reporting, the State party was examining a bill on judicial procedures in family inheritance cases, which, if adopted, could bring an end to the difficulties that women encounter in family cases (para. 456). Please provide updated information on the content of this bill and its current status.

30. Information on whether the State party is considering granting mothers equal rights to legal guardianship of children

Qatari law provides that, when the circumstances warrant, mothers may be granted legal guardianship of children. The judge has discretionary power to grant such guardianship to mothers based on the circumstances and conditions of each case, particularly in view of the fact that Qatari law stipulates that both parents have a duty to care for young children while they remain married and that, on termination of the marriage, the mother shall have the right to care for the child. Article 166 of the Family Act provides that both parents have a duty to care for young children as long as they are married. If they separate, even if by means other than divorce, the mother shall have the right to care for the minor, unless a court decides otherwise, in the interests of the child. The court shall endeavour to reconcile the two parties, provided that a reconciliation does not harm the interests of the child. The right to care for young children is a renewable right. If that right cannot be exercised owing

to an impediment or has been denied by a court order, it may be restored once the impediment is removed or the basis for the court order no longer exists. The right to care for young children is shared between the carer and the child. The right of the child takes precedence.

Under the law, guardianship ends when the child reaches either the age of 13, in the case of boys, or 15, in the case of girls, unless the court decide that its in the interests of the child the guardianship should continue. The courts may also allow the child choose one of the two parties to the dispute, after it has determined their suitability. In view of the needs of children with special needs, the law allows such women to remain under the guardianship of women.

Act No. 4 (2004) on the control of minors' funds also addresses this matter in its articles 18, 19, 21, 22 and 23, which provide that no distinction shall be between men and women in respect of assigning guardianship of a minor, and that the guardian may be a man or woman alone, or that a man and a woman together may have guardianship, provided that the guardian is just, capable, fully competent, reliable and of the same religion as the minor.

XVI. Optional Protocol and amendment to article 20, paragraph 1

Please indicate any progress made towards. Please also indicate what progress has been made towards the acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, relating to the Committee's meeting time.

There are currently no plans to accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention.
