

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



**STATEMENT
OF THE STATE OF QATAR**

**BY
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VICE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL FOR
FAMILY AFFAIRS**

**AT
THE FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION
OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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Madam Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women,

At the outset I am pleased to express to you the congratulations of the State of Qatar on your election to the chair of the present session. I would also like to stress the readiness of the delegation of State of Qatar to cooperate fully and effectively to ensure the success of the session.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his comprehensive report to the Commission on the review and implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and on the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and on the extent of its contribution to establishing a gender perspective that ensures the full achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

This crucial session is convened fifteen years after the Beijing Conference and ten years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in order to review the progress made in the advancement of women in all areas and to identify the constraints that have hindered the full implementation of those plans. As States, we need therefore to renew our commitment to the advancement of women and to intensify our efforts at the national and international levels to promote progress in certain areas such as poverty, health, education and the elimination of violations of women's rights. My delegation hopes that the present session would adopt procedural recommendations for the advancement of women.

Madam Chairperson,

The State of Qatar confirms its commitment to implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the MDGs. Under the leadership of His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, my country has made significant achievements in promoting gender equality and the advancement of women within an overarching perspective that seeks to improve the status of women and that of all the members of the family and community at the health, education, economic and cultural levels through the development of health, education and economic systems. In this regard, I would like to mention the establishment of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs in 1998, which represents the institutional mechanism on women and an expression of a strong will and political commitment to the advancement of women. The Council aims to strengthen the capacities of women and empower them to participate in the economic and political life, especially in the area of decision-making, and to increase employment opportunities for Qatari women and support them in their professional careers. The Council follows up on all efforts made to implement the agreements to which our Government is a party in the field of women's rights.

The State of Qatar has achieved significant socio-economic growth; a fact that is reflected in the raising of Qatar's ranking in the October 2009 Report on Human Development to the 33rd place, up from the 57th a decade ago. Such advancement reflects

the results of the numerous development achievements and I am pleased to share with you some of the most important of them:

- the adoption of the Qatar National Vision 2030 to promote sustainable development. The Vision seeks to establish intergenerational equity. It stresses the crucial role of women in achieving the desired development and the importance of strengthening their capacity and participation in all areas, including decision-making.
- adherence by the State of Qatar to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2009 and the establishment of a national commission to prepare the initial national report on the implementation of the Convention.
- adherence to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and approval to the accession to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons to the latter Convention in 2009.
- continuous review and development of legislation relevant to the family and women, and most importantly of laws on family, housing and employment.

Madam Chairperson,

Due to its belief in the close link between education and development, the State of Qatar has adopted a comprehensive policy to develop its educational system, that is based on the principle of gender equal opportunity. The Supreme Council is the highest Government authority responsible for formulating education policy. The State of Qatar has also adopted a leading policy in promoting scientific research by virtue of the 2008 Decree No. 24 on the organization of scientific research, that provides in article 2 thereof for earmarking 2.8 per cent of the government revenues in the State budget to support scientific research.

Thanks to its education policy, my country has managed to increase the ratio of gender equality to that of literacy for those aged 15 years of age or older, from 93 per cent in 2005 to 96 per cent in 2007. The diversification and expansion of scientific specializations available to female students at the University of Qatar, coincide with providing distinctive educational options as part of the Education City project, that constitutes one of the projects of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. Such diversity has increased the number of female university students in various educational sectors from 6993 in 2005/2006 to 7977 in 2007/2008. The proportion of female trainees in various training centers in 2007 accounted for about 53.6 per cent of the overall number of trainees in all centers. The State aims also to narrow the digital gender divide through training and e-universality programs carried out by the Supreme Council for Communications and Information Technology.

The State of Qatar's efforts are not confined to promoting the right to education at the national level. It has also made significant efforts in promotion that right at the international level through the role of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah, Consort of His Highness the Emir

of Qatar, as UNESCO's Envoy for Basic and Higher Education, and initiatives launched by Her Highness for the promotion of such right, including the establishment of the "Education Above All" institution in 2009, which is an international institution that deals with the protection, support and promotion of the right to education in areas that are or would become areas of conflict, crises and wars. In the area of health:

The Government has established the Supreme Council for Health as the higher authority that addresses public health care issues. It ensures the highest level of health care and provides world-class and universally-renowned preventive and treatment health services. Women in the State of Qatar benefit from an integrated health care, including access to primary and specialized health care, as well as a comprehensive health program for maternity care. That health care system has helped achieve the global objectives of women's health included in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on women, and the objectives and targets set out in the Millennium Declaration. The adoption of that system has reduced the under-five mortality rate from 10.4 children per thousand live births in 2005 to 9.53 children per thousand live births in 2008. The maternal mortality rate also fell from 22.38 per hundred thousand live births in 2005 to 11.62 per hundred thousand live births in 2008. As part of the continuous expansion of specialized clinics for women's health, a clinic for early screening of breast and cervical cancer and a clinic for cancer chemotherapy have been set up, the medical examination and primary care in all women life stages have been endorsed in general and specialized hospitals and medical examination before marriage, the document to set up SIDRA Medical and Research Center, which is an academic medical center specialized in the health of women and children has been issued, and the National Commission for the Prevention of AIDS was established in 2006 (and the integration of women in the national strategy to fight cancer. Women deaths caused by breast and uterus cancers account for 1.2 per cent of the total female mortality).

Madam Chairperson,

The State of Qatar has adopted practical policy in addressing the problem of violence against women by establishing specialized independent institutions, namely the Qatar Foundation for Child and Women Protection and the Qatar Foundation to Combat Human Trafficking, as well as shelters for women victims of violence. The Ministry of the Interior inaugurated in March 2009 a special office to handle cases of domestic violence and violence against women. In addition, the Qatar Foundation for Child and Women Protection, the Qatar Foundation to Combat Human Trafficking, and the National Commission for Human Rights have accessible hotlines to address cases involving violence. Serious efforts are also underway to include education material on human rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in school and academic curricula.

In the economic area, the rate of women's economic activity rose from 27.5 per cent in 1986 to 49.1 per cent in 2009. Active Qatari females share in the labor market rose from 33.3 per cent in 2004 to 35.9 per cent in 2009, while that of economically active Qatari women in the government sector fell from 85.2 per cent in 2004 to 74.5 per cent in 2009, which provides an indication that Qatari women are open for work in mixed and private sectors. The ratio of active entrepreneur women to the total of economically active women rose from 0.2 per cent in 2006 to 0.4 per cent in 2009. The Qatari businesswomen account for more than 50 per cent of the total equity investors and dealers in the Doha Stock Market and the number of women-owned companies in the State of Qatar amount to nearly 1500 companies. Efforts are underway to expand employment opportunities for women in public institutions and companies and in the private and mixed sectors, strengthen their capacity in self-employment, encourage entrepreneur women, and adopt policy and programs in support of that category.

Madam Chairperson,

Despite all the efforts made by the State of Qatar, and the resulting achievements that we cherish and are proud of, we still face challenges, including certain societal constraints and cultural inherited issues that prevent the full realization of the objectives set by the national mechanisms, notably the belief that the advancement of women is the responsibility of Government agencies alone, without any role for the NGOs concerned with women issues. We would like however to stress that those challenges would not keep us from striving towards the advancement of women, building their capacities and promoting their contribution to the society. Our priority areas for the next five years will focus on contributing to the implementation of the Qatar National Vision for Development (Qatar 2030) and the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Madam Chairperson,

In conclusion, we wish the Commission on the Status of Women success in its work. We hope it would be able to develop formulas to raise the levels of implementation and activation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and to realize the hopes and expectations contained therein.

I thank you for your attention.

May God's peace and mercy be upon you.