

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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**Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations – New York
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Madam Chairperson,

At the outset, I am pleased to express my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon on your election to the chair of the present session. I would also like to thank you on behalf of the delegation of Qatar for your participation in this important 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 the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly from a perspective that ensures the full achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

This crucial session is convened fifteen years after the Beijing Conference and sixteen 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 hinder the full implementation of the 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 all areas, such as poverty, health, education and the elimination of violence. I am confident that the objectives that the present session would adopt would provide a solid foundation 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 Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, my country has made significant achievements in promoting gender equality and the advancement of women within an overarching national strategy 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 2008, which represents the highest institutional mechanism for the advancement of women. The Council aims to strengthen the capabilities of women and empower them to participate in the economic and social life, especially in 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 Qatar is a party in the field of women's rights.

The State of Qatar has achieved significant socio-economic growth which is reflected in the raising of Qatar's ranking in the October 2009 Report on Human Development to the 32nd place, up from the 57th a decade ago. Such advancement

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

- 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 and 2009, the 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 Chairman,

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 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 a percentage 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 many other developed countries. The ratio increased from 83 per cent in 2005 to 96 per cent in 2007. The diversification of 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 main pillars 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. State side also aims 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 bin Nasser bin Khalifa bin Hamad Al

of Qatar as UNICEF's envoy for Basic and High Education. Her Highness for the promotion of such right including the establishment of the "Education Above All" institution in 2008 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 zones of conflict crises and wars in the area of health.

The Government has established the Supreme Council of Health as its highest authority that addresses public health care issues. It ensures the highest level of health and provides world-class and universally renowned preventive and treatment health services. Women in the State of Qatar have full and equal access to 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 2006. 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 2006. As part of the continuous expansion of specialized services for women's health, a national screening of breast and cervical cancer and a clinic for early detection of breast cancer, in general and specialized hospitals and health examination centers, and a document to set up SIIPA Medical and Research Center which is a academic medical center specialized in the health of women and children has been established. A Commission for the Prevention of AIDS was established in 2000 to address 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 deaths.

Madam Chairperson,

The State of Qatar has adopted practical measures to protect women against 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 a centre for women victims of violence in the interior inaugurated in March 2009. A special unit to handle cases of violence against women. In addition to 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 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. In the private sector, the rate of women's economic activity 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 rose from 30.2 per cent in 2004 to 50.7 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 0.3 per cent in 2006 to 0.4 per cent in 2009. In Qatar, business women account for more than 50 per cent of the total activity investors and dealers in the Doha Stock Market and the number of women-owned companies increased to 1,540 among nearly 1,100 companies. Efforts are under way to expand employment opportunities for women in public institutions and companies and in the private administrative sector, strengthen their capacity in self-employment, encourage and empower 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, we cherish and are proud of, we still face challenges, arising from certain societal constraints and cultural inherited issues that prevented the realization of the objectives set by the national mechanism, notably the belief that the advancement of women is the responsibility of the Government alone, without any role for the NGO 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 (2011-2030) and the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Madam Chairperson,

In conclusion, we wish to commend 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-fourth 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.