



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
29 June 2020

English  
Original: Arabic and English  
Arabic and English

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## Human Rights Council

### Forty-fourth session

15 June–3 July 2020

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

## **Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education on her visit to Qatar**

**Comments by the State\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

GE.20-08542(E)



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## **I. Introduction**

1. The Government of the State of Qatar extends thanks to Ms. Koumbou Boly Barry, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education for her visit to State of Qatar from 8-16 December 2019 which was the first of its kind under this mandate.
2. The Government of the State of Qatar has paid attention to the constructive discussions held with the Special Rapporteur during her visit that Qatar regards as an important opportunity to consider the achievements made and the challenges faced in this regard.
3. The Government of the State of Qatar wishes to thank the Special Rapporteur for commending “its willingness to welcome and find solutions for Qatari students (531 students) who, during the diplomatic crisis in the region, had to interrupt their studies in some of the neighboring countries and return home”.
4. The Government of the State of Qatar also expresses its thanks to the Special Rapporteur for congratulating Qatar for “the priority given to providing quality education for all and the numerous measures adopted in this regard”. We note the Special Rapporteur’s appreciation of “in particular, the willingness of many (national) authorities concerned to build a modern educational system on a global level that provides students with first-class education, similar to the education provided anywhere in the world,” and “the significant commitment of Qatar to regional and international cooperation in upholding the rights to education for all as well as the crucial work of the Education Above All foundation and the Qatar Foundation, which is making a real difference for many people within and outside the State of Qatar”.
5. The Government of the State of Qatar has taken note of the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur and is pleased to note that work is already underway to implement a number of these recommendations, including ratification of the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education of 1960, development of a very wide variety of so-called “community” or private international schools, and promoting the right to education at the international level.

## **II. Second: General context:**

### **A. International legal framework and international cooperation:**

6. Referring to what was stated in paragraph (8), the reservation referred in this para does not include approval of any type of corporal punishment and has nothing to do with the right to education, as Article (8) paragraph (16) of the assessment of the student’s behavior policy in schools states the need to refrain from non-educational methods in addressing student disciplinary infractions, such as physical and psychological abuse of all kinds, provoking a student by any means, exposing him/her to contempt and ridicule or collective punishment for a violation committed by a student.
7. Referring to what was stated in paragraph (9), the State of Qatar issued a declaration on what is meant by ‘trade unions’ and their related issues, in line with the provisions of the Labour Law and Qatar national legislation of. Accordingly, what is meant by ‘trade unions’ and their related issues in Article (8) of the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights and Article (22) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, according to the ratification decree, is stated in Law No. 14 of 2004 Promulgating the Labour Law and its amendments in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the law entitled (workers’ organizations & Joint Committees, Collective Negotiation and Joint Agreements).
8. The Qatari legislator has ensured male and female teachers in private schools and communities subject to the provisions of the Labor Law, participation in improving and the regulating working environment, hearing of individual and collective disputes and attempting the amicable settlement thereof, through participation in joint labor committees. Article (126) of the Labor Law stating that the joint committee shall undertake the study and discussion of

all the matters related to labour and in particular the work regulation, ways to increase and develop the production and enhance productivity, as well as hearing of individual and collective disputes and attempting the amicable settlement thereof.

9. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education encourages teachers to establish specialized committees for workers in the field of education. The duration of committee's membership is three years and it is based on the results of voting process, allowing teachers and principals to exercise their electoral and democratic right to participate in the selection of members of the advisory committees, thus enhancing their participation in making educational decisions as follows:

10. First: Establishment of an advisory committee for teachers specializing in the following:

(a) Engaging teachers in developing the educational process, promoting confidence between leadership and the educational field and exchanging experiences;

(b) Monitoring challenges and obstacles in the educational field by discussing their causes and proposing solutions to them in line with teachers' visions and aspirations;

(c) Strengthening the professional partnership with educational leaders with the aim of evaluating educational decisions, programs and plans;

(d) Promoting the professional development of teachers to master and improve the work.

(e) Activating dialogue mechanisms, increasing communication opportunities, and exchanging experiences between teachers and educational leaders.

11. Second: Election of an advisory committee for school principals specializing in the following:

(a) Promoting a team spirit, consultation between educational leaders and increase their participation in the development;

(b) Exchanging different educational experiences to face the education problems and obstacles and proposing practical solutions;

(c) Strengthening the professional partnership with the decision makers at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in order to assess and evaluate the educational decisions, programmes and plans;

(d) Contributing to achieving the Ministry's strategic plan in developing education in the State;

(e) Referring to what was stated in paragraph (10), the reason for the reservation to Article (3) of the two International Covenants was their inconsistency with the provisions of Islamic Sharia in matters of inheritance and birth. It never infringes the principle of equality between men and women and has no effect on the rights of girls in the field of education.

12. The right to education is guaranteed by the Qatari constitution in its articles (25- 49). Education is compulsory for all groups in society without discrimination - in accordance with the applicable laws, and these reservations did not affect the principle of equality in legislation concerning education. On the contrary, the percentage of female graduates from Qatar University for the academic year (2016-2017) is about 70 percent of the total graduates from various colleges such as engineering, medicine, law, economics, arts and science...etc. Moreover, university total enrollment figures show that females outnumbered their male counterparts.

13. As a result of this demand for higher education, the percentage of Qatari women participating in the labor force has increased, reaching about 37% for women aged 25-29 years, and about 49% for women aged 30-34 years, according to statistics issued by The Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics for the year 2017. Women also had a majority of jobs in the education, health, and social work fields.

14. Referring to what was stated in paragraph (11), Article (50) of the Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of thought, belief and religion, as this article states that “Freedom to practice religious rites shall be guaranteed to all persons in accordance with the Law and the requirements of the maintenance of public order and morality”.

15. The State of Qatar ratified the Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions under the Emiri Decree No. 27 of 2009 dated 23.06.2009, and the Convention on the Child under Emiri Decree No. 54 of 1995 dated 12.07.1995. According to Article (68) of the permanent constitution of the State of Qatar, the treaty or agreement shall have the power of law after ratification.

16. Religious freedom is one of the human rights guaranteed in the educational system in the various educational levels in the State of Qatar. Since Islam is the official State religion, it is taught in all government schools while promoting the concept of respecting other religions, provided no religion or belief is disrespected. Moreover, Non-Muslim students in public (government) schools are not required to attend Islamic studies classes, and teachers are directed to develop alternative plans for these students to develop linguistic skills and artistic talents.

17. The same situation is applied in private schools in which Qatari and Muslim students are taught Islamic studies without obliging non-Muslims to attend the classes while offering Islamic studies as an optional subject for non-Muslims, provided that the student's parents/guardian provide written consent. As the State of Qatar hosts a large number of private and international schools, the Ministry of Education allows community schools and schools affiliated with embassies to teach Islamic studies while following the national curriculum applied in their countries. The system of education applied in the State of Qatar is similar to education systems applied in most countries of the world.

## **B. The School system in the State of Qatar:**

18. Referring to what was stated in paragraph (32) in the framework of responding to the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the education and training sector strategy, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education launched the general framework for national education, which identified six basic principles that underpin the educational curriculum, namely excellence, inclusion (education for all), openness and flexibility, balance, importance and relevance, complementarity and cohesion.

19. The educational curriculum achieves the principle of inclusion (education for all) in terms of providing equal opportunities for all learners, regardless of individual differences, including different modes of learning and special needs. It also achieves the principle of openness and flexibility in terms of opening up new possibilities for teachers to be innovative, and provides options for schools and various learning paths for learners at the level of curriculum content, the depth of knowledge and learning focus (academic or professional), and takes into account new or emerging issues.

20. Referring to what is mentioned in paragraph (33), the Ministry of Education issues annually the activities plan for government schools and gives authority to each school to choose the programs and activities appropriate to them. This system is flexible, as each school can choose a number of activities not exceeding 12 activities and not less than 6 Activities to ensure quality planning and follow-up for each school as well as relevance to age groups of students, the characteristics of student development, and diversity and inclusion in the selection of activities. The Ministry is keen to provide safety and security requirements, taking into account not the fact of affecting class hours and the progress of plans and lessons. It is worth noting that in case a school addresses the Ministry to implement any activity that the school deems appropriate and serves educational goals; even if it is not included in the activities plan, it should be approved by the Ministry. This denies stringency in decision making with regard to school activities in line with the Special Rapporteur's recommendation No. (115) (a)

### **III. Efforts of the State of Qatar in addressing the challenges related to the right to education mentioned in the report:**

#### **A. Availability**

##### **1. Available school seats and waiting lists:**

21. Referring to what was stated in paragraph (38), the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the State of Qatar opens the door for receiving application to submit an exception request to register a student in government schools for the groups that don't meet the admission requirements, and approximately 1500 students are accepted annually through requests for exceptions. Schools have also been opened for non-Qatari students from low-income families who cannot pay the fees for private schools and do not meet the requirements for admission to government schools in schools known as "Assalam Schols". Two schools were opened, and work is underway to expand the number of schools in the near future. It is worth noting that these schools offer two periods of education to be able to increase the number of students to benefit from free education in line with the Special Rapporteur's recommendations No. (110) and (111).

22. Referring to what was stated in paragraphs (39), (44), (45), (47), (49) and (50) regarding the outcomes and goals of the 2017-2020 strategic plan of education and higher education, emphasis was placed on ensuring that all students are enrolled at the compulsory school age regardless of gender, nationality, and individual capacities, in addition to providing equitable, diversified, and quality education for learners. These outcomes included providing the necessary school infrastructure that address the requirements of the State at all levels of education (from kindergarten to high school) and encouraging the active participation of the private sector in meeting the State's needs for private schools and higher education institutions.

23. As the Special Rapporteur noted, the State faces some challenges resulting from the diversity of nationalities, cultures and languages in the State.

24. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education opened 63 new schools in the academic year 2017-2018, including 23 British schools, 13 American schools, 12 Indian schools, 8 national schools, and also continued opening a number of schools during the year 2019-2020, including 5 government schools, 28 kindergartens and a private school, bringing the total number of schools in the State of Qatar to about 905 public and private schools.

25. The State of Qatar will continue to open schools in the framework of its national strategy and encourage investment in education through providing many benefits and advantages, for example Law No. (1) for the year 2019 regulating the investment of non-Qatari capital in economic activity allows non-Qatari entities and individuals to own up to 100% in any economic activity. The law offers many investment incentives including allocation of land to non-Qatari investors at preferential rates to establish schools in addition to important tax and customs exemptions, while enjoying various types of financial and consulting support when establishing investment projects as well as providing free water and electricity. Some classroom space requirements have also been modified for low-cost schools to accommodate larger numbers of students, and allowing a number of community schools to apply the system of (morning and evening) shifts during the academic year 2020, including the Indian and Pakistani curriculum schools, and Tunisian, Egyptian and Filipino communities' schools, to relieve the pressure on those schools due to the large numbers of students. The two-shift system will continue to be applied according to some conditions, the most important of which is that the tuition fees for the evening shift are equal to or less than the fees for the morning shift. Moreover, five contiguous buildings could be used to create a single school building in line with the Special Rapporteur's recommendation No. (108) and (109).

26. Statistics shown in Table (1)<sup>1</sup> indicate that government schools, private schools, and community schools comprise close proportions of Qatari and non-Qatari students of varying nationalities and economic conditions.

Table (1): Distribution of students in government schools sorted by stage, gender and nationality:

Education Type	Stage	Qataris		Non-Qataris		Total
		male	female	male	female	
Public						
	Pre-Primary	3697	4058	537	589	8881
	Primary	13472	14933	13913	14462	56780
	Preparatory	7016	8244	6525	6652	28437
	Secondary	6475	7592	6488	6595	27150
Overall Total		7765	8706.75	27463	28298	121248

## 2. The need to develop literacy and vocational training programs for low-wage expatriate workers:

27. Referring to what was stated in Paragraph (53) regarding training expatriate workers, building their skills, and eliminating illiteracy, the second national development strategy 2018-2022 has stipulated the need to "Focus on improving the capacities of skilled labor in the Qatari labor market". The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs cooperates with other government authorities and in partnership with the private sector, in launching many leading initiatives for literacy and capacity building for expatriate workers including, but not limited to:

- a) A personal skills training program that supports workers in their personal and professional lives. (Training: worker welfare);
- b) Occupational Health and Safety Program;
- c) Grievance mechanisms and general life advice programs;
- d) Literacy classes in English;
- e) The Better Connections Program is a practical implementation framework for providing ICT access within transient labor accommodation.
- f) Be Smart and Learn includes a range of interactive learning modules to support digital inclusion of migrant workers and enabling implementation of the Better Connections Program.

28. We would also like to emphasize that there is no discrimination in national legislation between workers based on nationality or ethnic, cultural or religious grounds, where the Qatari legislator uses a general formula for determining rights or obligations imposed on the persons referred to in the provisions of the laws. Moreover, the bilateral agreements to recruit workers from abroad concluded by the State of Qatar with the countries of origin for expatriate workers do not contain any discrimination on the basis of national or ethnic origin, and there is no distinction between one country and another with regard to the rights of workers from those countries, especially since a unified model has been adopted for all bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding (36 bilateral agreements and 13 memoranda of understanding) related to the recruitment of workers of different nationalities. Accordingly, the terms of those agreements are unified items for all countries, with a unified labor model contract annexed to these agreements; it applies to all workers of different nationalities without discrimination based on national, ethnic, or religious grounds.

29. The State of Qatar seeks to develop training and professional development opportunities for expatriate workers as explained in line with their competencies without any

<sup>1</sup> Statistical Bulletin 2018.

discrimination on the basis of national origin. Moreover, the initiatives implemented by the State in partnership with the private sector (referred to above) with a view to building their skills and literacy (English language training) are directed to all migrant workers of all nationalities without discrimination, in line with the Special Rapporteur's recommendation No. (109) (d).

## **B. Accessibility:**

### **1 Economic accessibility: the right to free education:**

30. Referring to what was stated in paragraphs (46), (56) and (59), the constitution of the State of Qatar stipulates in Article No. (25) that Education is one of the basic pillars of social progress. The State shall ensure, foster and promote education. Similarly, Article No. (49) stipulates that citizens have the right to education, and the State shall endeavor to make general education compulsory and free of charge in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations of the State. The Compulsory Education Law No. 25 of 2001 included thirteen articles clarifying the procedures and measures related to enrollment in schools and the bodies responsible for implementation. Article 2 of the said law affirms compulsory education, free of charge for all children from the beginning of the primary stage until the end of the preparatory stage or reaching the age of eighteen whichever is earlier. The law also included a provision specifying penalties and sanctions for violators of the law. It is worth mentioning that this provision was amended as the value of the fine increased and became no less than five thousand and no more than ten thousand Qatari riyals.

31. The National Committee for Education 2030 was formed by Ministerial Resolution No. (47) of 2016 to oversee the implementation of the fourth goal of the 2030 sustainable development goals, to develop an implementation plan for the goals, overarching framework and set of guidelines for developing data roadmaps for sustainable development. In the plan, the seven targets of the fourth goal were affirmed, including ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes by 2030.

32. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) has issued the admission policy in schools for the academic year 2018-2019. This policy outlines the admission categories in public schools, as well as the procedures for registration and transfer of students, which schools have to abide by as per the policies of MOEHE. The policy defines the rules for admission and registration of students in morning public schools, and it sets the regulations governing the senior education students (home schooling system) in morning public schools. According to the policy, the following are accepted in public schools: children of Qataris, children of Qatari women, children of GCC citizens, children of non-Qataris working in ministries and other government entities and public institutions, children of non-Qataris in private, charitable organizations and institutions, in addition to children of private sector employees in the areas and villages where there are no private schools. In the event that parents/guardians are unable to pay fees of books and transportation, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has devoted a special procedure to apply for exemption, where applications are reviewed.

33. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the State of Qatar also opens the door for receiving application to submit an exception request to register a student in government schools for the groups that don't meet the admission requirements, and approximately 1500 students are accepted annually through requests for exceptions. Schools have also been opened for non-Qatari students from low-income families who cannot pay the fees for private schools and do not meet the requirements for admission to government schools in schools known as " Assalam Schols ". Two schools were opened, and work is underway to expand the number of schools in the near future. It is worth noting that these schools offer two periods of education to enable the number of students to benefit from free education. Cabinet Resolution No. (27) of 2019 stipulated the terms and conditions for holders of permanent residence card for treatment and education in government institutions in the State. Article 3 of the said law states that "Acceptance of a permanent residence card holder, his wife and his children who are not more than eighteen years old, in state

educational institutions". Cabinet Resolution No. (13) of 2019 on the conditions and terms for the privileges and rights of a political refugee stipulated that "with regard to the right to receive education, a political refugee and his family members shall be admitted to State educational institutions".

34. Referring to what was stated in paragraph (58), (61) Law No. (23) of 2015 regulating private schools, has regulated tuition fees in private schools. Article 24 of the said law stipulated that: "Administration of private schools must provide the Ministry with a list of all school fees and expenses to be collected from students for approval prior to the adoption of the list."

35. Tuition and additional fees are studied by the administrative and financial department at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education based on academic services provided to students, operating capacity and the rental of premises. The State ensures that school fees are varying to meet the needs of all segments of the society.

## **2. Out-of -school children: economic, administrative and cultural impediments to access**

36. Referring to what was stated in paragraph (62), it is considered that covering school fees for children of employees enrolled in private schools is subject to negotiation between employees and employers. In all cases, this issue does not affect the right of children to education, especially since the State ensures that school fees are varying to meet the needs of all segments of the society.

37. Referring to what was stated in paragraphs No. (64), (65), (66), (67) and (68), Ministerial Decision No. 10 of 2010, concerning the establishment of the Committee for Follow-up on Parental Breaches of the Compulsory Education Act .In 2015, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has formed a committee to follow-up on school dropout due to unwillingness of some parents to enroll their children in education (very small percentage) in cooperation with the communities to convince parents to enroll their children in education, and impose penalties on violators to ensure the right of children to education.

38. First Ihsan school was opened for non-Arabic speaking students with a Cambridge English Curriculum. The second Ihsan School, which operates with the Arab National Curriculum, has also been opened with the aim to enable all children in the State of Qatar to have equitable access to quality education, in order to unleash their capabilities to become productive and responsible citizens who contribute to transforming their local communities and contribute to the overall economic prosperity in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030. The two schools are operating in one evening shift. Work is underway to open other schools. The school is completely free including education, food, transportation, textbooks and uniforms.

39. The Education Above All Foundation also launched the "Together" program in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the National Committee for Education, Culture and Science. The program was designed, developed and implemented under the framework of the Education Above All Foundation. The program seeks to reach those children who have not been enrolled in or continue basic education programs. Work is still under way to convince families in coordination with communities to enroll their children of both sexes in schools in line with the Special Rapporteur's recommendation No. (112).

40. Referring to what is stated in paragraph (70), Law No. (2) of 2004 regarding people with special needs stipulates that the State guarantees to every person with special needs the right to education, rehabilitation, care and other rights regardless of race, gender, color, language or religion.

41. Among the educational priorities that are reflected and affirmed by the general framework of the national education curriculum is welfare of learners with special needs as the general framework of the national curriculum sets the basis for preparing, developing and promoting support strategies and providing different educational paths to meet the needs of students with special needs with the aim to assist students to raise ambition and expectations to realize what is achievable in light of an accurate assessment of their needs and capabilities. All decisions taken in this regard are based on the commitment of the Ministry of Education



to the principle of providing education for all without exception and improving access to education for people with special needs. Being eager to provide a proper educational environment, attract and convince parents to enroll their children with special needs in education in public education schools and specialized schools, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has endeavored to provide comprehensive services to citizens and expatriates through:

- a) Opening kindergartens and schools that accommodate children with disabilities within specialized programs.
- b) Early diagnosis for people with disabilities through raising awareness and standardized diagnostic tools.
- c) Developing specific criteria for the team that provide care and services to the children with disabilities, including holding professional licenses from multiple relevant entities, such as the American Board for Applied Behavior Analysis.
- d) The use of Evidence-based intervention strategies.
- e) Providing assistive technology to persons with disabilities.
- f) Establishment of a database for students.
- g) Opening of Roa'a Center for Assessment, Consultation and Support to provide students with additional learning support with the highest level of educational services and alternatives in this field.
- h) Developing technical and vocational paths for high school students with disabilities in integrated and specialized schools and provide better learning opportunities and qualification for the labor market.
- i) Developing terms of reference for education and training programs for students with disabilities to reach general education curriculum.
- j) Planning is underway to open rehabilitation schools for students with disabilities over the age of students at the twelfth level and cannot be included in education at levels higher than the level they reached.

42. Students with disabilities are enrolled in three types of general education schools:

43. First: schools that provide support services: where students are offered a treatment plan by support teachers who are proficient in the literary and scientific tracks.

44. Second: specialized schools: Al Hedaya Schools for students with special needs provide support services in a more intensive way as well as programs that meet the needs of students with disabilities.

45. Third: Integration schools for persons with disabilities: In order to achieve equality between students with disabilities and their peers, a number of schools have sought to open classes for students with disabilities, create an educational environment for them to be better able to communicate with their peers, work to change negative attitudes towards students with disabilities, establish the concept that this group should be integrated and accepted in society and that education is one of their rights and a means to improve their personal lives.

46. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has provided assistive technology services to students with disabilities, with the aim to increase and improve functional capacities of students, facilitate the learning process, help students with disabilities to express themselves, develop social interaction with others, and support their academic performance, including raising the level of self-confidence, making an undesirable behavior less likely to occur, and exploring their own strengths and needs.

47. In addition, approximately 19 licensed private centers were opened for persons with disabilities. In 2019-2020, nearly 1000 students were enrolled, the percentage of males is 60%, and the percentage of females is 40%. The programs and sessions varied to meet the needs of students and parents in order to provide an enabling environment that helps students in acquiring capabilities and skills that enable them to communicate and integrate with others, including: early intervention program, learning difficulties program, evaluation and general

diagnosis program, pre-school foundation program, motor program, cognitive training program, cognitive rehabilitation program, sensory integration program, daily life skills program, Independent Living Skills program, psychological sessions for families of people with disabilities, reading skills development program, writing skills training program, academic integration rehabilitation program, social rehabilitation program, Support services, auditory qualification, attention and concentration development program, behavioral rehabilitation program, specialized assessment, diagnosis and treatment programs, Social-emotional learning programs, and consulting services For parents in line with the Special Rapporteur's recommendation No. (114) (d).

**3. Ensuring that accessibility leads to inclusiveness: children of various nationalities and social backgrounds**

48. With reference to what was mentioned in paragraph (73), there are many private and community schools that teach students in English, French and other languages, and consider the Arab language, the Arab and Islamic history and Islamic studies as secondary subjects.

**4. Access without discrimination based on sex and gender**

49. Referring to what was stated in paragraphs (79), (80) and (81), Qatar National Vision 2030 aims to improve the capabilities of women and enable their full participation in the political and economic process of the State, especially in decision-making roles. Equal opportunity is also one of the principles of the permanent constitution of the State of Qatar.

50. Legislation regulating the labor market in the State of Qatar has adopted the permanent constitution approach as it did not contain any negative discrimination against women and did not provide for any distinction between men and women in education and work. On the contrary, discrimination came positively, as Law No. (15) of 2016 promulgating the Civil Human Resources and its executive regulation issued by Cabinet Resolution No. (32) of 2016 regulating the provisions of the public office in the State of Qatar. Among the forms of positive discrimination for women, including, but not limited to, granting women who travel on an official mission or training course the right to be accompanied by a member of her family; the employer must pay the expenses of the accompanying family member<sup>2</sup>.

51. Accordingly, the State provides its programs for scholarships without discrimination based on gender. Moreover, national legislation encourages females to study abroad and grant them the right to be accompanied by a member of their families at the state's expense throughout the study period. Likewise, enrollment in higher education and study abroad scholarships is based on the desire of the individual himself; girls often prefer to enroll in universities within the State, where as males prefer to enroll in higher education abroad through scholarships.

52. The STEM School for Girls and a technical secondary school for girls, along the lines of the Qatar Technical Secondary School for Boys shall be opened in the academic year 2020/2021. It is worth mentioning that a secondary vocational school for girls specialized in banking studies was opened by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the academic year 2015/2016, in line with the Special Rapporteur's recommendation No. (114) (f).

**C. Acceptability:**

**1. The situation of teachers and academics:**

53. Referring to what was stated in paragraphs (95), (96), (97) and (98), the State of Qatar has made improving the conditions of teachers a top national priority and has enacted legislation and laws that promote their rights including offering incentives to attract greater numbers of Qatari cadres and providing a special wage scale in line with the tasks assigned

<sup>2</sup> Article 86 of the Human Resources Law.

to teachers with higher salaries available in other government departments under the Civil Human Resources Law No. (15) of 2016.

54. The State of Qatar has also provided many initiatives to pursue the teaching profession, for example, "Tamouh"(ambitious) program for high school graduates in partnership with the College of Education at Qatar University, the assistant teacher program in partnership with the Community College in Qatar, and "Learn for Qatar" education and scholarship program for postgraduate studies in educational specialties.

55. The transfer of teachers is specified by a decision of the Department of Teacher. Transfer from the school with which the teacher is affiliated is compulsory where this is required by the public interest for purpose of filling vacant posts or exchanging experiences and developing performance.

56. The State seeks to provide special contracts to attract non-Qatari teachers while providing competitive salaries. Non-Qatari teachers are granted many privileges, including, but not limited to, adequate housing for them and their family members (apartment or villa) in the best areas at a high cost covered by the State, as well as annual tickets for all family members. Given these benefits, inequalities between the salaries of Qataris and non-Qataris do not exist.

57. The relationship between the licensee or his representative at the school and employees is regulated. The employment contract may be written in Arabic as a native language, in addition to any other languages, for a period of one year starting from the beginning of the school year and ending with the beginning of the next academic year including the summer vacation period. The contract must specify the type of work that the employee will perform, monthly salary, and job description. The employee appointed for the first time spends a probationary period of six months from the date of commencement of work in the school. The employee may not be placed on probation more than once in the same school. The licensee may terminate the contract during the probationary period if the employee is found unfit to perform the work provided that the employee is notified before that at least a week from the date of termination of the contract according to Law No. (23) of 2015 regulating private schools.

58. Thus, teachers enjoy a safe and stable educational environment. Job assignments, working hours, and number of students are defined in each semester, which constitute an attractive environment in which teachers from fifty-six nationalities from the world are working, which reflects the richness of the Qatar educational system.

59. It should be noted that what was known as the sponsorship system was abolished according to Law No. (21) of 2015 and its amendments, and that expatriates in the State of Qatar currently enjoy complete freedom to leave the country and they can change the employer according to the conditions stipulated by the said law. On October 16, 2019, a draft decision for the Minister of Interior was issued to set regulations to facilitate the movement of expatriates to another employer during the contract period in a manner that preserves the rights of both parties.

60. As per the Labor Law as well as Law No. (21) of 2015, an accompanying spouse can obtain a work permit, and a residence permit based on the work contract, even in the event of termination of marriage.

61. The Qatari legislator is keen to ensure the right of family reunification in the belief in the importance of the family and what it reflects on the psychological wellbeing of the expatriates and in order to achieve a balance between work and mental health. According to law No. (21) of 2015, the competent authority may grant residence permits to the spouse, male children of the expatriate who are 25 years and who have not completed their university education, and to unmarried female children. With the approval of the Minister or his representative, a residence permit may be granted to the parents of an expatriate if deemed reasonable, in line with the Special Rapporteur's recommendation No. (115) (b) (c) (d).

## **2. Cultural acceptability**

62. Referring to what was stated in paragraphs (100), (101) and (102) in the framework of the strategic plan for the education and training sector 2011-2016, the Ministry of

Education and Higher Education has developed the general framework of the national educational curriculum for the State of Qatar in cooperation and coordination with a variety of partners representing various segments in Society in addition to the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Beirut. Many reference documents were used to enhance the orientation of a knowledge-based economy. The best international standards were reviewed and included in the general framework of the national educational curriculum for the State of Qatar; it identified general history for study from the Primary Third Grade to Twelfth Grade on the basis of global dimensions, including knowing the chronology of world history, understanding the causes of events in world history and the role of historical figures in shaping of history, in addition to ensuring the proper balance of change and continuity through knowing the past, understanding the present, and anticipating the future. This entails addressing different events and multiple civilizations at the local, regional and international levels. In addition, the course of history involves geographical discoveries, industrial revolution, global wars, liberation and independence movements, the emergence of the United Nations and their efforts to bring lasting peace between peoples, the promotion of human rights, and globalization in a way that enhances the nature of diversity and variety in historical, political, economic, social and cultural events. Qatar History is taught with the aim to establish the values of national identity.

63. Islamic education is a compulsory subject in all public (government) schools, and Non-Muslim students in public (government) schools are not required to attend Islamic studies classes. Teachers are directed to develop alternative plans for these students to develop linguistic skills and artistic talents. The same situation is applied in private schools in which Qatari and Muslim students are taught Islamic studies without obliging non-Muslims to attend the classes while offering Islamic studies as an optional subject for non-Muslims, provided that the student's parents/guardians provide written consent.

64. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education strategy (2017-2020) aims to ensure the preservation of Qatari values and traditions while enhancing understanding and respect for other cultures through several goals, including ensuring the consolidation of Qatari values and culture as well as understanding other cultures among all students in public and private schools in different Academic stages (from kindergarten to high school, ensures the effective contribution of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to local and international events and activities, and raising the level of parents and community participation in developing the educational process.

65. In conclusion, the State of Qatar reiterates its thanks to the Special Rapporteur on the right to education and renews its commitment to cooperation within the framework of her mandate, in confirmation of the importance of cooperation with special procedures Mandate-holders and the Human Rights Council.

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