



# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General  
6 July 2015  
English  
Original: Arabic  
Arabic, English and Spanish only

## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### Fourteenth session

17 August-4 September 2015

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

### Consideration of reports submitted by parties to the Convention under article 35

## List of issues in relation to the initial report of Qatar

### Addendum

### Replies of Qatar to the list of issues\*

[Date received: 29 June 2015]

### Purpose (art. 1)

1. The State of Qatar ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under the terms of Decree No. 28 of 2006 in accordance with article 68 of its Permanent Constitution and the provisions of the Convention therefore have the force of law. The State has incorporated the provisions of the Convention in its legislation through the promulgation of independent enactments recognizing specific rights or the promulgation of provisions guaranteeing the rights of persons with disabilities within existing enactments. As a further step in the ongoing promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, governmental and non-governmental endeavours in the State have been intensified to put the legislation relating to persons with disabilities into actual practice in keeping with the Qatar National Vision 2030 which aims to transform Qatar into a progressive State capable of achieving sustainable development by 2030 and ensuring that future generations of its people continue to enjoy a decent life.

2. With regard to the concept of persons with disabilities, in Act No. 2 of 2004 concerning persons with special needs, the Qatari legislature defined a person with a disability as “any person totally or partially incapacitated on a permanent basis owing to any loss of sensory, physical, mental or intellectual capacities that limits the person’s potential for learning, habilitation or employment”. The said Act classifies disability in various categories on the basis of whether it is full or partial, sensory, physical, mental or intellectual. It also stipulates that the disability must be permanent or identified as being long-term, as opposed to inability or reduced capacity to perform normal activities for a limited or short-term period that has no lasting impact

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



on the affected person or on his relationship with the community. Far from being merely a matter of temporary physiological impairment, disability has a psychosocial and economic impact on the social order. Permanent disability renders the person incapable of learning, undergoing habilitation, working or performing any normal activity.

3. At its twelfth session held on 16 April 2015, the Council of Ministers approved a new bill of law on persons with disabilities, drafted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which adopted the human rights model of disability in accordance with article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. At its same session, the Council of Ministers approved a draft decision concerning the rights of persons with disabilities.

4. The Council of Ministers has approved other bills of law on the rights of persons with disabilities which were submitted to it and which clearly adopted the human rights model of disability as set forth in the Convention. The Council has also approved the formation of a national committee on persons with disabilities.

### **Definitions (art. 2)**

5. Article 2 of Act No. 2 of 2004, concerning persons with special needs, stipulates that persons with disabilities must enjoy an appropriate physical environment. Paragraph 59 (g) of Qatar's initial report refers to the establishment of priorities and rules for the accommodation provided by the competent authorities for persons with special needs in accordance with the provisions of article 10 of the said Act. The new bill of law on persons with disabilities explicitly recognizes the right of such persons to accommodation in which their movement and mobility is ensured in a safe and secure manner. The bill makes provision for measures to guarantee the enjoyment of this right and, to this end, the competent department in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will examine complaints concerning infringements of the provisions contained therein and will follow up on such complaints with the national bodies concerned. The new bill also prescribes penalties to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are respected.

### **General obligations (art. 4)**

6. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the new bill of law on persons with disabilities which was tabled by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs recognizes the right of such persons to form a committee, known as the "Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" to safeguard their interests and protect their rights by drawing up and ensuring the implementation of disability-related legislation and policies in consultation and coordination with another committee, the National Committee on the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities, for which provision is also made in the new bill and on which governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations concerned with persons with disabilities will be represented.

7. The State has encouraged the establishment of associations and institutions of public benefit for the purpose of safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities, monitoring their situation and providing them with appropriate services additional to those rendered by the governmental centres specialized in this field. The Qatari Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs was established in 1992 with the aim of rehabilitating such persons by providing them with the best possible health, psychosocial and cultural care. The Society supplies medical appliances, prostheses and assistive devices for all its members in accordance with their needs and the nature of their disability and, in collaboration with all the national ministries,

institutions and bodies concerned, helps to find employment for persons with special needs. It also formulates training, educational and self-learning plans and programmes for such persons, provides them with psychosocial, educational and vocational guidance and counselling and organizes numerous courses and workshops to train their families in ways to cope with children falling within this category.

8. The Society runs four centres for persons with disabilities: the Social and Cultural Centre which promotes the integration of persons with special needs into the community through social work, the development of friendly social and cultural relations among their centres and clubs and the organization of vocational training courses and workshops throughout the year for persons registered therewith and their families; the Learning Centre which provides numerous training services for persons with intellectual and multiple disabilities; the Boys' Rehabilitation Centre and the Girls' Rehabilitation Centre which provide comprehensive vocational and psychosocial rehabilitation services for both sexes.

9. The Shafallah Centre for Children with Special Needs offers therapeutic and educational services for persons with disabilities, without gender-based discrimination, and is seeking to ensure their optimal social integration by raising public awareness and providing support and counselling for their families. Its services are available to children and adults from birth to 27 years of age.

10. With a view to ensuring the formulation and implementation of legislation and policies relating to persons with disabilities, the Shafallah Centre for Children with Special Needs coordinates not only with the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, which operates under its umbrella, but also with all the entities providing services in this field and with representatives and parents or guardians of persons with disabilities in order to study issues raised and take appropriate decisions and make the requisite recommendations thereon. The Centre also holds symposiums and workshops to discuss those issues and formulate appropriate recommendations, including the establishment of mechanisms to implement its decisions and recommendations. These workshops are exemplified by the following:

- Training workshops on applied behaviour analysis, held in September 2014 and March 2015 for staff and families;
- The first conference on autism and applied behaviour analysis, held in April 2015;
- Participation in the 15th Forum of the Gulf Disability Society on "the quality of services provided for persons with disabilities", held in March 2015.

It is also noteworthy that specialized committees have been assigned to study specific issues and make recommendations or propose policies thereon, taking care to ensure that, during the formulation and implementation of legislation and policies, due respect is shown for the provisions of the international treaties and instruments to which the State of Qatar is a party.

11. With regard to education, the Supreme Council for Education is committed to the fundamental conceptual principles of "education for all" and "full integration" and is diligently playing its roles in the national and international contexts by applying the best international practices in this field.

12. Accordingly, educational opportunities are available for all categories of students, including those with disabilities, in accordance with the national strategy for the education and training sector which emphasizes the need to integrate students with disabilities in all the country's schools. The new measures taken to ensure that all levels of education are accessible to persons with disabilities include the preparation of a series of documents, policies, guidelines and support materials to make all

schools aware of their responsibilities in regard to students with learning difficulties or other disabilities and the need to overcome the obstacles preventing such students from acquiring all the education and skills that they deserve.

13. A centre for the assessment and counselling of students receiving additional support for learning has been established to ensure the highest standard of services and educational alternatives in this field and to meet the assessment, counselling and support needs of such students, their teachers and their parents or guardians.

14. With regard to consultation and engagement with a diverse range of persons with disabilities and the institutions responsible for their training and rehabilitation, it should be noted that the Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs handles cases involving the following types of disability:

1. Multiple;
2. Mental;
3. Motor;
4. Hearing;
5. Visual;
6. Autistic spectrum;
7. Down syndrome;
8. Multiple sclerosis.

Non-governmental associations of public benefit bring the results of their consultations to the attention of the competent legal, medical, educational or social authorities and the parents or guardians of persons with disabilities constitute an effective driving force in decision-making and in the formulation of policies and programmes to further the interests of their children.

15. The governing bodies of many of the institutions concerned with the welfare and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities include one or more members with disabilities, as in the case of:

1. The Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs;
2. The Qatar Social and Cultural Centre for the Deaf;
3. The Qatar Social and Cultural Centre for the Blind.

16. The independent schools in the State also have boards of trustees which oversee their school's policies, expenditure and services and issue recommendations and directives concerning students with the following disabilities who have been integrated therein:

1. Learning difficulties;
2. Slow learner;
3. Mild mental disorders;
4. Hearing and speech impairments;
5. Autism and Asperger syndromes;
6. Down syndrome;
7. Motor disabilities (hemiplegia, poliomyelitis).

## **Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)**

17. With regard to article 5 on the list of issues, we wish to draw attention to the following:

- Paragraph 61 of the initial report of the State of Qatar refers to part II of the State's Constitution, concerning the guiding principles of society, articles 18 and 19 of which embody the legal framework for the principle of equality and non-discrimination;
- Article 16 of Amiri Decree No. 29 of 2014, concerning the organizational structure of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, clearly defines the functions of the Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities and paragraph 5 thereof stipulates the need for the compilation and development of an integrated database on older persons and persons with disabilities.

18. The Statistics Authority in the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, which operates in coordination with all the entities concerned in the State, is responsible for the establishment of a national statistical system and formulation of the plans and programmes needed to regulate, conduct and oversee official economic, demographic, social and other statistical operations the results of which it publishes in various forms at regular intervals.

19. With regard to the steps taken to collect data disaggregated by age, sex, type of disability and ethnicity on persons with disabilities, it should be noted that the Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs keeps a record of all such cases, based on the early intervention programmes supervised by the Hamad Medical Corporation and primarily targeting children with auditory and visual impairments, cerebral palsy or growth disorders, and submits a statistical report thereon at the end of each month. Other health facilities also play a role through their referral of cases to the competent entities for the provision of rehabilitation and training services and through their examination and diagnosis of cases in which genetic disorders are found to be hereditary in families.

20. Citizens with disabilities are entitled to social security benefits after being examined by an official medical board and their families are therefore motivated to register them with the entities concerned so that they can receive those benefits. The registration process, which is a simple procedure that does not take more than 10 minutes, is conducted at governmental or non-governmental facilities by experienced sociologists, psychologists or experts in special education and does not take account of ethnicity, religion or confession since only the type of disability and the services needed by the persons concerned and their families are taken into consideration.

## **Women with disabilities (art. 6)**

21. Paragraphs 64-68 of Qatar's initial report referred to the rights accessible to women with disabilities and the role that the State is playing in this regard. The following should also be noted:

- Article 18 of Amiri Decree No. 29 of 2014, concerning the organizational structure of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, specified the functions of the Family Development Department which include, inter alia, the implementation of national strategies, plans and policies regarding families, women and children and the raising of social awareness of family-related social challenges and issues and ways to avert their repercussions;

- The Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is fulfilling its mandate by taking measures to develop and implement the programmes and services needed to ensure the welfare of persons with disabilities, and particularly women, and promote their empowerment in all fields through access to hotlines, shelters and victim support services, in coordination with the national entities concerned, including civil society institutions working in those fields. Moreover, the Qatari Criminal Code contains provisions that explicitly guarantee the legal protection needed by women in general and women with disabilities in particular;
- In order to ensure access to hotlines and victim support services, the State has established a community police department in the Ministry of the Interior to protect and maintain the structure and cohesion of communities, safeguard their customs and traditions and resolve problems that are not of a criminal nature;
- With regard to the protection of women and children, and particularly those with disabilities, against domestic or family violence, it should be noted that the State has established the Qatar Foundation for Social Rehabilitation which is active in this field and is applying the legislation concerning the protection of such women and children. The State has also established a shelter for the protection of female victims of violence which offers full board and lodging in addition to psychosocial and legal services. Furthermore, the Qatari legislature has promulgated numerous enactments and provisions to protect women and children from aggression and abuse;
- To ensure communication with and the provision of assistance for victims of violence who are persons with disabilities, the Ministry of the Interior makes arrangements for accredited sign language interpreters to be present when persons with hearing impediments wish to submit complaints or reports or are involved in cases or being questioned;
- Women with disabilities and autonomous women's rights organizations are being consulted insofar as the Advisory Council acquaints itself with public opinion through the various information media and by contacting civil society institutions which include women with disabilities among their members. Communication is also maintained in places frequented by persons with disabilities, such as schools, hospitals and private associations, and governmental institutions organize courses, workshops and lectures to make persons with disabilities more aware of new developments and hear their views and proposals thereon.

### **Children with disabilities (art. 7)**

22. Paragraphs 69-74 of Qatar's initial report referred to the State's role in improving the situation of children, and particularly those with disabilities. We wish to add the following information in this connection:

- Article 18 of Amiri Decree No. 29 of 2014, concerning the organizational structure of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, specified the functions of the Family Development Department which include, inter alia, the implementation of projects and programmes to develop the creative abilities of children and the younger generation in cultural, educational and recreational fields in collaboration with the governmental and non-governmental entities concerned, and also to raise social awareness of children's rights. The Department plays an important role in supporting and protecting children's rights in conformity with the above-mentioned Amiri Decree;

- A new bill of law on children's rights, which is currently being considered by the Council of Ministers, makes explicit provision for the rights of children with disabilities, including their right to be protected against anything that might harm their health or their physical, intellectual, psychosocial or spiritual development or impede their education, as well as their right to participate fully in all the social, educational, cultural and other aspects of public life;
  - The Kindergartens Regulatory Act No. 1 of 2014 was promulgated with a view to providing a full range of care services for children in an environment conducive to the development of their skills and talents in various fields through sound pedagogical practices, a proper healthy upbringing and enhancement of their linguistic and mental aptitudes.
23. Act No. 2 of 2004, concerning persons with special needs, made provision for numerous preventive measures in educational, health and other fields.
24. The institutions providing rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities ensure the latter's active involvement by:
- Consulting with them in a fruitful and positive manner in order to determine and cater for the needs of patients with motor, visual or auditory impairments;
  - Identifying the requirements of persons with mental disorders through consultation with their families, parents or guardians.

Each institution, in accordance with its objectives, identifies the problems and requirements of the persons with disabilities registered with it and endeavours to meet their needs in consultation with the relevant entities.

### **Awareness-raising (art. 8)**

25. Paragraphs 75-81 of Qatar's initial report made detailed reference to the steps taken by the State to launch and promote awareness-raising initiatives for the general public and persons with disabilities. In addition, article 6 of Amiri Decree No. 29 of 2014, concerning the organizational structure of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, designated the Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities as the body responsible for developing and implementing, in coordination with the governmental and non-governmental institutions concerned, the programmes and services needed to ensure the welfare of persons with disabilities and for raising public awareness of the rights of such persons.

26. In the educational field, the Supreme Education Council launches initiatives to promote awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities through a number of projects for which provision is made in the strategy for the education and training sector. It provides schools and parents or guardians with information on the application of the system for the full educational integration of students with disabilities, the additional support for learning that is available to them and the special arrangements and facilities to which they are entitled. The methods employed to raise awareness include:

- Formation of human rights and other student support groups;
- Designation of a Human Rights Day in schools;
- Organization of competitions in the field of human rights;
- Compilation of a number of handbooks on human rights, such as a guide to human rights education and guidelines for teachers. Human rights concepts and principles are also incorporated in the academic curricula and school textbooks

cover a number of relevant topics and include exercises such as “It is my right” and “I have rights”;

- Organization of a number of training courses and workshops on human rights;
- Student visits and tours;
- Informative lectures and forums;
- An operetta entitled “We sing to celebrate our rights”, which also addresses the rights of persons with disabilities, is currently being written in collaboration with the National Human Rights Committee.

27. The Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is also endeavouring, by means of workshops and television spots, to make the public, as well as persons with disabilities themselves, more aware of the latter’s rights, including their right to accessibility and the need to ensure their enjoyment of that right by taking the necessary measures to that end.

28. Within the context of public awareness-raising, during the last three years the Department has conducted an annual campaign to reduce the incidence of disability caused by traffic accidents. Learning centres for persons with disabilities, such as the Noor Institute, the Shafallah Centre and the Auditory Education School, as well as mainstream government schools (for integrated students), also run public awareness programmes, particularly for the parents or guardians of such persons, with a view to ensuring that students with disabilities receive the best services and care. These programmes take the form of family training courses, lectures and regular meetings, in addition to communication-building activities at school open days. These meetings and encounters make it easier to monitor students, assess their academic progress, discuss their difficulties, involve parents or guardians in treatment plans and advise them on appropriate ways to care for their children. A planning committee at the Noor Institute also publishes a periodic bulletin designed to raise awareness of the various types of disability.

29. For its part, the Shafallah Centre has organized five campaigns; one campaign in 2000 to raise awareness of Down syndrome and four autism awareness campaigns in 2005, 2006, 2009 and 2010. The policy of additional support for learning defines the role of parents or guardians, which entails being involved in and supporting their children’s education. Parents or guardians also furnish up-to-date information on their children’s evolving capacities in the light of the policy’s emphasis on engaging and working closely with them in their efforts to support their children’s education. Emphasis is also placed on the need to inform parents or guardians of their rights and to support them so that they can play their role in helping their children to learn, as well as the need for collaboration and ongoing contact between school learning support teams and parents or guardians and the need for parents or guardians of children with disabilities to participate in school governing bodies so that they can communicate their children’s needs. The importance of using the mass media for awareness-raising and guidance purposes is also highlighted.

30. Qatari television has continued to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy full and easy access to information by providing expert sign language interpretation for various programmes and news bulletins. In its daily and weekly programmes, it has also continued to support all the governmental campaigns by spotlighting activities relating to persons with disabilities, including social communication with them through educational and media institutions. The concern that it shows for persons with disabilities is also reflected in its children’s programmes insofar as it takes care to involve all children in such programmes and give them every opportunity to express their creativity and ideas as active members of Qatari society. Its religious programmes likewise focus on ways to interact with persons with disabilities and the



need for a tactful approach in this regard. Qatari radio also constantly strives to cover activities relating to the rights of persons with disabilities in its live broadcasts by inviting organizers of those activities to appear as guests, interviewing persons with disabilities and providing information on their rights.

31. A study conducted by the Al Jazeera channel on its own view of and role in regard to persons with disabilities found that most media reporting of public events and activities involving persons with disabilities was appropriate but failed to tackle issues of concern to such persons and likewise failed to allocate sufficient time for such persons to bring up those issues and raise awareness of the whole concept of disability and persons with disabilities. The aim of that study was to identify the potential role of media outlets in furthering the interests of persons with disabilities, with a focus on the vision and role of Al Jazeera in that domain, the manner in which it presented its news bulletin for deaf persons and the media's role in promoting wider use of sign language, taking that particular bulletin as a model to be emulated since Al Jazeera was the first private satellite channel to present a news bulletin in sign language. The study formulated a number of recommendations for the establishment of a closer relationship between the media and persons with disabilities in order to make the public more aware of the latter's situation.

32. The Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs is helping to raise awareness by:

- Publishing books, pamphlets and other informative material;
- Publishing information on its website;
- Organizing lectures, workshops and discussion groups to which parents and guardians, as well as persons working in the institutions concerned, are invited;
- Providing information on compact discs;
- Publishing dictionaries and lexicons;
- Presenting its experiences and studies at conferences in order to make the Society and its various rehabilitation services more widely known;
- Participating in radio and television programmes;
- Publicizing the Society's services, programmes and activities in daily newspapers;
- Appointing a media coordinator to plan and implement strategies to raise awareness of the Society's services, activities and programmes.

33. With regard to the steps taken to launch and promote public awareness-raising initiatives, one of the fundamental components of the National Health Strategy is sustainable care of older persons and persons with disabilities. This is also one of the principal objectives of the Qatar National Vision 2030, which focuses on the right of persons with disabilities to effective empowerment as an important group in their local community. The ability of the National Health Strategy to achieve the objectives of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities depends on the extent to which the awareness-raising campaign, constituting the basis for future plans to provide primary and secondary care in collaboration with all the national governmental and non-governmental entities concerned, succeeds in convincing all the parties of the need to participate fully in the formulation of a clearly defined, carefully laid out, well-structured and attractively presented framework as a solid foundation for all future plans and projects to ensure the integration and empowerment of persons with disabilities within their local communities.

34. With regard to employers:

1. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is continuing to provide vocational training and education for persons with various disabilities at the functional rehabilitation centre even though the operation thereof has recently been transferred to the Ministry of Administrative Development which is endeavouring to organize specialized vocational education workshops for persons with disabilities. The training is conducted, in accordance with the technical and vocational education and training system, on a two-track basis:

- Training organized through the personnel managers of institutions;
- Training organized through employers whose workforce includes persons with disabilities.

2. The Supreme Council for Health has opened specialized clinics, operating seven days a week, to assess the motor, intellectual and psychosocial integration capacities of persons with disabilities wishing to enter the labour market, after which a comprehensive report is submitted on their capabilities and the specifications of the working environment most appropriate to their particular disabilities.

3. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Administrative Development and the Supreme Council for Health have jointly proposed the establishment of a mechanism to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the light of the specifications most appropriate to their individual circumstances and subject to the training of job applicants with disabilities on the basis of the rehabilitation report prepared by the Supreme Council for Health on their motor, intellectual and psychosocial integration capacities, an appraisal of the proposed working environment and any modifications that need to be made thereto, and the training of personnel who would be working with the job applicant.

4. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Supreme Council for Health, has organized awareness-raising workshops for employers with a view to making them more familiar with the manner in which job applicants with disabilities should be treated.

### **Accessibility (art. 9)**

35. Paragraphs 82-88 of Qatar's initial report referred to accessibility and the role that the State is playing in enabling persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life.

36. With regard to access to communications, the Qatar Assistive Technology Centre, which is a non-profit institution, regards itself as having an obligation to introduce persons with disabilities to information and communication technologies as a means to increase their potential and enhance their capacities. Visitors to the Centre can test a wide range of assistive technological devices that provide them with access to the world of technology and communications. The Centre's activities include the organization of training courses for persons with disabilities, their parents or guardians and their care providers, as well as individual assessment sessions to determine the needs of persons with disabilities and the role that assistive technology could play in ensuring their real and effective social integration. The Centre, which is working with companies producing assistive technological devices with a view to the development of Arabic-language applications, has already developed a number of Arabic-language devices and programmes for use by persons with disabilities.

## **Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)**

37. The Qatari legislature has promulgated various enactments setting out the criteria and rules pertaining to legal capacity. Article 189 of the Family Code (Act No. 22 of 2006) stipulates that: “Every person who attains majority by reaching the age of 18 years and whose legal competence has not been restricted shall enjoy full legal capacity.” The Qatari legislature has also made provision for a mechanism to enable persons with disabilities to manage their assets and the requisite measures have been taken to guarantee this right. Article 34 of the Guardianship (Assets of Minors) Act No. 40 of 2004 stipulates that: “Persons under guardianship for reasons of irresponsibility or incompetence may take over the management of all or part of their assets with the permission of a judge and after the Authority has been consulted. In such an event, the provisions concerning minors authorized to manage their own assets shall apply to them.” The aforesaid Guardianship (Assets of Minors) Act also includes persons with disabilities among the categories of minors whose guardians act on their behalf in concluding legal transactions and taking care of their financial affairs, subject to the provisions of article 9 thereof, which stipulates that: “No guardian may perform any of the following transactions without the permission of a judge:

1. Dispose of landed property;
2. Lend or borrow a minor’s assets;
3. Lease a minor’s property for a period of more than one year or extending to one year after the minor has attained majority;
4. Accept or refuse a gift or bequest to a minor that entails specific obligations;
5. Mortgage or gift a minor’s assets;
6. Continue to run a business that has reverted to the minor.

The judge may grant permission for the above transactions after consulting the Authority.”

Article 41 of the same Act further stipulates that: “The judge may permit the chosen guardian to sell a minor’s property if it is ascertained that:

1. The sale is necessary or in the minor’s interest;
2. The property in question is more suitable for sale than another property;
3. The current sale price is the highest attainable;

Such permission may be given by the judge after he has consulted the Authority.”

38. With regard to physical incapacity, article 127 of the Civil Code (Act No. 22 of 2004) stipulates that: “If anyone has a severe physical impairment that makes it difficult for him to understand contractual conditions or to express his wishes, particularly if he is deaf or mute, blind and deaf or blind and mute, the court may appoint a person to provide him with legal support and assist him in transactions if it believes such assistance to be in his interest.” Under article 128 of the Code: “Any transaction for which legal assistance has been prescribed shall be liable to invalidation if concluded without that assistance by the person concerned after the decision relating to such assistance has been placed on record unless the court has authorized him to conclude the transaction on his own.” Under article 129: “If, due to his physical or pathological condition, a person is unable to conclude a transaction, even with assistance, or if he refrains from doing so, the court may authorize the

person providing legal support to conclude the transaction alone, on his behalf, where failure to do so would jeopardize his interests.”

39. Article 10 of the Social Insurance Act No. 38 of 1995 stipulates that: “Benefits shall be payable from the first day of the month following the decision approving the application therefor. If there are valid reasons to believe that the recipient is squandering his benefit, the Department may decide to pay it to a member of his family or to a trustworthy person who shall assume responsibility for spending it for the benefit of the person entitled thereto.” Article 16 of the Act further stipulates that: “No benefit may be made over to others or sequestered.” On the basis of those two provisions, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, acting in coordination with the General Authority for Minors’ Affairs, has made the necessary arrangements for the establishment of a social security benefit mechanism to ensure that such funds are accessible only to the persons entitled thereto, without any intermediary and without documentary requirements that place additional burdens on them or prevent their full legal enjoyment of this right.

### **Access to justice (art. 13)**

40. Under the provisions of article 72 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in cases involving parties or witnesses who do not understand Arabic, the public prosecutor must hear their statements through an interpreter after the latter has sworn under oath to perform his task in a correct and trustworthy manner. Hence, when questioning deaf or mute persons as suspects, witnesses or victims, the public prosecutor has an obligation to call upon the services of a sign language interpreter.

41. The Qatari legislature has also provided special guarantees for accused persons with mental disabilities insofar as articles 209, 210 and 212 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulate that such persons may not be subjected to criminal prosecution or trial.

42. Persons with mental disabilities are absolved of criminal responsibility under article 54 of the Criminal Code, which explicitly states that they cannot be held criminally liable for offences that they commit. Article 355 of the Code of Criminal Procedure addresses the situation of a person sentenced to a custodial penalty who is subsequently found to be suffering from a mental disability by stipulating that enforcement of the sentence must be deferred until he has recovered, that he must be placed in a treatment facility and that the period spent in the facility must be deducted from his sentence. In addition, article 283 of the Code of Civil Procedure stipulates that: “A person who is incapable of speech may give testimony if he is able to make himself understood in writing or through sign language.”

43. As part of its constant efforts to develop its activities in a manner consistent with the needs of persons with disabilities, the Public Prosecution Department has prepared Braille versions of the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure and presented them to the Qatar Association for the Blind so that they can be consulted by blind persons.

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

- A separate investigation room is set aside for persons with disabilities in order to show regard for their feelings, facilitate the proceedings conducted against them and complete the said proceedings as quickly as possible;
- Police officers are under standing orders to treat criminal proceedings involving persons with disabilities as confidential;

- If a report is received from a person with a disability who is unable to travel to the police station, officers pay a visit to the person in order to conduct the requisite legal formalities;
- The services of a sign language expert are called upon whenever needed;
- An appropriately equipped vehicle is assigned to transport persons with disabilities to and from the Public Prosecution Department, the court or any other body before which they are required to appear by law;
- Designated parking spaces are reserved for vehicles used by persons with disabilities and assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, are made available to facilitate their mobility;
- Police stations, as well as the Public Prosecution Department, have special entrances and exits to make it easier for persons with motor disabilities to enter and leave their premises;
- Specially adapted areas in courtrooms are designated for persons with disabilities.

### **Liberty and security of the person (art. 14)**

45. Under article 36 of the Constitution, personal liberty is guaranteed and no one may be arrested, detained, searched, compelled to reside at a given location or restricted in his freedom of movement except in accordance with the law.

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

47. As a guarantee of these rights and freedoms, article 146 of the Constitution stipulates that: “Provisions concerning public rights and freedoms shall not be subject to amendment except for the purpose of incorporating therein further rights and safeguards for the benefit of citizens.”

48. With regard to measures taken to improve the situation of persons with disabilities, article 3 of Act No. 2 of 2004, concerning persons with special needs, requires:

- Provision of preventive and therapeutic medical, health and psychological services, as well as special medical reports, free of charge for such persons and their dependants who are not covered by any other health insurance scheme;
- Access by persons with special needs to employment opportunities compatible with their capabilities and to rehabilitation in competent institutions;
- Raising of public awareness concerning the rights of persons with special needs, and endeavours to ensure that they are provided with the necessary assistance and that they are well treated and socially integrated;
- Implementation of appropriate educational, rehabilitative and special pedagogical programmes, and training of staff qualified to work with persons with special needs;

- Provision of opportunities and encouragement for them to engage in sports and leisure activities in such a way as to meet their needs and develop their capacities;
- Provision of facilities for their benefit in the areas of welfare, care, support, vocational training and family-related, technical, sports and leisure services.

49. It should be noted that, in the State of Qatar, there is no impairment-based detention of children or adults with disabilities. The prescribed procedures are as follows:

1. The utmost importance is accorded to treatment, namely the need to save the patient's life, restore him to health or alleviate his suffering, and decisions in this regard are taken by three consultants licensed by the Supreme Council for Health.
2. Treatment requires the free and informed consent of the patient and, if the latter is incapacitated, such consent must be given by his legal guardian appointed by the sharia court;
3. Every government hospital has a professional ethics committee which monitors the treatment of all patients and ensures that decisions thereon are taken freely;
4. There is a sustainable care (home care) programme under which children and adults with disabilities can receive medical assistance or care in their homes where they are visited on a fortnightly basis by a physician and a qualified medical team. If the physician has reason to suspect that the patient is being subjected to neglect or ill-treatment, he has the right to report this to the competent authorities so that they can take the necessary action including, if necessary, the patient's admission to hospital.

### **Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 15) and protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)**

50. Article 36 of the Qatari Constitution guarantees the right to freedom from subjection to torture or degrading treatment. In fact, torture constitutes a criminal offence since that article stipulates that: "Personal liberty is guaranteed. No one may be arrested, detained, searched, compelled to reside at a given location or restricted in his freedom of residence or movement except in accordance with the law. No one shall be subjected to torture or degrading treatment and torture shall be deemed to constitute a legally punishable offence."

51. The protection afforded by article 36 of the Constitution is further strengthened by the detailed provisions of the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure which prohibit and criminalize torture. In this connection, it is noteworthy that, in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee against Torture concerning adoption of a definition of torture consistent with article 1 of the Convention against Torture, Act No. 8 of 2010 amended various provisions of the Criminal Code promulgated under Act No. 11 of 2004.

52. The Code of Criminal Procedure contains a number of provisions prohibiting torture. In this connection, reference can be made to article 40, which stipulates that: "No one may be arrested or detained except by order of the competent authorities and under the conditions prescribed by law. Such persons shall be treated in a manner conducive to the preservation of their human dignity and shall not be subjected to

physical or mental harm. The criminal investigation officer shall inform the suspect of his right to remain silent and to contact any persons whom he might wish to notify”.

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

54. Articles 2 and 3 of Act No. 2 of 2004, concerning persons with special needs, also provide for access to medical services, support, aid and other facilities and rights. In this regard, it should be noted that a Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities, adopted by Hamad Medical Corporation, has been published and distributed in all hospital wards and health centres. That Charter guarantees numerous non-discriminatory rights and, under article 1 thereof, patients are entitled “to access health-care services irrespective of ethnicity, religion, country of origin, belief, values, language, age or disability”. The rights guaranteed by the Charter include: the right to health care; the right of access to appropriate care; the right to accept or refuse any medication; the patient’s right to appoint a person to take decisions concerning his care and treatment in the event of the patient being unable to take such decisions himself; the right to privacy and confidentiality; and the right to safety and security. With regard to medical research, the rights guaranteed in the Charter include:

- The right to be provided with information concerning medical treatment being used for research purposes;
- The right of prior consent to participation in the conduct of such research and the right to refuse participation in the conduct of research activities, with a guarantee that such refusal would not have a negative impact on the patient’s medical care.

55. With regard to effective protection of persons with disabilities against medical or scientific experimentation conducted without their free and informed consent, the above measures are being applied at the medical research centre run by Hamad Medical Corporation in partnership with the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, which supervises medical, therapeutic and laboratory experimentation. In the case of persons with mental disorders and minors, written consent is required (after explanations and clarifications have been provided) from the person concerned, or from his family or representative, in accordance with the regulations governing the country’s treatment centres, before the person can take part in research involving any medical examination, laboratory testing, radiography, treatment or surgical intervention. A person with a disability has the right, which may also be exercised on his behalf by his representative, to decline or refuse to participate in such research from the outset. In such a case, he continues to receive treatment in the same way as other persons being treated in the facility, without distinction or discrimination.

56. A section of the Criminal Code (Act No. 11 of 2004) is devoted to abortion, which carries the penalties for an act harmful to human life and the integrity of the person, these being unassailable and inviolable. Article 315 of the Code stipulates that: “Anyone who intentionally beats or otherwise assaults a woman while being aware that she is pregnant shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to 10 years if the assault results in her miscarriage.” Article 316 further stipulates that: “Anyone who wilfully performs an abortion on a pregnant woman by administering medication to her or using other means to induce a miscarriage shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to seven years. The penalty shall be imprisonment for a term of up to 10 years if the offence is committed without the woman’s consent or if the person performing the abortion is a doctor, pharmacist or midwife or a medical or pharmaceutical assistant.” Under article 317: “A woman who consents, without medical grounds therefor, to the administration of medication or the use of other means to induce a miscarriage shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of up to three

years if a miscarriage results therefrom.” These articles criminalize all forms of abortion, making no distinction between one woman and another.

### **Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art. 16)**

57. The State has set up hotlines to a number of institutions providing services for persons with disabilities, including institutions operating under the umbrella of the Qatar Foundation for Social Work such as the Shafallah Centre, the Qatar Foundation for Protection and Social Rehabilitation and the Family Counselling Centre. These hotlines enable those institutions to receive information concerning problems faced by persons with disabilities or their relatives and, consequently, to provide them with the requisite support and assistance and to receive, follow up and investigate complaints in order to put an end to any abuses to which persons with disabilities might be subjected. In addition to a hotline, some institutions also have support groups in which parents and guardians participate and provide support and assistance by recounting their own experiences in a secure environment in the presence of sociologists and psychologists who help to facilitate the process of providing support.

58. The Shafallah Centre has also established procedures for the investigation of cases of abuse or neglect so that action can be taken to prevent their recurrence and, consequently, protect persons with disabilities against any form of violence or abuse.

### **Liberty of movement and nationality (art. 18)**

59. In keeping with the deep concern that it feels for older persons and persons with special needs, the State has established a section for these categories in the Directorate General of Passports, Borders and Expatriate Affairs. The section is responsible for, inter alia, overseeing the services provided for them, catering for all aspects of their welfare, including the rapid processing of their documents, and ensuring that they are treated fairly without discrimination between citizens and foreign residents.

60. In conformity with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the section liaises and coordinates with the Search and Follow-Up Department and also with correctional and penal institutions in order to monitor the services provided for persons with disabilities and ensure that such persons are treated in accordance with the following procedures prescribed for their detention or deportation:

- The Search and Follow-Up Department handles their cases, showing due regard for the precepts of our Islamic religion, the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and no person with a disability is held in a deportation centre;
- When a decision is taken to deport a person with a disability, the person’s sponsor is requested to vouch for him until the procedures for his deportation have been completed. The person concerned is contacted by telephone without being detained and, if his presence is required, the Department has the facilities needed to ensure his mobility without difficulty (wheelchairs, ramps, special parking places and lifts);
- Persons with disabilities are transported to the airport from their places of residence or workplaces in a special vehicle, not with other detainees. They are received in a lounge reserved for persons with disabilities and their travel formalities are completed by staff trained to deal with this category of passengers;



- Any such persons who fall ill are referred to a medical practitioner for treatment until their condition stabilizes.
61. With regard to the provision of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, the Search and Follow-up Department takes care to ensure:
- Provision of the requisite social care for these categories in conformity with the relevant human rights standards;
  - Full-time assignment of a staff member to monitor the situation of persons with disabilities who are detained or awaiting deportation, in collaboration with the Department for Older Persons and Persons with Special Needs;
  - Ongoing assessment and development of the services provided for persons with disabilities;
  - Compatibility of the premises with the capacities of persons with disabilities.

### **Living independently and being included in the community (art. 19)**

62. The State's initial report referred to Council of Ministers Decision No. 46 of 2014 specifying the benefits payable to the categories designated in Act No. 38 of 1995 concerning social security and the rules governing entitlement thereto. Under the terms of article 4 of the said Decision, persons with disabilities, persons incapacitated for work and older persons are entitled to an allowance to enable them to employ someone to provide them with personal care and assistance.

63. Article 3 of the Social Security Act, as amended by Legislative Decree No. 23 of 2007, stipulates that persons falling within the following categories are entitled to benefits under the provisions of the Act:

- Widows;
- Divorcees;
- Needy families;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Orphans and persons of similar status.

Article 5 further stipulates that beneficiaries without an income from any other source are entitled to the full benefit.

64. The State provides financial support and the requisite facilities to assist persons with disabilities and the Shafallah Centre also runs education and rehabilitation programmes to enable such persons to enjoy the maximum degree of autonomy consistent with their capacities and potential and to participate in various social activities with the help of monitors and specialists.

65. In addition to the above, the State ensures that public and private service facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities and equipped with wheelchairs and the assistive electronic, communication and other devices needed to enable them to participate more fully in social life.

66. Through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the State also pays a personal assistance or companion's allowance to some persons with disabilities whose entitlement thereto is established by a medical certificate and independent schools provide a teaching assistant for students with disabilities who, having been integrated in the education system, require additional support for learning.

**Personal mobility (art. 20)**

67. Article 2 of Act No. 2 of 2004, concerning persons with special needs, stipulates that: “In addition to the rights that they enjoy under the provisions of other legislative enactments, persons with special needs shall enjoy ... access to the tools, devices, means of transport and equipment needed to facilitate their learning, rehabilitation, mobility and travel”. Spaces reserved for persons with disabilities have been designated and marked in all public parking areas in markets and commercial centres and at government offices.

68. The Supreme Council for Information and Communication Technology has established an Assistive Technology Centre to help persons with disabilities by assessing their needs, providing them with training and sources of information and devising appropriate solutions to enable them to benefit from information technology and digital access.

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

70. The Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs has championed the “barrier-free city” project, the purpose of which is to ensure that accessible entrances and exits are provided for persons with motor disabilities in private and public areas, including hospitals, markets, government premises and hotels, along with special parking spaces designated for persons with disabilities in cooperation with the Traffic Department of the Ministry of the Interior. A further objective is to verify that building permits are in compliance with the requirements pertaining to accessibility, the availability of specially equipped hotel rooms and the installation of lifts suitable for use by persons with disabilities. The project is also seeking to ensure the availability of appropriately equipped taxis and a facility in which vehicles can be adapted for use by persons with disabilities.

**Respect for privacy (art. 22)**

71. With regard to respect for privacy, reference can be made to paragraphs 159 and 160 of the State’s initial report.

72. All information relating to persons with disabilities that is recorded on the premises of service providers is treated as confidential and no one is allowed access thereto unless such access is warranted by the nature of his work. Moreover, participation by persons with disabilities, and particularly mental disabilities, in radiographic or other processes for research or study purposes requires the written consent of their parents or guardians. Consequently, access to such confidential information is restricted to individuals or bodies working directly with persons with disabilities. This is explicitly stipulated in the regulations applied at the Shafallah Centre under which all its personnel have an obligation to maintain the confidentiality of information relating to children with disabilities.

73. With regard to access to confidential information on persons with disabilities recorded by the Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs:

- Access to information relating to this category is granted to specialists and physicians associated with institutions. However, such institutions are provided

only with figures, statistics and results and are not allowed access to information concerning pathological or family history;

- Data on persons with disabilities is treated as confidential and kept in a safe place;
- Parents or guardians are entitled to receive a report on the condition of their child or ward, if they so request, subject to verification of their status by the departmental head or the executive director of the institution.

### **Respect for home and the family (art. 23)**

74. In this regard, reference can be made to paragraphs 161-164 of the initial report. It should also be noted that the first two paragraphs of article 18 of Amiri Decision No. 29 of 2014, concerning the administrative structure of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, define the following functions of the Family Development Department:

1. Implementation of national strategies, plans and policies relating to the family, women and children;
2. Raising of public awareness concerning social and family issues and challenges, their impact and ways to address them.

75. With regard to the protection of persons with disabilities against discrimination on the basis of genetic or other impairment in relation to marriage and other family rights, persons with disabilities have the same constitutional right as other persons to equality and protection against all forms of discrimination in any aspect of life. As far as health is concerned, this equality is illustrated by the following:

1. Health insurance coverage for persons with disabilities in Qatar is based on recognition of the principle of the provision of treatment free of charge. If this is denied to them, the persons concerned can request the official authorities to ensure respect for their right to free treatment and medication. They can also apply to the competent court for enforcement of their right thereto;
2. Persons with physical disabilities are not subjected to any form of restriction of their right to marry, divorce or appear before the courts. However, persons with severe mental disorders who have been declared legally incompetent and placed under guardianship by a court order are unable to engage in contractual transactions or marry of their own accord. Such matters are decided on the basis of a full medical report from the Medical Commission and, in this respect, they remain subject to the curatorship of their guardian who exercises their rights under judicial supervision.

76. The Medical Commission, which was established under the umbrella of the Supreme Council for Health by a ministerial decision, consists of a number of medical consultants who examine all cases involving the medical status and social and family life (marriage) of persons with disabilities and issue decisions thereon. With regard to sexual and reproductive health:

1. The competent public health department in the Supreme Council for Health, as well as the Hamad Medical Corporation and the Primary Health Care Corporation, run programmes in the media to raise public awareness concerning reproductive health;
2. The maternal and child primary health care programme constituted the basis for a series of public forums designed to raise the awareness of mothers and young women with disabilities concerning the concepts of reproductive health, self-care and the stages of child growth and development at maternal and

child primary health care clinics. The programmes being implemented at the early intervention clinics run by the Hamad Medical Corporation have been among the most successful in ensuring early intervention and appropriate treatment and have helped many mothers and young women with disabilities;

3. The purpose of the prenuptial examination programme, which attracts many persons with disabilities, is to conduct examinations, raise awareness and prescribe treatment to minimize complications;

4. In this connection, awareness-raising campaigns are conducted for the benefit of persons with disabilities, and particularly those who are blind or deaf, and information on sexual and reproductive health is circulated to schools for the deaf, the Noor Institute and associations and their branches working in disability-related fields;

5. The Community Health Department is running numerous programmes to disseminate information concerning sexual and reproductive health;

6. The second part of the Arabic sign language dictionary for the deaf was published at Doha in 2007.

### **Education (art. 24)**

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

78. The measures that have been taken in this regard include:

- Integration of numerous students with disabilities into mainstream education;
- Opening of schools and centres for students with disabilities;
- Ratification of the recommendations of the World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000, preparation of the national “education for all” plan comprising the six goals adopted at Dakar, and presentation of a mid-decade report evaluating the progress made in achieving the indicators outlined in the plan;
- Creation of an appropriate school environment and facilities for persons with disabilities;
- Elaboration of a policy on additional support for learning for students with disabilities or learning difficulties;
- Provision of equitable education opportunities for all, which has been corroborated by the enrolment rates;
- Facilitation of the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, orientation and mobility skills, as well as facilitation of peer support and mentoring;
- Facilitation of the learning of sign language and promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;

- Provision of education for blind or deaf persons and persons with intellectual disabilities or autism, and particularly children, in the most appropriate language and mode and means of communication and in environments conducive to the highest possible degree of academic and social development.

79. With regard to new measures that are being implemented for the inclusive education of persons with disabilities at all levels of learning in the State, the Qatar Centre for Autism and Special Needs, which operates under the supervision of the Supreme Council for Education, is applying the most modern international and Islamic scientific methods to highlight the Qatari identity and the personal and practical skills of persons with disabilities in order to ensure their social reintegration, promote their self-reliance and prepare the way for them to become productive members of their family and community. This specialized centre, which is the first to offer integrated rehabilitation services for children and other persons with autism and special needs, employs staff highly qualified in the teaching, pedagogical and psychological aspects of such social work.

80. The centre's principal functions include:

- Early detection of various disabilities by a specialized and integrated team which conducts diagnostic tests in view of the importance of early diagnosis for the child's future;
- Application of the most modern early intervention techniques in a manner consistent with the capacities of each child;
- Development of a sound cognitive base to enable children and other persons with special needs to interact with their surrounding environment in a proper and effective manner;
- Treatment of behavioural and psychosocial difficulties through the provision of an integrated and adapted teaching environment to enable children and other patients to discover the full extent of their capacities and enhance their future educational potential;
- Discovery of strong points and helping autistic children and persons with special needs to become self-reliant by benefiting from future employment opportunities;
- Provision of pedagogical and psychological services to overcome obstacles, and particularly those impeding communication and self-reliance;
- Preparation for educational integration in schools on completion of the stages of their psychosocial rehabilitation;
- Public awareness-raising with a view to changing social attitudes towards persons with autism or special needs, and provision of guidance and counselling to help parents or guardians to understand the nature of such disabilities and the best ways to handle their children and cater for their needs.

## **Health (art. 25)**

81. With regard to legislative measures taken to ensure that any health treatment of persons with disabilities is administered with their free and informed consent, it should be noted that article 1 of the Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities, adopted by the Hamad Medical Corporation, recognizes the patient's right "to access health-care services, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, country of origin, belief, values, language, age or disability". Accordingly, persons with disabilities enjoy all the rights specified in the Charter in the same way as other patients. When they

present themselves spontaneously for treatment at a hospital, such persons, including those with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, sign the form acknowledging their free and informed consent after its content has been explained to them. Their legal guardian is also entitled to countersign the form after a similar explanation. The form is drawn up by the treating physician in accordance with the rules concerning consent that are applied in each hospital. Persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities are not subject to any special regulations concerning their discharge from hospital, which is obligatory on completion of the treatment or if requested in writing by the patient or his legal guardian. A guardian or third party can take decisions relating to health care on behalf of patients with disabilities in the following cases:

1. Severe cases in which consent cannot be obtained from the patient himself;
2. Urgent and critical cases requiring emergency treatment;
3. Cases in which the medical condition of a patient with a disability poses a threat to his safety or the safety of others.

Such cases necessitate a medical report from the treating physician specifying the disability, its severity and the extent of its impact on the patient's intellectual and mental capacities.

82. With regard to the training of health professionals in ways to communicate with persons with disabilities:

1. The ongoing medical training programme in government hospitals comprises compulsory courses for all health professionals on the proper way to treat persons with disabilities as well as the rights to which such persons are entitled, including the right to free and informed consent which must be given through signature of the relevant form;
2. There are medical rehabilitation units operating round the clock which draw up comprehensive treatment plans for persons with disabilities in consultation with the persons concerned and their families in order to ensure that the patients and their families cooperate with the health professionals supervising the treatment;
3. Non-governmental associations and organizations hold numerous workshops that provide training in the skills and techniques needed to work with persons with disabilities.

### **Habilitation and rehabilitation (art. 26)**

83. In this connection, reference can be made to paragraphs 197 and 198 of the initial report. It should also be noted that, in accordance with article 16, paragraph 2, of the above-mentioned Amiri Decree No. 29 of 2014, the functions of the Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities include "development and implementation of the programmes and services needed to ensure the welfare and rehabilitation of older persons and persons with disabilities in collaboration with the governmental institutions concerned".

84. The Supreme Education Council and a number of other bodies in the country conduct habilitation and rehabilitation operations in which persons with disabilities have access to all the requisite services, support and specialized skills.

85. The Qatar Foundation for Voluntary Work provides pedagogical and habilitation services for persons with disabilities at the Shafallah Centre in order to provide them with the high-quality training needed to attain the maximum degree of autonomy. Some persons with disabilities also receive such services while studying with their

peers in private or public schools if their capacities and potential enable them to benefit from the academic syllabuses in those schools.

86. The Shafallah Centre applies the most modern techniques to help them to develop their capacities and potential so that they can integrate in social life and, consequently, in their community. The Centre also provides rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities who need such assistance to facilitate their autonomy and psychosocial adaptation. These services, which are provided in accordance with the respective needs of persons with disabilities, include physiotherapy as well as functional, speech and language therapy.

87. In addition, the Centre organizes therapy sessions for persons with disabilities in which their families can participate. These sessions, which are based on methods of applied behaviour analysis, help them to acquire new skills or recover those, such as communication and social interaction skills, that some of them might have lost due to the nature of their disability.

88. The Centre's functional rehabilitation department offers vocational rehabilitation programmes for persons who, as a result of various disabling accidents, are no longer able to practise their previous occupations. It also offers programmes for the habilitation of persons with mental disorders or autism whose capacities are sufficient to enable them to find suitable employment.

89. Other habilitation programmes for persons with disabilities have been designed in a manner consistent with their capacities and potential for employment in appropriate environments. By way of example, there are production lines on which a number of graduates from the Shafallah Centre are employed under the terms of an agreement concluded between the Centre and the national airline, Qatar Airways.

90. In accordance with their statutory objectives, Hamad Medical Corporation and Rumailah Hospital provide medical habilitation services and assistive medical devices for persons with disabilities. The Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs also provides psychosocial habilitation, training and educational services for its members, as well as assistive medical devices and financial support for those entitled thereto. These institutions cooperate in the provision of habilitation services by referring cases requiring medical, sports or psychosocial habilitation to either of the other two if such services are not available in house. The State also meets the cost of treatment abroad for certain cases requiring care that is not available within the country.

### **Work and employment (art. 27)**

91. With regard to article 27 on the list of issues, note should be taken of the new bill of law on persons with disabilities and the draft decision of the Council of Ministers concerning the rights of persons with disabilities. The new bill of law makes provision for the allocation of a minimum of 2 per cent of civil service posts at all grades to persons with disabilities and, in addition, stipulates that such persons must not be denied any of the rights or privileges normally enjoyed by employees of the agencies in which they are working.

### **Adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28)**

92. With regard to this issue, reference can be made to the information contained in the initial report, to which the following can be added:

- Article 109 of Act No. 14 of 2014 promulgating the Labour Code stipulates that: “Any worker who suffers an occupational injury shall be entitled to receive treatment appropriate to his case at the employer’s expense if so decided by the competent medical authority. The worker shall be paid his full wage throughout the duration of the treatment up to a maximum period of six months. If the duration of the treatment exceed six months, the worker shall be paid half his full wage until he recovers or is found to be permanently incapacitated.”
- Under article 110 of the same Act: “Any worker who suffers an occupational injury that results in total permanent or temporary incapacity shall be entitled to compensation”.

93. Qatari legislation guarantees all the services needed to ensure an adequate standard of living for citizens and foreign residents alike and, in accordance with the Social Security Act No. 38 of 1995, persons with disabilities fall within the categories entitled to benefits.

94. The general conditions and requirements that persons with disabilities must meet in order to benefit from the housing scheme are laid down in the Housing Act No. 2 of 2007 and Council of Ministers Decision No. 18 of 2007 concerning priorities and rules governing access to the housing scheme by needy persons.

95. The functions of the Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities include the proposal and implementation of national strategies, plans and policies relating to older persons and persons with disabilities, development and implementation of the programmes and services needed to ensure the welfare and habilitation of such persons in collaboration with the governmental and non-governmental entities concerned, raising public awareness of their rights, implementation of training programmes for persons working with them in collaboration with the governmental and non-governmental entities concerned, organization of courses, conferences and workshops to discuss issues of concern to older persons and persons with disabilities, and compilation and development of an integrated database on such persons.

96. The State provides social security for persons entitled thereto through the Qatar Foundation for Protection and Social Rehabilitation. It makes various rehabilitation services available to citizens and foreign residents with disabilities and issues the latter with valid residence permits through the Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs. The Ministry of the Interior’s Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities also provides numerous services for persons applying to the Directorate of Passports.

### **Participation in political and public life (art. 29)**

97. In this connection, we wish to point out that there is no provision in the electoral law under which persons with visual or motor disabilities could be prevented from participating in elections. This is in conformity with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, under articles 5 and 9 of which all persons are recognized as being equal before the law without any discrimination on the basis of disability and are entitled to participate fully in all aspects of life.

98. We also wish to point out that, under the Qatari Constitution, all citizens have a guaranteed right to vote and be elected and enjoy freedom of assembly, freedom of opinion and scientific research and freedom of the press, printing and publication. These rights are guaranteed in articles 42, 44 and 45 of the Constitution which stipulate, respectively, that the State shall guarantee the right of citizens to vote and stand for election in accordance with the law; that the right of assembly shall be



guaranteed to citizens in accordance with the provisions of the law; and that freedom of association shall be guaranteed in accordance with the rules and conditions prescribed by law. Article 47 of the Constitution further stipulates that freedom of opinion and scientific research shall be guaranteed under the terms and conditions prescribed by law and article 48 guarantees freedom of the press, printing and publication in accordance with the law.

99. Article 2 of Act No. 2 of 2004, concerning persons with special needs, specifies the rights of persons with disabilities, including their political rights, and the Act confirms that these constitutional rights apply to persons with disabilities in their capacity as Qatari citizens. Under paragraph 9 of the said article, persons with disabilities have the right “to participate in decision-making on matters of concern to them”. With regard to political rights, Decree No. 17 of 1998 regulating Central Municipal Council elections guarantees to persons with disabilities the same right to vote and stand for election as other persons and article 20 thereof stipulates that a voter who is unable to mark the ballot paper may communicate his choice orally in a voice audible only to the members of the committee and the paper shall then be marked with the voter’s choice and placed in the ballot box.

100. Ballot papers in Braille are prepared for each constituency and sign language interpreters are available at polling stations. The right of persons with disabilities to vote is further guaranteed by article 19 of Decree No. 17 of 1998 regulating Central Municipal elections, which stipulates that candidates are entitled to enter polling stations or designate in writing a voter in their constituency to do so on their behalf in order to monitor the voting and vote counting procedures.

101. With regard to participation in political and public life, reference can be made to paragraphs 207-212 of the State’s initial report. Moreover, the new bill of law on persons with disabilities explicitly recognizes their entitlement to exercise their political rights in accordance with the law since articles 42, 44 and 45 of the Qatari Constitution guarantees to all citizens the right to vote and stand for election, as well as freedom of association, freedom of opinion and scientific research and freedom of the press, printing and publication.

102. Article 2, paragraph 9, of Act No. 2 of 2004, concerning persons with disabilities, recognizes their right to participate in decision-making on matters of concern to them and, with regard to the exercise of political rights, Decree No. 17 of 1998 regulating Central Municipal Council elections stipulates that persons with disabilities have the same right as other persons to vote and stand for election.

### **Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (art. 30)**

103. In promulgating Act No. 2 of 2004, concerning persons with special needs, Qatar guaranteed the fundamental and legitimate rights of this important segment of society. The provisions of the Act confer on persons with special needs many of the advantages and privileges needed to ensure that they regard themselves as an integral part of the social order. Under article 2, paragraph 6, of the Act, persons with special needs enjoy the right to engage in sporting and leisure activities in accordance with their individual capabilities. Paragraphs 5 and 6 of article 3 further stipulate that the bodies concerned have a responsibility not only to provide opportunities for persons with special needs to engage in sporting and leisure activities, in such a way as to meet their needs and develop their capabilities, but also to provide special care and sports and leisure facilities for such persons.

104. The Qatar Sports Club for Persons with Disabilities was established in 1993 with the aim of facilitating, through the medium of sport, the psychosocial and physical

adaptation of young persons with disabilities for integration into the community. The country's Sports Federation for Special Needs, established in 2011, participates in the activities of international, Asian and regional sports federations for persons with special needs with which it is affiliated.

105. The services and facilities available to persons with special needs are designed to provide the material and human resources needed for the organization of sporting activities, to offer persons with disabilities an opportunity to participate in sporting events abroad and sporting activities at the community level, to ensure easy accessibility to, and use of, sports facilities by persons with disabilities, and to encourage their participation in sporting activities through the national Olympic Committee or the Qatar Federation. Persons with special needs are also appointed to serve on the national Olympic Committee.

106. As part of the school Olympic programme run in collaboration with the Qatar Olympic Committee, persons with special needs play goalball and participate in goalball championships at home and abroad.

107. The Qatar Social and Cultural Centre for the Blind, which is supervised by the Public Authority for Youth, undertakes the following functions:

- Promotion of closer relations between blind or visually impaired persons and the community;
- Raising the awareness of blind or visually impaired persons concerning the facilities available;
- Occupying the leisure time of blind or visually impaired persons in a manner beneficial to them;
- Overcoming the obstacles and difficulties facing blind or visually impaired persons;
- Promotion of closer links between the Centre and other Arab and international centres pursuing similar goals.

108. The Centre also provides various services, including:

- Provision of free transport for its blind members from their places of residence to the Centre and vice versa;
- Organization of a variety of special training programmes for blind persons (courses in computer skills, the English language, typing in Braille, physical fitness, handicrafts and sport) in order to develop their capacities and increase their knowledge;
- Provision of Braille printing facilities for the Centre's blind members;
- Promotion of social interaction and integration through field trips in and outside the city of Doha;
- Provision of facilities specially adapted to the needs of blind persons (computer laboratory, sports hall, library, swimming pool, etc.).

### **Statistics and data collection (art. 31)**

109. Statistics and data on persons with disabilities are collected not only by the Qatari Statistics Authority but also by numerous other specialized institutions and centres providing services for such persons. Noteworthy endeavours are being made to bridge gaps in the data by conducting targeted surveys and including in the annual statistical abstract disability-related sections containing data, disaggregated by type of

disability, sex, nationality and age, on persons with disabilities registered with the centres, as well as data, disaggregated by profession, sex and nationality, on persons working in those centres.

### **International cooperation (art. 32)**

110. The State of Qatar attaches great importance to the provision of external humanitarian and development assistance pursuant to its international cooperation strategy designed to promote security and stability in keeping with the Qatar National Vision 2030. At the same time, the State is aware of the challenges and dangers with which the world is currently faced, such as lack of food security, climate change and the increasing incidence of disasters and conflicts caused by the repercussions of the world economic crisis on the feasibility of fulfilling international pledges and commitments. The total value of the external aid that the State provided for around 100 countries throughout the world in 2012 amounted to more than 3 billion Qatari riyals, part of which was earmarked for services to assist persons with disabilities. In fact, Qatar's humanitarian and development assistance constitutes an important bridge of communication and solidarity with other countries and peoples of the world.

### **National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)**

111. In accordance with Amiri Decree No. 29 of 2014, concerning the organizational structure of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Department for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities exercises the following functions:

- Proposal and implementation of national strategies, plans and policies relating to older persons and persons with disabilities;
- Development and implementation of the programmes and services needed to ensure the welfare and habilitation of older persons and persons with disabilities, in collaboration with the governmental and non-governmental entities concerned;
- Raising public awareness of the rights of older persons and persons with disabilities and implementing training programmes for persons working with them, in collaboration with the governmental and non-governmental entities concerned;
- Organization of courses, conferences and workshops to discuss issues of concern to older persons and persons with disabilities;
- Compilation and development of an integrated database on older persons and persons with disabilities.

112. The National Human Rights Committee also monitors the situation of persons with disabilities and conducts field studies in which the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is taken as the basic yardstick for observation and research. The Committee has completed one study on the extent to which the Convention is being applied at seven centres in which medical, educational and social care services are being provided for persons with disabilities, and another study on previously deaf children who have received cochlear implants. The Committee also carries out regular field observation visits.