

**Mr. President,
Distinguished members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you,
It's a pleasure to meet you again at the Human Rights Council, four months after the review of the second national report of the State of Qatar which was presented to the nineteenth session of the UPR Working Group held last May.

I would like to express once again the profound appreciation of the State of Qatar to the Council's Secretariat and to the UPR Working Group for their cooperation, professionalism and their contribution to the preparation of the second report on the State of Qatar.

The UPR mechanism provides a valuable opportunity to help States improve, strengthen and enhance their obligations under the international human rights law. The fruitful interaction between countries during the review process has also contributed to strengthening cooperation among stakeholders, taking advantage of expertise and learning from other countries' experiences. This helps in providing the platform for achieving the noble objectives of the Human Rights Council.

Qatar is always keen to participate actively in the UPR mechanism based on its firm belief in the importance of working and cooperating with international and regional mechanisms dealing with the promotion and protection of human rights and to support the advancement of human rights protection at the national and international levels.

Qatar's efforts to protect human rights stem from its Permanent Constitution where this cause is considered as a strategic choice for the State of Qatar since it constitutes the backbone of the comprehensive reform policy (constitutional, economic, social and cultural), pursued by the State of Qatar. This interest has been reflected in the development and strengthening of human rights infrastructure at the legislative, institutional and awareness-raising levels, which has been emphasized in the comprehensive vision of development (Qatar National Vision 2030) and in the Qatar National Development Strategy 2011-2016.

The issue of human rights has also been reflected in Qatar's foreign policy through its hastening to provide humanitarian assistance and the required support, without exception, to all affected people in disaster areas around the world. This has also been reflected through the Qatar Development Fund that considers human rights as one of the most important pillars in the international assistance we have provided as well as in development programs to be implemented by the Fund in all areas, in addition to Qatar's mediation efforts in resolving many conflicts, based on our belief in the importance of peace and stability as a basic foundation for the enjoyment of human rights.

Despite Qatar's exerted efforts in recent years and its human rights achievements, our determination is boosted by our big ambitions to carry on our efforts to overcome all difficulties, to build capacities and to benefit from international experience and expertise. In this regard, we rely heavily on our cooperation and dialogue with various Human Rights Council mechanisms. This is apparent through Qatar's desire to present

its candidature for re-election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2015 -2017.

Mr. President,

Our national experience in preparing our report for the universal periodic review mechanism was fruitful and led to an active dialogue on human rights, both with governmental bodies and the civil society. Indeed, the preparatory process for the UPR has helped us create growing awareness on the issue of the promotion and protection of human rights. This process also led to an effective dialogue between the governmental bodies and other stakeholders.

In fact, all the recommendations and observations formulated during the interactive dialogue conducted last May were received with great interest and were carefully reviewed. Accordingly, Qatar accepted at the time many of these recommendations, while deciding to take note of (84) recommendation for further study, deep analysis and consultation with the concerned authorities in the country.

The interval between Qatar's second national report review last May and today's session for the final adoption, allowed us to classify the recommendations and to carry out extensive consultations with various governmental bodies and relevant stakeholders.

Consequently, several of the recommendations presented during the interactive dialogue were in fact already implemented or in the process of implementation, and were consistent with the State of Qatar's objectives and strategies. Likewise, a number of recommendations are drafts that are currently at the legislative and executive stages.

Although in agreement with the overall contents of a number of recommendations, the State of Qatar could not accept some of them in full as they contained items that are incompatible with the provisions of Islamic law and with Qatar's Constitution and laws, or because they touch upon the national identity.

Regarding the recommendations calling for immediate accession to several international conventions, we would like to stress that Qatar's political will supports the trend towards acceding to many international conventions based on our firm belief in their importance in the promotion and protection of human rights. However, some temporary difficulties have prevented ~~from the~~ accession to further conventions at the present time. Indeed, legislative bodies in the country faced pressure and burden following Qatar's accession in a short time to many international and regional conventions in recent years, due to a shortage in technical capacities and human resources, that are still at the stage of construction and development.

Moreover, the State of Qatar is considering accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. We will continue our efforts to strengthen and build capacities through technical cooperation with human rights mechanisms and to take advantage of the activities and programs of the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region in Doha in order to overcome some of these temporary difficulties.

On the other hand, during the discussion of its second report, the State of Qatar received a number of recommendations on the promotion and protection of the rights of expatriate workers. Therefore, we announced Qatar's intention to carry out extensive reforms and to provide further promotion and protection to the rights of expatriate workers in Qatar, as it will consider a new draft law based on employment contracts instead of the sponsorship system (Kafala System). The new draft law also calls for abolishing the current exit permit system and for increasing the level of sanctions imposed on employers who confiscate passports.

As part of our constant determination to improve the human rights situation in the State of Qatar through constructive cooperation with the mechanisms of human rights, we would also like to extend once again an open and standing invitation to special procedures mandate holders.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We believe in Qatar that the process of following-up on the recommendations accepted by the State during the UPR is no less important than the process of preparing the report and discussing it before the Working Group. We shall in this respect, continue the work importance of the National Committee that prepared our national report as a mechanism of implementation. This is undoubtedly one of the benefits of the UPR. We shall also spare no effort to build and strengthen capacities through technical cooperation with human rights mechanisms.

Mr. President,

We welcome comments and statements that will be presented by States and stakeholders today. We also look forward to working with all of you in order to make headway towards achieving our common goals and in order to actively contribute to the advancement of the work of the Working Group and the Human Rights Council.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our sincere thanks to all those who participated in the review of our national report, and also express our appreciation to all the countries that presented recommendations to my country. Our deepest thanks go in particular to you, Mr. President, for your wise guidance of the Human Rights Council's work.

Thank you, Mr. President.