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

Report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity on his visit to the State of Qatar

Comments by the State*

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Introduction

The State of Qatar thanks Mr. Obiora Chenedu Okafor, the independent expert on human rights and international solidarity for his visit to the State of Qatar during the period 2 - 10 September 2019, within the framework of his mandate on human rights and international solidarity, which is the first of its kind under this mandate.

The State of Qatar has paid attention to the constructive discussions held by the Rapporteur during the visit period, which the State of Qatar considers as an important opportunity for considering the accomplishments achieved and the challenges Qatar faces in this regard.

Our position of conviction in supporting the work of those entrusted with special procedures also remains rooted through the provision of an open invitation to them since 2010 to visit our country. In this regard, the State appreciates the important and effective role they play in assisting member states in fulfilling their human rights obligations.

At the outset, the State of Qatar also wishes to express its thanks and appreciation to you for commending the invitation and the State's full cooperation with your mandate and its gratitude for your observations that clearly demonstrated the gravity of the violations and hardship caused by the diplomatic crisis which has befallen the State of Qatar represented in the separation of families, interruption of education and medical care, blocking the sole land borders, and hindering the access of Qataris to places of religious rites. We were also pleased to brief the expert on the positive practices of the State in interacting with international and regional organizations, appreciating its financial contributions, and praising the State's practices in interactive solidarity, preventive solidarity, and international cooperation.

The State of Qatar has taken note of the recommendations of the independent expert and is pleased to point out that work is already under way to implement a number of issues the recommendation No. (50) regarding strengthening the work of civil society organizations at the national and international levels. The state will also continue its efforts to implement the recommendation No. (52) related to continuing its efforts in achieving sustainable development, No. (54) on introducing education in the field of human rights, as well as the recommendations No. (55) on combating climate change, and No. (56) on economic diversification. The state will also continue its efforts to promote and protect workers' rights, based on recommendation No. 57.

After reviewing your report, we would like to submit substantive comments and observations according to the following themes:

First: Civil society organizations concerned with human rights.

Second: Economic diversification and combating climate change.

Third: the promotion and protection of migrant workers' rights.

Fourth: The right to asylum.

Fifth: Challenges and future visions.

First: civil society organizations concerned with human rights

With reference to the provisions stated in paragraph (5), we would like to state that the constitution guarantees the right of forming associations. Article (45) of the constitution stipulates that "freedom of association is guaranteed, according to the terms and situations specified by law." Article (116) of the Labor Law promulgated by Law No. 14 of 2004 stipulates that "workers who work in an establishment where the number of Qatari workers is more than one hundred workers have the right to form a committee from among them called the "labor committee". It is not permissible to form more than one committee in the establishment. Labor committees in establishments that work in a single profession or industry, or professions or industries identical or interrelated with each other, have the right

to form a general committee from among them called "the general committee for workers of the profession or industry". The general committees of workers of different professions and industries among themselves form a general union called the "General Federation of Qatar Workers". Membership in the aforementioned committees and the General Federation of Qatar Workers shall be restricted to Qataris. The Minister shall determine the conditions and procedures for forming the aforementioned labor organizations and their membership and work system, and similar or interrelated professions or industries. "

Law No. (12) of 2004 regarding private societies and institutions regulates the right of natural or legal persons to participate in the establishment of an association aimed at organizing a human, social, cultural, scientific, professional or charitable activity, provided that it is not intended to achieve financial profit or to get engaged in political matters. The law stipulates that for the establishment of the association at least twenty Qataris submit an application for the formation of such association to the administrative authority, provided that they have reached the age of eighteen, with a fee estimated to be one thousand Qatari riyals for the charity association, fifty thousand for the professional association, in addition to ten thousand riyals annually for the renewal of the license. The condition of the nationality of the founders and their number may be excluded by a decision to be issued by the Council of Ministers "when necessary, according to the requirements of the public interest, and upon the proposal of the Minister." One of the conditions for establishing associations is that the founders provide proof that they have a contract for the association's headquarters or a declaration that they will provide a headquarters for it, in case it is established. In the State of Qatar, there are a number of private institutions of public interest for the promotion and protection of human rights, including, but not limited to the following:

(a) The National Human Rights Committee, established in 2002 as an independent national institution for the protection and promotion of human rights.

(b) The Qatar Foundation for Social Work, which was established in 2013, as a higher institution that, through a unified board of directors, oversees and monitors institutions and centers specialized in social work in the country which seeks to promote human rights by protecting and raising awareness of the rights of the target groups through each of these centers. The Foundation also specializes in preparing and developing the plans, programs, policies and strategies necessary to achieve the goals of civil society institutions and follow up their implementation, in cooperation and coordination with ministries, government agencies, public and private bodies and institutions at home and abroad. These centers are concerned with protecting the rights of the groups shown below:

- Protection and Social Rehabilitation Center, which is concerned with protecting the rights of abused women and children or those being vulnerable to domestic violence and family rift (Aman).

- Family Counseling Center, which is concerned with family affairs. (Wifaq)

- Orphan Care Center, which is concerned with protecting orphan children and children of unknown parents. (Dreema)

- Center for Empowerment and Elderly Care. (Ehsan)

- Shafallah Center for Persons with Disabilities. (Shafallah)

- Social Development Center, which is concerned with empowering youth. (Nam'a)

- Best Buddies Initiative (Qatar), with the aim of ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities in public life.

- Al-Noor Center for the Blind, with the aim of providing exemplary services to target groups and their inclusion in society. (Al-Noor)

- Silatech Foundation, established in 2008, which aims to provide job opportunities for Arab youth. The Foundation has programs in 16 Arab countries, namely, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen and the Comoros.

- Education above All Foundation, established in 2012, which aims to provide education to children in areas of poverty and armed conflicts.
- The Doha International Family Institute, which was established in 2006 with the aim of promoting policies and programs concerned with the family.
- The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue in 2010 aims to foster a culture of interfaith dialogue and peaceful coexistence among believers.
- Mada Center which was established in 2010 with the aim of consolidating the meanings of digital inclusion and building an accessible technology community for people with disabilities and the elderly.
- The public institution of the Katara Cultural District, which was established in 2008 and aims to promote the cultural movement through festivals, exhibitions, seminars, concerts and all forms of artistic expression. It includes a number of numerous centers and societies, of which: The Sniper Association, the Children's Cultural Center, Burooq Magazine, the Poetry Council, the Bedaya Center, the Katara Art Center, Siwar Choir, the Arab Stamp Museum, the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, the Voice of the Gulf Radio, the Qatar Society for Fine Arts, the Qatar Society for Photography Optical, Visual Arts Center, Doha Film Foundation, Qatar Museums Authority, Qatar Society of Engineers.
- Qatar's Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities, found in 2014 and aims to support and encourage charity works and their organization. It includes 15 charities under its umbrella, for example we mention: Qatar Charity Society, Qatar Red Crescent Society, Sheikh Eid Charitable Foundation, Thani Bin Abdullah Foundation for Humanitarian Works (RAF), Qatar Society for Rehabilitation of Special Needs, Qatar Cancer Society.

We also find in practice that there are many civil society institutions that have already been created and established by non-Qatari citizens, including, but not limited to, societies that carry out humane social activity such as the Gulf Heart Association, and the Qatar Nursing Society. We also find civil society organizations registered in the state in Qatar Financial Center, which amounted to 27 organizations with a variety of purposes, including sports, professional, educational, social and cultural ones, established by non-Qataris. Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducts the registration of non-Muslim places of worship totaling “20” so far and which are considered to be religious civil society organizations. This information is in accordance with the expert's recommendation No. (50).

Secondly: The Economic diversification and combating the climate change

In reference to what is in paragraph (23) and paragraph (27) the economic development and environmental development constitutes one of the pillars of Qatar vision that seek to develop a diverse and competitive national economy as well as the protection of the environment. Within the framework of the state of Qatar endeavors to achieve its goals the state was able to consolidate position on the world economic map. Lately, it was classified as one of the fastest emerging economies in the world and ranked first in the Arab world in the security index issued by the Global Finance for the world safety and security measures in 2019, the first in the Arab world in the world index of entrepreneurship issued by the World Institute of Entrepreneurship and Development in 2018, the second in the world in the economic Freedom Index of The American Heritage Institution, also in the Global Competitiveness Report in 2018, ranked state of Qatar first for the reduction of inflation rates and globally the sixth, in the non-effect of taxation on competition, the eighth in the availability of the investment capital and ninth for financing Small and Medium Enterprises - attributed to its policies of achieving a robust and diversified economy.

Also, the State of Qatar pays a greater attention to tackling the Climate change and confirms this during implementing a number of projects and initiatives that contribute to the efforts exerted to reduce the air pollution, reduction of Carbon dioxide and increasing of dependence on renewal energy. The State of Qatar plays a bigger role in the field of

cooperation with the International Organizations and International Agencies concerned with the affairs of environment and climate change. The State of Qatar is one of first countries who joined the UN framework convention on the climate change in 1996, Kyoto protocol in 2005, Paris Agreement in 2016, with ratification of the Agreement in 2017, as well as hosting the conference of the Eighteenth Partners for the Climate Change “COP18” in 2012, considered the global stations of negotiations of the Climate change contributed to Paris Convention.

One of the remarkable efforts of the State of Qatar in the field of Climate Change is the project using compressed Natural Gas as energy in the transportation sector which aims to develop Compressed Natural Gas as an alternative energy to reduce the emission of Heating Gases.

Hamad International Airport is the first Air-port in the region achieving the third level of ‘levels of improvement’ in the program of approval of the Carbon Emission of the air-ports supervised by the Global Council of Air-ports. The accreditation approves the commitment of Hamad International Air-port to tackle the Climate Change based on continuous measuring of Carbon Emissions in the air-port in addition to implementing a program to reduce energy on the level of the air-port level and to involve the stakeholders in measuring and administration of the emissions in relation to the Air-Port.

The launch of the State of Qatar of a project establishing a solar power station represents an important step along the road to diversify the state resources of electrical energy and increasing the dependency on sources of renewal energy. Launching the project of electric buses operation also came to enhance sustainable transportation in the state and to interconnect it in order to achieve integration with the Doha Metro Project in the framework of the exerted efforts to reduce the emission of air pollution as regards transportation.

The project of reforming and re-use of Gas of AL Shaheen oil field came as a project of clean development mechanism since 2007 in the framework of the UN Framework Convention for the Climate Change as the mechanisms established to reduce the Emission the of Buried Gases on the international level. The project aims to reduce the burning of the Associated Gas and thus reducing emission of the Buried Gases.

The Facility of re-using the Evaporated Gas during loading which started operation in the last quarter of 2014, is one of the biggest environmental projects in the State of Qatar as it collects the Evaporated Gas from the carriers of the liquefied Natural Gas and compresses it in a central facility in order that the compressed gas be transmitted to the producer of the Liquefied Natural Gas to be consumed in the form of energy or again be transformed to Liquefied Natural Gas thus reducing the emission of the Carbon Dioxide by more than 2,5 tons annually which contributes to reducing greenhouse Gas Emission.

Also, among efforts of the State of Qatar in the field of environmental change is the launch of Um Al Howial station for energy, which is the biggest energy station in the Middle-East.

The plant is characterized by high productivity, using the best environment-friendly techniques in the field of water desalination and also using of clean Natural Gas to reduce emissions.

Concerning efforts of tackling the phenomena of the Climate Change, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Environment launched “million tree” initiative, which is a social initiative that aims to enhance the environmental sustainability and it has many benefits represented in adapting with the expected effects of the phenomena of Climate Change, reducing of the emissions and improving air quality.

In the field of observation and the environmental lab, the draft of “Report of the State of the Environment of the State of Qatar, has been finalized, and this Environmental Report is most important internationally as it is the evaluation of different environment aspects which includes air quality, marine environment and others, noting that the report methodology was based on the established framework of the UN Environment Program “UNEP”.

In this regard a national network for continuous observation of air quality of the State of Qatar was established, eighteen stations were connected to the national network for continuous observation of the air quality surrounding the state, also four stations of

observation of air quality were developed and modernized by the most modern world tools as well as the development of a program of the state of the marine environment and observation of the soil.

The State of Qatar is also a member of the International Energy Agency for Renewable Energy which supports countries in their efforts to move towards the future of sustainable energy, the State of Qatar is also a founding member of the Global Institute of the Green Growth “GGGI”, which helps the developing countries to pursue sustainable development strategies built on the sustainability basis.

The system approves a policy and special procedures for (ESG) which is the abbreviation of Environment, Social Responsibility and Governance, and Qatar Investment Authority depends on investment on mortgage projects that adopt policies of energy conservation and use of Renewal Energy, Green landscapes and reduction of Carbon Emissions. Some employees were attached for training on ESG to specialized Centers in Paris, which constantly organize courses, workshops and seminars on the Climate Change and ESG. These measures conform to the recommendations of the Independent Expert No. 55 and 56.

Thirdly: Protection and promotion of migrant workers

With reference to what was mentioned in the paragraphs No. (33), (38), (39), (40), (41), (42), (44) we would like to notify that the State has concluded in 17 Oct. 2017 a technical cooperation agreement with the ILO from 2018 to 2020, which stipulates that the Organization shall give the technical advice in areas: Improvement of protection of wages systems, improvement of the system of inspection, safety and professional health, implementation of a contract system to replace the sponsorship, improvement of employment conditions, the procedure of recruitments, labors employment, increase prevention from forced work and its protection, prosecution of its perpetrators and giving a voice to workers.

The state in addition established a modern judicial system in the field of promotion and protection of workers’ rights keeping with its inspiration in this field, here we note in order to clarify the information mentioned in the report of Rapporteur in accordance to the following themes:

A. In the field of access to justice

The Law No. (13) for the year 2017, was issued to establish a committee or more called” The of workers disputes settlement Committee” responsible to settlement during a term not exceeding three weeks all the disputes emerging out of the law provisions or employment contract referred to it by the competent department in the Ministry. The Committee’s decision on the settlement of the dispute shall be the power of the executive bond in accordance with the following procedures:

(a) The complaint shall directly be submitted from the employee, the home worker or by the embassy to the competent department at the Ministry of Administration Development, labor and Social Affairs in the form prepared for such, the worker will fill the form with the required data, sign it and then deliver the compliant to the Ministry, then after the compliant shall be electronically recorded and calling on the companies representatives by email, the migrant worker will be handed formal copy of the call.

(b) The settlement officer provides the legal advice for the benefit of the worker or the employer with the help of the ministry translator; there are enough numbers of translators for all languages of the migrant’s workers, interpreters are also available in the section of the Committees of Disputes Settlement, no fees are associated to the operation and the government offices are open to workers including the Committees, also works in the afternoon.

(c) If at any stage of the complaint, the worker or the employer desires legal opinion he may meet a legal expert of the Department of Labor Relations during the official business hours i.e. (without needing to book an appointment in advance).

(d) If the worker believes that he was subjected to arbitrary procedure from the employer the officer specialized with labor Complaints will advise him to resort to the competent authorities (the Police/ the Prosecution).

(e) It is possible to process worker's complaints through the electronic devices and the administration continues to disseminate electronic devices to receive complaints and train the workers to use them. The devices are available in 11 languages. The Ministry is planning to enable the workers and domestic workers to submit their complaints and follows them electronically on the site of the Ministry of Administrative Development, labor and Social Affairs through "order me" app. In order to enable the workers and employees who cannot personally come to the Ministry, to apply their complaints while insuring that complaints remain confidential.

Number of workers complaints in the year 2018

Statement	Females	Males
No. of submitted complaints to the Department of labor Relations (citizens)	26	47
No. of submitted complaints to the Department Of labor Relations (residents)	1653	15637
Total no. of submitted complaints to the Department of labor Relations (residents, citizens)	1679	15684

B. The possibility of changing the employer

The State of Qatar has repealed the sponsorship law and a fundamental reform of the legal structure of labor relations since 2015 under Law No 21 regarding organizing entry and exit of expatriates and their residency. The issuance of the law came after countless rounds of community consultations in order to attract all social partners and stakeholders. The Articles 21 and 22 of the law specify cases of changing the employer for the migrant worker, namely:

(a) The transfer of the worker to another employer before the end of the contract period, that by mutual consent between the worker and the employer.

(b) Transfer to another employer immediately after the term of the fixed-term contract expires, or after five years have passed if the contract is for an indefinite period.

(c) Transfer to another employer in the event that the recruiter dies or the legal person no longer exists for any reason.

(d) The migrant worker may temporarily change the employer, in case there are lawsuits between him and the employer.

(e) The migrant worker may change the employer, in the event that the employer is found to be abusive against him, or if the public interest so requires.

The law also allowed the expatriate worker in the cases in which the residence permit expired naturally, to return to the country to work in his new job immediately after obtaining a new job opportunity, without waiting for the two-year period that was prescribed under Law N° 4 for the year 2009.

These measures aim to ensure that migrant workers enjoy their civil rights without discrimination, in particular their right to freedom of movement and leave the country, in accordance with Article 12/2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Article 5- paragraph-d of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs launched the e-notification service through which the worker can apply in case he wants to move from one employer to another or in case he wants to leave the country for good, on its website at the following link: <http://e-notice.adlsa.gov.qa/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2>

One of the practical effects of the application of Law N° 21 on the right of the worker to change the employer, an electronic system and a specialized administrative unit was established, 2309 workers - despite the employer's objection- changing the employer was facilitated for the workers who were granted work visas on specific projects, which is known as the restricted visa to move to another business if it meets the other conditions.

The following link shows the locations of the headquarters designated to provide and follow-up to the employer's notification to leave work and move to another employer.

Article 51 of the Qatari Labor Law allowed the worker to terminate the contract of employment before its expiry date whether it was for a fixed or indefinite period, and without informing the employer while retaining an end of service bonus if the employer violated his obligations legally stipulated in the contract or if there was false information from the employer about the conditions of work or a physical or moral aggression against the worker or one of his family members, or there was a threat to the worker and the employer did not protect him and in this case the worker has the right to leave the work without the need to present the issue to the judiciary, and he is entitled to resort to law enforcement agencies to protect him and provide shelter if necessary.

On October 16, 2019, the Council of Ministers also approved a draft resolution for the Minister of Interior to set regulations to facilitate the movement of workers to another employer during the contract period in a manner that preserves the rights of both parties. The State of Qatar is seeking to completely replace the sponsorship system with the contractual labor relationship, and the legislative tools necessary for the adoption of the new system are being prepared, which will have greater flexibility allowing migrant workers subject to the provisions of the Labor Law to navigate the labor market in conformity with international labor standards.

C. Protection of domestic workers

1. Law N° 15 of 2017 was issued regarding domestic workers, the provisions of which are consistent with international labor standards and the provisions of Convention N°189 of the International Labor Organization regarding decent work for domestic workers; the following points are the guarantees provided by law to protect domestic workers from violations that it was mentioned in the report as follows:

(a) Article 12 stipulates that "the maximum working hours shall be ten hours per day, unless agreed otherwise, punctuated by periods of worshipping, rest and eating, and these periods do not fall within the calculation of working hours." And that was organized only in the text mentioned is the maximum daily working hours, as the legislator set it at 10 hours per day, while the model contract approved by the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs stipulated in the fourth clause thereof, entitled "Regular working hours and rest periods" It is stipulated that the employee is obliged to perform the agreed work for a period of 8 hours a day, as normal working hours, interspersed with periods of worshipping, rest and dining, which are not counted within the

working hours." The employee may be employed for two additional hours per day, for the maximum working hours to become ten hours per day, which governs the nature of the relationship between the employee and the employer is the employment contract that specified the normal working hours, which is 8 daily hours only, that is, the relationship of contract between the domestic worker and the employer. The employment relationship between the domestic worker and the employer is not out of the analogous relationship between the worker and the employer in the labor law. And the nature of domestic worker is completely different from the nature of work in factories and others sites, where domestic worker permeates large periods of rest, and therefore the legislator did not consider setting a specific regulation for rest periods, and therefore it is necessary to refer in this regard to the provisions contained in the Labor Law as the general legislation which organizes individual work relationships.

(b) Obliging the employer to provide domestic worker with adequate food and housing, appropriate health care, medicines and medical supplies in the event of his illness or injury during the performance of work, or during the process of doing so, without requiring the domestic worker to bear any financial burden. And treating the employee in a good manner that preserves his dignity and physical integrity. In addition to not exposing the employee's life or health to danger, or physically or psychologically harming him in any manner, and not to employ the employee during his sick leave, during the daily rest times, or during the weekly holidays, unless there is an agreement between the two parties to do so.

(c) Obliging the employer to pay the agreed monthly wage for the employee in the Qatari currency at the end of the Gregorian month, and not later than the third day of the following month.

(d) . Organizing annual leave and payment issues; so that the employee is entitled, for each calendar year spent in service, to an annual paid vacation of three weeks with the entitlement to air tickets. The legislator also obligated the business owner to pay the employee, at the end of service, the end of service gratuity as well as any other amounts that are due to the employee.

(e) . Determine the cases of the employee terminating the employment contract before it expires.

(f) . Disputes between the employer and the employee are subject to Labor Law No. 14 of 2004 and its amendments; by resorting to the aforementioned labor dispute settlement committees.

(g) . Compensating the employee for work injuries in accordance with the provisions of the Labor Law referred to above.

(h) . Imposing penalties for violators of the provisions of the law, amounting to 10 thousand Qatari riyals.

(i) . The law also permits the employee to terminate the employment contract before its term, while retaining his right to the indemnity, in the following cases; If the employer violates his obligations under the employment contract or the provisions of the law. If the employer, or his representative provided false information to the employee regarding the terms of employment, if the employer or a member of his family assaults the employee in a manner that affects him physically or threatens his life. If the employer or one of his representatives knows that there is an imminent danger jeopardizing the safety or health of the employee and does not act to address it.

2. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs has established a division to receive and resolve complaints from domestic workers, and the competent department receives complaints directly from domestic workers through social media, the complaint will be recorded on the same day and an appointment will be made with the employer the next day to try to settle the dispute amicably, if the parties accept the result of the settlement, what is agreed upon will be proven in a record that has the strength of the executive bond, if the two parties do not reach a settlement, the complaint will be referred to the parties to settle labor disputes, in a manner that guarantees the speedy

settlement of the dispute and the employee's obtaining his rights and entitlements as a matter of urgency.

The employee may, in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 21 of 2015, change the employer in the event that the employer is found to be abusive against him or there are lawsuits between him and the employer (as previously indicated), and an electronic notification system has been established to change the worker's authority from one employer to another. On the website of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs to consider these requests and respond to inquiries according to the criteria set forth in the law and cases of abuse are dealt with as a matter of urgency. As well as direct legal assistance when filing complaints.

The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs is making a continuous effort to educate domestic workers of their rights stipulated in the law in cooperation with the labor embassies of the exporting country and the International Labor Organization, and it also regularly monitors labor inspections and domestic workers and inspects them to monitor procedures for bringing domestic workers and checking housing conditions, and guarantee that they will not be exploited and preserve their rights. In addition to the complaints mechanisms for domestic workers.

In addition, according to article 22 of the Law of regulating the entry and exit for expatriates in State of Qatar and their residency, there is an important guarantee such as the given authority, to the Department Human Rights in the Ministry of Interior, to change the employer of any worker immediately without the consent of the employer, in the event that the latter took arbitrary measures against him.

Total domestic worker complaints during 2018 and 2019

(a) The total number of complaints submitted by domestic workers (from January 2018 to December 2019) to the department of employment agencies in the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, are (673) complaints.

(b) The number of cases of rape of domestic workers in 2018 reached (3) cases, and the defendants have been prosecuted for such crimes, besides providing shelter, legal, psychological and health assistance, to the victim.

(c) The total number of resolved complaints through mediation between employers and domestic workers during the same period, are (489) complaints.

(d) The number of referred complaints to the Labor Disputes Resolution Committee, are (122) complaints.

These data reflect the increased access of workers to the complaints mechanism, and the Ministry is continuing in raising the awareness campaigns, to domestic workers, to learn about laws and regulations which maintain and protect their legitimate rights, in accordance with the Qatar Labor Law and employment contracts, via various media resources.

D. Regulation of Exit permits for workers in the responsible positions

Law No. (13) of 2018 on amending Article (7) of Law No. (21) of 2015 related to the regulating the entry and exit for expatriates and their residency has been issued, which canceled the exit permit and recognized the right of the expatriate worker, subject to the Labor Law, to temporary exit or final departure from the country during validity of the employment contract. It stipulated that employer may submit a request, to the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, with in the names of those who deem it necessary to obtain his prior approval before leaving the country, due to their work nature, not to exceed 5% of the number of his employees.

The Minister of Interior issued the decision No. (95) of 2019, which canceled exit permits for all expatriates who are not subject to the labor law in the State of Qatar - including domestic workers - except for workers in the military authorities. The decision also stipulated that the employer has the right to submit prior request to the Ministry of Interior to obtain prior approval before leaving the country, due to their work nature, not to exceed

5% of the number of employees. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, has published clear exemption criteria for those exceptions that apply, only for highly skilled workers, such as the CEO, the financial employees, the managers who supervise the daily company operations, and the director of information and communications technology.

These exceptions aim to take into account the mutual interests of both parties of the employment contract, and urge the workers with (highly skills) to coordinate with employers, and inform them in advance about their travel programs or their final departure from the country.

It should be noted, that there is an important guarantee referred to in Article 7 of the Law regulating entry and exit of expatriates; It is represented in the following: (In case that the expatriate is unable to leave the country for any reason, he may resort to the expatriate exit complaints committee, which will decide on the grievance within three working days).

In addition, according to article 22 of the Law of regulating the entry and exit of expatriates in State of Qatar and their residency and, there is an important guarantee, such as the given authority to the Department Human Rights in the Ministry of Interior, to change the employer of any worker immediately without the consent of the employer, in the event that the latter's decisions were arbitrary or bearing grudges against him or any form of abuse

E. Increase the minimum wages and make mechanism to protect and enhance them

On October 16, 2019, the Council of Ministers agrees on a draft Law to organise the minimum wages. This law was the first type in the region, and the law obliges employers to provide decent food and accommodation to the workers, in addition to the basic salary, including domestic workers. The draft law also included the establishment of the minimum wage committee, which controls the effect of the minimum wages and proposes adjustments on a periodic basis.

An evaluation of the wages protection system was carried out in cooperation between the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs and the Office of the International Labor Organization in Doha, after three years from the establishment of the system, that aim to identify gaps and create necessary recommendations, to improve the wages protection system. The report prepared by the two parties, was briefly reviewed on the legal framework and institutional and the internal measures and processes related to the wage protection system, as a unit of the Labor Inspection Department. An organized meetings were held with all the concerned authorities in the country, with coordination the labor *Protection System Unit (WPSU)* and in the presence of a number of specialized advisors in the field and representatives of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs and the International Labor Organization. The results of the report revealed recommendations for developing and monitoring the wage protection system and increasing its effectiveness.

The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, Qatar Central Bank and other institutions, are working on these recommendations. Materials have been developed to raise awareness about the wage protection system and the registration process. Discussions are under way to improve the wages protection system, so that payments can be tracked, against the terms of the employment contract, as well as to ensure that the payment is higher than the minimum wage, and the possibility of workers to obtain statements upon request, can be explored. This will ensure that workers will have a detailed analysis of how their wages are calculated.

F. Labor inspection

In April 2019, The National Labor Inspection Policy was adopted, which indicates a major shift towards strategic and evidence-based inspections, with a focus on data collection and

its analysis, strategic planning and work, coordinated guidance and training for all labor inspectors and awareness-raising activities, and transparency and accountability.

In December 2018, the Strategic Unit of the Labor Inspection Department was established, which developed a training plan for the period 2019-2020. The training units are being developed, in cooperation with the Institute of Management Development and the International Training Center of the International Labor Organization (Torino Center) and international experts.

In addition, the State of Qatar has employed, inspectors (males and females) who speak several languages and have skills specialized in labor inspection, and provide them with the latest electronic technologies, to enable them to submit instant reports online according to GPS systems, (number of inspectors).

G. Regular awareness for employers about workers' rights

Within the framework of the national development strategy for the labor sector in the State of Qatar, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, adopted a new project to implement a campaign to raise awareness, about the rights of the expatriates workers, which aims to increase awareness of workers and employers, on the new laws in order to ensure the application of laws and improve the work environment and employment conditions, through holding direct meetings with workers and Embassies' Attachés and local media, such as newspapers, TV channels and social media (Facebook and Twitter). Several workshops were held, for expatriates workers and employers, to familiarize them with their rights and duties, according to the laws.

In the same context, a training program for officials and specialists, in public relations departments and units and communication, was held for a number of official authorities, regarding the issues expatriates workers, in order to provide them with the necessary guidance and resources, to understand how to communicate on the topics of expatriates workers, fair employment agencies and forced work. A round table for editors and senior officials, was held and covered by television and printed media, to discuss how to improve cooperation, awareness and exchange views, on labor and workers reforms. A number of discussions were held, with the press program departments at North Western University in Qatar, regarding the possible collaboration with such as academic institutions, that build the ability of the new generation of journalists, to accurately cover a wide range of issues related to labor migration and fair employment.

The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, has also held various discussions with the private sector, including the American Chamber of Commerce, the Dutch Business Council, the Spanish Business Council, the Philippine Business Council, the Portuguese Business Council and the Swiss Business Council, to raise awareness of the new Act No. 13 of 2018 and the ongoing reforms in other work.

The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, will issue two instructive brochures for domestic workers and for employers. The brochure for domestic workers will be printed in several languages, and the brochure for employers will be printed in both Arabic and English languages. These brochures will provide information, on the main provisions of Law No. 15 of 2017, and also provide information based on rights and responsibilities employers as stipulated in Law No. 15 of 2017. These brochures will be launched, as part of a wider public awareness campaign, on the rights and responsibilities of domestic workers and their employers in State of Qatar. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, also produced a video regarding the rights of domestic workers and published on the social media.

On June 16, 2019, The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, held a public event for domestic workers, to celebrate the International Day of Domestic Workers, and made an ongoing comprehensive awareness strategy for the upcoming years.

H. Opening shelters for domestic workers

Qatar Social Work Foundation launched the "Comprehensive Safety House" affiliated to the Protection and Social Rehabilitation Center "AMAN", one of the centers operating under the umbrella of Qatar Social Work Foundation which represents an integrated shelter and a comprehensive social and health environment for protection and rehabilitation services for the targeted groups, including victims of human trafficking. The house is an integrated complex consisting of more than 30 dedicated units equipped with comprehensive housing services, providing its guests with "temporary" accommodation services in line with a well-thought-out rehabilitation plan. Villas of the aforementioned units are specifically designated for victims of trafficking - both male and female, each of which is capable of caring for 20 people. Accommodation process begins with four basic stages beginning with reception stage including the initial evaluation of each case and determining their needs for shelter, then the entry stage in which the rights, duties and requirements necessary to accommodate victims are defined, and the stage of rehabilitation plan setting the detailed framework for rehabilitation phase in the house, and then the stage of integration of victims into their families to return them to their natural environment in their families and the society.

Finally, we point out that the place prepared for deportation in the Research and Follow-up Department is not (a place of detention to spend the sentence), but rather a place intended to finish the procedures of those who decide to leave the country, mostly within 48 hours. In this regard we would like to point out that all detention facilities in the State of Qatar are subject to inspection visits from various authorities, including international non-governmental organizations (such as the International Committee of the Red Cross) or the special rapporteurs (Working Group on Arbitrary Detention – the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination), and at the national level there is a government oversight represented by (the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Interior), judicial oversight represented by (the visits organized by the public prosecution to places of detention to ensure the legality of detention), and the controls of the civil society represented by the (the visits of Human Rights National Committee to the places of detention), which reflects the keenness of the state to ensure the conformity of the places of detention to international human rights standards. No congestion or overcrowding was observed at any of the facilities belonging to the Research and Follow-up Department as mentioned in the Rapporteur's remark. On the contrary, the difference is mostly large between (the capacity of the facility and the actual number of detainees), in line with the recommendation No 57 of the independent Rapporteur.

Fourth: The right to asylum

Referring to what is stated in paragraph No. (35), we would like to state that, in accordance with the provisions of Article (58) of the permanent constitution of the State of Qatar, which guarantees the right to political asylum, the State of Qatar issued Law No. (11) of 2018 on granting the right to political asylum in the territory of the State of Qatar, and the decision of the Council of Ministers No. (12) of 2019 specifying the categories to be granted political asylum, who are (advocates of human rights, reporters and representatives of audio-visual and written media, members of political parties, religious denominations and ethnic minorities, writers and researchers) subject to prosecution or persecution because of these affiliations.

Based on the asylum seekers' personal safety, when responsible competent authorities detect the possible threats against their lives or personal safety that compelled them to seek asylum, Article (10) provides that competent authorities may specify the place of residence of the political refugee, in order to preserve their security and safety.

The state continues to grant such people the right to political asylum (in line with the principle that granting this right is not an act of hostility against the state to which they belong by nationality or in which they usually live). One manifestation of the implementation of this principle is the state's endeavor to ensure that the refugee is not

involved in any activity of a political nature that include insulting his home country, whatever the form or pattern of that activity.

It is useful to point out in the same context that the right to freedom of expression is not an absolute right. The international law and many national constitutions recognize that it is acceptable to impose limited restrictions on this right, to ensure the private interests of individuals or supreme and vital interests of the state. Based on this, countries resort to control this right in a manner that does not contradict the spirit and essence of the right to freedom of expression.

Article No. (9) of the law also stipulates a set of rights and privileges that a political refugee enjoys in the State of Qatar, including freedom of worship and practice of religious rites, and the right to litigation.

It is worth noting that the definition of refugee in Law No. (11) of 2018 regulating political asylum is in line with its counterpart in the The UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which means that the definition of refugee is the same in both the law and the convention.

Fifth: Future visions

The issue of the promotion and protection of human rights is a strategic choice for the state, as it forms the backbone of the comprehensive reform policy (constitutional, economic, social and cultural) pursued by the state. This was confirmed in the comprehensive vision for development (Qatar National Vision 2030), which was adopted by the Amiri Decree No. (44) for 2008, which includes important themes that touch the main issues of human rights in the fields of education, the environment, the rights of expatriates and the empowerment of women, in addition to reaffirming the state's commitments outlined in the state's permanent constitution to respect and honor all its international obligations, including those related to human rights.

As a result of the State of Qatar's recent accession to the two international covenants on human rights, a committee was formed to study the legislations in force in the State of Qatar and its suitability with the provisions and terms of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in accordance with the decision of Council of Ministers issued in its regular meeting No. (27) for the year 2018, held on 10/10/2018, chaired by His Excellency the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers with representative memberships of each of the following bodies: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Advisory Council, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor, and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Economy and Commerce, the Public Prosecution, Human Rights National Committee, Qatar Social Work Foundation. The term of the committee is a renewable one year, and it started its meetings with identifying the Qatari laws and legislations that may contradict the provisions of the two abovementioned international conventions, so that the members of the committee can discuss these laws and legislations, show their opinions on them and propose appropriate actions thereon. The committee is still in the process of collecting and completing data from various authorities in the country.

The State of Qatar is also currently preparing a national plan of action for human rights based on the decision of the council of ministers in its regular meeting No. (19) for 2014, according to which a government national committee was formed to prepare a national human rights plan of action headed by His Excellency the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with several memberships from other government stakeholders. The development of the National Human Rights Plan of Action is a clear and practical step to promote and protect human rights as it is seen to represent an instrument to improve human rights situation in the country.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar reiterates its thanks to the independent expert for the visit and renews its commitment to cooperate with him within the framework of his

mandate, emphasizing the importance of cooperation with special officials and the Human Rights Council.

It affirms its continued support for the mandate of the independent expert on human rights and international solidarity, and appreciates his methodology, which was characterized by objectivity, transparency and non-selectivity.
