



**Convention on the  
Rights of the Child**

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**COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES  
UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION**

**Second periodic report of States parties due in 2002**

**QATAR\* \*\***

[10 January 2008]

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\* In accordance with the information transmitted to States parties regarding the processing of their reports, the present document was not formally edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

\*\* The annexes to the report may be consulted in the files of the Secretariat.

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## Introduction

1. Childhood and children's issues are accorded high priority in the development planning process of the State of Qatar. They are matters of the utmost importance for political leaders, planners and governmental and non-governmental experts, who spare no effort to establish national mechanisms and institutions for children throughout the State that are accessible to the entire population and ensure, in an efficient and effective manner, the survival, safety, development and protection of children from all forms of violence and exploitation, together with children's engagement in activities appropriate to their age.
2. Children are guaranteed the right to health care, education, social and economic welfare and full protection from all forms of violence and exploitation under the Permanent Constitution and laws of Qatar.
3. Over the past four decades, the State's efforts to construct and expand the primary health-care network and mother's and children's health centres have had great success and have helped to deliver health services to the entire population of the State. Education at all stages has expanded and is now available to all children. The State of Qatar has done much to bring about changes in lifestyles and deliver greater prosperity and social welfare to all segments of society. These achievements are reflected in major improvements in the indicators on children and mothers, in particular falling infant mortality rates, rising rates of enrolment in all stages of education among both males and females and better standards of social welfare provision for all citizens. The robust state of the national economy has likewise helped to improve living standards among all inhabitants of Qatar.
4. States parties are required to submit, within two years of the entry into force of the Convention for the State party concerned, and thereafter every five years, reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is a matter of priority for the State as a party to the Convention. Qatar submitted its initial report on the implementation of the Convention (CRC/C/51/Add.5) in October 1999, and the report was considered in 2001.
5. The present second periodic report was prepared between 2001 and 2006, in keeping with the State's obligations under article 44 of the Convention. It contains full information on the measures, procedures and legislative, policy and programme changes which the State introduced in implementation of the Convention. It also responds to the concluding observations which the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted following its consideration of Qatar's initial report (CRC/C/15/Add.163).
6. The present joint national report was drafted by a national committee formed pursuant to a decision taken by the Cabinet at its 35th ordinary meeting held in 2006. In order to involve all governmental and non-governmental organizations in the drafting exercise, seats on the committee were assigned to representatives of both government bodies and civil society institutions.

7. The present report covers the following topics:

- General measures of implementation
- Definition of the child
- General principles
- Civil rights and freedoms
- Family environment and alternative care
- Basic health and welfare
- Education, leisure and cultural activities
- Protection measures
- The Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

**I. GENERAL MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION  
(arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6, of the Convention)**

**A. Reservation entered by the State to the Convention**

8. In the concluding observations adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child further to its consideration of the initial report of Qatar submitted in 1999, the Committee refers to the reservation which the State, when ratifying the Convention in 1995, entered to any provisions that were incompatible with the Islamic sharia. It also refers to the “broad and imprecise nature of the State party’s general reservation”, which “potentially negates many of the Conventions provisions, as well as the overall implementation of the Convention”. In its recommendations, the Committee welcomes information “that the State party is re-examining its reservation to the Convention” (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 10 and 11).

9. Further to the Committee’s recommendations, in December 2003 the Supreme Council for Family Affairs set up an expert committee to review the reservation which Qatar had entered to the Convention and to the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and to identify any provisions that were incompatible with the sharia; the Committee recommended that the reservation should be withdrawn.

10. Accordingly, the Cabinet, at its 27th ordinary meeting held on 19 September 2007, approved the withdrawal of the general reservation to the Convention and the Optional Protocol and its replacement with an interpretative declaration on articles 2 and 14 of the Convention.

11. The competent State authorities are in the process of drafting the interpretative declaration.

**B. Measures taken to bring domestic legislation into full conformity with the principles and provisions of the Convention (arts. 4 and 41)**

12. In its concluding observations on the initial report of Qatar, the Committee takes note of the Children's Bill introduced by the State and recommends that the State "[c]onduct a comprehensive review of its domestic laws, including administrative regulations and legal procedural rules, to ensure that they conform to international human rights standards, including the Convention"; "ensure the speedy promulgation of legislation relating to child rights and its effective implementation"; and "ensure that laws are sufficiently clear and precise, are published and are accessible to the public" (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 12 and 13).

13. Further to these recommendations and with a view to bringing domestic legislation and practice into conformity with the principles and provisions of the Convention, the State took steps in the interim between the submission of the initial report (1999) and the date of submission of the present report to introduce extensive amendments to Qatari legislation in order to boost democratic governance and popular participation in decision-making and to guarantee the rights and freedoms of all members of the nation. What follows is a description of the main legislation which has a bearing on children:<sup>1</sup>

- Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar, 2004
- Compulsory Education Act No. 25 of 2001, establishing free and compulsory education for all children up to the end of the intermediate stage or the age of 18, whichever of the two comes first
- Criminal Code No. 11 of 2004, as amended by Act No. 38 of 2006, containing articles on the treatment of children over 7 and under 16 years of age (arts. 280-281, 284-285, 287-288, 292, 296, 268-269, 271, 53, 20, 300, 302, 305-306, 318, 321-322, 297 and 299) which are without prejudice to the Juveniles Act No. 1 of 1994 (mentioned in the initial report)
- The Labour Code No. 14 of 2004, which contains articles on child labour (arts. 86-89, 91-92, 99-100, 103-105, 54 and 106-108)
- The Civil Code No. 22 of 2004, which affords protection to children (arts. 19-23, 40, 49-52 and 110-116)
- The Code of Criminal Procedures No. 23 of 2004, which ensures that children are protected throughout all stages of investigation and trial proceedings and while serving sentences (arts. 65, 213, 345, 353 and 356)

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<sup>1</sup> Annex 1. Legislation on the subject of children which was enacted after the submission of the initial report of Qatar in 1999.



- The Trusteeship of Minors' Assets Act No. 40 of 2004, which provides for the protection of children's assets and monitoring of transactions undertaken by their representatives (arts. 4-7, 9, 14, 16, 22, 24, 27-28, 45-46 and 48)
- Act No. 22 of 2005, prohibiting the recruitment, employment, training and participation of children in camel racing and prescribing penalties for infringing the Act
- Act No. 18 of 2005, establishing a State children's literature and arts prize; the idea behind the prize is to help develop children's literary awareness and encourage children to take an interest in literature and culture
- The Nationality Act No. 38 of 2005, which stipulates the conditions under which children, children of unknown parentage and foundlings are granted nationality or naturalized (arts. 2-4)
- The Family Act No. 22 of 2006, which deals with many issues regarding the protection of children before and after birth, including: child maintenance; care and custody of young children (*hadanah*); the child's right to legal and beneficial ownership of gifted assets (*hibah*) (arts. 88-100, 75-82, 165-187 and 195-196); and the child's right to inherit, as regulated under chapter V of the Act
- Minister for the Civil Service and Housing decision No. 15 of 2005, concerning jobs in which minors may not be employed, in particular those which could be damaging to their health or mental, psychological or moral welfare
- Cabinet decision No. 38 of 2006, amending Cabinet decision No. 8 of 1997, concerning the amount of benefit to be given to the categories listed in the Social Security Act No. 38 of 1995 and the rules on eligibility; the amount of benefit was doubled under the first-mentioned decision

14. Further to the recommendation on the enactment of legislation on children's rights, the Cabinet, at its 37th ordinary meeting in 2006, decided to form a national committee to review and revise the Children's Bill in keeping with the State's obligations under the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto. The committee was chaired by the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, the main State institution for the protection of children's rights. Members included organizations tasked with ensuring the realization of children's rights. From the outset, the committee took the Convention and the Optional Protocols as the reference framework for its activities. Proposed articles were incorporated into the Children's Bill in order to reflect and harmonize the legal norms on children, in particular the definition of the child, to spell out the rights and freedoms to which children are entitled and to establish the procedures for protecting children and the modalities for developing their capacities and abilities.

15. Although the legislative procedures for enactment of the Bill have not yet been completed, the Qatari legislature views children's rights and protection as crucial issues which merit special consideration. Accordingly, it has drafted legislation focusing specifically on the status of children, recognition of their rights, guarantees of their freedoms and the furtherance of their best interests in all circumstances, as indicated above and explained in detail hereunder.

16. In parallel with the enactment of domestic legislation, the State has ratified or acceded to the following international instruments on children's rights and the protection thereof:

- The ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182), of 1999, pursuant to Decree Law No. 29 of 2001 issued on 2 July 2001
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which was ratified on 25 July 2002
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, to which accession was effected pursuant to Decree Law No. 15 of 2003
- The ILO Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour (No. 29), of 1930, which was ratified pursuant to Act No. 26 of 2006

17. In addition to the legislative measures which it has taken in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the State has introduced several executive measures since the initial report was submitted establishing children's rights and child protection institutions. These institutions, to which reference is made in various parts of the present report, are listed hereunder:

- The Shafallah Centre for Children with Special Needs, which was founded in 2001 to provide social, health and comprehensive rehabilitation services for children with special needs
- The Cultural Centre for Motherhood and Childhood, which was founded in 2003 to raise awareness of effective child-raising techniques, design awareness programmes for mothers, identify and devise solutions for children's psychological, learning and social problems and help to resolve children's behavioural problems, such as smoking, drug dependency and violence
- The Family Consultation Centre, which was founded in 2003 to help create and sustain aware families, provide personalized consulting services for the resolution of marital problems, mediate between marriage partners, shield children from the adverse effects of divorce and fill the gap created by a parent's absence
- The Qatari Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children, which was established in 2003 to protect women and children from aberrant practices in the home and society, address the problems arising from such practices, create a legal framework for women's and children's rights, ensure the application of the relevant international instruments and prevent discrimination against women with regard to their rights and responsibilities
- The Qatari Orphans Foundation, which was established in 2003 to provide care and services to orphans, to offer shelter and integrated living services to children of unknown parentage or paternity and to monitor children living with foster families

- The National Office to Combat Human Trafficking, which was established by Supreme Council for Family Affairs decision No. 8 of 2005 to design policies, plans, measures and procedures for combating human trafficking and to liaise with the competent State authorities in the delivery of assistance
- The Qatari Shelter and Humanitarian Welfare Home, which was established by a Cabinet decision of 13 April 2003 to offer a refuge to children, women, domestic servants and others who are victims of human trafficking and provide them with health, social and psychological services
- The Social Rehabilitation Centre, which was established in 2005 by a decision of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs to provide social rehabilitation to target groups and ensure that they know right from wrong through: prevention and treatment of aberrant social behaviour and the risks thereof; the creation of an enabling environment for the development of beneficiaries' abilities; protection from the risks of becoming depressed and isolated; and the provision of social rehabilitation and reintegration services. The Centre also seeks to raise awareness, particularly among target groups, of the dangers of social aberrations and the rights, duties and roles of these groups

### **C. Development aid provided by the State**

18. The State of Qatar accords considerable importance to the provision of development assistance and aid, as is clear from the directives issued by His Highness the beloved Amir of Qatar on the need to support all charitable works and human development initiatives. The State of Qatar has provided development aid to developing countries in many parts of the world and contributed to the realization of several of those countries' economic and social development goals.

19. What is distinctive about the aid which the State of Qatar provides is that it is offered to developing countries on easy terms and without conditions which vary from one country to another. No conditions are imposed with respect to imports and implementation and there is no interference in the general economic policies of the receiving States. The aid is flexible and easy to administer and its geographical scope is extensive; as of the end of 2003, a total of 70 countries in different parts of the world had received aid from Qatar.

20. Development assistance is supplied by governmental and non-governmental organizations. Government assistance is provided by ministries and government bodies. The value of such assistance rose from US\$ 11.2 million in 1995 to US\$ 64.6 million in 2003, an average annual rate of increase of 21.5 per cent. Non-governmental assistance is supplied by private and civil society organizations and foundations, together with associations and charities. The value of such assistance rose from US\$ 11.6 million in 1995 to US\$ 61.9 million in 2003, an average annual rate of increase of 20.5 per cent.

### **D. Remedies provided by national judicial institutions**

21. As evidence of the commitment of the Qatari legislature to protecting children, whether they are the victims or alleged perpetrators of crimes, the legislation in force provides for the establishment of judicial remedies which guarantee the best interests of the child.

**Evidence-gathering and investigations**

22. Bearing in mind the special status of children, the Qatari legislature guarantees special protection to children who are under investigation for committing an offence. At the evidence-gathering stage, a child's statements will be taken down at the Juvenile Police Department, the officers of which are specially trained to deal with children (Juveniles Act, arts. 1 and 25-26). The same rules apply during the investigation stage. Investigations with children are conducted by a special prosecution service, the Juvenile Prosecution Service, which has staff specially trained to deal with children.

**The trial phase**

23. The Juveniles Act No. 1 of 1994 provides for the establishment of special courts, presided over by specialist judges, to hear juvenile offences. The scope and decisions of these courts and the measures that they may take vis-à-vis all social, vocational and health institutions that deal with children are defined in articles 28 to 44 of the Act. They shall be described in detail later in the present report.

24. The legislature has established the procedures for trying children before the juvenile courts, bearing in mind the best interests of the child. For instance, juvenile trials must be conducted in camera and may be attended only by the child's family members, the witnesses, the lawyers and representatives of the competent authorities. Children may be tried in absentia providing that a verdict of guilt is not handed down before they have been informed of what happened during their absence (Juveniles Act, art. 31). The legislature requires children accused of a serious offence to have a lawyer. The courts have discretion to appoint a lawyer for a child charged with a major offence (Juveniles Act, art. 32). Under article 33 of the Act, juvenile courts cannot render a decision on a charge against a child until they have examined the respective reports of the relevant Ministry of the Interior department and the social workers in order to assess the child's physical, mental and psychological state and social circumstances and their bearing on his or her delinquency or risk of delinquency.

**E. National mechanisms for children; the design and implementation of national action plans based on national strategies; and coordination and cooperation between mechanisms that deal with children in implementation of these plans**

25. In its concluding observations on Qatar's initial report, the Committee on the Rights of the Child notes that the Supreme Council for Family Affairs is the lead body in Qatar entrusted with the implementation of the Convention. The Committee recommends that Qatar ensure that the preparation and implementation of its national strategy and national plan of action for children is comprehensive, human rights-based and undertaken through an open, consultative and participatory process and that it give greater attention to intersectoral coordination and cooperation (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 14 and 15).

26. Further to the recommendation contained in paragraph 15 (a) of the Committee's concluding observations (CRC/C/15/Add.163), the Supreme Council of Family Affairs is in the process of finalizing the national strategy for children for 2008-2013. The strategy designers have taken as their reference framework the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the final

document, “A world fit for children”, which the General Assembly, in its resolution S-27/2 of 10 May 2002, adopted at its twenty-seventh special session on children. The strategy is built around three main themes: the survival and health of the child; education and development of the child; and protection of the child.

27. Further to the recommendation contained in paragraph 15 (b) of the Committee’s concluding observations (CRC/C/15/Add.163), and having due regard to the importance of consultation with all parties in the State that deal with children, in May 2005 the Supreme Council for Family Affairs conducted a series of national consultations on the draft national strategy for children with a view to translating the vision and aims of the strategy into a workable and measurable plan of action. All governmental and non-governmental organizations and individual stakeholders, including children, were involved in the consultation process and they submitted a set of procedural objectives for each of the strategy’s three themes. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs recently finalized the action plan for implementation of the national strategy for children, focusing on the strategy’s goals of ensuring children’s survival, health, education, development and full protection.

28. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs is preparing a follow-up and monitoring plan with all the stakeholders. The national action plan clearly identifies the entities responsible for coordination and implementation and the role of relevant international organizations, such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in providing technical assistance for the implementation of the plan in keeping with the State’s obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

29. With regard to coordination and cooperation in monitoring the implementation of the Convention, the preparation of the present report provided an opportunity for all mechanisms that deal with children to work together in the interim between the submission of the initial report (1999) and 2006 to monitor compliance with the Convention. In that connection, in December 2006 the Cabinet decided to set up a national committee to prepare the present report under the chairmanship of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, as the lead institution. The committee members were drawn from a range of government institutions, including the Office of the Amir, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of the Civil Service and Housing, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, the Supreme Education Council, the National Health Authority and the Public Prosecution Department. The National Human Rights Committee, the Qatari Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children and the National Office to Combat Human Trafficking were also represented.

#### **F. Independent monitoring mechanisms established by the State**

30. In its concluding observations on the initial report of Qatar, the Committee on the Rights of the Child refers to “the absence of an independent mechanism with a mandate to monitor and evaluate regularly progress in the implementation of the Convention and to receive and address complaints”. The Committee recommends that the State party establish an independent national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights to monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation of the Convention at the national and local levels. The institution should be

accessible to children and empowered to receive and investigate complaints of violations of child rights in a child-sensitive manner and to address them effectively (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 22 and 23).

31. Further to this recommendation, and in keeping with the nation's commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights, the State of Qatar established the National Human Rights Committee by Decree Law No. 38 of 2002. The Committee is a standing official body which is financially and administratively independent of State institutions, has the status of a special public body corporate - since it is an official committee rather than a non-governmental organization - and has its seat in the city of Doha. The Committee is tasked with promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms in keeping with the Paris Principles on the establishment of national human rights institutions. The Committee's tasks are defined in article 2 of Decree Law No. 38 of 2002 as follows:

- To pursue the objectives set out in the international human rights instruments to which the State has become a party
- To advise the competent State institutions on human rights and related freedoms
- To examine infringements of human rights and freedoms, where they occur, and suggest ways of dealing with them and preventing them from recurring
- To monitor comments by international non-governmental organizations on human rights in the State and liaise with the competent authorities in responding to them
- To contribute to the preparation of the State's human rights reports
- To cooperate with regional organizations devoted to protecting human rights and freedoms
- To raise awareness of human rights and freedoms and promote human rights education

32. In addition to the above, the National Human Rights Committee follows up on complaints about children's rights which come under its purview according to the Act by which it was established and the Paris Principles. The Committee receives, investigates and follows up on such complaints, contacting the State authorities concerned in order to put a stop to any violations of children's rights. The Committee also submits proposals to address or prevent such violations in the future. When the Committee receives a complaint via its 24-hour hotline or website or from complainants or their representatives who come to the Committee's headquarters in person, the complaint is referred to the Complaints Section of the Legal Affairs Department, where it will be examined and the necessary legal process will be initiated. The Department will write to the State executive authorities, as appropriate, or refer the matter to the Social Investigation Section for it to look into the background to the complaint and offer the necessary legal and social assistance. The Committee has received 100 complaints about children's rights in the past three years and dealt with most of them in line with the principle of the best interests of the child.

33. The Committee reviews domestic legislation to assess how far it meets the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocols thereto and other international instruments that deal with children's rights. It encourages the State to ratify or accede to international or regional instruments on children's rights and contributes to the preparation of reports which the State is required to submit to United Nations treaty bodies and committees and regional children's rights institutions. It takes legal action where necessary to protect children's rights and offers children such legal assistance as its mandate allows. It acts as a mediator or conciliator prior to or following the bringing of legal proceedings, seeking amicable settlements of disputes over children's rights.

34. As part of its efforts to raise awareness of children's rights, the Committee has given assistance and advice to the State on the incorporation of children's rights into academic curricula. It has also published books, disseminated information about international instruments and children's rights legislation and run training courses for law enforcement personnel on dealing with children. The Committee has held several training courses and workshops, including, by way of example:

- A seminar for law enforcement personnel on the promotion and protection of human rights, which was held from 9 to 13 May 2004
- A training course on the role of information in the promotion and protection of human rights, which was held from 11 to 25 November 2004
- A training course on action against drugs, which was held from 4 to 10 January 2005
- A training course for Ministry of Education personnel on the concept of human rights, which was held from 13 to 17 November 2005
- A training course on international humanitarian law, which was run in conjunction with the Ministry of Education from 20 to 24 March 2005

35. The Committee submits a quarterly report to the Cabinet on the situation of human rights in the State of Qatar setting out a review of legislation and the situation of human rights, together with a summary of the Committee's activities and its recommendations. A special section of the report is devoted to children's rights. The Committee publishes its annual report on its website ([www.nhcr.qa.org](http://www.nhcr.qa.org)) consistent with the principle of transparency which guides its work and in order to improve public awareness of human rights.

36. In the context of cooperation between the National Human Rights Committee, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other organizations, the Committee pursues cooperation on a continuing basis with OHCHR, with which it held a joint conference in Doha in March 2006 on the dissemination of a human rights culture in the Arab world. The subjects taken up by the conference included children's rights.

### **G. Steps taken by the State to make the principles of the Convention widely known**

37. In order to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, the State published the text of the Convention in issue 13 of the 1995 edition of the Official Gazette. In addition, a number of programmes to integrate the concepts of human and children's rights into educational curricula were implemented, such as a programme to disseminate a children's rights culture in schools. In that connection, by Ministerial Decision No. 1 of 2004, a higher committee was established to disseminate a children's rights culture in State schools. The higher committee, in cooperation with UNESCO drew up a national action plan on the preparation of teaching manuals containing simplified information on the rights and principles set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, together with quotations from the Koran and hadiths from the sunna (tradition) of the Prophet designed to link those rights with those of the child in Islam. The manuals contain teaching aids which use real stories and coloured illustrations to explain rights and violations to children. The programme includes workshops to train school teachers to use the manuals in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Approximately 60 teachers from 11 schools were trained in 2003/04 and 2004/05.

38. The programme managers, in cooperation with UNESCO, are preparing tailor-made teaching manuals that can be used for a wider audience than State schools. The manuals will be introduced in the forthcoming academic year (2007/08).

39. With regard to training, the State has run awareness programmes for groups that work with children on the principles and provisions of the Convention and ways of applying them in practice. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs began implementing these programmes in 2004, in conjunction with OHCHR, drawing on the assistance of Arab experts who are members of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. In 2004, 35 members of the judiciary and 50 doctors and paediatricians were trained, as compared with a total of 30 participants drawn from the police, the Public Prosecution Department, juvenile courts and labour inspection departments in 2005. In 2007, the training will be targeted at mosque imams. Moreover, in May 2005, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs hosted the regional meeting of Arab States and Yemen on follow-up to the recommendations by the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the reports of States of the Arab Gulf region. The event, which was held in cooperation with OHCHR and UNICEF, originated in a desire on the part of the State to make the recommendations widely known and boost the work of the governmental and non-governmental sectors in this domain.

### **H. Cooperation with national civil society institutions in the State**

40. With regard to cooperation and coordination between government organizations and civil society institutions, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, the lead institution for children, liaises and works with children's civil society institutions. The Council decided to establish a liaison committee that would include public interest associations and institutions in order to unify efforts to serve children and guarantee the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. With a view to enhancing coordination between the Council and these institutions, the Council decided that the committee chairman should be a member of the Council's executive board, which in turn includes representatives of governing boards of private institutions that



serve a public interest function and were established by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misnad, the President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs. This is confirmation of the State's commitment to ensuring that civil society institutions participate and engage in a transparent manner in work with government institutions to benefit children.

41. With regard to coordination on executive matters, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs involved civil society institutions in the development of a mechanism to liaise and work with private institutions that have a public interest function. All areas of activity which furthers the best interests of the child are included in this initiative, for example: the development of legislation that deals with children's issues in accordance with the national vision and the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the formulation of the national action plan for children; follow up on implementation of the national action plan; and follow up on, and the preparation of, reports on the implementation of international and regional conventions on children.

42. The preparation of the present report is a practical example of coordination and cooperation between the State and civil society institutions in the preparation of State party reports: the Cabinet, by decision No. 35 of 2006, established a national committee, to draft the present report under the chairmanship of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and with the participation of government institutions and civil society organizations.

## **II. DEFINITION OF THE CHILD (art. 1)**

### **Definition of the child in domestic legislation**

43. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its concluding observations on Qatar's initial report, states that "the minimum ages for marriage and employment are unclear under Qatari law" and recommends that the State party "review its legislation so that the minimum-age requirements for marriage and employment conform to the principles and provisions of the Convention, are gender neutral and are explicit, and ensure that they are enforced by law" (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 28 and 29).

44. The applicable legislation defines a child as "any person below the age of 18 years", a definition that is consistent with the one adopted by the Convention. Article 49 of the Civil Code defines the age of majority as 18 full years and article 1 of the Trusteeship of Minors' Assets Act defines a minor as a child who has not reached his or her majority - majority being reached at the age of 18 full years. Article 189 of the Family Act defines a person with full capacity as "any person who has reached the age of majority of 18 full years and does not have a mental impairment.

45. It should be noted that the Children's Bill, to which reference was made above, will contain a single definition of the child based on the age criterion. This will make it necessary to bring other domestic legislation on children into line with the age definition set out in article 1 of the Convention.

46. With regard to marrying age, the Committee expressed concern that the minimum age for marriage was unclear under Qatari law.

47. Qatari legislation on children recognizes the principle of gender equality. The general terms that it uses apply to both males and females. For instance, the minimum age for marriage is defined in article 17 of the Family Act as 18 years for boys and 16 years for girls. Marriage of persons below this age is not permitted except in conformity with religious and cultural norms which are specific to the State. The Act lays down conditions which limit the possibility of contracting such marriages, including the need to obtain consent from the legal guardian, to ensure that both prospective marriage partners consent to the union and to apply for permission from a competent court. Notwithstanding the difference in the minimum age for marriage for males and females and the exception provided for in the aforementioned article 17, the data on marriage show that the number of early marriages in the State of Qatar is falling, owing to the expansion of education and a desire on the part of girls to pursue higher levels of education. This positive trend is reflected in an increase, over the years, in the average age of males and females embarking on marriage, as shown in the following tables.

**Table 1**

**Percentage of Qataris of 15 years and over, by social status, age group and sex**

Age groups	1986		1997		2004	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
15-19	4.1	0.6	1.8	0.3	1.2	0.4

*Source:* Supreme Council for Family Affairs and the Planning Council, “Men and women in Qatar”, (2004).

**Table 2**

**Average age upon first marriage, by nationality and sex, for the years 1986, 1997 and 2004**

Nationality/ gender indicator	1986				1997				2004			
	Qataris		Non-Qataris		Qataris		Non-Qataris		Qataris		Non-Qataris	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Average age upon first marriage	19.2	24.8	21.0	25.9	23.2	26.5	23.4	27.4	24.8	29.2	24.5	28.9

*Source:* Supreme Council for Family Affairs and the Planning Council, “Men and women in Qatar”, (2004).

48. With regard to care and custody of young children (*hadanah*), article 173 of the Family Act states that the period of *hadanah* ends when a boy reaches 13 and a girl reaches 15, although the courts have discretion to decide otherwise, in the interests of the child, and may extend *hadanah* of a boy until he reaches the age of 15 and of a girl until she marries. Alternatively, a child may be asked to choose between two parties disputing the right to care for him or her, after their suitability for the task has been established.

49. As for the age of criminal responsibility, under article 7 of the Juveniles Act criminal responsibility does not apply to persons below the age of 7 years. The Criminal Code enacted in 2004 cites to article 53 of the Juveniles Act, which prescribes the penalties for offences

committed by young persons. Article 7 of the Juveniles Act states that it applies to persons under the age of 16 and that no person shall be held responsible for committing an offence when he was under 7 full years of age. Based on this position taken by the Qatari legislature, no child under the age of 7 full years - the age of discretion - can be held responsible for committing an offence. Even after this age, the burden of criminal responsibility is still lighter for children. Thus, a child who commits a serious or major offence will be classified as a person at risk of delinquency and the courts may not impose an ordinary sentence but must instead order the measures prescribed in the Juveniles Act (a reprimand; supervision by a guardian; enrolment in vocational training; the imposition of specific obligations; probation; placement in a social reform institution or in a health facility). These measures are designed to reform behaviour not to punish it. They are preventive measures aimed at protecting children in this age group. More details on this subject will be provided in the section on protection below.

50. With regard to the age for voluntary enlistment in the Armed Forces, under article 1 of Act No. 36 of 2006, promulgating the Military Service Act, no one below the age of 20 years may be enlisted as a military officer. Under article 13 of the Act, no one below the age of 18 and over the age of 35 may be enlisted in the other ranks. In this way, the legislature has set the minimum age for military service at 18 full years; no one may be enlisted below this age.

51. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its concluding observations on Qatar's initial report, expresses concern that the minimum age for employment is unclear under Qatari law (CRC/C/15/Add.163, para. 28).

52. In this regard, we refer to the State's ratification, by Decree No. 29 of 2001, of the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

53. The Qatari legislature raised the minimum working age from 15 to 16 years under Act No. 14 of 2004, promulgating the Labour Code. It therefore prohibits persons below this age from engaging in any type of work whatsoever, and goes even further by barring them from entering any place of work. Under article 87 of the Labour Code, restrictions are imposed on the employment of persons who are over 16 and under 18 years of age: consent must be given by the legal guardian, the Department of Labour and also the Ministry of Education if the young person is still at school. In addition, no person under the age of 18 may be employed in work likely to jeopardize his or her health, safety or moral welfare. The Minister for Civil Service Affairs and Housing issued decision No. 15 of 2005 listing the jobs in which young persons may not be employed. In keeping with the legislature's approach to the prohibition of child labour, and as stated in article 10 of the Civil Service Act No. 1 of 2001, persons below 18 years of age may not be employed in ministries and other government institutions.

54. Act No. 22 of 2005 prohibits the recruitment, employment, training and participation of children below 18 years of age in camel racing. More details are found below in the section on protection measures.

55. With regard to capital punishment, according to article 20 of the Qatari Criminal Code No. 11 of 2004 a death penalty may not be imposed on persons who were under 18 when they committed an offence. Thus, the Qatari legislature has established that a person must have been 18 years old when the offence was committed for a sentence of capital punishment to be imposed on that person. No one below this age may be sentenced to capital punishment; alternative

measures must be ordered. A child who commits an offence for which the prescribed penalty is death or life imprisonment shall face 10 years' imprisonment. The legislature has made this provision in recognition of the fact that capital punishment is a radical measure which precludes any hope of reform on the part of the guilty party and would therefore be inconsistent with the legislature's objective of correcting the behaviour of young persons and avoiding a rush to despair of their reform.

### **III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)**

#### **A. Non-discrimination**

56. In its concluding observations, the Committee expresses concern about "discrimination against females and children born out of wedlock under existing personal status law (e.g. in inheritance, custody and guardianship)" and "at the disparities in the enjoyment of economic and social rights, particularly the rights to health and education, experienced by children living in rural areas and non-national children". The Committee recommends that the State party "take effective measures, including enacting or rescinding legislation where necessary, to prevent and eliminate discrimination on grounds of sex and birth in all fields of civil, economic, political, social and cultural life" and undertake "all possible measures to reconcile fundamental human rights with Islamic texts" (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 30, 31 and 32).

57. The principle of non-discrimination is a general and binding principle which is enunciated in article 34 of the Qatari Constitution as follows: "Citizens have equal public rights and duties." The Constitution applies to all groups in Qatari society without discrimination - men, women and children - and uses the general term "citizens", which applies to both sexes. It also recognizes that citizens have equal rights and duties, without any discrimination. Article 35 of the Constitution states that all persons are equal before the law and that there can be no discrimination between them on grounds of sex, origin, language or religion. Thus, women and men are afforded a full range of rights and duties on the basis of equality. Article 42 of the Constitution guarantees women political rights by recognizing their right to vote and to stand for election. Indeed, women have exercised this right by standing and voting in municipal elections. The principle of non-discrimination against women is clearly articulated in Qatari laws, including the Trusteeship of Minors' Assets Act No. 40 of 2004, which grants women the right to act as tutors on behalf of minors without any discrimination on grounds of their gender. The Act states that one or more males or females may act as tutors, provided that they are honest and eligible, possess full capacity, are trustworthy and profess the same religion as the minor. Similarly, under article 93 of the Labour Code No. 14 of 2004, women are entitled to the same pay as men for performing the same work and must be given the same training and promotion opportunities. Having due regard to women's social, health and physical circumstances, the legislature prohibits the employment of women in work that is dangerous, physically punishing or hazardous to their health or moral welfare or in jobs or at times other than those specified by the competent authorities (arts. 94-95). It also prohibits employers from terminating a woman's contract when she marries or takes maternity leave (art. 98). In this connection, the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004, defines a person with special needs as "any person who suffers from a total or partial permanent disability affecting any of his or her senses or bodily, psychological or mental capacities such as to limit that person's ability to learn, acquire a skill or work". The Act guarantees all persons with special needs (men, women and children) the right, inter alia, to education, training and medical, psychological, cultural and social services, together

with access to equipment and means of transport that will help them to move from place to place and maintain contact with their immediate environment. These rights are afforded without regard for the ethnic origin, sex, colour, language or religion of the beneficiary. The Compulsory Education Act No. 25 of 2001 furthermore states that “education is compulsory and free of charge for all children, from the beginning of the primary stage until the end of the intermediate stage or until the child reaches the age of 18 years, whichever of the two comes first. The Ministry shall make the necessary provision for such education”. The Act therefore guarantees all children the right to compulsory education without any discrimination on any ground whatever.

58. With regard to children born out of wedlock, Qatari legislation does not deny children born out of wedlock the rights afforded to legitimate children. Indeed, the legislature safeguards the lives of such children, even vis-à-vis their own mothers. Article 303 of the Criminal Code, for example, prescribes a term of up to three years’ imprisonment for a woman who deliberately kills a child with whom she became pregnant out of wedlock. It also guarantees educational, health and inheritance rights to children born out of wedlock. Under article 297 of the Family Act, such children have the right to inherit from their mother or her relatives, where the identity of the mother is known but the father has not acknowledged paternity. The Social Security Act No. 38 of 1995 grants children of unknown parentage the right to a subsistence benefit, the amount of which was doubled under Cabinet decision No. 38 of 2006.

59. With regard to children of unknown parentage, the Registration of Births and Deaths Act No. 5 of 1982, as amended by Act No. 6 of 1992, regulates the procedures for dealing with a foundling of unknown parentage. The child must be brought to the nearest police station, where a report will be written and submitted to a sharia court, which will choose a name for the child and fictitious names for the parents. A birth certificate will then be drawn up. In article 85 of the Family Act, the Qatari legislature grants such children the right to maintenance, which will be paid by the State if the child has no assets or a benefactor to care for him; the right to maintenance is also guaranteed under the Social Security Act. The amount of the subsistence benefit allocated to such children was increased by Cabinet decision No. 38 of 2006. Since these children are classified as foundlings born in Qatar, they are also entitled to Qatari nationality, unless otherwise provided in article 2 of the Nationality Act.

60. With regard to a woman’s right to transmit her nationality to her child, the Qatari Nationality Act No. 38 of 2005 states that nationality is transmitted by descent through the father. However, in order to protect Qatari mothers, article 2 of the Act provides that the child of a Qatari mother is entitled to acquire Qatari nationality. With a view to protecting children of Qatari mothers and foreign fathers in the event of the fathers’ death or his leaving his wife and the country for good, the Qatari legislature decided to grant such children the right to reside permanently with the mother and to be issued with Qatari travel documents. These children are treated as Qataris for the purposes of education, medical treatment and employment and, under article 6 of the Marriage to Aliens Act No. 21 of 1989, are given priority for naturalization when they reach their majority.

61. With regard to the women’s right to care and custody of her young children (*hadanah*), articles 165 to 188 of the Family Act state that women take precedence in this matter and are entitled to receive maintenance payments until their child reaches the age when the period of *hadanah* comes to an end. The child’s father must provide or rent a suitable home for the mother.

Article 169 of the Act stipulates that women have priority when it comes to recognition of the right to *hadanah*. This provision reflects the view that it is preferable for the woman to care for and raise young children, given how much children need their mothers. The legislature authorizes mothers to travel with their children, provided that there is nothing to militate against it. If the father forbids her from travelling, then a court will decide whether or not she may go. No one other than the father or grandfather may travel with the child during the period of *hadanah* without the mother's consent. Thus, the legislature, in the provisions on *hadanah*, puts the best interests of the child before all other considerations. It also stipulates the criteria which the person entrusted with *hadanah* must meet. These criteria include: trustworthiness; the capacity to raise a child and create an environment conducive to a proper education; and an ability to protect a child from delinquency and offer him or her the best treatment and education and a grounding that will enable the child to face the future confidently. While the legislature defines the age at which *hadanah* ends as 13 years for boys and 15 years for girls, it does allow courts the discretion to extend *hadanah* if they deem it to be in the interests of the child or the child makes a choice between two disputing parties after their suitability for the task has been verified. Furthermore, having due regard to the special needs of children, the legislature allows for the continuation of *hadanah* in respect of females.

62. The subject of women's inheritance rights is covered in articles 241 to 301 of the Family Act, which safeguard the inheritance rights of both male and female children. Children are entitled to their share of an estate in accordance with the sharia. In fact, under article 294 of the Act, a larger share of an estate will be set aside for the foetus in the mother's womb, pending discovery of the child's sex. Women, as wives, sisters, daughters, granddaughters and grandmothers, are also entitled to inherit the share assigned to them under the sharia.

63. The rules on inheritance strike a balance between males and females; sometimes, the shares are the same, sometimes the male receives more and sometimes the female receives more. In some cases, the female may inherit without the male inheriting anything. The part of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) that deals with quota shares of an inheritance prescribed by the Koran (*fara'id*) lists 34 cases in which a female is entitled to different shares in an estate. The rule "to the male the equivalent of the portion of two females" does not always apply. There are 10 cases in which the female receives a share equivalent to that of the male, 10 where she receives more and 10 where she takes precedence and receives the entire estate. There are only four cases in which the male receives a share equivalent to that of two females. In the following examples, we shall explain all the conditions of inheritance applicable to males and females.

### **Equal shares in inheritance for both sexes**

Inheritance by a father and a mother: each parent receives one sixth of the estate, in keeping with the words of Almighty God: "And to each of his parents a sixth of the inheritance, if he have a son" (Koran, verse 11 of the chapter entitled *Al-Nisa'* (Women)). Thus, if a person dies and is survived by his father, mother and son, the father shall receive one sixth of the estate as his quota share, because there is a direct heir, the son. The mother shall also receive one sixth of the estate on the same basis and son shall receive the remainder because he is the closest agnate relative to the deceased.

In the absence of a direct heir, the brother and sister on the mother's side will receive an equal share of the estate. As Almighty God says: "If a man or woman has no direct heir but has a brother or a sister, to each of the two a sixth; if they be more than two, they shall share a third equally" (Koran, verse 12 of the chapter entitled *Al-Nisa'* (Women)).

### **A greater share in an estate for a female**

64. In some cases, the female inherits twice as much as the male. As Almighty God says: "And if there be more than two women, then theirs is two-thirds of the inheritance, and if there be one, then the half. And to each of his parents a sixth of the inheritance, if he have a son" (Koran, verse 11 of the chapter entitled *Al-Nisa'* (Women)).

The following are some examples:

- A person dies leaving a daughter and a father. The father will receive one sixth, which is much less than the daughter or daughters would receive, but no one will say that this is an affront to the father's dignity.
- A person dies leaving a daughter and two full brothers. The daughter will receive one half of the estate, because there are no other agnate relatives in the same line, and the two full brothers will receive an equal share of the remainder as the closest agnate relatives of the deceased. In other words, each full brother will receive one quarter and thus the share given to the male is less than that of the female.
- A person dies leaving two daughters and two full paternal uncles. The two daughters will receive an equal share of two thirds of the estate as prescribed by the Koran, because there are two of them and they have no agnate relatives in their line. Thus, they will each receive one third and the two paternal uncles will receive the remainder as the closest agnate relatives. This means that the uncles will receive one sixth, and thus their share will be less than that given to the females.
- If a woman dies leaving a husband and a daughter, the daughter will inherit one half of the estate and the husband one quarter. Thus, the daughter will inherit twice as much as the father.

### **Cases where a female inherits and a male does not**

65. There are cases where females inherit and males do not; the following are some examples:

- A person dies leaving a son, a daughter and two full brothers. The son and the daughter receive the entire estate. The son will receive a share equivalent to that of two females and the two brothers will receive nothing, because direct heirs have precedence. Hence, the daughter inherits and the brothers do not.
- A man dies leaving a grandmother (his mother's mother) and a grandfather (his mother's father). The grandmother will inherit everything because she is recognized as the "true grandmother" under the rules of succession. In other words she will inherit a share of one sixth according to the Koranic rule (*fara'id*) and the remainder by

redistribution (*radd*). The grandfather of the deceased, her husband, will receive nothing, even though his relationship to the deceased is of the same degree as that of the grandmother. She will inherit the entire estate because she is a Koranic heir and the grandfather is a relative on the mother's side. Relatives on the mother's side do not inherit alongside Koranic heirs.

- A person dies leaving a daughter, a full sister, a half brother of his father, the son of a full brother, the son of a half brother of his father, a paternal uncle and the son of a paternal uncle, the full sister and the daughter shall be deemed to have the same status as a full brother and shall exclude from the inheritance all those whom a full brother would have excluded. Thus, the daughter and the full sister will each inherit one half of the estate as Koranic heirs and will exclude all the males from the inheritance, namely, the half-brother of the father, the sons of brothers and sisters and the paternal uncles and their sons.

66. With regard to disparities in the enjoyment by non-Qatari children of economic and social rights, in particular the right to health and education, the State of Qatar, through its legal system, the management of its public administration and oversight of private institutions, guarantees children the equal enjoyment of all their rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child without any discrimination on the basis of language, religion, belief or race or between rural and urban areas. The instruments affording rights to children in general, which apply to males and females throughout the State and to non-Qatari children, are implemented through legal and practical measures aimed at ensuring the enjoyment of these rights. With regard to the right to education, article 25 of the Permanent Constitution of Qatar states that education is a fundamental pillar of social progress and that the State shall endeavour to promote education. In keeping with the principle of equality, article 34 of the Constitution states that all citizens have equal public rights and duties. Article 35 stipulates that all persons are equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination between them based on sex, origin, language or religion. Article 49 states that every citizen has a right to education and the State must provide compulsory education free of charge. Article 2 of the Compulsory Education Act states that compulsory education must be provided free of charge to every person of 6 years and above, beginning at the primary stage and continuing until the end of the intermediate stage or when a person reaches the age of 18 years, whichever of the two comes first. Under article 3 of the Act, a person responsible for a child is legally obliged to enrol the child in school when he or she reaches the age of 6 and must notify the competent ministry (the Ministry of Education) of any change in the child's place of residence or address (art. 5). Failure to meet these obligations will result in the imposition of a fine, which will be doubled in the event of a repeat offence (art. 11). Since the right to education is a fundamental and an inalienable right afforded to all citizens without distinction, in particular children, and since the Compulsory Education Act does exist, talk of disparities cannot be reconciled with the existing state of affairs and the laws in force.

67. With regard to measures to ensure that there are no disparities in the educational opportunities offered to non-Qatari children, the State introduced legal measures to open up education to non-Qataris and grant many of them the same rights as Qataris. Ministry of Education decisions and regulations establish the criteria for enrolment in schools at all stages of education, including free government schools, by foreign children of Qatari women, children of foreign workers employed in ministries, State institutions, public entities and enterprises in which the State has a stake of not less than 50 per cent and the children of diplomats employed in



embassies in Qatar. In order to protect the educational rights of children in other groups, namely, children of private sector employees, the State authorizes the establishment of private schools and schools run by expatriate communities. It also provides them with every possible facility in terms of residence cards for teachers and school employees and the import of textbooks and other materials. It allocates land for the construction of such schools and offers them financial and technical assistance. As further confirmation of the State's determination to offer educational opportunities to non-Qatari children of private sector employees, the conditions on school enrolment allow such children to enrol in government schools in areas where there are no private schools or equivalent classes.

68. The Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 was enacted, in keeping with the principle of non-discrimination endorsed by the State, in order to safeguard the rights of the most vulnerable children. Under articles 1 and 2 of the Act, children in this category are granted special rights in addition to the general rights accorded to all groups, such as the right to education and rehabilitation services free of charge and access to all the resources and equipment which persons in their condition need. Pursuant to Cabinet decision No. 17 of 1997, foreign children with disabilities are afforded protection by being granted exemptions from school fees, from the costs of textbooks and from other related expenses.

69. With regard to the right to health, the Constitution affirms that the State will care for the rising generation, shield it from immorality and protect it from exploitation and the evils of physical, mental and spiritual neglect, creating conditions suited to the realization of its potential in all domains, based on a sound education (art. 22). The State also has responsibility for protecting public health and providing resources to prevent and treat diseases and epidemics (art. 23). In conformity with the Constitution, State health institutions offer their services free of charge to Qatari children throughout the country without any disparities or differences in the standard or efficiency of the services offered in different locations. These services range from prenatal programmes to paediatric care for newborn children, the prevention of infectious diseases and immunization. A health card is issued for all newborn children to make it easier to monitor them and keep records on their general health. Qatari health institutions also offer services and issue health cards to foreign children of expatriates residing in Qatar. They do not charge fees for preventive health services for mothers and children, school health services, treatment of infectious diseases and treatment in emergency and accident cases where the patient needs to be hospitalized. The Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004 stipulates that additional services, including preventive health services, medical treatment, health and psychological care and medical reports, must be offered free of charge to children with special needs and their carers to avert any problems arising from their physical, mental and psychological condition.

## **B. Best interests of the child**

70. In its concluding observations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expresses concern "that in actions concerning children, such as in matters relating to family law, the general principle of the best interests of the child contained in article 3 of the Convention is not always a primary consideration". The Committee recommends that the State party "review its legislation and administrative measures to ensure that article 3 of the Convention is duly reflected therein and that this principle is taken into account when administrative, policy, court or other decisions are made" (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 35 and 36). We referred above to the sustained efforts of

the State to enact legislation with a view to building a democracy based on the rule of law and to responding to the Committee's observations on the principle of the best interests of the child. That the Qatari legislature is fully committed to applying this principle as effectively as possible is clear from the provisions on children contained in the laws, regulations and procedures that were introduced after the initial report of Qatar was submitted to the Committee. What follows is a description of how these laws give effect to the principle of the best interests of the child.

71. The Family Act stipulates that fathers must maintain their children. The Act extended the statutory maintenance period, in the best interests of children, until marriage for a girl and working age for a boy, unless the boy is still in education (Family Act, art. 75). Higher priority is accorded to maintenance of children and wives than to any other kind of maintenance (art. 83). The Act guarantees the best interests of foundlings of unknown parentage by requiring the State to maintain them if they have no assets of their own or a benefactor to care for them (art. 85). Proof of filiation, an important issue in the protection of children's rights and interests, is made contingent upon the production of a marriage contract, a declaration of paternity or witness testimony (art. 86). The Act establishes time limits for maintenance payments for children and wives and requires the courts to observe these time limits, in the best interests of children and for the sake of their protection, when hearing cases of parental separation (art. 102). The Act deals in a comprehensive manner with *hadanah*, a subject of the utmost importance in the raising and rearing of children and the creation of a healthy and suitable family environment. *Hadanah* is defined as "maintaining, raising, guiding and caring for a child, in his or her best interests". These are duties which the parents must assume for as long as they are married to one another and which otherwise devolve upon the mother (art. 165). The Act emphasizes that *hadanah* is a continuous right which the parent and minor share between them, with the minor's right taking precedence (art. 166). Hence, the Act makes the child the central focus of the person entrusted with *hadanah*. When a court issues a judgement assigning *hadanah* to any person, it will always take into account the best interests of the child, choosing the person best placed to show the child affection, provide a suitable environment, shield the child from delinquency, offer the best kind of care, education and preparation for the future, teach the child important moral values and meet the other criteria set out in article 170 of the Act. In order to ensure the best interests of children in terms of the care that they receive, the Act allows mothers to retain custody (*hadanah*) of a boy up until the age of 13 years and of a girl up until the age of 15 years. It also grants the courts the power to extend *hadanah* of a boy up to the age of 15 years and of a girl until she marries. The courts may also ask children to select the person that they want to care for them (art. 173). The Act supports the right of *hadanah* by requiring the father to pay maintenance to the woman entrusted with care and custody of the child (art. 178), in addition to providing a home, money for rental of a home or a portion of the rent on a home which the carer shares with her parents (art. 181). As for visiting rights, the Act regulates the *hadanah* process in keeping with the best interests of the child. In order to preserve family ties and cohesion and allow fathers a role in guiding their children, the Act grants fathers the right to visit their children throughout the period of *hadanah*. Visits are arranged by agreement between the parents or pursuant to a court order (art. 186). Disputes over visiting rights are deemed as urgent cases before the courts (art. 187). The Act allows children to accept a deed of gift (*hibah*) for themselves, provided that they have a legal guardian (art. 195) but does allow them to make such gifts to others before reaching the age of 18 years (art. 197). The purpose of these provisions is to guarantee the best interests of the child. Under the Act, a competent court may annul a deed of gift (*hibah*) by which a father shows favour to one child over another for no good reason (art. 204). The aim of this provision is

to preserve family unity and protect the rights and interests of the other children. As for tutorship arrangements, with a view to ensuring the best interests of the child, the Act provides that the tutor must agree to the arrangement and may only revoke it with the permission of the courts (art. 217). Under the Act, a share in an estate must be set aside for a foetus in the mother's womb (art. 294), while a child born out of wedlock has the right to inherit from the mother and her relatives (art. 297).

72. Article 2 of the Trusteeship of Minors' Assets Act protects children and their best interests by recognizing the legal validity of all financial transactions that benefit children, declaring all transactions damaging to children as null and void and allowing for the annulment of transactions that neither benefit nor damage them. Under article 42 of the Act transactions which the tutor carries out using the child's assets are subject to authorization by the courts and prior consultation with the General Authority for Minors' Affairs. Under article 5 of the Act, the person responsible for the minor must be trustworthy and capable of managing the child's affairs. The competent courts, acting on their own motion or at the request of the General Authority for Minors' Affairs or any other party, may revoke, terminate or suspend guardianship or transfer it to another person (art. 14). The Act reflects a desire on the part of the Qatari legislature to guarantee the best interests of children by granting them limited or full capacity, upon reaching the age of 16 years, to manage or trade all or some of their assets, subject to authorization by the competent court and prior consultation with the General Authority for Minors' Affairs (art. 44). Minors must submit annual accounts on their dealings to the General Authority for Minors' Affairs (art. 45). The courts may restrict or revoke authorization on their own motion or at the request of the Authority or a concerned party, after consulting the minor (art. 46).

73. As explained below, the establishment of the General Authority for Minors' Affairs by Amiri Decree No. 66 of 2004, issued on 14 December 2004, was a great step forward, reflecting as it did a wish on the part of the State to support, consolidate and protect children's rights and guarantee and promote children's best interests in the disposal of their assets. The Authority was set up to preserve and develop the assets and property rights of minors and persons of similar status in order to guarantee these persons a decent life and benefit them in all aspects of their affairs. Tutorship is offered to minors or unborn children who do not have a male guardian or tutor. The Authority also oversees transactions performed by guardians, tutors, agents and representatives and scrutinizes the manner in which these persons carry out their obligations. It looks after the general affairs of minors and persons with a similar status, monitoring their social, domestic, health and educational situation, receiving, preserving, managing and investing their assets, opening bank accounts for them, maintaining records on them and acting on their behalf vis-à-vis domestic and foreign organizations.

74. Through the Labour Code the legislature protects and promotes the best interests of the child by stipulating the conditions under which persons of 16 years of age may be employed: the father or guardian must give his consent; a work permit must be issued by the labour department of the Ministry of the Civil Service and Housing (art. 87); permission must be obtained from the Ministry of Education if the child is still at school; and the child must undergo an annual medical check-up to determine whether he is fit for work (art. 88). While the Act authorizes the employment of children under the aforementioned conditions, it also imposes rules and restrictions to prevent any damage to their health and moral welfare (arts. 87, 89 and 90). In addition, Minister for the Civil Service and Housing decision No. 15, issued on

25 September 2005, lists the jobs in which children of this age may not be employed. The Act extends protection to expectant mothers by requiring employers to give them 35 days of maternity leave on full pay in the period before and after delivery (art. 96) and one hour of each working day for breastfeeding (art. 97).

75. The legislature enacted a special law, the Juveniles Act, to deal with the subject of offences committed entirely or in part by minors or juveniles who have not reached their majority and to establish appropriate penalties in order to protect children and their best interests. The legislature reiterates that approach in the current Criminal Code, which states that minors below 7 years of age are not criminally liable for any offences that they commit. Children between the ages of 7 and 16 who commit serious or major offences are only subject to the measures prescribed in the Juveniles Act. A death sentence may not be imposed on a person who was under 18 when he or she committed an offence (art. 20). In line with the legislature's policy of protecting children and their interests, a section of the Code has been devoted to the offences of "endangerment of children", which are categorized as "social offences". A term of imprisonment and/or a fine will be imposed for taking a newborn child from a legal guardian, concealing or swapping a child with another or claiming that a child belongs to persons other than the real parents in the event of a stillbirth (art. 268). Penalties will be imposed on any person responsible for the protection or welfare of a minor below 16 years of age who endangers or abandons the minor in a deserted place (art. 269). The Code prescribes a term of imprisonment for committing a sexual offence against a female below the age of 16 years, even with her consent (art. 280). The penalty is increased if the perpetrator of the offence is an ascendant of the victim, the person responsible for her education or care or someone with power over her (art. 279). Similar provisions apply when the victim of such an offence is an under-age male (arts. 283-285). The Code punishes persons who exploit children of up to 16 years of age in making, importing, publishing, acquiring or transporting, for the purposes of its exploitation, distribution or sale, an indecent book, publication, picture, image, film or object (art. 292). It also criminalizes and severely punishes incitement of a boy or girl below the age of 16 years to engage in depravity, debauchery and prostitution (art. 297) or to commit suicide (art. 305). Penalties are prescribed for women who kill children born to them out of wedlock (art. 303) or procure an abortion (art. 317), for battering a woman in order to make her miscarry (art. 315) and for deliberately inducing an abortion, with or without the woman's consent (art. 316). The Code criminalizes and prescribes severe penalties for abducting or unlawfully depriving minors of either sex of their liberty (art. 318) and for deceiving or exploiting the inexperience, neediness or feelings of a minor for the purpose of taking a moveable asset from him or her (art. 356). The penalty is increased if the culprit is the victim's legal guardian, the custodian of his or her interests or a person with power over him or her.

76. With a view to safeguarding the rights and interests of minors under the age of 16, a provision of the Code of Criminal Procedures requires guardians to submit claims or complaints on behalf of such minors whenever necessary for the institution of criminal proceedings (art. 5). The Code further states that, where necessary, a minor under the age of 16 who is the victim of an offence shall be placed in the care of a trustworthy person or an officially accredited welfare institution until his case has been decided (art. 213). In recognition of children's right to life, maternal care and breastfeeding, in their own best interests, the Act stipulates that where a pregnant woman is sentenced to death on the basis of retaliation (*qisas*) or a fixed penalty (*hadd*) under the sharia, execution of the sentence shall be deferred until two years after the child is born to allow for breastfeeding. If the punishment is one imposed by the court at its discretion (*ta'zir*),

the death sentence may be commuted to a term of imprisonment (art. 345). Moreover, where a man and his wife with a child under 16 in their care are sentenced to imprisonment, even for different offences, and have never served time before, execution of the sentence of one of the spouses may be deferred until the other one is released (art. 356).

77. According to the Nationality Act, a naturalized Qatari is a person born in Qatar or abroad to a father who is a naturalized Qatari. A person of unknown parentage born in Qatar will be considered a naturalized Qatari and a foundling born in Qatar, unless otherwise provided in article 2 of the Act. Nationality is transmitted to minor children who live with a naturalized Qatari father. It may also be granted to children not living with that parent, five years from the date on which they first take up residence in Qatar, provided that they had not reached their majority when the application was submitted (art. 4). Children have the option of formally reverting to their original nationality upon reaching their majority.

78. The Compulsory Education Act is a concrete example of how the legislature applies the principle of the best interests of the child. It guarantees children the right to compulsory education free of charge. The Act was written to give effect to the rights and protect the interests of children by offering them a proper grounding and preparation for the future and imposing specific obligations on both their guardians and the State.

### **C. The right to life, survival and development**

79. In its concluding observations, the Committee expresses serious concern that under the 1994 Juveniles Act there is a possibility that the death penalty or life imprisonment may be imposed for offences committed by persons when they were under 18 years old, contrary to articles 6 and 37 (a) of the Convention. The Committee strongly recommends that the State party take immediate steps to ensure that the law prohibits the imposition of the death penalty or life imprisonment for crimes committed by persons under 18 (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 37 and 38).

80. The Qatari legislature provides guarantees and support for the child's right to life in many different laws. Under article 20 of the Criminal Code, a death sentence cannot be imposed on a person who was under 18 when he committed an offence. This provision addresses the loophole in the Juveniles Act. There are also provisions protecting the foetus from deliberate harm inflicted by the mother or a third party, even by means of incitement. Penalties are prescribed for mothers who kill children born to them out of wedlock (art. 303) or who procure their own abortion (art. 317), for battering a woman for the purpose of causing her to miscarry (art. 315) and for deliberately inducing an abortion, with or without the woman's consent (art. 316). The Code makes it an offence to incite a minor to commit suicide (art. 305). A section of the Code deals with the offences of "endangerment of children", which are categorized as "social offences", and prescribes penalties for taking a newborn child away from a legal guardian, concealing or swapping a child with another or making a fraudulent claim about a child's true parentage, where a child is stillborn (art. 268). Penalties will be imposed on any person responsible for the protection or welfare of a minor below 16 years of age who endangers the minor or abandons him or her in a deserted place (art. 269). The Code prescribes a term of imprisonment for engaging in a sexual act with a girl under the age of 16, even with her consent (art. 280). The penalty is increased if the perpetrator of the offence is an ascendant of the victim, the person responsible for her education or care or someone with power over her (art. 279). The same provisions apply when the victim is an under-age male (arts. 283-285). The Code increases

the penalty for exploitation of children of up to 16 years of age in the production, importing, publication or transportation, for the purposes of its exploitation, distribution or sale, of an indecent book, publication, picture, image, film or object (art. 292). It also criminalizes and severely punishes incitement of boys or girls below the age of 16 years to engage in depravity, debauchery and prostitution (art. 297). The Code stipulates that where a pregnant woman is sentenced to death on the basis of retaliation (*qisas*) or a fixed penalty (*hadd*) under the sharia, execution of the sentence shall be deferred until two years after the child is born to allow for breastfeeding. If the punishment is one imposed by the court at its discretion (*ta`zir*), the death sentence may be commuted to a term of imprisonment (art. 345). Moreover, where a man and his wife with a child under 16 in their care are sentenced to imprisonment, even for different offences, and have never served time before, execution of the sentence of one of the spouses may be deferred until the other one is released (art. 356).

#### **D. Respect for the views of the child**

81. In its concluding observations, the Committee expresses concern that “traditional attitudes towards children in society may limit the respect for their views, especially within the family and schools”. The Committee recommends that the State party continue “to promote and facilitate within the family, the school, institutions, the courts, and administrative bodies respect for the views of children and their participation in all matters affecting them, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention”, “develop skills-training programmes in community settings for parents, teachers, social workers and local officials so that they can learn how to help children to express their informed views and opinions and to take those views into consideration; and seek assistance from, among others, UNICEF” (CRC/C/15/Add. 163, paras. 39 and 40).

82. The Qatari legislature affirms the vital importance of the right to freedom of opinion and expression in several laws:

- The Constitution guarantees protection of the right to freedom of opinion and scientific research (art. 47) and recognizes the right to freedom of assembly (art. 44) and association (art. 45), freedom of the press, printing and publication (art. 48) and freedom of worship for all men, women, children and adults (art. 50), without discrimination based on sex, race, religion or belief.
- In keeping with these fundamental constitutional rights and freedoms, legislation has been enacted to improve consultation with children on various matters and allow them the freedom to express their views and make choices. With regard to *hadanah*, the Family Act provides that a competent court may consult a child on the selection of a carer and the decision whether or not to remain in the care of the mother (art. 173). The Act grants children the right to state their views on whether to accept a deed of gift (*hibah*), provided that they have a legal guardian (art. 195).
- The Trusteeship of Minors’ Assets Act grants children of 16 years of age who are able to express their views on management of their assets absolute or limited authority to manage or trade all or some of their assets, subject to authorization by the courts and prior consultation with the General Authority for Minors’ Affairs. A court may not restrict or revoke authorization once it has been given without first consulting the child (art. 48).

- The legislature, in drafting the Persons with Special Needs Act, did not neglect the right of persons with special needs to freedom of opinion and expression. The Act requires all stakeholders to involve persons with special needs in decisions that affect them (art. 9/2) and offers these persons special rights and privileges in addition to those afforded by existing laws.

#### **IV. CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS**

##### **A. Name, nationality and preservation of identity (arts. 7 and 8)**

###### **(i) Name of the child**

83. Under article 4 of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act No. 5 of 1982, births must be reported to the authorities within 15 days. Details of the child's first and family names must be provided.

###### **(ii) Identity of the child**

84. Under article 4 of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act the information to be provided when reporting a birth must include the date of birth, the sex and first and family names of the child, the names, nationalities, religion, place of residence and occupation of the parents, the name of the doctor or licensed practitioner who attended the delivery and the name, age, sex, religion, occupation, place of residence and official capacity of the person reporting the birth.

###### **(iii) Nationality of the child**

85. In its concluding observations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child states that it "is concerned that the 1961 Nationality Act does not grant citizenship to children of Qatari women married to non-nationals, as it does where the father is Qatari". The Committee recommends "that the State party ensure the right of a child to a nationality without discrimination on the basis of either parent's sex, in accordance with articles 2 and 7 of the Convention" (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 41 and 42).

86. Further to these recommendations, the legislature enacted a number of laws, such as the Nationality Act No. 38 of 2005, article 1 of which states that "Any child born to a Qatari father shall be deemed a Qatari national". Article 4, paragraph 1, of the Act states that Qatari nationality shall be granted to the children who are living with a naturalized Qatari in Qatar when he is naturalized and to children born to him thereafter. Moreover, minor children of a naturalized Qatari who are living abroad are entitled to acquire Qatari nationality five years from the date on which they first take up residence in Qatar, provided that they had not reached their majority when they submitted the application. Under article 2 of the Act priority for naturalization is accorded to the children of a Qatari woman, whether male or female, out of humanitarian considerations. The final paragraph of article 2 of the Nationality Act states that Qatari nationality shall be granted to persons of unknown parentage who are born in Qatar. Such persons will be deemed naturalized citizens of unknown parentage born in Qatar unless evidence is provided to the contrary.

### **B. Freedom of expression**

87. The right to freedom of expression is a constitutional right accorded to every citizen or resident of Qatar. This right is affirmed in article 47 of the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar, which provides: “Freedom of opinion and of scientific research is guaranteed under the conditions determined by law.” Since this provision applies to adults and children alike, the legislature has not made any special provision granting this right specifically to children. In practice, children in Qatar are guaranteed this right. Their views on children’s programmes delivered by the audiovisual and print media are garnered through school and university assemblies.

### **C. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art. 14)**

88. Qatar does not deny freedom of opinion and conscience to anyone, including children, as is clear from the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar, article 50 of which provides: “Freedom of worship is guaranteed to all subject to the law and the need to protect public order and public morals.” The Qatari legislature punishes defamation of revealed religions and the vandalization, destruction or desecration of buildings or of objects contained therein which are used to perform the rites of a revealed religion (Criminal Code, art. 256).

89. Reports by international, regional and national organizations confirm that freedom of thought, conscience and religion is guaranteed by the State. They make no mention of any obstacles confronting any confessional group in Qatar wishing to perform a religious rite. Although Qatar as an Islamic State does not allow Muslim children to convert to another religion, nor does it compel other children to abandon their own faith and embrace Islam, since the Almighty God says: “There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error” (verse 256 of the chapter of the Koran entitled *Al-Baqrah* (The Cow)).

### **D. Freedom of association and of peaceful assembly**

90. The right of individuals to freedom of association is closely bound up with the right to personal freedom, freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. This right is guaranteed in article 45 of the Constitution, which states: “Freedom of association is guaranteed under the conditions laid down in the present Constitution.” The Private Associations and Institutions Act No. 12 of 2004 regulates the exercise of this right by establishing conditions on membership of associations by Qataris and foreigners and the legal personality, financial management and dissolution of associations, together with penalties for infringing the Act. Freedom of assembly is guaranteed under article 44 of the Constitution, which states: “The right of citizens to freedom of assembly is guaranteed by law.” The Public Meetings and Demonstrations Act No. 18 of 2004 regulates the exercise by children or adults of the right to peaceful assembly. The Act does not deny children the enjoyment of this right.

### **E. Protection of privacy**

91. The legislature guarantees the right to privacy. As stated in article 37 of the Constitution: “Privacy is inviolable and there can be no interference in the private life, family affairs, home, correspondence or any other sphere where the honour or reputation of individuals will be affected, except in accordance with the law and the procedures established therein.” The Code of



Criminal Procedures No. 23 of 2004 contains several provisions on the protection of children's privacy. For example, article 3 defines the offences for which a prosecution may only be brought on the basis of a complaint, and provides that where an offence is committed against a child, the complaint may be submitted by a person acting on the child's behalf. Article 5 of the Code provides that where the victim of an offence listed in article 3 of the Code is under 16 or has a mental disability, the complaint may be submitted by the victim's legal guardian. If the offence is committed against the victim's property, the testamentary tutor or guardian may submit the complaint. If the victim is a body corporate, the complaint may be submitted by a legal representative or delegated agent. Article 6 states that the Public Prosecution Department shall act on the victim's behalf, if his interests conflict with those of his representative or he does not have a representative. With a view to protecting children's lives, article 345 of the Code provides for the deferment of a death sentence handed down to a pregnant woman until two years after the child is born. If the sentence was imposed by the court at its discretion (*ta`zir*), then it may be commuted to a term of life imprisonment.

#### **F. Access to appropriate information (art. 17)**

92. The right to have access to information is a fundamental human right. Therefore, children must be allowed access to appropriate information tailored to their age and capacities. As stated in article 22 of the Constitution: "The State shall care for the rising generation, shield it from immorality and protect it from exploitation and the evils of physical, mental and spiritual neglect, creating conditions suited to the realization of its potential in all domains, based on a sound education." Access to appropriate information is a vital part of a child's development, since the modern age is characterized by the existence of a wide range of communications and information technologies and of the media, which directly influence children's lives and education and shape their personalities through the programmes that they present. The State of Qatar assigns numerous slots for children's programmes on Al-Jazeera Children's Channel. In addition, textbooks are being updated to keep pace with the intellectual development of children in Qatar. Modern technology is employed in all schools, from kindergarten until the secondary stage, both as a subject of study and a teaching tool.

#### **G. The right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including corporal punishment**

93. In its concluding observations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child states that "it is seriously concerned that under the 1994 Juvenile[s] Act there is a possibility that the death penalty or life imprisonment may be imposed for offences committed by persons when they were under 18 years old, contrary to articles 6 and 37 (a) of the Convention". The Committee strongly recommends that the State party "take immediate steps to ensure that the law prohibits the imposition of the death penalty or life imprisonment for crimes committed by persons under 18" (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 37 and 38).

94. The legislature guarantees personal freedom and protects individuals, both children and adults, from torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Article 36 of the Constitution states: "Personal freedom is guaranteed. No one may be arrested, imprisoned, searched, confined to a specific place of residence or subjected to restrictions on his freedom of residence or movement except in accordance with the law. No person may be subjected to torture

or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Torture is an offence which is punishable by law.” The Qatari legislature criminalizes torture and the threat or use of force by public officials, prescribing penalties of from 10 years to life imprisonment for these offences (Criminal Code No. 11 of 2004, arts. 159, 161 and 163). Article 20 of the Criminal Code reiterates the provisions of the Juveniles Act on children over the age of 7 and under the age of 16 and prohibits the use of capital punishment against persons who were under 18 when they committed the offence concerned.

#### **H. Children living in difficult circumstances**

95. The Qatari legislature safeguards the welfare of children, both Qataris and foreigners, by according them a number of special rights under the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004, in addition to the other statutory rights which children with disabilities enjoy.

96. Under the aforementioned Act, children with disabilities are entitled to: education and rehabilitation tailored to their capacities; health and psychological care; cultural and social services; access to safe tools, instruments, means of transport and equipment that facilitate their education, rehabilitation and mobility; suitable job opportunities; housing where they can move around safely; special facilities in public places; and involvement in making decisions that affect them (Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004, arts. 2-3, 5-7 and 9-10).

97. The State of Qatar provides for children living in poverty. Under the Social Security Act No. 38 of 1995, the legislature decided to allocate a monthly benefit for such children. The amount of the benefit was doubled pursuant to Cabinet decision No. 38 of 2006.

98. A number of governmental and civil society institutions in Qatar offer financial assistance to non-Qatari children. These institutions include: Qatar Charity, the Zakat Fund, the Eid Charity Foundation, the Qatari Red Crescent Society and other charities.

#### **V. FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND ALTERNATIVE CARE (arts. 5, 9-11, 18, paras. 1 and 2; 19-21, 25, 27, para. 4, and 39)**

99. In the guidelines adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the form and content of reports to be submitted by States parties (CRC/C/58/Rev.1, para. 28), the Committee states that, with reference to this particular section of the Convention, States parties should provide relevant information, including the principal legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures in force, particularly on how the principles of the “best interests of the child” (art. 3) and “respect for the views of the child” (art. 12) are reflected in addressing the questions of:

##### **A. Parental responsibilities and rights**

###### **Legislative measures**

100. The State has enacted a number of laws introducing legislative, preventive and executive measures to offer parents or legal guardians appropriate assistance in fulfilling their responsibilities for raising children. Under the Civil Service Act No. 1 of 2001 and its implementing regulation, civil servants are entitled to 60 days’ paid maternity leave from the date of the child’s birth, together with two hours per day for breastfeeding, beginning immediately after the maternity leave ends. They are also entitled to two years’ paid leave to care

for children under the age of 16, the first time on full pay and the second time on half pay. The conditions on age and frequency of leave are waived for women who have children with special needs (articles 159 and 168 of the Act and 109 and 110 of the implementing regulation).

101. Under the Labour Code No. 14 of 2004 working women are entitled to 50 days' maternity leave on full pay. Maternity leave covers the period before delivery and not less than 35 days thereafter. Women are also entitled to a one-hour breastfeeding break each day for one year after the end of maternity leave. The break is deducted from the working day and does not entail any reduction in the woman's salary (arts. 96-97).

102. In support of the parental right to raise children, the Code of Criminal Procedures No. 23 of 2004 provides that where a pregnant woman is sentenced to death on the basis of the sharia penalties of retaliation (*qisas*) or a fixed punishment (*hadd*), execution of the sentence must be deferred until two years after the child is born to allow for breastfeeding. If the punishment is one imposed by the court at its discretion (*ta`zir*), the death sentence may be commuted to a term of imprisonment (art. 345). Moreover, if a man and his wife with a child of under 16 in their care are sentenced to imprisonment, even for different offences, and have never served time before, execution of the sentence of one of the spouses may be deferred until the other one is released (art. 356). In this way, one of the parents can care for and raise the child in the family environment.

### **Executive measures**

103. The State has taken measures to protect the family and children by establishing government protection agencies and creating opportunities for the establishment of private associations and institutions pursuant to the Private Associations and Institutions Act No. 12 of 2004 and the Private Institutions with a Public Interest Function Act No. 21 of 2006. Through these institutions, the State endeavours to provide its citizens with high quality social welfare services. The State's policy in this area is directed at the application and consolidation of social welfare principles. Indeed, the State of Qatar is a leading provider of quality social welfare services.

104. In that connection, the Social Affairs Department of the Ministry of the Civil Service and Housing offers social welfare support, in the form of benefits for needy families, pursuant to the Social Security Act, which provides for the payment of monthly benefits to widows, divorcees, orphans, persons with special needs, older persons, families of missing persons and persons who are unable to work. The Department makes recommendations on social welfare policies and designs and implements social development programmes. Under Cabinet decision No. 38 of 2006 social security benefit was increased by 100 per cent in order to preserve the dignity of these groups and help them to cope with the difficulties of life.

105. The Ministry, in conjunction with the competent authorities, organizes training for social security recipients to prepare them to earn their own living by enrolling in vocational training centres and courses. It also encourages them to pursue their education so that they can get help in setting up their own microenterprises (art. 17).

106. The General Authority for Minors' Affairs was established to preserve, develop and protect the assets and property rights of minors and persons of similar status in order to provide

these persons with a decent life, further their general interests, oversee transactions undertaken by their guardians, tutors, agents or representatives, keep track of, manage, invest and safeguard their assets and prepare and follow up on studies and plans to increase their assets and the other assets which the Authority manages.

107. The General Retirement and Pensions Authority was established by the Retirement and Pensions Act No. 24 of 2002. It manages and invests assets paid into the Pension Fund both by civil servants with permanent contracts regulated under the Civil Service Act and by employees of public authorities, institutions and enterprises which subscribe to the Fund. Its aim is to guarantee these persons and their heirs a decent life and thus safeguard the rights of families.

108. The Zakat Fund established by Act No. 8 of 1992 collects and distributes the alms-tax (*zakat*), charitable gifts (*sadaqat*), deeds of gift (*hibat*) and donations (*tabarru`at*) and helps families in need. The Fund assisted a total of 28,464 families, at a cost of 160,393,858 Qatar riyals (QR), between 2001 and 2006. In addition, it created and supported children's charity schemes, such as a student grant scheme offering financial aid to students in all stages of education. Between 2001 and 2006, the project dispensed aid to a total of 29,424 students, at a cost of QR 32,114,667.

109. Qatar Charity, a private association, was established on 1 April 1992 pursuant to Minister of Labour and Social Affairs decision No. 2 of 1974, concerning the establishment of private associations and institutions. Oversight of the Charity's activities is assured by the Qatar Authority for Charitable Activities.

110. The mission of Qatar Charity is to contribute actively, in the areas of education, health, income support and environmental protection, to the human development of impoverished populations, achieving sustainable development and contributing, in a responsible and impartial manner, to the prevention of conflicts which impede development and development efforts. Qatar Charity also seeks to serve as a model of Arab-Islamic cooperation, in keeping with the principles of the true Islamic faith which call for cooperation and mutual assistance among peoples.

111. In furtherance of these goals, Qatar Charity undertakes a variety of development and aid-related tasks and activities.

112. In the area of development, Qatar Charity focuses on women, families, children, education, culture and income-generating activities, specifically: family protection and welfare; support for productive families; women's economic, social and legal empowerment; child protection and welfare; support for basic education; literacy promotion; community development and vocational training; and the delivery of financial and non-financial services.

113. Qatar Charity focuses its aid activities on the delivery of water and sanitation services, shelter, food and non-food items, health, education and income-generation services.

114. Qatar Charity relies on a variety of funding sources for its different tasks and activities, including:

- Independent sources: members' contributions and returns on Qatar Charity investments
- Benefactors: all the individuals who donate to Qatar Charity for charitable and humanitarian reasons
- Private sector: private sector donations to fund social services
- Government sector: bilateral and multilateral cooperation funding provided by international or regional organizations
- Non-governmental sector: cooperation with international, national and community-based non-governmental organizations

115. The activities of Qatar Charity are directed at two different target groups:

- Individuals, such as orphans, students, teachers, pensioners and poor, non-productive families
- Groups, such as refugees, displaced persons, returnees and families which benefit from construction services and from social services such as those delivered by educational, health, cultural or other kinds of organizations

116. More information about the activities and achievements of Qatar Charity can be found on the organization's website ([www.qcharity.org](http://www.qcharity.org)).

### **Role of civil society organizations**

117. The object of the Family Investment Centre is to create aware and cohesive families by eliminating the root causes of, and resolving, family disputes, safeguarding families from disintegration and collapse and providing advice to help mediate between spouses via a transparent mechanism specifically designed to avert the problems and adverse consequences of divorce for families in general and children in particular.

118. The Social Development Home is part of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, which was set up inter alia to train workers, turn them into productive resources and sell their products as a means of improving families' economic conditions. The Home has created several non-for-profit economic projects to utilize and develop human resources and help them to contribute to the State's development process. The "Contemporary family" project is an important project which the Home adopted in 1997. Its scope was expanded to include all families, not just low income families. The Home is embarking on a long-term plan to develop and expand the project through field studies, research, training courses, workshops for families on many subjects (recruitment, production, marketing, promotion, management and financial planning) and the holding of an annual trade show to sell products made by the families concerned.

### **B. Parental guidance (art. 5)**

119. The State has taken steps to provide appropriate direction and guidance on the exercise by children of their rights under the Convention. Under article 166 of the Family Act, for as long as they remain married to one another, both parents are responsible for the care, education, moral guidance and welfare of their children. Capacity to provide direction and guidance is one of the criteria that the court must verify when assigning a person custody (*hadanah*) of a young child (art. 170). The person entrusted with *hadanah* must allow the legal guardian or agnate relative to check that the child is being raised properly and is protected from delinquency (art. 171).

120. Civil society institutions that focus on children's rights play a major role in offering parental guidance, pedagogical skills training and advice on child-rearing. The Maternal and Childhood Cultural Centre and the Family Consultancy Centre raise awareness of effective child-rearing techniques in all developmental stages. They design programmes which alert mothers to cultural and social factors that contribute to effective child-rearing and teach them how to avoid harmful practices and inappropriate behaviours and identify and find ways of resolving children's psychological, educational and social problems.

### **C. Separation from parents (art. 9)**

121. The legislature fully safeguards the best interests of the child through the Family Act, which sets out the procedures for maintaining a child's relationship with the parents and the rest of the family and for transferring *hadanah* in a manner such that ensures continuity of contact between the child and the parent who does not have custody. The Act regulates the freedom to transfer care of a child and the right of parents to raise, guide and care for a child for as long as they are married to one another. In the event of separation, even other than by divorce, the mother has priority for the care of small children (Family Act, arts. 165-187), as explained in detail in the section above on the best interests of the child.

122. Under article 42 of the Prisons Regulation Act No. 3 of 1995, mothers who give birth while serving time in prison may keep their children with them until they reach the age of 2. The children will be entrusted to the care of the father or a relative chosen by the mother, if the mother does not want to keep them with her or when they reach the age of 2. Children without fathers or relatives will be placed in a social welfare institution. Mothers must be informed of their children's whereabouts and must be granted easy access to them at regular and frequent intervals.

123. There are circumstances, defined in the Act, where it is necessary to separate a child from the parents. Article 27 of the Act stipulates that a juvenile court may withdraw all or some of the rights of legal guardians or persons entrusted with the care of a minor by a competent authority in cases where: guardianship is forfeited by a person sentenced to 10 or more years in prison for a sex offence or any other kind of offence; the guardian jeopardizes the minor's health, safety or moral welfare because of abuse or acts of depravity; or a court orders the placement of the minor in a social welfare institution pursuant to the Act.

124. As for executive measures, the Department of Social Affairs of the Ministry of the Civil Service and Housing, as part of its regular follow-up duties, pays visits to male prisoners' families in order to assess their situation and needs and report back to the director of the Department. After the case has been considered, the family will be referred to the social security section for it to pay benefits to the wife and children, if the wife does not work.

125. In this context, the Qatari Orphans Foundation seeks to create an alternative environment for children living in difficult family conditions by offering them shelter and other services. The Foundation also cares for children who have been rejected by their natural families and have no one to look after them and children who are the victims of family conflict. The Foundation cares for children whose mothers are in prison and have no father or relatives to look after them. In coordination with the Prisons Department, it organizes regular visits by children to their mothers.

#### **D. Family reunification**

126. The State of Qatar is committed to ensuring that children can live in their own family environment. In keeping with the principle of family reunification, the Alien and Entry and Residence Act No. 3 of 1963 grants the right to reside in Qatar to the wife and minor children of a man who has that right (art. 20). Article 6 of Minister for Internal Affairs decision No. 9 of 1963, concerning the issuance of visas, different types of visas and visa fees, authorizes the competent authorities abroad to issue visas to students returning to Qatar to join their families and minors arriving in Qatar with their families, thus sparing these persons from having to go to the Immigration, Passports and Nationality Department in person and making it easier for them to get into the country, given that they need to be with their families.

127. Under the implementing regulation of the Civil Service Act, the State must pay the travel costs of internationally recruited foreign civil servants, their spouses and three of their children under the age of 10, upon commencement and termination of service. It must provide them with a round trip ticket from and to the nearest airport to the appointee's place of residence. This is evidence of the importance that the legislature attaches to family reunification (art. 42).

#### **E. Recovery of maintenance for the child (art. 27, para. 4)**

128. Articles 75 to 79 of the Family Act guarantee the child's right to maintenance. The cost of maintaining a child without means must be borne by the father. Maintenance must be paid for girls until they marry and for boys until they reach working age or complete their studies. Maintenance must be paid on a continuous basis for children who are unable to earn a living because of a disability and have no other means of support. The father of a child without sufficient means must make up for any shortfall in the resources needed to maintain the child. Similarly, a mother with means must pay for the maintenance of a child if the father cannot afford to do so. As for *hadanah*, maintenance must be paid out of the child's property, if there is any, or by the person responsible for paying (art. 76).

129. The Family Act guarantees respect for the principles of non-discrimination and the best interests of the child as they apply to child maintenance. It makes no distinction between males and females but makes a general provision recognizing the equal right of both sexes to maintenance. This is confirmed in Qatari case-law, which demands that equal amounts of maintenance should be paid for males and females. The Act also grants males and females the

right to claim maintenance from the person responsible for paying. The enforcement division of the family court will be responsible for recovering child maintenance and paying it to the person who cares for the child, whether that be the father, the mother or any other person.

130. When the Qatari courts hear cases of separation between spouses with children, they will order the person responsible for maintenance to make temporary payments until the case has been decided. In the event of refusal, the courts have the power to order the seizure of the defaulter's assets to cover maintenance payments. The subjects of seizure of assets and recovery of child maintenance are covered in articles 408 and 473 of the Code of Civil and Commercial Pleadings No. 13 of 1990, as amended. The legislature protects assets earmarked for maintenance payments by precluding them from confiscation (Code of Civil and Commercial Pleadings, art. 389).

131. The State of Qatar is in the process of finalizing a special law on bringing legal proceedings under the Family Act which will contain several provisions guaranteeing and facilitating the recovery of maintenance.

#### **F. Children deprived of a family environment (art. 20)**

##### **Legislative measures**

132. The State endeavours to offer alternative care to children temporarily or permanently deprived of a family environment in order to protect their best interests and in implementation of the relevant parts of the Convention. As explained above, laws and ministerial decisions, namely, the Births and Deaths Act No. 5 of 1982, as amended by Act No. 16 of 1992, and the Nationality Act No. 38 of 2005, guarantee the welfare of deprived children.

##### **Executive measures**

133. The State established the Qatari Orphans Foundation, to which reference is made above, as an executive tool with a mission to care for orphans and children in a similar situation through in-house and external programmes and activities designed to demonstrate social solidarity and contribute effectively to the moulding of upstanding citizens who are self-reliant and participate in the development of their community. The Foundation delivers a range of services for this group in the form of residential facilities, a comprehensive package of day-to-day services, care, developmental and psychological advice and monitoring of orphans living with foster families to assess their situation and the quality and suitability of the care that they are receiving. The Foundation seeks to create an alternative environment for children living in precarious circumstances owing to a death, divorce, disability, imprisonment or an illness. It also seeks to sensitize society to the plight of orphans, correcting misconceptions about them and the way that they perceive themselves and are perceived by society and conducting theoretical and empirical research to help them.



**Table 3**  
**Number of children deprived of parental care, by reason**

**Place of residence: Qatari Orphans Foundation**

Year	Category	Males	Females
2007	Parents unknown	2	-
	Father unknown	3	1
	Orphan	-	-
	From a broken family	3	3
	Removed from the family by a court order	-	-
	Total	8	4
		12	

**Table 4**  
**Number of children deprived of parental care, by reason**

**Place of residence: foster families**

Year	Category	Male	Female
1961-2006	Parents unknown	123	136
	Father unknown	-	-
	Orphan	-	-
	From a broken family	-	-
	Removed from the family by a court order	-	-
	Parents unknown	123	136
	Total	256	

**G. Illicit transfer and non-return (art. 11)**

134. In the framework of the State's efforts to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children, article 268 of the Criminal Code prescribes penalties of up to three years' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to QR 10,000 for removing a newborn child from the legal guardian, concealing or swapping a child for another or fraudulently attributing the parentage of a child to persons other than the real parents.

**H. Abuse and neglect (art. 19), including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (art. 39)**

135. In its concluding observations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child states that it is concerned that there is insufficient information about and awareness of the ill-treatment of children within the family and institutions. It recommends that the State party conduct a study to assess the nature and extent of ill-treatment and abuse of children, and design policies and programmes to address it; take legislative measures to prohibit all forms of physical and mental violence against children, including corporal punishment and sexual abuse in the family and in institutions; carry out public education campaigns about the negative consequences of

ill-treatment of children and promote positive, non-violent forms of discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment; establish effective procedures and mechanisms to receive, monitor and investigate complaints, including intervention where necessary; investigate and prosecute cases of ill-treatment, ensuring that the abused child is not victimized in legal proceedings and that his/her privacy is protected; provide care, recovery and reintegration for victims; train teachers, law enforcement officials, care workers, judges and health professionals in the identification, reporting and management of ill-treatment cases; and seek assistance from, among others, UNICEF and WHO (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 45 and 46).

### **Legislative measures**

136. Article 24 of the Juveniles Act No. 1 of 1994 states: “Without prejudice to any higher penalty that may be imposed under any other law, a term of up to one year’s imprisonment and/or a fine of up to QR 1,000 shall be imposed on anyone who induces a minor, directly or indirectly, to abscond from a social welfare home or who shelters or conceals such a minor or prevents him from returning to the home or knowingly aids and abets a minor in the commission of any of the foregoing acts.” Article 25 of the Act provides: “Without prejudice to any higher penalty that may be imposed under any other law, the penalty prescribed in the preceding paragraph shall be imposed on any person who exposes a minor to the risk of delinquency by training him or her to carry out the acts listed in article 1, paragraph 2, of the present Act or by aiding, abetting or facilitating such conduct in any way, even if it does not give rise to actual delinquency. The penalty shall be a term of up to three years’ imprisonment and/or a fine of up to QR 3,000, if the perpetrator uses force or threats or is an ascendant, guardian or person with authority over the minor or if the minor is legally obliged to obey him.” Article 27 of the Act states: “The juvenile court may revoke the rights of guardianship, wholly or in part, together with the rights of any person to whom the minor is entrusted by order of a competent court in the following circumstances: ... Where the guardian endangers the minor’s health, safety or moral welfare as a result of abuse or acts of depravity.”

137. The Criminal Code No. 11 of 2004 increases the penalty for unlawful intercourse and sex offences committed by an ascendant, tutor, guardian or person with authority over the victim or a servant in the home of any of the aforementioned persons, such acts being classified as dereliction of the duty of care incumbent upon the aforementioned persons (arts. 279-288). The penalty is also increased for endangerment of a minor under 16 years of age by a person responsible for the minor’s protection and care.

138. With regard to protection from physical and psychological violence, articles 300 to 303 of the Code prescribe severe penalties for intentional homicide and classify acts of assault and battery leading to death or a permanent disability as criminal offences. Under article 325 it is an offence to threaten another person or his reputation or the person, reputation or property of someone who is important to him, whether the threat is made in writing, orally or by actions motivated by a determination to damage a person or his reputation or property which have the effect of deliberately inducing the victim to do or refrain from doing an act. The penalty is up to five years’ imprisonment if the perpetrator threatens the victim with murder. The legislature’s concern to protect the psychological well-being of minors is articulated in article 203 of the Act,

which prescribes a penalty of up to one year's imprisonment and/or a fine of up to QR 5,000 for seven different types of act, including publication of the names and photographs of child defendants in legal proceedings.

139. Measures to protect the foetus from physical violence are established in articles 315 and 316 of the Code, which prescribe penalties for beating or assaulting a woman knowing her to be pregnant and thereby causing her to miscarry or for giving a pregnant woman drugs or using any other means to induce an abortion. The Act punishes persons who offer minors below 16 years of age wine or intoxicating beverages or encourage them to drink them (art. 271) or who incite a minor below 16 years of age to commit suicide or assist him or her in doing so (art. 305).

140. The Code of Criminal Procedures offers special protection to minors and persons with disabilities who are victims of crime. Article 213 of the Code provides for "the issuance, in cases where an offence is committed against a minor, of orders providing for the minor's placement with a trustworthy individual who undertakes to care for and protect him, or with an officially accredited welfare institution, until the case is decided. If the child is suffering from a mental disability, an order may be issued for his temporary placement in a treatment home or delivery into the care of a trustworthy person, as the case may be".

141. The Qatari Labour Code contains many articles (arts. 86-145) on the protection of minors' health. No person under the age of 16 may be employed in any kind of work whatsoever. Employment of a person of 16 years of age is subject to approval by the parents or guardian and the issuance of a permit by the Department of Labour. If the child is still at school, approval must be obtained from the Minister of Education. Young persons may not be employed in work that is damaging to their health, safety or moral welfare and their employment is subject to certain rules and restrictions: the production of a health certificate; no work between sunset and sunrise; a working week of not longer than 36 hours, interspersed with rest and food breaks; maintenance by the employer of a special file on the minor, including the birth certificate, medical certificate and results of regular check-ups. The employer must also provide the Department of Labour with details of the minor's name, work, date of entry into employment, working hours and rest breaks and must display a copy in a prominent position in a public place. The law prescribes penalties for breaching these regulations.

142. Ministerial decisions have been issued on the protection of children's health from potential harm, for example:

- Minister for Civil Service Affairs decision No. 13 of 2005, regulating labour inspections and procedures
- Minister for Civil Service Affairs decision No. 15 of 2005, concerning the jobs in which young persons may not be employed because they constitute a threat to their physical and mental health and safety
- Minister for Civil Service Affairs decision No. 16 of 2005, regulating medical care for employees of enterprises, including minors and pregnant women

### Executive measures

143. The Qatari Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children provides for all children in need of assistance. The Foundation receives reports from different sources and complaints are submitted to it either directly by victims, children or their relatives or teachers or via health centres, schools or various institutions. A hotline was set up to assist children and guarantee their right to a decent life free from any ill-treatment.

**Table 5**

#### **Cases referred to the Foundation in 2004, 2005 and 2006**

Type of case	2004	2005	2006
Health	17	25	11
Legal	47	151	76
Economic	28	137	11
Educational	24	72	50
Social	16	74	42
Total cases for the three years concerned (781)	132	459	190

**Table 6**

#### **Number of children subjected to violence, 2004-2006**

Year	No. of cases
	15
2005	54
2006	19
Grand total	88

144. The Foundation takes steps to deal with the cases referred to it, such as investigating cases of ill-treatment and taking legal action to prevent child victims of ill-treatment from being further victimized by the legal process and from being subjected to physical abuse.

145. A technical committee was set up to conduct a special study on the establishment of a centre for the protection of children and women. The initiative was taken in response to a recommendation of the Foundation and in coordination with law enforcement institutions such as the Ministry of the Interior and the Public Prosecution Department. The committee drew up a general framework, the terms of reference and an organizational structure for the centre and work is under way to finalize a law on its activities. The object of the centre will be to receive complaints and reports about child abuse and to institute legal procedures, including interviews, medical examinations and investigations, taking due account of the victim's age and psychological situation, under conditions which guarantee the dignity and privacy of those who are referred to it. The centre will safeguard the human dignity of victims, in keeping with the Constitution of Qatar, the laws in force and the State's international treaty obligations. It will also offer care, treatment and social reintegration services.

146. The Foundation completed a wide-ranging study on the establishment of a Qatari “safe house” offering protection, care, rehabilitation and treatment to child victims of abuse. The basic idea is that the facility will run rehabilitation programmes and activities that take account of children’s desperate need for a normal life and for treatment which is geared towards their reintegration into the community and the family and tailored to their age and psychological needs. In addition, staff of the facility, law enforcement personnel, members of the caring professions, judges and health practitioners will be trained in identifying, reporting and managing cases of abuse. The Foundation, in conjunction with the competent State institutions, offers welfare, health and legal services, disseminates the values and principles of peace and social security and trains employees of the institutions concerned to deal with victims of violence and abuse in a manner consistent with the relevant principles, human dignity, the Constitution, the laws in force and the State’s obligations under Arab and international treaties.

147. The Foundation has formulated a comprehensive training strategy in line with its vision of creating an integrated training scheme that imparts high-level skills to personnel involved in protecting children and women who are subjected to abuse and violence in Qatar. The clear purpose of the strategy is to build a training structure that can offer high-quality, comprehensive protection services and security to children and women subjected to abuse and violence. The Foundation defined the general purpose of the training strategy as that of creating a national framework which includes law enforcement agencies, institutions of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and relevant State ministries, to train persons involved in children’s and women’s protection to deal with cases of violence and abuse. The strategy comprises a number of objectives: identifying the patterns and forms of violence and abuse to which children and women are subjected; improving the skills of participants in detecting, diagnosing and assessing the risks of abuse and violence; providing training on the use of video equipment and other devices to record interviews; supplying information about the procedures and techniques for managing conferences on cases requiring the intervention of specialists; examining actual cases of violence and abuse; developing trainees’ awareness of the law on these matters; identifying the role of institutions in protecting children and women; identifying legislation and international treaties which constitute a reference framework for the elimination of violence and abuse directed at children and women; and boosting the law enforcement role of competent institutions and the role of civil society organizations in delivering quality services to protect victims of violence and abuse through joint inter-institutional partnerships.

148. In cooperation with Child Helpline International, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs held a special training workshop in March 2007 to support institutions that receive complaints about abuse and violence against children. The purpose of the event was to support, develop and promote the integrated functioning of these mechanisms, which receive complaints about children subjected to violence, abuse and neglect, to ensure that they liaise effectively with government and civil society organizations and to train hotline operators to receive calls and social workers, psychologists and researchers to deal with and pass on complaints and document and prepare reports on child abuse cases. The training also included information on intervention techniques and treatment and awareness-raising on the conduct of advocacy campaigns, in conjunction with governmental and non-governmental organizations. Real examples of child abuse were used, and information was provided on the categories of violence listed in international instruments on children, the role of the media in raising awareness of violence against children and the adverse effects of neglect and ill-treatment on children and society.

### **I. Periodic review of placement (art. 25)**

149. The Department of Juvenile Welfare of the Ministry of the Civil Service and Housing oversees social welfare homes which house, care for, assess and rehabilitate minors, follow up on the enforcement of probation orders, ensure that minors fulfil their obligations and supply inmates with health care and the physical, educational, psychological and social services that they need. The homes endeavour to: rehabilitate juvenile delinquents; teach them sound principles and values; strengthen their sense of belonging to the family and the community; provide them with theoretical knowledge and vocational skills; conduct studies and research on the causes of juvenile delinquency and recommend ways of preventing it; and increase awareness of child welfare, child education, juvenile delinquency and its prevention and treatment, through participation in seminars, conferences and lectures and other appropriate methods.

150. The Orphans Foundation also cares for children living with foster families by carrying out regular visits to provide these families with guidance, advice and assistance in resolving the children's problems and making sure that the children stay and get on with the host families. It monitors children's progress at school and cooperates with specialists in dealing with any difficulties that these children may have.

## **VI. BASIC HEALTH AND WELFARE (arts. 6, 18, paras. 3, 23, 24, 26 and 27, paras. 1-3)**

### **A. Health and health services**

151. Since 2001, when the initial report of Qatar on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was considered, significant advances have been made in the health and health-care sectors. The National Health Authority was established by Amiri Decree No. 13 of 2005 to provide Qatar with the best possible standard of health care and offer world class preventive and treatment services in the framework of the State's general policy and a national strategy designed to achieve these objectives. The Authority oversees the following institutions: the Hamad Medical Corporation; the Specialist Teaching Hospital; private medical institutions such as hospitals, clinics, medical laboratories, pharmacies, auxiliary medical facilities and primary health-care hospitals and centres; and any other general treatment facilities that may be established.

152. The National Health Authority has now embarked on an ambitious health improvement programme for Qatar with the aim of creating a healthy, productive and vital society in the present and for the future. The central theme of the programme is "Caring for the future", which means promoting public health, encouraging healthy lifestyles, providing community-based primary care and creating the most advanced system of health care in the world and tertiary-level medical facilities that not only deliver high quality care but are expected to be pioneers in scientific research.

153. Health institutions in Qatar provide free health services to, among others, children and mothers, in conformity with articles 3 and 4 of the regulation on exemptions from payment for treatment at the Hamad Medical Corporation. Article 3 of the regulation states: "In accordance

with Act No. 7 of 1996 and other relevant laws and Cabinet decisions, the following groups shall be exempt from paying for treatment: Qatari nationals; foreign wives of Qatari nationals; children of Qatari mothers and non-Qatari fathers; non-Qatari children of fathers who are naturalized Qataris; holders of temporary residence permits issued in accordance with Minister for Internal Affairs decision No. 1 of 1994 and any groups or individuals whom the Minister for Internal Affairs may deem as having equivalent status; citizens of the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, whether they reside in or are visiting Qatar; adults and minors placed in custody and prison pursuant to a court order - these persons will be provided with a health card free of charge; and persons suffering from a complete or partial permanent disability which impairs any one of their senses or physical, psychological or mental capacities to a degree that prevents them from learning, acquiring a skill or undertaking work.” Article 4 of the Act states that, pursuant to Act No. 7 of 1996, and by virtue of the powers vested in the Governing Board under Act No. 14 of 2002, no fees shall be charged for the following medical services provided by the Corporation: treatment in emergency and accident cases, including where the patient needs to be hospitalized; preventive health services for mothers and children, including prenatal tests and examinations, treatment and vaccinations of newborns, and preventive health services for school children. The services on offer include dental care, treatment of hearing and visual problems, public health and treatment of psychological disorders, obesity, anaemia and common childhood diseases. The services are delivered at the Corporation’s primary health-care facilities and hospitals, which diagnose and vaccinate against infectious diseases and offer treatment to foreigners employed by the Government and government agencies, as well as domestic servants employed by Qataris who need treatment for work-related injuries and illnesses. The treatment covers cosmetic operations and the supply of artificial limbs, where necessary for the foregoing reason; examinations and tests required by government bodies for official purposes, unless the institution has them done abroad - in which event, the Corporation may claim the processing costs from the institution concerned; treatment and hospitalization costs for newborns who remain in hospital for observation and treatment after the mother has been discharged; and treatment of psychological and mental diseases and disorders, together with all kinds of addictions. Also included are: treatment arising from a medical error or complications following treatment at the Corporation; treatment or diagnostic services in relation to organ donations; follow-up care for patients who receive organ transplants; and treatment of official guests of the State in accordance with a circular issued by the State hospitality service. Beneficiaries include: players on national teams as identified by the Team Care Committee of the Qatar National Olympic Committee; foreign students holding grants from Qatar to study at Qatari schools and universities - these students are entitled to services throughout the entire course of their studies and are issued with free health cards; cases which the director of medical instruction and training decides should be treated by the Corporation for teaching or training purposes.

154. With regard to the formulation and implementation of immunization policies, the National Health Authority ensures that children are vaccinated since this is an important way of protecting our children from many diseases. The year 2005 was the year for meeting the global challenge to curb the spread of infant poliomyelitis, following outbreaks in neighbouring States (although Qatar itself is free of the disease). In 2005 and 2006, the National Health Authority conducted immunization campaigns against infant poliomyelitis and tuberculosis for all children under 5 in Qatar (Qataris and foreigners). Roving medical teams were set up, in cooperation with primary health-care centres across the State, and were dispatched to kindergartens. In 2005, the National Health Authority added a fifth vaccine to the basic set for children, which includes vaccines

against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis B and haemophilus influenzae. The vaccine for rotavirus, which is a cause of diarrhoea among children, will soon be introduced, and will be included in a national immunization campaign; according to a study on the incidence of diarrhoea among children in the State, 16 to 17 per cent of cases are caused by the rotavirus.

**Table 7**

**Immunization coverage rates (in percentages) for the period 1997 to 2005**

Type of immunization	Coverage (%)								
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
T.B. (BCG) at birth	99	100	100	100	99	100	100	100	100
OPV 3	92	94	92	91	93	96	93	95	98
DPT + HIB	92	94	92	80	93	96	92	96	97
Hepatitis B Vaccine 3	90	92	92	89	93	98	93	97	97
Haemophilus influenzae (third dose)	92	94	92	80	92.4	96	92	96	97
Measles/MMR 1	87	89	87	91	92	100	93	99	100
Varicella (first dose)	Started in 2002					95	90	98	

*Source:* Annual health report (2005), National Health Authority.

155. The above table clearly shows that there was a steady rise in the immunization coverage rate between 1997 and 2005, with a minimum coverage rate of 97 per cent and a 100 per cent coverage rate for some diseases in 2005.

156. The State of Qatar has taken a keen interest in the development of primary health-care services in recent years, including in hospitals, as explained hereafter. A number of children's emergency centres and accident and emergency rooms have been set up in various parts of the State to provide easy access to high-quality medical services free of charge. The centres operate around the clock and have state-of-the-art equipment which meets world health standards. A quality improvement section was set up at the Hamad Medical Corporation to raise the standard of medical services on offer, based on international criteria. In 2006, Qatar won international recognition for the health services offered at the State's main hospitals, namely, Hamad General Hospital, the Gynaecology and Obstetrics Hospital, Rumailah Hospital and Amal Cancer Treatment Hospital. A section was set up at the Hamad Medical Corporation to develop indicators to measure the quality of services based on international health criteria and to assess compliance with these indicators as a first step in the monitoring and oversight process. A scientific research committee was set up by the Corporation to develop health programmes, studies and research in conjunction with the Qatar Foundation. A programme was established by the babies and premature babies unit at Hamad Medical Corporation to conduct a survey, in cooperation with Heidelberg University Children's Hospital in Germany, of all births in Qatar (Qataris and non-Qataris), whether they take place at the Maternity and Obstetrics Hospital or private hospitals. The focus of the programme is the early detection of glandular and metabolic disorders and hearing and sight defects in newborns. Some 12 babies with an underactive thyroid and 35 with metabolic disorders were identified. All these cases were referred promptly to specialist clinics for treatment. This programme also provides free special treatment and milk substitutes for children (at a very high cost).



157. The National Health Authority and the Hamad Medical Corporation introduced a national initiative to promote breastfeeding - the “Child Friendly Initiative” - involving information sessions on breastfeeding, the fundamentals of proper nutrition for children and ways of overcoming problems that arise during breastfeeding. The baby is placed close to the mother during the first few hours after delivery to encourage the mother to breastfeed, and women are offered assistance with breastfeeding. A breastfeeding policy has been adopted by all State hospitals and health centres and must be applied by all health professionals. All health administrators and professionals are trained in the skills required for implementation of this policy. In 2003, the breastfeeding section of the National Health Authority ran 40-hour training courses for nurses and doctors on the subject of breastfeeding. The training team includes four health educators (a nutritionist, two midwives and one nurse), in addition to doctors.

158. The breastfeeding policy in effect in hospitals and health centres includes compulsory pre- and postnatal breast examinations, education on breastfeeding techniques and information for expectant mothers, mothers with babies and family members on the benefits of breastfeeding. Mothers are encouraged to give their babies breast milk only during the first six months of life and to continue to breastfeed, even after the introduction of solid foods, until the child reaches the age of 2. Breastfeeding begins in the first hour after birth, if the baby’s condition allows it, and newborns are given no foods, liquids or artificial milk other than breast milk, except on medical grounds and under a doctor’s orders. Babies are kept in the same room as their mothers 24 hours a day and mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their babies on demand. It is forbidden to advertise inside the hospital products and articles such as milk powder, feeding bottles, pacifiers, whether on posters, through the distribution of free samples or by any other method. These items are not given to mothers or family members. Support groups are set up to encourage breastfeeding and help mothers to continue with the practice.

159. In the decade beginning in 1996, the State paid considerable attention to the promotion of pre- and postnatal care. The figures show that 100 per cent of women were monitored by a trained professional during pregnancy and assisted by a trained birth attendant during delivery, while 100 per cent of infants were monitored by a trained professional, as shown in table 8 below.

**Table 8**

**Percentage of pregnant women, births and infants supervised by trained professionals**

Type of immunization	Coverage (%)								
	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
T.B. (B.C.G.) at birth	100	100	100	100	99	100	100	100	99
O.P.V.3	98	95	93	96	93	91	92	94	92
D.P.T. 3 + HIB	97	96	92	96	93	80	92	94	92
Hepatitis B vaccine 3	97	97	93	98	93	89	92	92	90
Haemophilus influenza (3rd dose)	97	96	92	96	92.4	80	92	94	92
Measles/ M.M.R. 1	100	99	93	100	92	91	87	89	87
Varicella (Dose 1)		98	90	95	(Started in 2002)				

*Source:* Annual health report (2005) of the National Health Authority.

160. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its concluding observations on Qatar's initial report, states that there is insufficient information available in relation to adolescent health (CRC/C/15/Add.163, para. 47). With regard to adolescents' health and school health services, in Qatar schoolchildren's health is monitored by specialized clinics. In 2006, a total of 25,323 children were examined.

**Table 9**  
**Number of students visiting school health specialized clinics**  
**January-December 2006**

S.N.	Clinic	No. of visits
1	Ear Nose and Throat	3 679
2	Ophthalmology	4 439
3	Dermatology	427
4	General paediatric	997
5	Psychiatry clinic	590
6	Clinical psychologist	700
7	Psychologist	172
8	Social worker	190
9	*Dental (from 15/09/2005 to 20/06/2006)	14 129
10	Total	25 323

*Source:* Annual report (2006) on specialized school health clinics.

161. The following tables contain data on the most common children's psychological and mental disorders and the number of children examined and treated in psychological and behavioural clinics specializing in school health. Plans have been made to create a department for adolescents' health and similar sections (under construction) in the Children's Hospital, providing inter alia psychiatric services for all children, particularly adolescents.

**Table 10**  
**Psychological disorders among 4-to-12-year-olds**  
**(Psychometry and behaviour therapy clinic, diagnostic statistics, Jan.-Dec. 2006)**

No.	Diagnosis	Q		N-Q		Total
		M	F	M	F	
1	Poor school performance	69	51	46	27	193
2	Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder	46	28	57	20	151
3	Speech disorders	37	25	35	20	117
4	Mild mental retardation	14	12	8	7	41
5	Moderate mental retardation	9	1	2	3	15
6	Nocturnal enuresis	13	4	10	3	30
7	Behavioural disorders	2	4	1	1	8
8	Sexual deviations	3	-	-	-	3
9	Elective mutism	-	1	-	-	1
10	Separation anxiety	-	1	-	-	1
Total		193	127	159	81	560

*Source:* Annual report (2006) on specialized school health clinics.

**Table 11**

**Psychological disorders among 13-to-17-year-olds**

**(Psychometry and behaviour therapy clinic, diagnostic statistics, Jan.-Dec. 2006)**

No.	Diagnosis	Q		N-Q		Total
		M	F	M	F	
1	Poor school performance	15	9	6	3	33
2	Nocturnal enuresis	1	1	2	4	8
3	Speech disorders	5	2	-	-	7
4	Mild mental retardation	2	3	-	1	6
5	Moderate mental retardation	3	-	-	-	3
6	Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder	3	1	-	1	5
7	Sexual deviations	2	-	-	-	2
8	Obsessive compulsive disorder	-	-	-	1	1
Total		31	16	8	10	65

162. According to the Maternity Hospital, the fertility rate among adolescents (15- to 19-year-olds) has fallen; in 2005, adolescent mothers accounted for 341 out of a total of 13,401 births, i.e. 2.5 per cent.

**Table 12**

**Total live births**

Mother's age group	Weight at birth (in grammes)							
	Total	Total of 2 500 and more	Total of less than 2 500	2 000-2 499	1 500-1 999	1 000-1 499	500-999	Less than 500
15-19	341	311	30	23	4	3	0	0
20-24	2 590	2 372	218	150	38	21	7	2
25-29	4 202	3 888	314	219	52	26	11	6
30-34	3 536	3 258	278	191	59	25	2	1
35-39	2 012	1 847	165	111	29	20	4	1
40-49	611	567	44	39	3	1	1	0
45+	109	103	6	5	0	0	1	0
Total	13 401	12 346	1 055	738	185	96	26	10

*Source:* Annual report (2005) of the National Health Authority.

163. The National Health Authority developed an integrated anti-tuberculosis programme and introduced a testing scheme for all persons exposed or suspected of being exposed to the disease. All children are thoroughly tested before starting school to make sure that they are free of tuberculosis. The Department of Infectious Diseases runs regular talks, three times a week, to inform primary health-care practitioners about the symptoms and methods of diagnosing, treating and preventing tuberculosis. The talks are given by a person who acts as a focal point for tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. In addition, publications and printed materials (in Arabic, English and Hindi) on tuberculosis, the symptoms and prevention of the disease are

distributed to key individuals to alert them to the procedures to deal with suspected cases. The department runs a home monitoring service for cases of latent or active tuberculosis to verify compliance with drug therapies and check-up on patients regularly.

164. The Medical Commission of the National Health Authority conducts examinations to ensure that persons are free of tuberculosis before they are allowed to take up residence in Qatar. All workers in the catering trade must be tested every six months to ensure that they are free of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.

165. The Department of Infectious Diseases treats and monitors all tuberculosis cases in Qatar. The data for 2006 shows that the number of cases among children under 14 years of age has fallen. In that year, there were 11 such cases out of a total of 339, i.e. 3.24 per cent.

**Table 13**  
**Number of tuberculosis cases in Qatar in 2006**

Age	Qatar	Gulf Cooperation Council State	Egypt	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	Iran	Somalia	Sudan	Yemen	Other Arab	Philippines	Nepal	Other Asians	Other nations	Total
0-1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
2-4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4
5-9	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
10-14	2	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
15-19	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	4
20-24	6	1	1	7	2	1	3	1	-	1	-	1	38	1	7	70
25-34	2	-	3	32	2	5	-	3	-	1	-	12	44	4	15	123
35-44	6	-	1	19	2	6	-	-	-	1	1	8	12	4	10	70
45-54	3	-	-	21	2	7	1	-	1	-	1	4	-	-	-	40
55-64	2	-	-	3	3	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	14
>65 yrs	5	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Total	31	2	5	83	12	20	9	4	1	5	5	25	95	9	33	339

*Source:* Department of Children's Infectious Diseases - Hamad Medical Corporation.

166. The Department of Infectious Diseases monitors children suffering from AIDS. There are only two such children, both of them non-Qataris. The Department monitors these children regularly and has its own counsellors who specialize in AIDS.

167. With regard to children's health, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the National Health Authority, organized a national public campaign, entitled "Tackling obesity among schoolchildren", to sensitize all segments of society, in particular schoolchildren, to the importance of avoiding unhealthy lifestyle habits which lead to obesity. The campaign was launched in 2003 using a series of educational talks for schoolchildren designed to convey the message directly to the target group. An educational programme consisting of activities and talks focusing on obesity and its risks and targeting children, nurses, social workers and officials in government and private schools and health centres was set up to reach as many members of society as possible. Community-based activities, including a march along the *corniche*, were organized with the participation of various State

bodies and a total of 1,600 persons, including schoolchildren. In addition, activities and competitions were held in malls in order to involve as many children as possible in the campaign.

### **B. Children with disabilities (art. 23)**

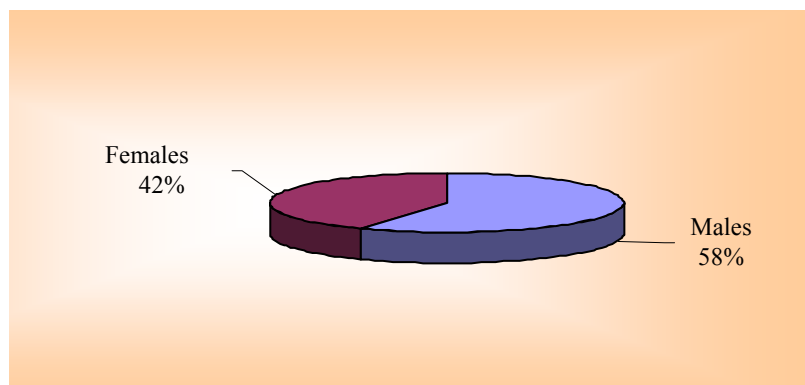
168. In its concluding observations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child notes the establishment of the National Committee for Persons with Special Needs and the drafting of the Persons with Special Needs Bill. It further notes the State party's efforts at awareness-raising and inclusion. The Committee recommends that the State party: review existing policies and practice in relation to children with disabilities, including draft legislation, taking due regard of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 48/96) and of the Committee's recommendations adopted at its day of general discussion on "Children with Disabilities" (see CRC/C/69); continue to involve children with disabilities and their families in the development of surveys and policy review; undertake greater efforts to make available the necessary professional and financial resources; and undertake greater efforts to promote and expand community-based rehabilitation programmes, including parent support groups, and inclusive education of children with all forms of disability (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 49 and 50).

169. Further to these recommendations, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs conducted an assessment of the quality of services offered to children with special needs consisting of a descriptive, analytical study of the services provided by governmental and non-governmental organizations that deal with persons with special needs. The findings of the study were published in May 2005 (see annex).

170. The data in the study show that, according to the 2004 general census, a total of 2,399 Qataris are persons with special needs, a rate of 12.9 per 1,000 population. This figure may be contrasted with the results of the 1994 census, indicating the presence of 1,479 persons with special needs, or 9.9 per 1,000 population. Figure 1 below shows the distribution of persons with special needs by sex based on the 2004 census.

**Figure 1**

#### **Distribution of persons with special needs, by sex**



171. As shown in figure 1, males account for 58 per cent of persons with special needs and females for 42 per cent. This indicates an increase in the incidence of disability among males in Qatari society. This increase can be ascribed to the fact that men are more likely than women to suffer work injuries and accidents and thus sustain disabilities. Moreover, women are more reluctant to report disabilities, because of social or cultural factors. Table 14 shows the distribution of persons with special needs by type of disability and sex, based on the 2004 general census.

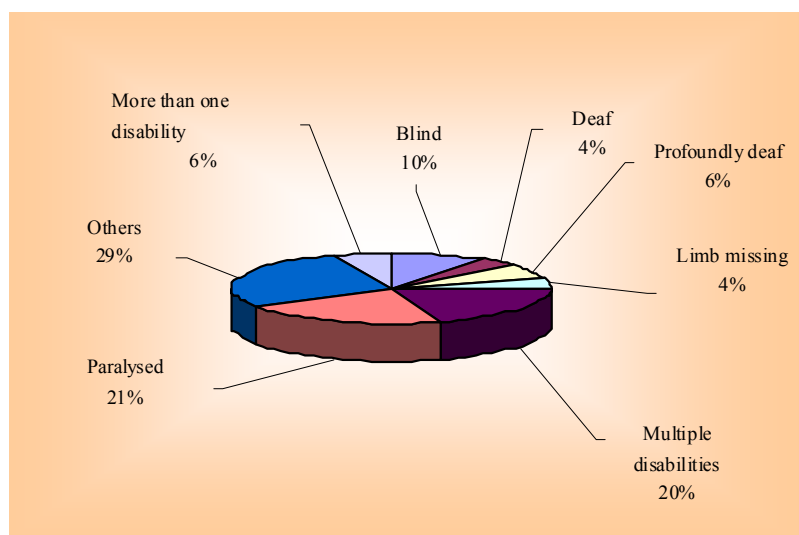
**Table 14**

Disability	Males		Females		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Blind	129	9.3	109	10.8	238	9.9
Deaf	62	4.7	43	4.3	105	4.4
Profoundly deaf	75	5.4	77	7.6	152	6.3
Missing a limb	67	4.8	38	3.8	105	4.4
Mental impairment	280	20.1	197	19.5	477	19.9
Paralyzed	292	21.0	216	21.4	508	21.2
Multiple disabilities	401	28.8	273	27.1	674	28.1
Total	85	6.1	55	5.5	140	5.8
	1 391	100.0	1 008	100.0	2 399	100.0

172. Table 14 shows that motor disabilities (paralysis) account for 21.2 per cent of the total number, followed by mental disabilities (19.9 per cent), blindness (9.9 per cent), profound deafness (6.3 per cent) and multiple disabilities (5.8 per cent). Figure 2 below shows the percentage distribution of disabilities rounded up to the nearest figure.

**Figure 2**

**Percentage distribution of persons with special needs, rounded up to the nearest figure**



173. Table 15 shows the number of persons with special needs broken down by the cause of the disability and sex.

**Table 15**

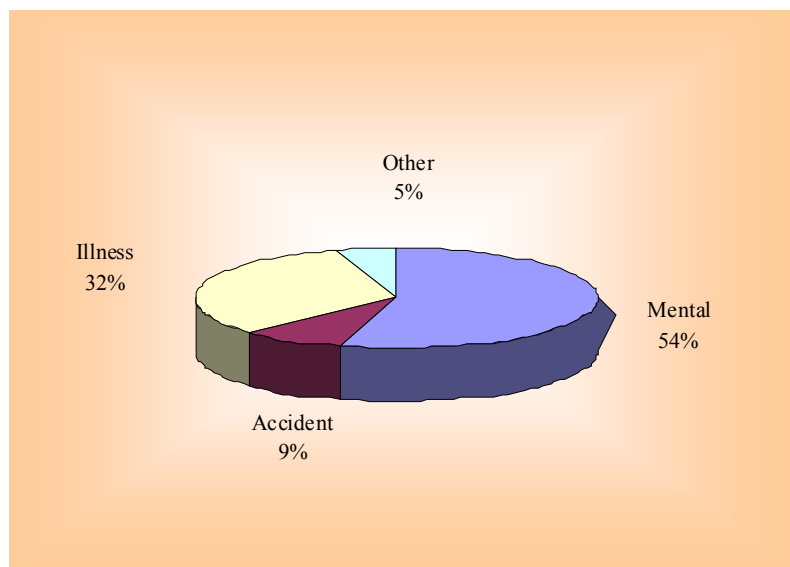
**Number of persons with special needs, by cause of disability and gender**

Causes of disability	No. of males		No. of females		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Genetic	732	9.3	575	10.8	1 307	9.9
Accident	259	4.7	46	4.3	205	4.4
Illness	439	5.4	337	7.6	776	6.3
Other	61	4.8	50	3.8	111	4.4
Total	1 491	20.1	1 008	19.5	2 399	19.9

174. Table 15 shows that genetic factors accounted for 54 per cent of all cases of disability, followed by illness (32 per cent) and accidents (9 per cent). Figure 3 below shows these percentages rounded up to the nearest figure.

**Figure 3**

**Percentage distribution of persons with special needs, by cause of disability**

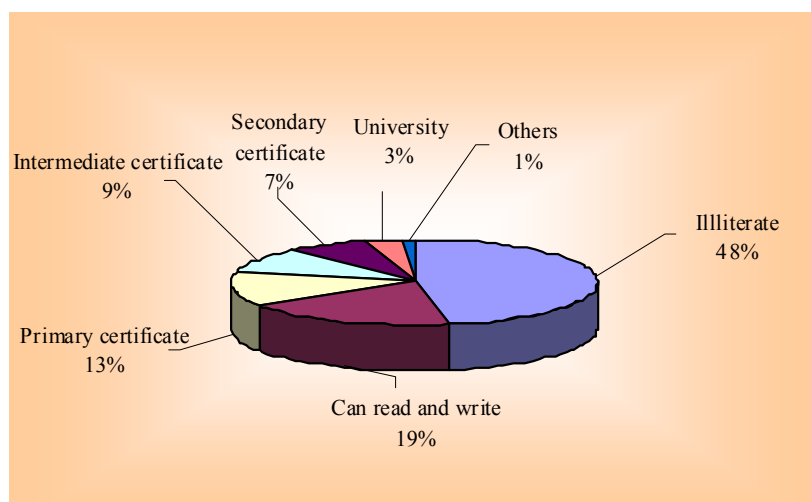


175. The 2004 general census found that there were 14 children under the age of 1 with disabilities and 114 children under the age of 5 (4.7 per cent of the total number). A total of 13 per cent of persons with disabilities were in the 10-to-14 age group, as compared with 9 per cent in the 5-to-9 age group and 10 per cent in the 15-to-19 age group. The percentage is lower in other age groups.

176. As the 2004 general census also shows, 62 per cent of persons with special needs are aged between 5 and 39. The percentage begins to taper off in the five subsequent age groups, averaging out at 2.5 to 4.5 per cent.

**Figure 4**

**Persons with special needs, by educational status**



177. Figure 4 shows the percentage of persons with special needs broken down by educational status, based on the 2004 general census. It clearly shows that 48 per cent of persons with special needs aged 10 and above are illiterate, while 19 per cent can read and write. These percentages decline as the level of educational attainment increases; 13 per cent of persons with special needs have a primary school certificate, 9 per cent a middle school certificate, 7 per cent a secondary school certificate and 3 per cent a university qualification.

178. A study was conducted of the institutions which provide services to persons with special needs. What follows is a description of the services offered by each institution based on the types of disability that they treat.

**Institutions offering treatment**

179. Occupational therapy department: the Hamad Medical Corporation's occupational therapy department (Rumailah Hospital) offers a number of specialized services (education, rehabilitation and social welfare services), including educational services (adult rehabilitation) and follow-up on certain cases included in the Ministry of Education academic integration programme. The main rehabilitation services consist of occupational therapy. The centre also delivers social services such as home visits to particular patients and visits to some public schools with special needs students.

180. Physiotherapy department: the Hamad Medical Corporation's physiotherapy department (Rumailah Hospital) and its eight branches offer services in and outside of Doha and for persons



with motor, physical and multiple disabilities. Its main rehabilitation services consist of physiotherapy for persons with various disabilities (mental, motor and visual) who are referred to the department.

181. The prosthetics department: the Hamad Medical Corporation's prosthetics department (Rumailah Hospital) offers specialist services for persons with disabilities (motor, physical and multiple), including rehabilitation services (corrective motor skills training and adjustments, checks and the delivery of prosthetics).

182. The special education department: the Hamad Medical Corporation's special education department (Rumailah Hospital) offers services for persons with mental, motor, physical and multiple disabilities. The department assists children below school age (early intervention) and delivers four types of service (health, educational, rehabilitation and social). Rehabilitation services include physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. It also offers services to persons with multiple disabilities (motor and mental). The department provides health services through doctors who follow up on cases on a regular basis. Social services include support for families in the form of medical equipment and assistance provided to families that have been means tested. In addition, users and their guardians can take part in the department's leisure programmes and in trips and visits in Qatar and abroad.

183. Speech therapy department: the Hamad Medical Corporation's speech therapy department (Rumailah Hospital) provides rehabilitation and social and other services tailored to the type of disability. The disabilities treated include mental, emotional, motor and hearing disorders, speech and language impairments and other disabilities.

#### **Institutions offering educational, training, social and advisory services**

184. These institutions include the Special Education Department, the School for Boys with Mental Disabilities, the School for Girls with Mental Disabilities, the School for Boys with Hearing Impairments, the School for Girls with Hearing Impairments and the Nur Institute for the Blind. The main services provided by these institutions and the user groups are described below.

185. Special Education Department: the Special Education Department is part of the Social Education Department of the Ministry of Education and offers educational, rehabilitation and social services to persons with special needs (mental, emotional, motor and hearing disabilities, learning difficulties, slowness to learn and language and speech impairments). The Department offers user groups training sessions and personalized services. Its educational services include educational assessments, skills development, the preparation of reports containing advice for schools or the Department of Examinations and Student Affairs users' committees of different kinds. Rehabilitation services are provided to treat psychological, communication and learning difficulties. The Department offers a range of social services, including advice and guidance for families, school visits, talks for sector employees and teachers and advisory sessions for the families of persons with special needs and other concerned persons.

186. School for Boys with Mental Disabilities: this school is overseen by the Special Education Department of the Ministry of Education and offers health, educational, rehabilitation, social and other services for boys with mental or multiple disabilities. Boys with multiple disabilities who

use the school's services tend to have mental and hearing disabilities or mental and motor disabilities. The rehabilitation services offered by the school include vocational training, which is delivered through vocational workshops, psychological rehabilitation and communicative and social skills training.

187. School for Girls with Mental Disabilities: this school is overseen by the Special Education Department of the Ministry of Education. It offers health, educational, rehabilitation, social and other services for girls with mental or multiple disabilities. Girls with multiple disabilities who use the school's services tend to have mental and hearing disabilities or mental and motor disabilities. The rehabilitation services offered by the school include vocational training, which is delivered through vocational workshops, psychological rehabilitation and communicative and social skills training. Other services include advice and guidance and leisure programmes.

188. School for Boys with Hearing Impairments: the basic services offered are education and training. The school delivers specialized services to boys with auditory and multiple disabilities who have hearing and speech impairments, are profoundly deaf or have cochlear implants. Students with multiple disabilities tend to have hearing and mental impairments. Rehabilitation includes vocational training, psychological rehabilitation and communicative and social skills development. The school is overseen by the Special Education Department of the Ministry of Education.

189. School for Girls with Hearing Impairments: the school offers its specialized services to girls with hearing impairments who are deaf or hard of hearing. Health services are provided by a nurse who looks after students' health and refers children to the Hamad Medical Corporation for hearing assessments and tests. Educational services are offered through a programme that begins at the nursery stage and includes rehabilitation. Rehabilitation at the school includes training in sewing and computing skills, in addition to communication, psychological and social skills development.

190. Nur Institute for the Blind: the institute offers its services to the blind and persons with visual impairments, in addition to those with multiple disabilities, such as visual and mental disabilities, visual and motor disabilities and visual and emotional problems. Health services are offered at the eye-testing clinic and through occupational therapy and monitoring of the health of persons registered with the institute. Educational services include support programmes, computer skills training, etc. Rehabilitation services include treatment for speech disorders, psychological rehabilitation and other services such as reintegration into ordinary education and family and community awareness and advice.

191. Shafallah Centre for Children with Special Needs: this centre is attached to the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and offers a range of specialized services for persons with mental, emotional and multiple disorders. Health services are delivered by a medical unit and rehabilitation services include vocational training, communication skills, psychological rehabilitation, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Social services include social, material and psychological support for families. The centre takes persons with multiple disabilities, usually mental and motor disabilities, mental and hearing disabilities or mental disabilities and autism.

192. Education Centre: the centre is part of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development and specializes in learning difficulties. Its rehabilitation services include psychological services and speech therapy. Classes are held to train persons with learning difficulties using special programmes and curricula and some social services are offered to persons with learning difficulties and speech disorders. The centre takes pupils suffering from minor hearing impairments and registers them in classes for students with learning difficulties.

### **Qatari Society for Persons with Special Needs**

193. The Qatari Society for Persons with Special Needs (headquarters) offers health, education, rehabilitation and social services to persons with mental, motor, visual, auditory and multiple disabilities. Basic health services include referrals to medical institutions, diagnoses and the identification of individuals' symptoms and problems. Educational services are offered at four of the Society's centres. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and schools, the Society seeks to integrate children into regular education, analysing different cases and their needs and providing certain tools and devices that will enable students to acquire the skills that they need and pursue their education. Rehabilitation services offered at the headquarters office include psychosocial rehabilitation and the supply of assistive devices, medical equipment and prosthetics. The Society and its centres are overseen by the Ministry of the Civil Service and Housing.

194. The Sociocultural Centre for Persons with Special Needs is part of the Qatari Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs and offers health, rehabilitation, social and other services to persons with hearing, visual, mental, emotional, motor and physical disabilities and learning difficulties, together with slow learners and persons with multiple disabilities. Health services include the provision of first aid care by a designated nurse at the centre. Rehabilitation services include year-round vocational training, consisting of from four to six courses each year. The Centre offers various other services, including leisure activities, advice and guidance and social activities.

### **Educational Centre for Persons with Special Needs**

195. Rehabilitation Centre for Girls: the centre offers health, educational, rehabilitation, social and other services to persons with mental or multiple disabilities. It also offers some rehabilitation services to persons with motor and physical disabilities. Health services are provided by a doctor appointed by the Hamad Medical Corporation, who is present one day a week to examine users of the centre, beneficiaries and by a nurse. Rehabilitation services include vocational training, arts, handicrafts, cookery, sewing, agriculture, home and personal care and communications skills training. In addition, a trainer from the Qatar Sports Federation for Persons with Special Needs provides training and runs certain physical and sports activities. The persons with multiple disabilities who attend the centre tend to have combinations of mental and motor disabilities, hearing disabilities and autism and mental disabilities and autism.

196. Rehabilitation Centre for Boys: the centre offers health, rehabilitation, social and other services to children with mental or multiple disabilities. Health services are delivered in cooperation with organizations which conduct regular check-ups on persons registered with the centre. Rehabilitation services consist of vocational training, and the other services consist of open-air sports.

### **C. Sports education services**

197. The Qatar Sports Federation for Persons with Special Needs offers specialized sports and physical education services for persons with mental, motor, physical, visual hearing and multiple disabilities. The Federation was established to help persons with special needs to make good use of their free time, to develop their potential and skills and promote a spirit of cooperation among all. The Federation represents the State of Qatar at Arab and international meetings and encourages the practice of sport among persons with special needs.

### **D. Miscellaneous services (education, training, counselling)**

#### **Private centres**

198. Qatar Speech Centre: the centre offers educational and rehabilitation services for persons with emotional disorders, motor problems, auditory impairments, learning difficulties, slow learning syndrome, language and speech impediments and multiple disabilities.

199. Bar'a Children's Centre: the varied services offered by the centre include health, educational, rehabilitation, social and other services for persons with, inter alia, emotional disorders, motor problems, auditory impairments, learning difficulties, slow learning syndrome, language and speech impediments and multiple disabilities.

200. With regard to the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the amendment of legislation on persons with special needs, efforts are under way to issue implementing decrees for Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004.

201. With regard to the Committee's recommendation on the involvement of the families of children with special needs in matters affecting the lives of their children, the section of the analytical study services provided by institutions in Qatar which care for children with special needs that deals with the interaction between families and these institutions concluded that 80.9 per cent of these institutions organize regular meetings with children's families. This result shows that technical and administrative staff in these institutions are aware of how important such meetings are for ensuring the constructive participation of families in educational or therapeutic programmes. Institutions work with families through the delivery of advice and guidance to mothers or parents, monthly follow-up of cases, parents' workshops, cultural talks and the organization of programmes and trips for children and their families. As for home visits, 66.6 per cent of institutions organize visits to children with motor or multiple disabilities and 33.3 per cent visits to children with behavioural, psychological, social or educational disorders, autism or mental and auditory disorders. The arrangement depends on whether the physical or specific behavioural problem can be dealt with in the family environment, the existence of severe difficulties with mobility, problems with beginning treatment far from the family environment and the presence of safety or attachment issues in some cases. Beneficiaries will be integrated into the programmes of these institutions at a later stage.

202. With regard to the recommendation on the provision of financial resources for children with disabilities, the above-mentioned study concludes that the volume of government aid covers the majority of persons who use the services provided by institutions for persons with special needs. Government bodies support 16 such institutions. This is evidence that government

funding covers a wide range of persons with special needs. The funding is provided by the Ministry of Education, the Hamad Medical Corporation, the Ministry of the Civil Service and Housing and the Qatari National Olympic Committee. Enterprises and institutions support 12 such institutions and businessmen support 7, while banks and exchange offices support 6. Hence, diverse sources of funding, both governmental and non-governmental, are available for each institution. According to the analytical study, 66.7 per cent of institutions for persons with special needs deliver their services free of charge and 14.3 per cent waive fees for Qataris and foreign residents with special needs. This means that there is a high level of government support in addition to non-governmental funding. The study indicates that 9.5 per cent of institutions charge users monthly fees, while 4.8 per cent charge on an annual or semi-annual basis. All governmental and non-governmental organizations help pay the costs of the services which institutions provide to users.

### **Programmes and activities of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs for children with special needs**

203. In 2002-2004, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs ran public awareness campaigns, comprising a range of events, health centres, schools and some government and civic institutions.

204. In December 2005, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs ran an inter-Arab workshop on a unified sign language for the deaf. Agreement was reached on the introduction of 1,500 Arab words with 1,500 corresponding signs. The words were translated into English and French and printed, reproduced in pictures and translated into sign language. The Council launched a survey of persons with special needs (disabilities), in cooperation with the Planning Council, to run from January to June 2007.

205. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs, in conjunction with Qatar University, established a special education diploma. In agreement with the "Crew" transportation company, it secured vehicles equipped for persons with special needs, which were made available in May 2007. In addition, in conjunction with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Traffic Department and the Qatari Society for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs, it allocated parking spots in a number of government locations and malls for persons with special needs and introduced fines for breaching the rules prohibiting other drivers from using these spots.

206. In February 2006, the Supreme Council held a round table discussion on the importance of premarital screening and its impact on curbing the spread of disabilities. It held a workshop in January 2007, in cooperation with the Gulf Press Federation, entitled "Whither the Gulf press and persons with special needs?"

207. It oversaw the finalization of a national strategy for the family, which includes a strategy for persons with special needs consisting of several themes, in line with the Arab Decade of Disabled Persons, the principles underlying a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and the Qatari Persons with Special Needs Act No. 2 of 2004.

## **VII. EDUCATION, LEISURE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES (arts. 28, 29 and 31)**

### **A. Education, including vocational training and guidance (art. 28)**

208. Since the consideration of the initial report of Qatar in 2001, the State has taken numerous initiatives to develop education, issuing Amiri decree law No. 37 of 2002 establishing the Supreme Education Council, under the chairmanship of His Highness the Crown Prince, appointing its members and defining its terms of reference, The Council formulates the education policy of Qatar and develops education according to the State's requirements, utilizing highly qualified personnel to ensure standards of high education.

209. The purpose of the "New stage education" development initiative is to promote national and humanitarian principles and values, make classrooms places that foster a love of learning, encourage students to use their capacities and talents to the full, hold schools responsible for raising performance standards, involve parents in the education process, satisfy their ambitions and produce a generation of young persons who are qualified to enter universities and the local and international labour market. The initiative focuses on four main principles: independence, accountability, diversity and choice. The institutional structure of the Council is described below.

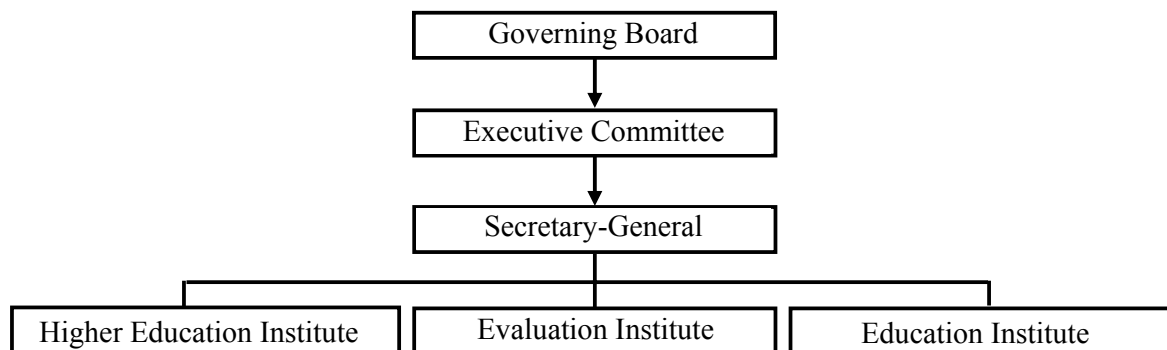
The Council is the supreme authority for education policy design and educational development. It comprises three bodies, directed by the Secretary of the Council, namely:

- The Education Institute, which is responsible for overseeing independent schools, developing new curriculum standards, promoting best practices and modern teaching techniques and creating professional development programmes for staff of independent schools.
- The Evaluation Institute, which is responsible for assessing students' performance through national and international tests (the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) frameworks) and for conducting annual assessments of schools, and regular and special inspections to ensure that schools are genuinely providing a quality education, and for supporting the performance development and improvement processes. The Institute also collects data and information from multiple sources, including students, parents, teachers and school managers, using a variety of approved scientific tools.
- The Higher Education Institute, which is responsible for advising students about career and job choices and opportunities for higher education in Qatar and abroad, in addition to managing grants programmes and study trips.

210. Figure 5 shows an organizational chart of the Supreme Education Council.

**Figure 5**

**Organizational chart of the Higher Education Council**



211. The State has taken numerous steps since the consideration of the initial report of Qatar in 2001 to address the educational needs of young children. In 2001, it adopted a policy on preschool education, which is a part of the regular education system. It also constructed, established and opened a number of government kindergartens. In 2001/02, for example, two kindergarten and preparatory sections were opened up in two primary schools, and in 2002/03 two additional government kindergartens were opened. Ministerial decision No. 27 of 2003 was issued on 25 September 2003, establishing a preschool education department, the Directorate of Preschool Education to manage girls' education, oversee the running of government kindergartens, introduce a system of kindergarten certificates, draft technical and administrative reports, maintain files on kindergarten staff and devise regulations on admission and registration. By 2005/06, the number of kindergartens had risen to 95, providing for a total of 36,756 children.

212. In the framework of early childhood development policies, the Supreme Education Council recently formulated a draft early childhood strategy to support the broad principles of the education development initiative, create education opportunities for all children without distinction, offer an education that fully meets the needs and addresses the individual differences of learners and provide opportunities on and introduce appropriate procedures for early education. The strategy is founded on a set of principles on the creation of special curricula and programmes for this age group and the use of appropriate education techniques which take account of positive experiences in early education and the need to provide a controlled and well-organized educational environment and to endow teaching staff (at this stage) with a set of skills, in particular the ability to supervise and respond to children's needs, etc.

213. The Supreme Education Council devoted considerable resources to this stage of education in order to achieve the objectives of the initiative, commissioning experts to prepare a strategic plan for early education, the first draft of which was completed in February 2007. The key objectives of the five-year strategy are to improve the quality of education offered to children at this stage, prepare for expansion in the number of kindergartens and move gradually towards the

realization of these goals. The strategy relies heavily on a media plan to raise public awareness of the importance of early childhood and the potential role of the Higher Educational Council (the Education Institute) and stakeholders in providing financial and organizational support.

214. Details are provided hereunder of some of the quantitative and statistical aspects of kindergarten education. The figures below illustrate the progress made between 2001/02 and 2005/06 in the development of kindergarten education.

**Table 16**  
**Increase in the number of kindergartens and pupils**  
**from 2001/02 to 2005/06**

Academic year	No. of kindergartens	Total No. of pupils	Percentage of children enrolled	Average for both sexes
2000/01	90	9 291	29.5	0.89
2003/04	98	11 752	34	0.94
2005/06	95	15 634	42.5	0.94

215. The following observations may be made based on Table 16:

- The number of kindergartens increased between 2000/01 (90) and 2003/04 (98) but subsequently fell in 2005/06 (95), owing to the closure of some kindergartens as a result of rising rental costs. The State is currently constructing and leasing a number of kindergartens.
- The number of children enrolled in kindergartens rose between 2000/01 (9,291) and 2003/04 (11,572) and continued to rise in 2005/06 (15,634). This shows that families are aware of the importance of enrolling their children in preschool education and of the role that preschool education plays in developing children's skills and aptitudes and helping them to adapt to the school environment. With regard to gender equality as reflected in enrolment rates, the average enrolment rate for both sexes is 0.94, meaning that there is no significant gender gap in this area.

216. In order to encourage regular attendance, reduce school drop-out rates and increase rates of enrolment in all stages of education, the State, through various educational establishments, endeavours to attract learners to education using various techniques, which are described below:

- Diversification of learning sources: students are able to learn from different sources, namely, textbooks, the Internet, periodicals, academic research, seminars, etc.; learning resource centres have been set up in schools for the purpose
- Continuous curriculum development: this task is undertaken based on the needs and interests of students, the developments taking place in the State and intellectual and technological innovations



- Classroom and extracurricular activities which supplement the education process, such as trips, field visits, laboratory experiments and research and organized sports, cultural and social activities
- Diversification of teaching techniques and methods through empowerment of teachers
- Use of technology in the learning and teaching processes both as a tool and a subject in its own right
- Creation of a safe school environment which encourages learning and education, and the development of school buildings in such a way as to create a stimulating and varied environment
- Assignment of roles and responsibilities to students to give them a sense of responsibility and self-confidence

217. With regard to raising primary school enrolment and attendance rates and offering educational opportunities to boys and girls, the primary school stage in Qatar offers six years of education to children beginning at the age of 6. There are some special schools which enrol 5-year-olds in the first primary grade. Table 17 shows the number of schools and students in primary education.

**Table 17**

**Number of students and enrolment rates in primary education  
from 2001/02 to 2005/06**

Academic year	No. of pupils		Total	Overall enrolment rate	Class enrolment rate
	Government	Private			
2000/01	37 923	24 542	62 465	103	92.4
2003/04	39 651	27 281	66 932	101.5	95.9
2005/06	38 008	32 919	70 927	101.7	97.6

*Source:* Statistics Department, Ministry of Education.

218. From table 17 the following observations may be made:

- The number of children enrolled in primary education has increased over the years, from 62,456 in 2000/01 to 66,932 in 2003/04 and 70,927 in 2005/06. This increase can be ascribed to a series of factors, such as awareness of the importance of education, the issuance of the Compulsory Education Act, the interest which the State has taken in education and also economic, commercial and industrial development in Qatar. In that connection, the State needs foreign workers to come to Qatar with their families and this has a knock-on effect on school enrolment numbers.

- In 2000/01, the government sector accounted for 37,923 students, or 60.7 per cent of the total number, while the private sector accounted for 39.3 per cent. In 2003/04, there were 39,651 students enrolled in government primary schools (59.25 per cent of the total number), as compared with 27,281 (40.75 per cent) in private schools. The corresponding figures for 2005/06 were 38,008 students (53.6 per cent) in government schools and 32,919 (46.4 per cent) in private schools. In recent years there has been a marked increase in admissions to private schools, with the percentage of children enrolled in these schools rising from 39.3 in 2000/01 to 46.4 in 2005/06. There has been a marked degree of convergence in enrolment rates in the two respective types of education over the past year with the result that there is now no great difference between the two.
- In primary education, the gross and net enrolment rates stood at 103 per cent and 92.4 per cent respectively in 2001/02. The gross enrolment rate fell to 101.5 per cent in 2003/04, while the net enrolment rate rose to 95.9 per cent. In 2005/06, the gross enrolment rate was 101.7 per cent, as compared with a net enrolment rate of 97.6 per cent for the target age group. This is evidence of a sharp rise in the net enrolment rate after 2000/01, which could be ascribed to the introduction of the Compulsory Education Act.

219. With regard to enrolment in intermediate and secondary education, the course of study for the two stages lasts a total of six years, divided into three years for each stage. Table 18 shows the number of students and the gross and net enrolment rates for the two stages in the period 2001/02 to 2004/05.

**Table 18**

**Number of students, and overall and class enrolment rates in intermediate and secondary education 2000/01-2005/06**

Academic year	No. of students		Total	Overall enrolment rate	Class enrolment rate
	Government	Private			
2000/01	33 402	13 529	46 931	92.2	78.7
2003/04	38 009	17 409	55 418	96.7	90.6
2005/06	38 778	19 659	58 437	96	92.5

220. From table 18 it is possible to make the following observations:

- In the 2000/01 academic year a total of 46,931 students were enrolled in secondary education, 33,402 in government schools and 13,529 in private schools. In 2003/04, the total number stood at 55,468, with 38,009 enrolled in government schools and 17,459 in private institutions. The number continued to rise, reaching 58,437 in 2005/06, with 38,778 children in government schools and 19,659 in private schools.
- The number of students in government and private secondary school education has risen steadily over the years.

- The gross enrolment rate has risen sharply over the years - from 92.2 per cent in 2000/01 to 96 per cent in 2005/06.
- There was a marked increase in the net enrolment rate - from 78.7 per cent in 2000/01 to 92.5 per cent in 2005/06.
- There are no significant differences between the sexes in secondary enrolment rates; the net enrolment rate ranges from 99 to 102, indicating a situation of gender equality.

221. The Compulsory Education Act No. 25 of 2001 introduced free universal compulsory education. The Act states that education is compulsory and free of charge for all children from the beginning of the primary stage to the end of the intermediate change or until the child reaches the age of 18, whichever of the two comes first. The Ministry provides the necessary resources for this purpose. In implementation of the Act, a series of measures and procedures were introduced, including the passing of Act No. 48 of 2001 establishing a committee to study and design mechanisms for the implementation of the Compulsory Education Act and the issuance of a school circular at the beginning of each year on addressing problems of student absenteeism. Schoolteachers and social workers keep track of absences, verify the reasons for them and contact parents whose children are absent without a good reason, warning them that school attendance is obligatory and that truancy is not allowed. Parents who prevent their sons or daughters from pursuing their studies will face penalties under the Compulsory Education Act. Some cases may be referred to the Public Prosecution Department for appropriate action.

222. With regard to financial aid for students, part of the Ministry of Education annual budget and the profits from casinos are earmarked to provide financial aid to students whose families are shown through means testing to have limited incomes. In 2004/05, aid was dispensed to support a total of 3,642 students - 622 boys and 745 girls in secondary education, 537 boys and 648 girls in intermediate education and 598 boys and 492 girls in primary education. Social benefits were disbursed for 4,071 students in the past few years. State institutions and some civil society institutions offer assistance in cash and kind to support students. A total of 7,000 students receive such assistance.

223. Numerous procedures have been put in place for the implementation of plans to tackle the problem of children dropping out of school, ensure that more children continue their education and reduce drop-out rates in primary, intermediate and secondary schools. Various cultural, social, sports and technology competitions have been run under conditions designed to encourage children to attend school and persevere with their studies. In addition, student councils are encouraged to participate in decisions on the running of schools. Financial assistance and aid is offered to encourage students in straitened circumstances to continue their studies and not to drop out in order to find a job. A series of reinforcement classes are offered to students who are weak in particular subjects. Teachers are trained to use the most modern and appropriate teaching methods and techniques, which are tailored to students' needs and the nature of the subject being taught and allow for differences between individual students. The Compulsory Education Act urges all children of school age to enrol in school. Various school activities are used to help eliminate psychological barriers between students and their teachers. These activities have a positive impact on school admissions, enable teachers to exert a positive

influence on students' behaviour and increase students' commitment to learning. The role of boards of governors and parents has been boosted in monitoring regular school attendance and students' academic progress and conduct.

224. The pupil/teacher ratio is one indicator of the internal efficiency of the education system. Table 19 contains figures on the pupil/teacher ratio in secondary education.

**Table 19**

**Teacher/pupil ratio for 2003/04-2005/06**

Academic year	No. of students		No. of teachers		Teacher/pupil ratio		Overall ratio
	Government	Private	Government	Private	Government	Private	
2003/04	39 651	27 281	3 953	1 950	1:10	1:14	1:11
2004/05	38 292	31 702	4 322	1 901	1:9	1:17	1:11
2005/06	38 008	32 919	4 497	2 059	1:8.5	1:16	1:11

225. Table 19 shows that the pupil/teacher ratio in government schools was 10:1 in 2003/04 and 9:1 the following year. The ratio continued to improve, reaching 8.5:1 in 2005/06. In private schools, the ratio has fluctuated and has not been stable. It stood at 14:1 in 2003/04, 17:1 the following year and 16:1 the year after that. The overall pupil/teacher ratio was 16:1 in three consecutive years. Compared to the figure of 11:1 envisaged in the Qatar national plan for education for all, the pupil/teacher ratio was 11:1 in government primary schools in 2000/01 and 16:1 in private education. The total ratio in primary education was 12:1. This indicates a fall in the ratio of students to teachers in government education and primary education generally, reflecting the energy devoted to improving the efficiency of the education system and the commitment of the State to providing a quality education which allows teachers to follow all students in their classrooms. In this way, the aim of the basic education development plan of delivering education to all and reducing pupil/teacher ratios in basic education is being met.

226. With regard to the eradication of illiteracy among children and adults, in 2003/04, some 99 per cent of males and 98 per cent of females in the 15-to-24 age group knew how to read. These rates are high. The illiteracy rate for the age group stood at 1.5 per cent, which is very low. The gender equality indicator (98 per cent) shows that a situation of parity exists. In the 2004 academic year, 99.1 per cent of males and 98.2 per cent of females knew how to read. The gender equality rate was 99 per cent. The illiteracy rate was 1.3 per cent, reflecting the increase in enrolment in education and greater awareness in the State of the importance of education.

227. The illiteracy rate has fallen steadily, reaching 1 per cent in 2005/06, a very low rate. This is the result of an increase in the percentage of persons who know how to read (99 per cent). The equality indicator (99.2 per cent) points to the absence of gender gaps and gender discrimination.

**B. Aims of education (art. 29) with reference also to quality of education**

228. In its concluding observations on the initial report of Qatar, the Committee on the Rights of the Child states that it is concerned that the aims of education presented in the report do not adequately reflect the aims outlined in article 29 of the Convention, in particular that: the system

of public education continues to emphasize rote learning rather than analytical skills development and is not child-centred; the choice of some preparatory- and secondary-level programmes may be restricted for girls; and the development and respect for human rights, tolerance and equality of the sexes and religious and ethnic minorities are not explicitly part of the curricula. The Committee recommends that the State party undertake a process of curriculum and teaching methodology reform, direct education to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential, include in the curricula, human rights education, including on children's rights, and seek assistance from, among others, UNESCO and UNICEF (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 51 and 52).

229. Since the consideration of the initial report of Qatar in 2001, the State has taken various initiatives to develop education, such as establishing the Supreme Education Council which formulates Qatar's educational policy and develops education based on the State's need for qualified human resources and educational quality standards (see above).

230. In diversifying areas of specialization in intermediate and secondary education for girls, the education development initiative adopted by the Supreme Education Council applies the principles of gender equality and equal opportunities for girls and boys to enrol in the schools that they want to attend. The concept behind independent schools, which are overseen by the Supreme Education Council, is one based on diversification, independence, choice and accountability. Every school has a different educational programme, depending on its vision and objectives. There are schools which focus on the sciences, for example Al-Bayan Educational Complex for Girls and the Umar Bin al-Khattab Complex for Boys, and there are others which offer students the chance to choose subjects based on their interests and wishes. Students are offered careers advice to help them to choose their area of academic specialization and chosen career path after university. There are four core subjects that all students, male and female, must take in the education system introduced by the Supreme Educational Council through the new education development initiative (Arabic, English, mathematics and science). Each school designs the subject content and the teaching methods best suited to it following the set national curricula criteria.

231. As part of the educational development process under way in the State, the Academy for Sports Excellence was established in 2003/04 to provide for pupils with outstanding sporting ability and create a learning environment suited to their needs. The Academy uses special curricula and plans which meet its needs and aspirations in pursuance of its mission and vision. The curricula are guided by the standards set by the Supreme Education Council, and the educational programme encompasses a series of subjects, namely, Islamic studies, Arabic, English, mathematics, science and sociology, in addition to core subjects such as information technology, sports education and sports psychology. The Academy uses a system of continuous assessment, consisting of tests, events, student activities and behavioural evaluations. In 2005/06, the Academy had 128 students.

232. The Qatar Leadership Academy was established in September 2005 in partnership with the Qatar Foundation of Education, Science and Community Development and the Qatar Armed Forces. The Academy maintains the highest educational standards with a view to ensuring that every student achieves academic excellence. Its mission is to produce intellectual leaders capable

of lifelong learning and citizens who assume responsibility and will be society's future leaders. The academic programme covers Islamic and Arab values, academic subjects, leadership training and sports. In 2005/06, a total of 45 students were enrolled in the Academy. Graduates receive the International Baccalaureate certificate, which qualifies them for admission to international universities and military colleges.

233. With regard to children with special needs, the State has made sure to provide them with educational and rehabilitation services based on the rights guaranteed to them under the Persons with Special Needs Act No. 4 of 2003. By ministerial decision No. 6 of 2004 a committee was established to oversee the academic integration programme which aims at creating an enabling environment to educate, rehabilitate and integrate children with motor disabilities who suffer from learning difficulties into ordinary schools, improve the professional skills of those who work with children with disabilities, raise awareness of the importance and benefits of academic integration, create an objective system for making accurate assessments and follow up on all persons involved in the integration process. The programme offers a series of services to the target group, which may include psychotherapy, communication skills development, physiotherapy or personalized learning plans. The integration programme was in effect in nine schools in 2006/07, benefiting 114 students in primary or intermediate education. The programme comprises a range of activities, such as the formulation of an integration strategy for persons with special needs, the organization of the first and the second ever "weeks for the promotion of coexistence with persons with special needs", training courses and workshops for personnel involved in the programme and those responsible for its implementation in schools, a survey of children with special needs in schools, educational centres and private schools such as those for children with mental and hearing impairments, the Nur Institute and the Shafallah Centre.

234. The State provides for persons with exceptional gifts and creative abilities by establishing structures offering them special programmes. The Qatar Foundation for Gifted and Creative Students was established in 2001 to raise awareness of what it means to have such gifts and talents and to provide for and help gifted children to realize their potential using various enrichment techniques and programmes. The Foundation identifies the special characteristics and needs of gifted children and offers them academic and careers advice. The main programmes run by the Foundation are the "Beautiful Mind" programme, the "Educational Enrichment" programme and the "Creative Thinking" development programme. The Foundation runs training programmes for teachers and counsellors and student programmes and discussion groups. It also provides educational advice to parents and produces booklets, publications and reports, with titles such as "How can a family cultivate a child's creativity?". The Foundation disseminates information on the most important principles that teachers may apply in delivering education. A total of 212 students were enrolled in the centre in 2004/05.

235. With regard to the development of children's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential, independent schools, which are government-owned and have the freedom to pursue their vision, mission and educational objectives through educational programmes that meet established national education criteria, use diverse and innovative teaching methods driven by the concept of learner-centred education. This approach plays a

vital role in the education process and uses different techniques, including self-directed learning, peer-to-peer learning, cooperative learning, brainstorming, problem solving, explorative research, laboratory work, discussion, dialogue and research. Independent schools focus on the following:

- Using teaching techniques designed for gifted students, offering enrichment activities and also, where necessary, providing educational programmes, activities and individualized plans tailored to the type of need.
- Linking theory and practice through experiments and empirical study.
- Teaching techniques are designed around the learner's interaction with the educational process and his or her responsiveness to learning. This offers the teacher the opportunity to assess the student's performance and to deal with individual differences between learners. It also provides an opportunity to identify the skills and talents of the learners.
- Immediate positive reinforcement is used as an adjunct of the teaching process. It consists of verbal encouragement, the presentation of certificates or prizes and children's participation in favourite activities or inclusion on honour rolls.
- The use of modern technology in schools as a teaching tool for many subjects which makes the teaching process more effective and stimulates students' interest.
- The use by teachers of various techniques and different kinds of questions which stimulate children's thought processes, beginning with their comprehension and ability to absorb, analyse, structure and evaluate information and to make criticisms.

236. The State develops curricula through educational establishments in Qatar in order to keep pace with the major transformations under way in Qatari society and to meet the real needs of the labour market. National curriculum standards were devised for four subjects (Arabic, English, mathematics and science), disseminating among independent schools and published on the website of the Supreme Education Council. Schools were given the freedom to choose and design the curriculum best suited to their needs, in conformity with the national standards established for each grade. As for other subjects, independent schools were given the option of designing curricula consistent with their objectives, mission, vision and values. The variety of curricula adopted by different independent schools allows parents and students to opt for the school best suited to students' interests and abilities. The national curriculum standards were drawn up with a view to the integrated development of the personality, thought processes and intellectual, critical, creative and evaluative capacities of learners. Learners are offered opportunities to express their views freely and to make criticisms.

237. With regard to teacher training programmes, career development is critical to developing the skills, capacities and professionalism of educational personnel, both teachers and administrators, and has a positive impact on educational outcomes. The State has taken steps to promote career development through a series of internal and external training programmes. It has introduced programmes on teaching methods and techniques, school management and assessments, educational guidance, strategic planning, class management, creative thinking, the media, human rights and the use of modern technology in private school management, teaching

and education. The training meets a series of objectives, which include: providing staff in different functions with knowledge and information that will further their professional development; refining and improving their skills; promoting positive career development goals and values and excellence in the educational profession; and keeping pace with international innovations in the educational, administrative and technical domains. Table 20 contains details of the number of training programmes and trainees from 2002/03 to 2005/06.

**Table 20**

**Number of training programmes and trainees from 2002/03 to 2005/06**

Academic year	No. of programmes	No. of trainees
2002/03	152	3 520
2003/04	111	3 407
2004/05	146	3 239
2005/06	90	2 765

In addition a large number of training programmes are run in schools to meet the schools' professional needs and the objective of career development.

238. With regard to higher studies programmes for teaching professionals, the Faculty of Education of Qatar University, in partnership with its counterpart at Texas A&M University and the Supreme Education Council, has been running a primary education diploma programme since August 2005 designed to produce highly-skilled classroom teachers for independent schools and contribute to the education development programme. The two-year primary education diploma programme was established to offer teachers training in: modern teaching skills and techniques; the use of English to teach science and mathematics; the introduction of modern technology in teaching; full compliance with curriculum standards for the subjects of Arabic, English, mathematics and science; the design and development of curricula in keeping with national standards; the use of appropriate student assessment methods; and the creation of a safe learning environment that supports the education process. The programme consists of 30 hours' contact time, covering 10 subjects, half of them teaching methods. All subjects are taught in English and the programme provides both theoretical and practical input. A range of independent schools have taken part in the training, with a total of 100 teachers participating in 2005/06.

239. With regard to the development of schools' institutional structures in line with the educational objectives set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the philosophy behind independent schools, which are considered a model for the future of schools in Qatar, is that schools should manage their own affairs independently, choosing their own curricula and teaching and evaluation methods, establishing their own systems and offering educational support resources. Independent schools give parents a role in school management through boards of trustees and boards of parents. From an organizational point of view, each school has a principal, deputy and assistant principals, a board of trustees and a board of parents. The board of trustees is part of the legal structure which every independent school must have. Its role is to guide, advise and represent parents and the community and help the school to control quality. Members of boards of trustees ensure that schools comply with regulations and laws and use their resources to carry out their mission as set out in their strategic plan. They offer advice on



the school's mission, strategy and future priorities, advise the school principal and work with him to promote the school's mission and achievements in the community. They also endeavour to preserve the integrity of schools, encourage accountability, diversify resources, collect financial donations and contribute actively to school life.

240. In most schools, boards of trustees consist of nine members, including the chairman, deputy chairman, secretary and treasurer. These persons are elected to a steering committee. The board meets once a month and performs its tasks through, inter alia, a financial committee and a donations committee. Each committee has two or three board members. Each school also has a board of parents established to ensure successful participation and genuine cooperation between parents and school management and to develop parents' awareness. Discussions are held on students' educational progress, conduct and social background focusing on two key aspects of the formation of students' personalities. The boards meet regularly every year and whenever the exigencies of the school so require and exist at all stages of education. They discuss students' situation, problems and academic progress and normally meet at the beginning of the academic year in order to provide parents with a clear picture of the school concerned, how it works and the role of the board in achieving educational goals. Parents have a chance to spend an entire school day with their children in the classroom experiencing at first hand the educational life of their children.

241. The school support programme was established to further the objectives of the "New stage of education" development initiative, which relies to a large extent on the training of highly qualified staff. In order to guarantee school administrators and teachers access to the support that they need, each independent school has been twinned with a school support organization. The idea behind the school support programme is that each school should employ four full-time staff - an adviser on school management and three other advisers - and a team of experts may be deployed to visit schools depending on their needs. Support may be offered in various areas such as information technology, funding, accounting and so on. The Education Institute monitors and evaluates school support organizations in order to guarantee that the goals of the initiative are met and to ensure that schools have the capacity to develop and achieve excellence. The process is overseen by a quality assurance specialist employed in the Institute's career development office.

242. In its concluding observations on the initial report of Qatar, the Committee on the Rights of the Child takes note of the 1993 ministerial decree which bans corporal punishment in schools and states that it remains concerned that this issue is not addressed effectively (CRC/C/15/Add.163, para. 53). In this connection, in line with the educational development policy in effect in Qatar, Ministerial Decree No. 57 of 2001 was issued establishing a system of behavioural guidance and discipline for students aimed at creating an appropriate educational environment characterized by good relations between students, their peers and teachers and curbing student misconduct. The system uses a planned, step-by-step, scientific approach of encouraging positive and good behaviour that reflects religious values, noble ideals and a sense of respect for oneself and others. The regulations list the persons responsible for guiding and correcting behaviour, namely, the school principal, the vice-principal, social workers, teachers, student boards and the Social Development Department. Guidance and disciplinary methods include verbal warnings, personal guidance and advice, written warnings, reprimands, suspension, exclusion from classes, a change of school environment and permanent exclusion.

The regulations contain a list of prohibited measures, which include corporal punishment in all its forms, lowering of grades, collective punishment, public vilification and injuring of students, etc.

243. The Education Institute of the Supreme Education Council has developed guidelines to prevent corporal punishment. The guidelines are included in the discipline policy and were designed to control students' behaviour while at the same time respecting the autonomy of schools. The guidelines stress the importance of reinforcing positive behaviour, of presenting rules in a positive light and of avoiding lists of things that students cannot do. The rules must apply to students' behaviour throughout the day. The policy stipulates that there must be a reward system for good behaviour which uses positive and avoids negative language. The system must consist of a series of gradual punishments for bad behaviour which encourage good behaviour, are fair and are consistent with the law.

244. With regard to the development and observance of human rights and the principles of tolerance and gender equality, school curricula and textbooks in the three stages of education (primary, intermediate and secondary), depending on the area of study, contain definitions of the rights of the child in particular and human rights in general, together with human rights themes and concepts, including political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights, the right to social security and the rights of children, women, older persons and persons with special needs. These rights are taken into account in teaching methods and educational and learning techniques, and curricula and textbooks are constantly revised in line with new developments in human rights.

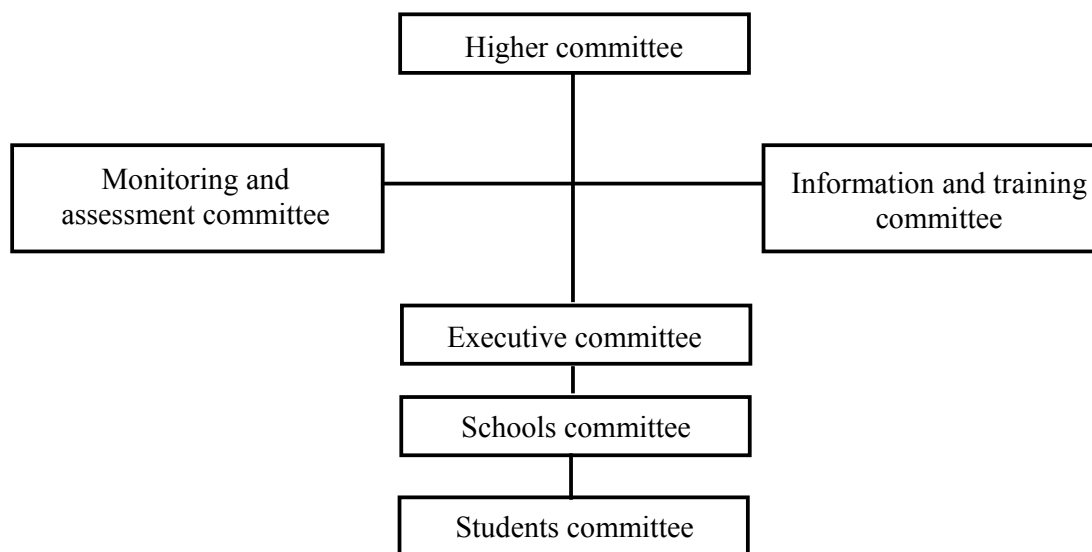
245. Several programmes incorporating the concepts of human and children's rights into educational programmes have been implemented, such as the programme to promote a children's rights culture in schools in conformity with Ministerial Decision No. 1 of 2004 establishing a higher committee for that purpose. The higher committee devised a national action plan, in cooperation with UNESCO, for the preparation of teaching manuals which deal in simplified language with the rights and principles set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, linking these rights to the rights of the child in Islam using passages from the Koran and the hadith (tradition) of the Prophet. The manuals include inserts that use real stories and coloured illustrations to explain rights and violations to children. The action plan provides for workshops to train school staff on the use of the manuals in classroom and extracurricular activities. In 2003/04 and 2004/05, approximately 60 staff from 11 schools were trained. The promoters of the programme are working with UNESCO on the design of separate teaching manuals that can be used to reach a wider audience than State schools. The manuals are due to be introduced in the 2007/08 academic year.

246. Other programmes have been implemented to integrate children's and human rights concepts into educational programmes, such as the Educational Values Programme. Pursuant to Ministerial Decision No. 5 of 2004, a committee was established to promote educational values in school. The committee was tasked with: designing a matrix of educational values for use in education; defining the methods and mechanisms for the application of educational values in schools; devising an appropriate training programme for those involved in implementing the project; overseeing the application of educational values in schools; and encouraging discussions between schools and families in support of efforts to strengthen, promote and highlight the importance of these values. The last of these tasks involves an analytical study of curricula to identify the educational values that they contain.

247. The purpose of the programme is to inculcate and promote educational values among young persons at school, preserve social cohesion based on Islamic, humanitarian and noble values and enable teachers to assess behaviour and decide whether or not it is acceptable. The programme is supported by various committees, consisting of a main committee and subcommittees. Details are shown in Figure 6 below.

**Figure 6**

**Organizational chart of committees to promote educational values**



248. A series of briefings and training courses about the project were held for all groups involved in the different stages. The matrix of values was then distributed to all schools. Various publications and booklets were prepared, including an information booklet, a guide to educational values, a manual on teaching educational values, a set of standards for assessing educational values, postcards and a matrix of educational values for school curricula. A competition on these values was launched in all schools in Qatar and a committee was set up to evaluate submissions, examine evidence and monitor results, which were then transmitted to the Higher Committee for approval. Various schools have received cash prizes in the past two years.

249. Extracurricular activities have been used to promote human rights concepts. For example, student councils provide a new framework to make students aware of their role, afford them the right to express their views and develop their abilities and skills in managing dialogue and discussion and applying democratic principles, in particular by informing them of their rights and how to realize them. The councils also help to form national leaders capable of contributing to national renewal. Each school has a council consisting of students directly elected by their peers. Tasks are divided up between the members and regular meetings are held between representatives of student councils in different stages of education to discuss students' problems and find solutions. Moreover, at regular meetings with officials student representatives have the chance to present their ideas and needs. Student councils operate on several levels (class, school, educational stage, Ministry). They perform a range of functions, including providing information about school activities, considering and suggesting solutions for school and students' problems,

organizing exchange visit programmes for student councils, participating in public celebrations and events in Qatar and helping school managers to manage all programmes and activities. The date 12 April was designated as the day for school self-management and democracy, the dissemination and application of democratic principles and training of student council leaders in leadership and self-management tasks. Leadership skills were refined and support for the role of elected student councils was strengthened.

250. With regard to the promotion of international cooperation on education, the State has concluded educational and scientific cooperation agreements on such matters as exchanges of educational expertise, curricula, textbooks, studies, research, visits between teachers, students and members of Arab and international committees. In the framework of international cooperation and partnerships and the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum meeting held in April 2000, which Qatar adopted in 2000, Ministerial Decision No. 46 of 2002 was issued establishing a committee to formulate a national plan for education for all in the State of Qatar. The plan was drawn up in cooperation with the UNESCO regional office and reproduces the objectives of education for all, based on an examination, analysis and diagnosis of the current state of education, followed by the formulation of a national implementation plan for each theme. A mid-decade evaluation report on the education for all plan is being prepared by the committee established pursuant to Ministerial Decision No. 17 of 2006, the members of which include the Ministry of Education, the Supreme Education Council, the Qatari National Committee for Education, Culture and Science and the University of Qatar.

251. With regard to State support for the development of national education, an endowment fund was set up to use some of the money invested in the natural gas centre and abroad for expenditure on education. Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misnad was designated the UNESCO Special Envoy for basic and higher education in 2003, in recognition of her work to improve the quality of education in Qatar and abroad, beginning with initiatives to develop general and university education in Qatar and including: the launch of the “new education stage” initiative; the establishment of independent schools; the success of efforts to attract well-known universities to Educational City in order to offer women and men opportunities to study and achieve academic excellence; and international initiatives such as support for educational projects offering better opportunities to girls in Mauritania and the Sudan.

252. In 2003, Her Highness, in her capacity as UNESCO Special Envoy, established an international fund for higher education in Iraq, a three-year project to support the construction of higher education establishments in Iraq. Qatar contributed US\$ 15 million to the Fund, which is managed by the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development in conjunction with UNESCO. Qatar continues to support educational projects abroad through the “Reach Out to Asia” charity, a non-governmental organization founded in November 2005 and presided over by Her Highness Sheikha al-Mayasah Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani. The charity offers humanitarian aid to disaster-stricken regions and conflict zones in Asia. In partnership with the Red Crescent Society it provided assistance to remote communities in Kashmir in November 2005 to improve their educational facilities. Educational opportunities were provided to approximately 3,000 children affected by the earthquake in these stricken areas and the quality of primary and secondary education was improved through better access to knowledge and modern technology. The charity organized the first trip by volunteers to Pakistan

in April 2006, with the participation of 65 students from different schools in Qatar. The students helped to deliver aid to schoolchildren adversely affected by the earthquake in Kashmir, including in areas such as health education (first aid), exercise, arts, trades, music and storytelling in Urdu. In the space of just one year, the charity managed to collect over US\$ 19 million for its activities in Asia. The money is spent on providing and supporting health, educational and social services, particularly for children and women. In addition, a school in Indonesia was rebuilt and refurbished (in the village of Bayat Klaten in the south of Yogyakarta) to accommodate 960 students. The project was accompanied by an educational programme carried out by a group of Qatari volunteer students. The “Reach Out to Asia” charity signed a memorandum of understanding in Doha in 2007 with a delegation of officials from Cambodia on the launch of the charity’s latest educational projects for the expansion of the Vihear Suork secondary and primary school building and vocational training centre.

253. The State of Qatar has also established several schools in areas of southern Lebanon damaged by Israeli attacks.

254. Qatar Charity (a civil society association) signed a memorandum of understanding on the implementation of education projects in the city of Kassala in eastern Sudan, and a sustainable school nutrition project for children which consists of two phases due to begin in 2007, in order to create a suitable learning environment for children, encourage the stable development of the educational system and promote partnerships between the Government, the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations.

### **C. Rest, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities**

255. The State has established several institutions which organize rest, leisure, recreational, cultural and artistic activities. It has also devised programmes like the “Qatar of the Future” programme, on instructions from His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalif Al Thani, the Amir of Qatar, to foster among students a culture of openness to dialogue between civilizations and peoples, consolidate the values of tolerance, peace and acceptance of others, provide information to students about other States and civilizations, develop their skills in engaging in dialogue and communication with others, give them insight into other cultures, develop their personalities and teach them the habits of self-reliance.

256. The programme was launched in 2003/04 with two delegations of eight students each being sent to visit Italy and Spain respectively. In 2004/05, three delegations of eight students each were sent on visits to the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy. In the third year, 2005/06, three delegations were sent respectively to Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The delegations’ members were selected from among students who had completed the fifth grade of primary education, i.e., children in the 11-to-12 age group, and the criteria for selection included academic excellence, proficiency in English and a record of good behaviour. Before the visits the children were given three weeks’ training in English to improve their communication skills and provide them with the vocabulary that they needed. They were encouraged to behave in keeping with their national and humanitarian values and were given information about the geography and history of Qatar. The programme also included trips and visits.

257. The State is committed to providing physical education at all levels in order to build a broad foundation for the development of a generation that is physically fit. It instituted a programme to promote swimming in kindergartens and the first grade of primary schools and develop children's physical health by dealing with certain defects through sports, thus helping to improve the physical fitness and health of schoolchildren at an early stage. Over 750 children have benefited from the programme.

258. The health and physical, mental and psychological development of students is promoted through the involvement of schoolchildren in various kinds of sports competitions and events which are organized according to a carefully thought out plan that takes account of students' ages. The main sports activities and events include: football games for children in the three stages of education; primary school games (football, basketball and handball); intermediate and secondary school championships (football, basketball, volleyball and handball); school table tennis championships for the three stages of education; and physical strength championships for the secondary stage. Students also take part in events, visits and activities abroad such as the 15th Pan-Arab Scholastic Games in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and the first table tennis championship among member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which was held in Dammam in Saudi Arabia.

259. Table 21 contains figures on sports activities in 2004/05 in schools in Qatar. It shows that 27 sports events were held in Ministry schools in 2004/05 with the participation of 4,582 students.

**Table 21**

**School sports activities in 2004/05**

Stage	No. of events	No. of teams	No. of students
Primary	8	78	978
Intermediate	9	126	1 725
Secondary	10	151	1 879
Total	27	355	4 582

260. Social and cultural activities are considered to be important for students and thus many such activities are organized with schools playing an important role. Social activities include: awareness campaigns for schoolchildren; public service camps for students in all stages of education; prizes for academic excellence and distinguished community service; environmental, community and recreational trips for schoolchildren; participation of student delegations in conferences and meetings abroad; coordination and cooperation with all social institutions on their programmes and activities; and cultural, social and newspaper competitions. Cultural activities include educational meetings, awareness and education campaigns, cultural and social competitions, school celebrations, talks and seminars, scientific and community visits, cultural and technical exhibitions and the celebration of various public events. Table 22 contains details of cultural activities organized in different stages of education in 2004/05.

**Table 22**

**Cultural activities in different stages of education in 2004/05**

Programme	Activities
Educational conferences	Hosting of the Gulf Education Conference “Talking kids” in cooperation with the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States
Awareness and education campaigns	Prevention of road accidents (intermediate and secondary schools) The dangers of drugs (secondary schools) Advice on water and electricity use The importance of trees and their conservation
Cultural and social competitions	Prevention of road accidents (intermediate and secondary schools) The dangers of drugs (secondary schools) Advice on water and electricity use The importance of trees and their conservation
School parties	Welcome party for new students Gulf Children’s Day Awards ceremony for academic excellence or distinguished community service End of school year
Informational and community visits	Advisory Council Municipal Council University of Qatar Supreme Council for Family Affairs Qatari Red Crescent Society Technical Innovation Centre Qatari stamp collectors’ association Department for the Elderly Ras Lifan Industrial City Iron and Steel Company Chemical fertilizer plant North Atlantic College Leisure areas
Cultural and art shows	Doha International Book Fair The Environmental Fair The “No to Terrorism” exhibition Shows to mark the end of different stages of activities
Celebrations of various events	World AIDS Day World Water Day Qatari Environmental Day Gulf Traffic Week Tree Week Gulf Children’s Day World Civil Defence Day International Children’s Day

261. The aim of the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) programme, in which Qatar has been involved since 2000, is to establish links between students, teachers, scientists and researchers via the Internet, in order to help students to attain the highest levels of scientific expertise, enhance their scientific, geographical and computing skills, increase their understanding of the earth on which they live and foster their love for their environment and its conservation. As part of the programme, a database has been created on the environment in Qatar which uses information from visits to nature reserves, farms, gardens, beaches and practical training courses have been designed for teachers and students and cooperation has been instituted with domestic organizations and institutions such as the Climate Watch Centre and the Supreme Council for the Environment and Nature Reserves. The programme relies on Global Positioning System (GPS) research and focuses on climate, water, hydrological and soil resources, ground cover, bio-organisms and studies of the four seasons.

262. The Cultural Centre for Motherhood and Childhood was established to lay the groundwork for introducing an approach to dealing with mothers and children aimed at: raising awareness of effective child-raising techniques at different stages of development; designing programmes to educate mothers about the cultural, social and material factors in their environment which influence the course of children's lives and development; and providing mothers with the skills and techniques required to raise children properly. The Centre identifies children's psychological, developmental and social problems and seeks to resolve them at an early stage in order to prevent them from adversely affecting children in the future. The Centre uses the most advanced techniques to develop children's linguistic, manual and intellectual skills and caters for gifted children, using modern techniques to develop their abilities. Activities run by the Centre include a children's workshop, an environmental workshop for children, an "open reading" workshop and an intellectual competition workshop. Titles of talks organized by the Centre include "How I deal with my mistakes", "My distinctive behaviour ..." and "Be alert". The Centre has taken part in several activities such as "The summer breeze" event and International Children's Day.

263. With regard to children's leisure and access to cultural information, Al-Jazeera Children's Channel, an Arab satellite television channel, was launched in September 2005. Through its unique concept and a range of educational programmes either produced by Al-Jazeera or purchased from other providers, the Channel opens up avenues for Arab children to learn and develop their skills and encourages them to learn, explore and seek knowledge. The Channel broadcasts Arabic programmes, presents a variety of educational, recreational and interactive topics in a format suited to children in the 3-to-15 age group, meets their needs and caters for their interests. It produces approximately 40 per cent of the programmes that it broadcasts and has a small stock of films and cartoons. It produced the first ever Arab discussion programme featuring Arab children expressing themselves and presenting their views. The Channel has also produced the first ever Arab educational magazine on science, health, sports, culture and computing, in addition to an interactive games programme presenting information in a simplified way. The Channel uses studios and facilities equipped with the latest technology to make high-quality television products. It is committed to broadcasting new programmes for 6 out of 18 hours on weekdays and 7 out of 19 hours at weekends.



264. With regard to leisure, sports, social and cultural activities, the General Authority for Youth offers 22 different kinds of activities for children under the age of 18. In 2001, a total of 26,124 children took part in these activities, as compared with 30,299 in 2003 and 33,658 in 2006. A total of 23 youth clubs and youth associations contribute to these activities.

**Table 23**

**Number of children participating in activities (2001-2006)**

Activity		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1	Religious	417	445	490	437	519	574
2	Cultural	324	269	309	316	365	538
3	Scientific	597	581	681	796	662	533
4	Theatre	196	178	192	188	158	215
5	Arts	632	1 061	1 680	1 355	1 597	2 066
6	Music	477	468	494	325	455	569
7	Social	520	535	733	576	767	711
8	Camps	419	410	440	442	510	518
9	Environmental	20 643	22 419	23 171	23 737	25 650	26 664
10	Sports	1 899	1 632	2 109	1 862	2 184	1 450
Total		26 124	27 998	30 299	30 232	32 983	33 658

265. Table 23 clearly shows that:

- The number of children participating in these activities over the years has risen by 8.5 per cent
- Annual increases vary depending on the type of activity
- Youth clubs and associations were established in the areas shown in Table 23, with participation in environmental activities showing the largest increase (from 20,643 in 2001 to 26,664 in 2006)

**VIII. SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES**

**(arts. 22, 30, 32-36, 37 (b)-(d), 38, 39 and 40)**

**A. Measures taken to protect children**

**Child refugees (art. 22)**

266. Although the State of Qatar does not have any child refugees, this does not mean that the issue is not addressed in its laws or in separate legislative initiatives. Such children would be referred to a child refugee centre. In addition, the State is in the process of drafting the Children's Bill, which takes the Convention on the Rights of the Child as its legal point of reference. The Bill contains articles which, in keeping with the Convention, guarantees the rights of any child refugees in the future.

267. The State of Qatar takes a keen interest in the plight of refugees in other countries and has launched numerous initiatives and provided financial aid and educational, health and social assistance to help refugees and persons in need in other States. The “Reach Out to Asia” initiative was launched in 2005 through a non-governmental organization working under the auspices of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. The charity was established by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Beloved Amir of Qatar, to develop human potential and resources through a network of centres offering educational, research and social development programmes and support for the goals of the Education for All By 2015 initiative launched by UNESCO. The charity also adopted the “Our Children” campaign to help children in Lebanon and Palestine.

### **Children in armed conflict (art. 38)**

268. Qatar ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict on 25 July 2002 and acceded to the four Geneva Conventions and their Optional Protocols in 1977.

269. In keeping with its commitments under international humanitarian law, the State has taken measures to prevent children from being enlisted in the Armed Forces. The Military Service Act No. 31 of 2006 stipulates that a person must be 18 years old in order to enlist in military service (art. 13).

270. Moreover, the enlistment process in the State is voluntary, as stipulated in the regulations and conditions established by law. Documents offering proof of age and evidence of medical fitness, as attested by a medical panel, must be presented in order to be eligible for military service.

271. It follows that there are no persons or volunteers in the ranks of the Armed Forces who are under 18 and thus the Qatari Armed Forces have not had any cases of children needing to be released, reintegrated or provided with humanitarian assistance and medical treatment.

## **B. Children in conflict with the law**

### **Juvenile courts (art. 40)**

272. In its concluding observations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expresses concern that persons under 18 may be prosecuted for crimes in the same manner as adults (i.e. without special procedures), and be subject to the same penalties as adults. It also expresses concern at the criminalization of status offences (CRC/C/15/Add.163, para. 59).

273. The Committee recommends that the State party establish a minimum age of criminal responsibility that is in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention; ensure that its legislation and practice concerning juvenile justice fully reflect the provisions of the Convention, in particular articles 37, 40 and 39, as well as other relevant international standards in this area, such as the Beijing Rules, the Riyadh Guidelines, the United Nations Rules for the

Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, and the Vienna Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System; expedite the promulgation of the draft juvenile justice law, ensuring that it is applicable to all persons under 18 and that adequate resources are allocated for its effective implementation; ensure that the deprivation of liberty is only used as a measure of last resort, for the shortest possible time, is authorized by a court, and that persons under 18 are not detained with adults; ensure that children have access to legal aid and independent and effective complaints mechanisms; consider alternative measures to deprivation of liberty, such as probation, community service or suspended sentences; train professionals in the area of rehabilitation and social reintegration of children; and seek assistance from, among others, OHCHR, the Centre for International Crime Prevention, the International Network on Juvenile Justice and UNICEF, through the Coordination Panel on Technical Advice and Assistance on Juvenile Justice (CRC/C/15/Add.163, para. 60).

274. The Juveniles Act No. 1 of 1994 regulates the establishment of juvenile courts which deal with juvenile cases and of juvenile welfare institutions which house and care for young persons at risk of delinquency. These matters are described in detail in the initial report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1999 (CRC/C/15/Add.5).

275. The subject is taken up in the Criminal Code No. 11 of 2004, article 53 of which states: “No person shall be criminally liable for an offence that he or she committed when under the age of 7. The measures prescribed in the Juveniles Act shall apply only to persons aged between 7 and 14 who commit a serious or major offence.”

276. The Juveniles Act No. 1 of 1994 defines the terms “juvenile”, “juvenile delinquent” and “juvenile at risk of delinquency”, spells out the procedures that must be taken in cases where juveniles engage in, or are at risk of, delinquency and lists the authorities competent to take and impose such measures. Article 1 of the Act states that for the purposes of the Act, the following terms shall have the meanings set out for each term hereunder, unless the context suggests a different meaning:

- Juvenile: a boy or girl who was over 7 and under 16 when he or she committed an offence or was at risk of delinquency.
- Juvenile at risk of delinquency: a juvenile who engages in: work that does not provide enough to live on; activities linked to sexual and immoral offences and offences against public decency and morals; offences involving alcohol, gambling, vagrancy, drugs or mind-altering substances; or the delivery of a service to persons engaged in such offences. The term also includes juveniles who: frequent vagrants, suspects or persons with a reputation for bad conduct or depravity; habitually run away from home or school; have no legitimate source of income or reliable provider; have been removed from their parents, legal guardian or testamentary tutor; have no fixed address; or normally sleep on the streets or in places not suited for living or sleeping.
- Juvenile delinquent: any juvenile who commits a serious or major offence.

- Juvenile courts: divisions of lower criminal courts established by a decision of the president of the justice courts to hear juvenile cases.
- Juvenile police: a branch of the police established by a decision of the Minister for Internal Affairs to deal with juvenile cases.
- Social supervision home: a government institution charged by the investigating authority with caring for juveniles until they are brought before the juvenile courts.
- Social guidance home: a government institution which houses and looks after juveniles at risk of delinquency. A social reform home is a government facility which houses, looks after, reforms and rehabilitates juvenile delinquents who have been sentenced to imprisonment or placement in a home.

277. Article 2 of the Act states: “A juvenile shall be deemed a social risk case if he or she is afflicted by a mental or psychological illness or mental impairment and is shown by means of observation to suffer from a total or partial incapacity to understand or make choices that constitutes a danger to the juvenile or others.” Juveniles have the right to submit complaints to any juvenile protection service in the State.

278. The Tables below contain some explanatory figures.

**Table 24**

**Number of persons under 18 arrested for breaking the law**

Years	No.
Second half of 2003	93
2004	153
2005	138
2006	183
2007	92

**Table 25**

**Number of persons under 18 convicted of a crime and given a suspended sentence or a custodial sentence**

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006
No.	9	19	4	15

**Table 26**  
**Number of cases of repeat offending**

		Nationality								Types of delinquency											
		Qatari		Gulf		Arab		Foreign		Theft		Attacks on Property		Attacks on Human life		Immorality		Drugs		Others	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
51	3	38	2	4	-	8	1	1	-	53	-	11	-	47	2	3	-	4	-	25	4
54		40		4		9		1		53		11		49		3		4		29	

**Children deprived of their liberty, including any form of detention, imprisonment or placement in a detention facility (art. 37, paras. (b), (c) and (d))**

279. Explanatory figures are provided in the Tables below.

**Table 27**  
**Number of persons under 18 detained in police custody or at a remand centre awaiting trial for a reported offence, and average term of detention**

Years	No.	Average term for a lesser offence	Average term for a serious offence
2003	93	From 1 day to 1 week	From 1 day to 2 weeks
2004	153		
2005	138		
2006	183		
2007	92		

**Number of institutions for persons under the age of 18 who have been accused, charged or found guilty of breaching the Criminal Code**

280. There is one such institution, called the Department of Juvenile Welfare.

**Table 28**  
**Number of persons under 18 in the institution**

	Years	No.
1	2003	93
2	2004	153
3	2005	138
4	2006	183
5	June 2007	92

**Number of persons under the age of 18 who are detained in institutions that are not designed for children**

281. None.

**Table 29**

**Number of persons under 18 convicted of an offence and sentenced to imprisonment**

	Years	No.
1	2003	93
2	2004	153
3	2005	138
4	2006	183
5	June 2007	92

**Number of reported cases of children under the age of 18 subjected to assault and abuse while under arrest or in detention or prison.**

282. None.

**Child convictions, in particular the prohibition of capital punishment and life imprisonment (art. 37 (1))**

283. The State of Qatar monitors the judgements handed down to children. The criminal laws contain many articles prescribing different kinds of penalties in accordance with the Convention and its Optional Protocols. For example, article 53 of the Criminal Code No. 11 of 2004 states: "No person shall be held responsible for an offence that he or she committed when under the age of 7. The measures prescribed in the Juveniles Act shall apply only to persons aged between 7 and 14 who commit a serious or major offence."

284. Article 8 of the Juveniles Act states: "Where a juvenile under 14 years of age commits a serious or major offence, the penalties or measures prescribed for the offence shall not be imposed, except for confiscation of property or closure of premises. The juvenile shall instead be subject to the following measures (a reprimand; supervision; enrolment in vocational training; specific obligations; probation; placement in a social training facility or a health facility). Article 19 states: "A juvenile over 14 and under 16 years of age who commits a serious or major offence shall not be sentenced to death, imprisonment with hard labour or flogging but rather to one of the following penalties:

"If the offence carries a penalty of death or life imprisonment, the juvenile shall be sentenced to a term of up to 10 years' imprisonment.

"If the offence carries a penalty of imprisonment and/or a fine, the juvenile shall be sentenced to half the maximum penalty prescribed by law."

285. For offences which carry the death penalty or a life sentence, the juvenile courts may impose penalties other than those laid down in this article, such as the measures prescribed in article 8 of the Act, excluding reprimands and supervision.

286. Article 20 states: "Convictions handed down to juveniles under the present Act shall not be recorded in the criminal journal and the penalties prescribed in the Criminal Code or any other

law for repeat offences shall not be applied to juveniles.” Article 21 states: “A sentence of imprisonment imposed on a juvenile delinquent shall be served in a social reform home.” Article 22 states: “Where a juvenile is exposed to a risk of delinquency in one of the situations mentioned in article 1, paragraph 2, of the present Act, the juvenile police shall place the young person in a supervised facility, if necessary, until the case has gone before the juvenile court. The period of placement shall not exceed 48 hours, unless an extension is granted by court order.”

287. As an alternative to the procedures described in the preceding paragraph, the juvenile police may order that the juvenile be entrusted to the care of a parent, guardian or tutor for them to keep the young person safe and present him or her upon demand.

288. Article 23 states: “The juvenile court may apply one of the following measures to a juvenile at risk of delinquency: placement with a parent, guardian, tutor or family member who gives an undertaking to look after the juvenile properly; placement with a reliable person, in the absence of the aforementioned persons, subject to an undertaking to look after the juvenile properly; or placement in a supervised facility which offers residential care. The juvenile police may take one of these measures without a court order, if the parents, guardian or tutor give their consent.”

289. Article 27 states: “The juvenile court may suspend all or some of the rights of guardians and of any person to whom the juvenile is entrusted by a competent authority in the following situations: where the guardian, while the juvenile is in his care, is convicted of a sex offence or a term of 10 or more years in prison for other offences; where the guardian endangers the health, safety or moral welfare of the juvenile as a result of abuse or depravity; or where the juvenile is placed in a social welfare home in accordance with the present Act.”

290. Articles 28 to 44 of the Act define the functions of juvenile courts, the judgements that they may render and the measures that they can take vis-à-vis social, vocational and health facilities, centres and institutions which deal with convicted juvenile offenders.

291. Articles 45 to 47, concerning conditional release, list the situations in which juveniles convicted of offences may be released.

### **Verdicts handed down against children, in particular penalties of death or life imprisonment (art. 37 (a))**

292. None.

### **C. Camel racing**

293. In its concluding observations on the initial report of Qatar, the Committee states that it “is seriously concerned at the hazardous situation of children involved in camel racing. In particular, it is concerned that sometimes very young children are involved [...] and are trafficked.” The Committee recommends that the State party, in accordance with article 32 of the Convention and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), implement - in compliance with all international labour standards - the recommendations of the Committee established by the Supreme Council of Family Affairs to examine the issue of children in camel racing;

continue to strengthen its efforts to undertake a regional initiative in this regard, including bilateral and multilateral cooperation; and seek assistance from ILO (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 57 and 58).

294. In keeping with the undertakings that the State of Qatar gave to prohibit the employment of children as camel jockeys, the legislature passed Act No. 22 of 2005 prohibiting the employment, training and participation of children in camel racing. Robots were introduced instead.

295. The State took measures to repatriate such children, paying their travel costs and offering them compensation. Rehabilitation projects and programmes were set up to provide these children with a decent living, while a social survey was conducted to identify the best means of integrating the children into their communities. A field survey was carried out beginning on 14 October 2005 of all the areas in which children involved in the rehabilitation project in the Sudan live. The aim was to identify the requirements for the project based on scientific norms and criteria designed to guarantee the target group assistance with recovery and integration into their communities, which in turn need social development assistance in order to create an appropriate and healthy environment for the young. The survey produced a large set of findings and recommendations. The task was assigned to Qatar Charity, which worked with the National Council for the Welfare of Children in the Sudan, the government focal point for the project. The integrated psychosocial rehabilitation programme was designed for all 212 of the children concerned. The survey was commended by the UNICEF office in the Sudan as a model of excellence.

#### **D. Children in situations of exploitation, including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (art. 39)**

296. As stated in articles 86 to 92, chapter 8 (Employment of minors), of the Qatari Labour Code No. 14 of 2004, minors under the age of 16 may not be employed in any kind of work or admitted to any workplace. The Juveniles Act deals with the subjects of physical and psychological recovery and reintegration (arts. 10 to 15). The process begins with a reprimand or warning given by the parents or tutor or the person raising the child, where the latter is separated from the family, and includes enrolment in vocational training centres, attendance at religious and social guidance talks, reporting requirements and the performance of specific duties, probation, placement in a social reform home and, lastly, admission to a health institution, where the court decides that the child needs medical care or treatment, and release of the child when his or her condition allows.

297. Minors under the age of 18 cannot be sent to prison, nor can they be employed in work which, by its nature or because of the conditions under which it is performed, is hazardous to their health, safety or moral welfare. Minors may only be employed after undergoing a medical examination by an authorized medical panel. The remaining articles of the Act set out the rules on daily and weekly working hours, rest breaks and leave for minors and stipulate that employers must create appropriate conditions in the minor's workplace and display details of these conditions in a prominent place in the workplace.

298. The Qatari Orphans Foundation established by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misnad, the wife of the beloved Amir of Qatar, was formally incorporated on 10 June 2003



pursuant to Ministerial Decision No. 4 of 2003. It has independent legal personality and full capacity. Its mission is to help create social solidarity between orphans and society in keeping with the noble Islamic sharia. It seeks to provide quality services to child orphans of all ages by: offering them lodging; monitoring children involved in the foster family programme; creating an environment which encourages orphans to feel pride in themselves and to be accepted by their community; and developing orphans' personality through advisory programmes and activities and awareness campaigns run jointly with local, Arab and international institutions. In addition, the Qatari Shelter and Humanitarian Welfare Home was established by a decision of the Cabinet on 13 April 2003 further to the recommendations of the committee to develop strategic national guidelines to combat human trafficking in Qatar. After the issuance of the decision establishing the National Office to Combat Human Trafficking, the Home was placed under the Office's supervision pursuant to article 4, paragraph 2, of the decision. The Home is expected to serve as a safe house for victims of human trafficking, offering them opportunities for psychological, health and social recovery which safeguard their dignity and protect and assist those wishing to return to their countries after their rehabilitation and recovery. The Home admits persons referred to it by the authorities and also deals with emergency cases on humanitarian grounds.

299. The welfare services offered by the Office and the Home include: providing suitable accommodation to victims of human trafficking, particularly children and women; familiarizing victims with their rights and offering them advice; providing medical, psychological, educational and day-to-day care to residents; organizing sports and leisure programmes and activities for victims of trafficking; monitoring individuals and claiming the rights of victims vis-à-vis the authorities concerned; rehabilitating and reintegrating victims into society and providing for their health and psychological recovery after they leave the Home.

#### **E. Economic exploitation (art. 32)**

300. In its concluding observations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expresses concern at the "lack of information on child labour within the agricultural and domestic service sectors" and recommends that the State party: undertake a national survey on the causes, extent and impact of child labour; implement the ILO Minimum Age Recommendation, 1973 (No. 146) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190); ratify the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); and seek assistance from, among others, ILO (CRC/C/15/Add.163, paras. 55 and 56).

301. As the Constitution provides (art. 22), the State must care for the rising generation, safeguard it from corruption, protect it from exploitation and shield it from the evils of physical, mental and spiritual neglect.

302. Accordingly, under the Labour Code No. 14 of 2004, to which reference was made above, the minimum working age was raised from 15 to 16 years and conditions and regulations were established on children's employment.

303. Moreover, the State of Qatar ratified the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) in December 2005, in addition to the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).

304. With regard to the number and percentage of children under the minimum age for employment engaged in child labour, according to the reports on scheduled and unannounced inspections conducted in enterprises and institutions subject to the Labour Code No. 14 of 2004, there are no children employed below the minimum age stipulated in the Labour Code and international conventions.

#### **F. Drug abuse (art. 33)**

305. The State has done everything necessary to shield children from the unlawful use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and to prevent them from using, producing or trafficking in these substances. In addition, the State has acceded to international conventions on the subjects of drugs, namely:

- The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961
- The Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971
- The Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988

306. The State of Qatar ratified the Arab Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances by Decree No. 64 of 1995.

307. The Anti-Drugs Act No. 9 of 1987, as amended by Act No. 7 of 1998, deals with the use of and trafficking in, narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The law imposes high penalties for involving a person under the age of 18 in any of the offences listed in the Act.

309. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs ran a training workshop on the prevention and elimination of drug addiction, in conjunction with the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The workshop was attended by staff of ministries and State institutions engaged in drug prevention and suppression efforts.

#### **Number of child victims of substance abuse**

310. None.

#### **Number of persons offering treatment, assistance and rehabilitation to such children**

311. None.

#### **G. Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (art. 34)**

312. The State has taken action to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. For example, the Constitution states that children must be safeguarded and protected from corruption and all forms of exploitation (art. 22), while several provisions of the Criminal Code, to which reference is made above, guarantee children protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

313. The Qatari Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children receives complaints regarding children and seeks to protect children from all forms of exploitation and violence. The Foundation has run the following awareness and education campaigns for different segments of society in order to prevent child exploitation:

- A workshop on grooming via the Internet and protection measures was held with the participation of schools, the Supreme Council for Communications and Information Technology and Qtel. In the period from 2004 to 2006, the Foundation received no complaints about sexual exploitation or abuse of children.

314. With regard to offences involving sexual exploitation and harassment of children, the number of cases reported to the Ministry of the Interior in 2005 [and 2006] is shown in tables 30 and 31 below.

**Table 30**

**Offences committed against children involving sexual exploitation and harassment as registered by the Ministry of the Interior in 2005**

Offence	No. of victims	Male	Female
Rape	1	-	1
Anal rape	8	8	-
Attempted sodomy	2	2	-
Incitement and enticement to engage in sodomy	1	1	-
Abduction	1	1	-
For: Indecent assault	5	-	5
Grooming of minors	2	1	1
Harassment of a female	1	-	1
Total	21	13	8

**Table 31**

**Offences committed against children involving sexual exploitation and harassment as registered by the Ministry of the Interior in 2006**

Offence	No. of victims	Male	Female
Rape	2	-	2
Anal rape	3	3	-
Abduction	2	-	2
For: Indecent assault	6	-	6
Grooming of minors	2	-	2
Harassment of a female	1	-	1
Total	16	3	13

315. The National Office to Combat Human Trafficking provides the necessary safeguards to combat sexual exploitation of children as part of its annual plan and awareness-raising programmes and activities. It runs seminars, talks, training and awareness workshops on the

subject, together with press interviews and investigations designed to boost the role of families, guardians and the staff of social, security and educational establishments involved in dealing with cases of child exploitation, including sexual harassment. On 14 and 18 January 2007, the Office held two workshops for social workers employed in schools and social institutions on the protection of children from sexual harassment. Talks were given on the concept, causes and factors that facilitate sexual harassment; the devastating impact on children, their families and guardians; the need for coordination between social, psychological, educational, security and judicial institutions and the family in order to tackle this problem in a determined and objective manner; and methods of dealing with the problem and helping children subjected to sexual harassment by teaching them, their guardians and those responsible for their guidance how to deal with the problem. The National Office plans to step up its involvement in public awareness-raising activities targeting families and encourage them to participate in the prevention of all kinds of offences and forms of delinquency including trafficking in persons that could involve children. To that end, it plans to hold seminars, workshops and awareness campaigns in 2007/08.

**Table 32**

**Number of children subjected to sexual exploitation, including in prostitution, pornography and trafficking**

Year	No. of children
2002	47
2003	50
2004	44
2005	21
2006	17

**Table 33**

**Number of children subjected to sexual exploitation, including in prostitution, pornography and trafficking, who benefited from rehabilitation programmes**

Year	Total
2002	47
2003	49
2004	44
2005	20
2006	16

**Number of cases of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of children, child abduction and violence against children reported during the reporting period**

316. Two children were admitted to the Qatari House for Lodging and Human Care.

**Number of children trafficked for other purposes, such as work, for example**

317. A total of 121 cases had been recorded as of 2005. No cases were reported following the enactment of Act No. 22 of 2005 prohibiting the recruitment, involvement and training of children in camel racing.

**Number of border and law enforcement officers who have been trained in preventing child trafficking and safeguarding children's dignity**

318. A total of 25 law enforcement officers were trained to deal with trafficking cases.

**H. Sale, trafficking and abduction (art. 35)**

319. In order to protect children, the Qatari legislature criminalizes exploitation and trafficking of children and prescribes the penalties for these acts in the Criminal Code No. 11 of 2004, as described in detail in the section above on abduction and human trafficking (Criminal Code, arts. 268-276). Article 321 of the Code states that penalties will be inflicted on anyone who brings a person into or out of Qatar with a view to selling that person as a slave or who buys, sells, offers for sale, makes a gift of, or disposes of another person as if he or she were a slave. Article 322 prescribes the penalties for using a person in bonded or forced labour, whether or not in exchange for payment. The penalty is increased where the victim is under the age of 16. Article 278 of the Code prescribes penalties for inducing or encouraging a minor to beg.

320. The State of Qatar took a major step in combating human trafficking by establishing a committee to draw up guidelines for a strategy to combat human trafficking. The committee was chaired by His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and was established pursuant to Cabinet decision of 13 April 2003. A second committee was formed, pursuant to a decision of the Cabinet adopted at its 26th ordinary meeting on 2 July 2003, to implement the first committee's recommendations. The recommendations that were drawn up were approved by the Cabinet and led to the passing of Act No. 22 of 2005, prohibiting the employment and training of children in camel racing, the establishment of the National Office to Combat Human Trafficking and the Qatari Shelter and Humanitarian Welfare Home, and the production of an informational booklet for migrant workers in several languages.

321. In regard to training, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva jointly organized training courses to raise awareness of the contents of international conventions on children among paediatricians, judges, the police, juvenile prosecution offices, labour inspectors and school social workers and psychologists. The training programme will continue in future years. The subject of human rights has been incorporated into the courses on offer at the Police Training Academy, which draw attention to the dangers of human trafficking and ways of preventing and dealing with the phenomenon. In addition, a human rights department has been established at the Ministry of the Interior.

### **I. Children belonging to a minority or an indigenous group (art. 30)**

322. There are no ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities in Qatar, since all natives of the State belong to a single religious and ethnic group. Such minorities as there are come solely from the migrant worker population.

323. The State has nevertheless taken measures to guarantee compliance with the principle of non-discrimination and prevent children from minorities from being denied their full rights on an equal footing with other members of society, as provided for in articles 18, 34, 35 and 50 of the Constitution.

### **J. Children living or working on the street**

324. Geographical, social and economic information and data on the State of Qatar show that Qatar is different than any other State. The available data do not suggest that there are any workers under legal age in the agriculture sector or in domestic service. There is no justification for children dropping out of school in order to go out to work for economic reasons, since the State is a prosperous one and income per capita is close to that in the most advanced countries in the world. Moreover, the State does not have to contend with the problem of high population density, which tends to push children out to work at an early age for economic reasons. This is confirmed in the regular inspection reports produced by the Department of Labour. Employment is regulated by the Labour Code, which prohibits employment of children under 16 years of age. Thus, there are no children working or living on the streets of Qatar.

## **IX. OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS TO THE CONVENTION**

325. With regard to the submission by States parties to the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child of detailed information on the measures taken to give effect to the recommendations set out in the concluding observations adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the initial report of Qatar on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution (CRC/C/OPSC/QAT/1) was considered on 16 May 2006 and the State took into account the concluding observations on the report (CRC/C/OPSC/QAT/CO/1), which were distributed among the authorities concerned for their consideration.

326. The State of Qatar submitted its report on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC/C/OPAC/QAT/1) and the report was considered by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva on 20 September 2007.

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