



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Summary record of the 2152nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 1 March 2012, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Avtonomov

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention *(continued)*

Combined thirteenth to sixteenth periodic reports of Qatar (continued)
(CERD/C/QAT/13-16; CERD/C/QAT/Q/13-16)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Qatar took places at the Committee table.*
2. **The Chairperson** invited representatives of the Qatari National Human Rights Committee to take the floor.
3. **Mr. Ali Al-Marri** (Qatari National Human Rights Committee) said that his organization greatly appreciated the opportunity it had been given to address the Committee. National human rights institutions were playing a more prominent role, engaging in productive exchanges, identifying sources of information, participating in meetings to discuss Government reports to treaty bodies and playing an influential role in the implementation of concluding observations. His organization's comments on the periodic report would both assist the Committee in assessing the human rights performance of the State party and assist the latter in improving its performance.
4. Considerable progress had been made in recent years in the human rights situation in Qatar in legislative, institutional and practical terms. However, a number of challenges remained.
5. **Ms. Al-Mannai** (Qatari National Human Rights Committee) said that women in Qatar had made enormous advances compared with those in many other States. They could now open their own bank account, occupy senior administrative positions and drive their own car.
6. Article 42 of the Constitution guaranteed all citizens the right to vote and to stand for election. Article 1 of Decree No. 38 of 2003 had urged Qatari men and women to participate in a referendum on the draft Constitution. Despite the fact that the Constitution guaranteed equality of rights and duties for all citizens, the Nationality Act (No. 38 of 2005) drew a distinction between Qatari citizens and naturalized Qataris, who could not be nominated for, or elected to, any legislative body. Moreover, former Qatari citizens who had recovered their citizenship through a process of re-naturalization could not be nominated for, or elected to, a legislative body until 10 years had passed since their recovery of citizenship.
7. With regard to the right to occupy public office without discrimination, the Human Resources Management Act (No. 8 of 2009) stipulated that public positions were open to all citizens depending on their qualifications, competence and practical skills. However, the existing inequality between Qataris and children of Qatari women married to non-Qataris was inconsistent with the provisions of Act No. 21 of 1989 regulating marriage to foreigners, which provided for equality in the treatment of children of Qatari women in education, medical care and employment. International standards also emphasized the right of women to pass on citizenship to their children. Article 16 of the Nationality Act prohibited naturalized citizens from holding public office until five years had elapsed since their acquisition of Qatari citizenship.
8. With regard to the right to leave the country and to return, article 38 of the Constitution stipulated that no citizen could be expelled from the country or prevented from returning thereto. However, pursuant to Act No. 4 of 2009, foreigners were not allowed to leave the country without an exit permit signed by their sponsor.

9. With regard to the right to a nationality, while the Constitution enshrined the principle of equality, article 34 of the Nationality Act stipulated that the husband or children of Qatari women married to foreigners were not entitled to Qatari citizenship.

10. The rights of domestic workers were not fully guaranteed because they were not subject to the provisions of the Labour Code (Act No. 14 of 2004) and there was no specific legislation regulating their employment.

11. Article 8 of Council of Ministers Decision No. 17 of 2007 on housing also drew a distinction between Qatari citizens and naturalized Qataris. Naturalized citizens could not exercise their right of access to housing until 15 years had elapsed from their date of acquisition of Qatari citizenship.

12. In the light of the foregoing, her organization wished to make the following recommendations: amendment of the Nationality Act, which prevented re-naturalized Qataris from standing for election to any legislative body for a period of 10 years from the date of recovery of their citizenship; amendment of the Human Resources Management Act on employment of children of Qatari women; annulment of the exit permit requirement for foreigners under Act No. 4 of 2009; review of the Council of Ministers decision on the right to housing, which discriminated against naturalized Qataris; amendment of the Nationality Act on non-eligibility of naturalized citizens to hold public office until five years after their acquisition of Qatari citizenship; amendment of the same Act with a view to allowing the children of Qatari women married to a foreigner to acquire Qatari citizenship; amendment of Act No. 12 of 2004, which restricted foreigners' right to join professional associations; and establishment of a national committee on racial discrimination as provided for in the Convention. Her organization would be pleased to accept such a mandate.

13. **Ms. Al-Motawa** (Qatar), referring to questions concerning human trafficking, said that article 36 of the Constitution guaranteed personal freedom and stipulated that no one should be arrested or imprisoned or have his or her movements restricted save in accordance with the law. It added that no one should be subjected to torture or humiliating treatment. Article 37 guaranteed respect for privacy and prohibited interference in a person's family affairs, residence or correspondence save in accordance with the law. Article 52 guaranteed protection of the person and property of all individuals residing legally in the State.

14. The Islamic sharia strictly prohibited trafficking in human beings and a number of laws had been enacted with a view to eradicating the phenomenon, for example the Criminal Code, the Labour Code, Act No. 22 of 2005 which prohibited the recruitment, employment, training and participation of children in camel-racing, and Act No. 21 of 1997 concerning organ transplants. Qatar had ratified a number of treaties concerning trafficking in persons, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

15. The Criminal Code imposed penalties, including imprisonment for 1–5 years, for incitement to prostitution or debauchery or for ordering a person to engage in debauchery within or outside the country. The sale of children had been criminalized but it was an extremely rare occurrence in Qatar. Article 321 of the Criminal Code imposed a term of imprisonment of up to 7 years on anyone who was convicted of buying, selling or donating a person as a slave.

16. The Qatar Foundation to Combat Human Trafficking had been established in 2005. In addition to its work in the area of prevention and protection, it provided medical care, psychological support and rehabilitation facilities for both Qatari and non-Qatari victims of trafficking. The Foundation had organized a seminar on the social and security dimensions of trafficking for law enforcement officials employed in the nationality and border services.

The security police had also attended workshops to raise their awareness of the phenomenon. A booklet in several languages had been published for migrant workers and the Foundation could be contacted by means of a free hotline. Awareness-raising campaigns and conferences had been organized in the country's secondary schools and universities. The Arab Initiative to combat human trafficking had been launched during the Doha Foundation Forum in 2010.

17. A centre had been established in 2003 to provide shelter for victims, especially domestic workers who had fallen victim to human trafficking. The Foundation had undertaken a study of the situation of domestic workers in order to resolve common problems encountered in their workplaces.

18. The Qatari Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children had been established by Act No. 8 of 1998. Its goals were: to assist in providing shelter and comprehensive care for target groups; to protect such groups from deviant practices in the home and in society; to raise awareness among target groups, families and communities of the social and legal aspects of human rights; to provide legal assistance to members of target groups with limited means; and to provide victims of violence in target groups with assistance and support for their social rehabilitation. A shelter had been opened for women and child victims of abuse, where they were looked after by social workers. The Foundation also cooperated with the police in protecting them against ill-treatment and threats. Other centres hosted both Qatari and non-Qatari women and child victims of violence or ill-treatment for limited periods pending longer-term solutions. Psychological and social rehabilitation services were provided. The Foundation had also opened an office in the accident and emergency department of Hamad General Hospital.

19. The Foundation had organized seminars, workshops and awareness-raising campaigns to promote a culture of protection in society and to publicize the Foundation's 24-hour hotlines, which could be used to report violations of rights.

20. Article 35 of the Constitution prohibited discrimination on grounds of sex, origin, language or religion. Women had the right to sign contracts and to manage their own property. Article 49 of Act No. 22 of 2004 stipulated that all persons who had attained the age of majority were entitled to engage in legal proceedings. Furthermore, article 57 of the Family Code set forth women's rights vis-à-vis their husbands, for instance with respect to property.

21. **Mr. Al-Obaidly** (Qatar) said that there was no discrimination in the area of employment between Qataris and non-Qataris. The definition of a worker in the Labour Code was applicable to women and men without discrimination. The Code also established the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, regardless of gender. In addition, women enjoyed the same training opportunities.

22. The labour force consisted of 74,680 Qataris and 1.9 million non-Qataris. The latter included 1.3 million domestic workers, 90 per cent of whom were Sri Lankan or Indian. While the Labour Code was not applicable to domestic workers, they were protected by bilateral agreements between Qatar and their countries of origin, which covered relations between employers and employees. Domestic workers' contracts were based on the right to a minimum wage, reasonable working hours and severance pay.

23. The Labour Code prohibited employers and recruitment agencies from charging migrant workers fees to bring them into the country. Work permits were issued only to individuals with signed contracts containing detailed information on the terms and conditions of their employment. Contracts were regularly reviewed by Labour Ministry jurists; the recruitment process was halted if statutory requirements were not met. His Government was committed to combating all forms of forced labour and unpaid work.

24. Bilateral agreements had been concluded with 29 sending countries on the protection of migrant workers' rights. The agreements ensured that migrant workers were entitled, inter alia, to standard contracts, decent housing, annual leave and health care. The Ministry of Labour had published a migrant workers' handbook in Arabic and English with information on Qatar and labour rights, which was given to workers on their arrival in the country. The handbook had also been sent to the embassies of all sending countries for translation and distribution. Under the agreements, joint committees consisting of representatives from Qatar and the sending country met annually to review any disputes that might have arisen between employers and employees.

25. The Labour Inspection Department had been established under Amiral Decree No. 35 of 2009. It carried out regular workplace inspections to ensure compliance with the Labour Code, including the timely payment of wages. Measures to end the practice of withholding wages included the requirement for employers to deposit wages in banks. Administrative penalties were imposed on companies failing to meet minimum standards. With respect to housing, the Ministry had issued Decision No. 17, which defined the criteria and specifications for suitable housing for workers and provided for inspections by the Department. If housing was found to be inadequate, action was taken to ensure that employers provided adequate alternative accommodation promptly.

26. As to health care, the Government provided medical treatment free of charge to all residents. In addition, employers were required to provide basic health services in the workplace; companies with more than 500 workers had to install their own clinics staffed by a full-time doctor.

27. A national committee on occupational safety established under Ministerial Decision No. 16 of 2011 was currently preparing a national plan on health and safety at work. Under article 99 of the Labour Code, employers were required to brief new workers on workplace hazards and precautions to be observed in the course of their duties. A handbook was being prepared for use within the construction industry. The Ministry had prohibited open-air work between 11.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. during the summer in order to protect workers from direct exposure to the sun.

28. Workers were free to terminate their contracts and return home at any time. They could file complaints against employers regarding financial entitlements with a competent court; the Ministry of the Interior issued workers with a provisional permit pending resolution of the case.

29. Pursuant to Act No. 4 of 2009 regulating the entry, exit, residence and sponsorship of migrant workers, sponsorship of a migrant worker could be transferred if an employer failed to honour a contract. In order to protect migrant workers from arbitrary procedures, it was no longer legal for employers to withhold employees' passports. The Ministry had established a hotline allowing workers to report Labour Code violations and to make queries regarding their legal and contractual obligations. All complaints and enquiries were dealt with directly by the Ministry. Complainants' names were not disclosed during investigations into claims conducted by the Labour Inspection Department.

30. The Labour Relations Department within the Ministry of Labour considered workers' complaints and adjudicated disputes within one week. It could also refer complaints to competent courts established by the Supreme Judicial Council for that purpose. In January 2012, a special office had been set up within those courts to provide complainants with technical assistance. In 2010–2011, over 7,600 complaints had been filed, 88 per cent of which had been settled. In coordination with relevant embassies, the Department disseminated information material in order to increase workers' awareness of their rights.

31. **Mr. Ahmed Al Mohannadi** (Qatar) said that, under article 24 of Act No. 4 of 2009, sponsors were responsible for returning migrant workers to their country on expiry of their residence permit or in the event of a deportation order against them. Article 12 established that the Minister of the Interior or his representative could transfer the sponsorship of a migrant worker in the country, subject to an agreement between the worker and the sponsor. Sponsorship could also be transferred to another employer in the event of an arbitrary decision by the sponsor against the worker or if a public interest issue was at stake. Similarly, sponsorship could be transferred at the worker's request subject to the approval of the Minister or his representative. In order to prevent trafficking in persons, article 15 prohibited the transfer of a visa to a third party under any circumstances; the offence was punishable by a prison term of up to 3 years and/or a fine of up to 50,000 riyals.

32. Under Act No. 4, migrant workers were permitted to stay in the country for up to 90 days following the expiry of their contract to enable them to settle personal affairs. The Act established that employers who withheld employees' travel documents were liable to prosecution. The sponsorship requirement for residence permits could be waived in the case of foreign investors, owners and users of real estate and housing.

33. Sponsored workers were free to leave the country at any time after receiving permission to do so. The granting of permission was an administrative procedure and not a restriction on migrant workers' freedom to leave the country. If the sponsor failed to grant permission, the worker concerned could apply to the relevant department within the Ministry of the Interior for the permit to be granted without the sponsor's consent.

34. As to the right to nationality, article 2 of the Nationality Act established that Qatari citizenship could be granted to non-nationals by Amiral Decree subject to the provisions of the Act. Article 13 provided for the withholding of nationality from persons whose nationality had previously been withdrawn. Articles 11 and 12 provided for the withdrawal of nationality.

35. The competent authorities were making every effort to resolve the situation of stateless persons in the country. Some individuals had been able to obtain nationality from their country of origin or country of former residence, while others had been able to acquire Qatari nationality. Stateless persons in the country had access to health care, education and social services and enjoyed the right to work. They could also be issued with travel documents to enable them to travel abroad with members of their families.

36. Under the Nationality Act, citizenship was granted to children whose fathers were Qatari nationals. The granting of citizenship to children born to a Qatari mother and a non-Qatari father would create a number of legal and practical problems relating to dual nationality, divided loyalties and conflicting legislation on the legal status of children. With regard to naturalization, Qatari legislation granted priority to the children of Qatari women, in accordance with article 4 (2) of the Nationality Act. Those children enjoyed access to health care, education, social services and other basic benefits. The children of Qatari women married to non-Qataris were never stateless as they took their father's nationality.

37. **Mr. Abdullah Al Mohannadi** (Qatar) said that his Government was fully committed to upholding and respecting human rights through the institutional and legislative structure, including the provisions of the Constitution. A number of government agencies and NGOs were also active in the field of human rights.

38. In response to the question on the difference between the human rights office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the human rights department in the Ministry of the Interior, he said that the former was involved in following up international human rights instruments and Qatar's efforts to combat human rights violations and organized crime, as well as coordinating the activities of other competent authorities; the latter received complaints and

petitions relating to the work of the Ministry of the Interior, investigated them and took the necessary measures. It also worked to promote and strengthen a human rights culture within the Ministry of the Interior as a whole and the law enforcement services in particular through training courses and awareness-raising campaigns.

39. With regard to the question of freedom of religion and conscience, article 50 of the Qatari Constitution guaranteed freedom of thought and religion in accordance with the law and provisions relating to public order and morality. That protection was enhanced by other measures, and the Emir, the Crown Prince and the First Lady had shown a personal interest in the matter. In order to guarantee the freedoms of non-Muslims, a Christian church had been inaugurated in 2009 (primarily for Indians), and other places of worship were being built for the evangelical, Eastern Orthodox and Coptic churches. In Doha, the International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue had been established to promote dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

40. The legislation on property ownership had originally defined three areas where foreigners were able to purchase property, but the Council of Ministers could extend those areas. Indeed, in 2006, the Council had adopted a decision defining 18 areas in which foreigners could purchase property, reflecting the State's desire to enact legislation in line with international human rights standards.

41. In 2009, the Government had ratified the Arab Charter on Human Rights. The Council of Ministers had established a national committee, consisting of government agencies, in order to draw up an initial report to be discussed before the Arab Human Rights Committee in November 2012.

42. **Mr. Mohamed Al-Marri** (Qatar) said that he wished to outline recent legislative developments in his country. With regard to the application of article 4 of the Convention and measures to integrate it into national legislation, he stressed that Qatari legislation already addressed the issues of racism and discrimination. Article 47 of the Printing and Publishing Act (No. 8 of 1979) prohibited the publication of texts which provoked social discord, hatred, racism or religious strife. As provided for in the Criminal Code, violations were punishable by a prison sentence of up to 6 months or a fine, while the 1992 decision issued by the Ministry of Information and Culture on censorship criteria prohibited the publication of written or audio-visual material denigrating any ethnic or racial group.

43. Article 256 of the Criminal Code criminalized acts which aimed to denigrate revealed religions, insult prophets or desecrate places of worship. It provided for a maximum prison sentence of 7 years for such offences, while article 263 stipulated a prison term of 12 months or a maximum fine of 1,000 riyals for persons who produced or circulated material containing slogans, images or symbols which defamed Islam or any other revealed religion, as defined under sharia. Under Qatari legislation, that law applied to Islam, Judaism and Christianity. There was therefore, no discrimination with regard to the protection afforded to those religions under national legislation.

44. With regard to the training of law enforcement personnel, the Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies held annual training workshops on human rights issues for judges, prosecutors and lawyers in the Ministry of Justice and other Government departments. The workshops covered human rights theory and practice at the national and international levels, and comprised other courses on human rights. The country was also expected to benefit from training programmes organized by the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab region, established in 2009.

45. Concerning the application of the Convention in national courts, under article 68 of the Constitution international treaties and conventions came into force once they had been ratified and published in the Official Gazette, while article 6 stipulated that the State should respect all international treaties and charters and implement all those instruments to which

it was a party. Qatar's ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1976, published in the Official Gazette, meant that its provisions applied in the country and could be directly invoked by the courts.

46. On the question of sources of legislation other than sharia, article 1 of the Constitution stated that Qatar was a sovereign Arab country, whose religion was Islam, with sharia as its main source of legislation. However, other sources, such as the international treaties ratified by Qatar as well as customary law, did exist.

47. **Mr. Kemal** said that, while he welcomed the concise and informative report and commended the work of the Qatari National Human Rights Committee, there was a need for more disaggregated data in order to obtain further information on the population, including ethnic groups, occupations and the migrant labour force. Those data would help to identify problem areas.

48. He cited examples of Qatari success, such as its media channel, the Doha Centre for Media Freedom and its competitive national airline.

49. On the issue of migrant workers, who had made a valuable contribution to the Qatari economy and had, in turn, been able to support their families back home, he noted that the Government had drafted, and guaranteed, a number of model agreements between workers and employers. He welcomed the importance Qatar attached to the problem of human trafficking, and noted that national legislation prohibited the charging of fees to enable migrant workers to come to Qatar, provided safeguards and regulated wages and working conditions. However, given the unequal nature of the relationship between workers and their employers, workers might find it difficult to complain and be afraid to exercise their legal rights. He asked the delegation whether they could provide information on mechanisms to detect abuse and related cases, including prosecutions.

50. With regard to provisions prohibiting the charging of fees, he asked about the safeguards in place and measures taken to identify violations. Did the Government play an active role in detecting abuse, namely cases where fees had been charged, or was the law not as effective in practice as it could be? Workers were able to leave their employer (a right guaranteed under Qatari law), but then also had to leave the country. In view of the inequality of that arrangement, had the Government considered authorizing workers to move to a new employer? Workers should be given a choice.

51. Lastly, he commended the Government's use of its resources to support education programmes in other countries, such as the Reach Out to Asia project, and the work of the Doha Centre for Interfaith Dialogue, another laudable initiative which promoted tolerance.

52. **Mr. Diaconu** said that Qatar had not fully integrated the provisions of article 4 of the Convention into national legislation, which was too general. It referred to discord in society and strife, which did not correspond to the language used in the Convention. National legislation did not cover incitement to violence, racially motivated acts of violence or the dissemination of ideas concerning racial superiority, while article 256 of the Criminal Code addressed the issue of religion, not racial discrimination.

53. He had been encouraged by the explanations provided concerning education, citizenship and women's rights, and the recommendations made to the Government by one of the women representatives of the Qatari National Human Rights Commission. They should be taken seriously as they could produce important solutions.

54. **Mr. Ewomsan** said that his concern related to migrant workers. The rapid rate of economic development in Qatar had resulted in a growing number of migrant workers, who were particularly vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation. In order to improve their situation, Qatar had concluded various bilateral agreements with their countries of origin. While welcoming those measures, he asked about the impact of sponsorship on the freedom

of those workers. The delegation had indicated that investors who came to Qatar did not require sponsorship. Did that not constitute discrimination?

55. **Mr. Lahiri** said that the following periodic report should contain more specific information about how legislation in the State party had been brought into line with the articles of the Convention, as well as disaggregated statistics on migrant workers, including their countries of origin. He asked whether unrevealed religions, not just revealed religions, were permitted under the Constitution, and whether people were also free to not practise a religion. He asked how possible acts of discrimination against an unrevealed religion, or against people who did not practise a religion, would be dealt with under Qatari legislation.

56. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** asked whether, in cases of workers making complaints against their employers, the burden of proof was on the employer, in accordance with the usual international standards.

57. **Mr. Vázquez** asked whether the bilateral agreements with the 29 States from which migrant workers in Qatar originated contained standard provisions on wages and benefits regardless of the sending country, in line with the provisions on equal pay for equal work in article 5 of the Convention. And he enquired whether the guarantee of equal pay under the Constitution applied to all workers or only citizens of Qatar. He wished to receive copies of the bilateral agreements.

58. He expressed concern at the distinction made in the Nationality Act between natural-born citizens and naturalized citizens with regard to their ability to hold public office. Even if, as had been stated, the provision was not enforced in practice, it should be repealed in order to prevent discrimination and to encourage naturalized citizens to apply for public office.

59. The arguments that had been advanced by the State party to justify the discriminatory provision whereby Qatari women married to foreign nationals could not pass on Qatari nationality to their children had been insufficient; the children would be made stateless, for example, if the father's country of nationality applied the *jus soli* nationality rule.

60. **Mr. de Gouttes** asked whether the mechanisms described by the State party for dealing with complaints by migrant workers could also be used by domestic workers.

61. **Mr. Al-Obaidly** (Qatar) said that, in accordance with the prohibition on the charging of fees by employment agencies, four agencies in Qatar had been suspended in 2011 for that offence. In an effort to curtail the practice in sending States, Qatar provided guidance to their employment agencies through its embassies. He described the role of the Labour Relations Department in resolving complaints by migrant workers, or referring the complaints to the courts, and gave details of the number of complaints submitted in 2011, both via the telephone hotline and directly to the courts.

62. **Mr. Ahmed Al Mohannadi** (Qatar) said that the Criminal Code made trafficking in visas and the exploitation of migrant workers specific offences. Migrant workers were free to leave Qatar whenever they wished; the requirement to obtain permission was purely an administrative matter and in no way restricted migrant workers' freedom of movement.

63. **Mr. Abdullah Al Mohannadi** (Qatar) said that freedom of thought and religion was guaranteed under article 50 of the Constitution; the Constitution did not define any religion or creed. He described the relevant Qatari legislation and institutions pertaining to the right of workers to engage in litigation.

64. **Ms. Al-Motawa** (Qatar) said that domestic workers had recourse to the institutions she had mentioned previously, such as the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking and the Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children. The

Human Rights Department at the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Labour, also dealt with matters relating to domestic workers. In addition to the hotline for complaints, a coordinating committee received complaints and forwarded them to the competent authority.

65. **Mr. Ahmed Al Mohannadi** (Qatar) said that bilateral agreements specified the rights and obligations of employers and employees, and the ways in which contracts could be terminated. The agreements contained provisions on coordination between the competent ministries in both countries. The following periodic report would include an example of a bilateral agreement. The 2011–2016 strategy to ensure sufficient numbers of skilled migrant workers for the purposes of national development provided for legislative measures to protect migrant workers and improve their conditions.

66. **Mr. Al-Obaidly** (Qatar) said that in the period 2005–2009 Qatar had provided approximately US\$ 2 billion in development assistance to over 106 countries in Asia, Africa and Europe. With regard to the wish expressed by the Committee for its activities to be disseminated by the Al Jazeera media channel headquartered in Qatar, he suggested that Committee members might wish to contact the channel directly; Al Jazeera had now established a human rights unit and would no doubt be delighted to hear from the Committee.

67. **The Chairperson** said he would be grateful if the information, data and statistics requested by Committee members could be included in the following periodic report.

68. **Mr. Calí Tzay** (Country Rapporteur) thanked the delegation for the openness and transparency it had shown in the interactive dialogue, and thanked the Qatari National Human Rights Committee for its valuable participation. His Committee still had a number of concerns about the vulnerability of migrant workers, non-citizens, stateless persons, domestic workers, women and children, and would be making recommendations in those areas.

69. The following periodic report should include detailed information on the rights of migrant workers, particularly on the apparent discrimination in the Labour Code, which did not apply to domestic workers, temporary workers or farm workers. More information would also be welcome concerning article 9 of the Labour Code, which stated that all employment contracts and related documents must be in Arabic. That discriminatory provision could be seen as violating the rights of the large number of migrant workers, temporary workers and farm workers.

70. He wished to know whether the workers' rights described in paragraph 84 of the periodic report, namely extra pay for overtime work, one day off a week, paid annual leave and official holidays, also applied to domestic workers. The information should be provided in the following periodic report. He welcomed the information given by the delegation concerning the bill on domestic workers that was being considered by the Cabinet, for possible adoption in June 2012. He asked what stage the bill had reached and how likely it was that the Cabinet would adopt it.

71. More information was also required about the sponsorship programme, how it affected the employment of domestic workers and what complaints procedures were available to them. He welcomed article 22 of Act No. 4 of 2009 on the entry, exit, residence and sponsorship of migrant workers, under which sponsorship of a migrant worker could be transferred, and article 12, under which sponsorship could be transferred without the sponsor's consent. However, he had been concerned about the finding by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights aspects of the victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in the report on her mission to Qatar, that migrant workers were vulnerable because they could not leave abusive sponsors. He would welcome information in response to that finding.

72. The presence of the National Human Rights Committee had attested to the State party's determination to defend human rights. He urged the State party to continue to support that institution, and to implement the recommendations it submitted to the Cabinet, not only to improve the image of Qatar but also to fulfil the State party's obligations.

73. **Mr. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that his country was committed to reviewing its legislation in order to combat racial discrimination with the support of all its ministries. It would strive to enhance its existing mechanisms and coordinate all its activities with the aim of implementing the Convention. It would consult the National Human Rights Committee and NGOs on the Committee's recommendations, and draw up a plan of action.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.