

Briefing Pack – Doha Forum

December 2019



مَكْتَبُ الْإِتِّصَالِ الْحُكُومِيِّ

Government Communications Office



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Foreign policy and mediation

Overview

- Qatar's foreign policy is based on a set of principles outlined in its constitution. These principles include strengthening international peace and security by encouraging peaceful resolution of international disputes.
- Qatar's foreign policy respects international treaties and conventions and honours all international treaties and conventions to which it is a party. Its priorities in foreign policy include:
 - Mediation
 - The promotion of sustainable development
 - Alleviating discrimination against women and religious minorities
 - Bolstering humanitarian assistance in regions of conflict and war
 - Supporting and strengthening efforts to reduce anticipated humanitarian needs in complex emergencies
- Qatar believes in building alliances and finding solutions to conflicts through dialogue and mediation, while respecting the rights of sovereign nations.

Conflict mediation

- Based on Qatar's commitment to renouncing force and coercion, Qatar upholds the need for the peaceful settlement of disputes through mediation, which is a priority of its foreign policy.
- Mediation can prevent wars and armed conflicts. Qatar seeks to use diplomacy to address threats to peace and security in the region and the world.
- Qatar has a long and successful track record in conflict mediation without interfering in other countries' internal affairs. It was a mediator of approximately 10 regional and international conflicts in less than eight years (2008-2016), including in Sudan and Lebanon.

Countering extremism

- Qatar continues to play an active role in maintaining security and combating the phenomenon of terrorism. It continues to take the necessary actions and procedures to combat terrorism and violent extremism through bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation.
- Combatting terrorism must not be confined to defence and security. It must also be combatted through enhancing the rule of law, promoting the rights of citizenship, developing a culture of conciliation and co-existence, accepting others, rejecting sectarianism, and addressing the issues of poverty and unemployment.

Concrete steps Qatar has made to combat terrorism

- On 20 July 2017, His Highness the Amir further amended anti-terror legislation in Qatar. The decree set rules for defining terrorist, crime, terrorist acts, terrorist entities, the freezing of funds and the financing of terrorism. It also created two national terrorism lists and established rules for including individuals and groups on each list.
- On 11 July 2017, Qatar signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the US outlining future efforts it can take to fortify its fight against terrorism and actively address terrorism funding



issues. In line with the MoU, the US will be deploying officials to the Qatari state prosecutor's office.

- Qatar enacted new laws in September 2014 to increase government oversight of charities, including preventing them from sending money abroad to charities that are suspected of financing terrorists, and more heavily regulating fundraising by individuals, including via social media.
- Qatar supports the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and has provided \$250,000 to support its future activities, in line with Qatar's support of international efforts in counterterrorism as a priority for Qatar.
- Qatar served as a founding member of the Global Counter-terrorism Forum, which coordinates initiatives by 30 different countries, including France, Britain, Germany, Canada and the United States.



Sport and 2022 World Cup

Overview

- Qatar is an ambitious and optimistic nation. Like every successful athlete, we are determined to continue to better ourselves, push our boundaries, break down barriers and re-define sporting greatness.
- Qatar's athletes have a growing record competing in global events, including the Olympics.
- Over the last decade, Qatar has used its wealth to pioneer new sports technologies. We take pride in our state-of-the-art facilities and have helped some of the world's best athletes make the small gains that are the difference between victory and defeat.
- Qatar is investing heavily in sports medicine research, which will benefit athletes globally.
- Sport is a catalyst for change for a variety of issues in Qatar, such as workers' rights.
- The 2022 World Cup will be the first Arab World Cup. We believe it presents an opportunity to break down stereotypes and cultural barriers and drive development in the country and throughout the entire region.
- The positive benefits and impact will extend beyond Qatar and throughout the Middle East. Qatar is dedicated to ensuring that the 2022 World Cup leaves a positive and lasting human, economic, social and environmental legacy for the country, the region and the world.
- Sport in Qatar is not just about the World Cup; it has long been part of our culture and identity. On National Sport Day, the country comes together to celebrate its love for sport.
- Qatar has a comprehensive 2030 development plan in place that is designed to reduce its dependence on natural resources and develop a knowledge-based economy. The World Cup is one part of this plan.
- Qatar looks forward to welcoming fans from all backgrounds and nationalities to the 2022 World Cup. Everyone is welcome in Qatar for major sporting events.
- The safety and security of athletes and spectators attending world-class sporting events in Doha is of paramount importance to the State of Qatar. According to Global Finance's World Safest Countries 2019 index report, Qatar is the safest country in the region and the 7th safest country in the world.

World Cup Readiness

- FIFA has moved the 2022 World Cup dates to winter when temperatures in Qatar are mild. As it stands, the tournament will take place over 28 days, with the final being held on 18 December 2022, the date of Qatar National Day.
- Fans will arrive at the newly built Hamad International Airport, which will have an annual capacity of 50,000,000.
 - Nationals from more than 80 countries can currently take advantage of visa-free entry into Qatar.



- The 2022 World Cup will be the first compact World Cup in the modern era, meaning the longest distance between stadiums is only 55km. Moreover, a new metro system and the proximity of stadiums will ensure that fans, media and officials will spend a maximum of 1 hour travelling between venues, thus allowing them to watch more than one match a day.
- More than 3 billion fans across Asia and Europe will benefit from prime time viewing during the tournament, thanks to convenient kick-off times.

- **Stadiums**

- Six stadiums are currently under construction, while Khalifa International Stadium has been redeveloped and was inaugurated on 19 May 2017 and Al Janoub Stadium was inaugurated in May 2019.
- The 80,000 capacity Lusail Stadium will host the opening match and final in 2022.
- \$6.5 billion (QAR 23.67 billion) is the total budget for the stadiums and training sites Qatar is constructing.

- **Sustainability**

- All stadiums are modular, with demountable seats that will be donated to countries lacking sporting infrastructure as part of the tournament's legacy.
- Ras Abu Aboud Stadium will be the first fully demountable tournament venue in FIFA World Cup™ history. It will be built out of shipping containers and other modular building blocks that will be repurposed post-tournament into smaller sports and non-sports venues.
- The SC-developed cooling technology will enable all 2022 venues to be used year-round; they can also be used by countries with similar climates.



Labour

Overview

- The State of Qatar is in a period of rapid economic growth and development, which relies on support from foreign workers. This is a unique situation, which brings unique challenges.
- We are enormously grateful to the millions of workers who have come to the State of Qatar in recent years to help us build our nation's infrastructure – including the facilities for the World Cup – and we are committed to respecting both their labour rights, and their human rights.
- Over the past several years, we have undertaken extensive reforms to strengthen labour laws and increase protections for migrant workers. Our progress has been recognised by human rights groups and UN organisations.
- Qatar continues to listen to the international community and works in tandem with governments and international organisations to ensure our commitment to improve the rights of our expat workers are far-reaching and effective.
- Qatar works to ensure that all policy reforms are enforced. Our new laws are clear, and anyone found to be violating the law will be subject to penalties imposed by the government.
- Our progress makes Qatar a leader in the Gulf on labour reform. Unlike others in the region, Qatar's reforms are genuine, long-lasting, and the product of years of careful planning.
- The challenges surrounding migrant labour are not unique to Qatar, or to the region. This is an issue that impacts many countries, and it needs to be addressed globally.

Key facts & figures

- The State of Qatar's rapid growth has provided jobs for **over 1.9 million workers from 183 countries**.
- The Government is strengthening labour laws and practices, whilst stepping up enforcement measures. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (ADSLA) has hired **nearly 270 labour** inspectors to investigate housing and working conditions and crackdown on violators.
- To address the issue of unfair and exploitative recruitment practices in origin countries, the government has licensed **over 350 recruitment agencies** that are subject to regular monitoring and checks.
- To address the issues at their source, we continue to cooperate with origin countries and have so far **signed 40 bilateral agreements and 19 memoranda of understanding with countries of origin**.

Qatar's partnership with the International Labour Organisation

Technical cooperation between Qatar and the ILO

- In November 2017, Qatar and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) entered into a three-year programme of Technical Cooperation to carry out extensive labour reforms.



- The ILO inaugurated its first project office in Qatar on 30 April 2018. The office will support implementation of a comprehensive technical cooperation programme on working conditions and labour rights in Qatar.
- The programme supports the implementation of numerous measures to address passport confiscation, contract substitution, as well as restrictions on migrant workers' ability to change employer and exit the country.
 - The Wage Protection System (WPS) will continue to be improved to ensure that workers' wages are paid on time and that wage arrears are systematically settled.
 - The Government is committed to undertaking the renewal of residence permits directly with migrant workers.
 - The ILO will support migrant workers in submitting complaints to the national mechanisms with a view to ensuring speedy and fair treatment and absence of retaliation.

Key initiatives and new labour laws

October 2019 reforms

On 16 October 2019, the State of Qatar announced sweeping reforms to Qatar's labour market, signalling an end to the Kafala system. The new reforms, announced by His Excellency Yousuf Mohamed Al Othman Fakhroo, the Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, have implemented following changes:

- Workers can change employment freely, without requiring a no-objection certificate from their previous employer;
- Exit permits are being removed for all workers other than military personnel; and
- The first non-discriminatory minimum wage in the Middle East will be established.

These reforms are part of Qatar's extensive technical cooperation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which opened a project office in Doha in April 2018. They follow on previous reforms related to exit permits.

- One year previously, HH the Amir issued Law No. 13 of 2018 amending provisions of Law No. 21 of 2015 on the regulation of entry, exit and residence of expatriates as of September 2018.
- Expatriates who are subject to the Labour Law shall have the right to leave the country temporarily, or to depart from the country permanently during the validity of the labour contract. The worker may submit a form in advance to the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs with the names of their employers or those in charge in order to leave the country due to the nature of their work, making sure to not exceed 5% of the number of workers under their employment. Then, if the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs approves the request, authorities will be notified.



- For expatriates who are not subject to the Labour Law, the regulations and procedures for their departure from the country shall be determined by a decision of the Minister.
- In the event that a worker is unable to leave the country for any reason, they are able to contact the Exit Permit Grievances Committee to resolve the issue.
- The committee must deal with the complaint within three working days.

Qatar Visa Centres

- The State of Qatar has opened Qatar Visa Centres (QVC) in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and Nepal. QVCs were established to create a unified transparent and responsible visa system that expedites the recruitment process and protects the rights of workers and the employer.
- The services provided by QVCs abroad to expatriate workers include biometric data capture, vital data registration, medical examinations and contract signing.
- QVC is an initiative led by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Public Health to ensure that the worker will be allowed to work as soon as he arrives in the country.
- In its first stage, the QVCs are opening in 8 countries: Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Nepal, Tunisia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines.
 - In October 2018, the first Qatar Visa Centre was opened outside the state in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
 - In December 2018, a Qatar Visa Centre was opened in People's Republic of Bangladesh.
 - In December 2018, a QVC was opened in Islamabad, Pakistan.
 - In March and April 2018, Qatar opened Qatar Visa Centres in Indian cities of Kolkata, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kochi, New Delhi, and Mumbai.
 - In May 2019, the Qatar Visa Centre was opened in the Kathmandu, Nepal.
 - In September 2019, a QVC was opened in Manila, Philippines.



Economy

Introduction

- Qatar is expediting diversification efforts and its economy continues to thrive. Since the start of the blockade, we have entered new markets and created new strategic partnerships.
- Qatar's economy is growing at one of the fastest rates in the region, creating a diverse range of opportunities for domestic and foreign investors.
- Our stock market is one of the best performing in the world and shows no sign of slowing.
- Qatar keeps business and politics separate, which makes us a reliable business and trade partner to governments, companies and the international community. This benefits both Qatar and our international partners.
- We are the world's biggest exporters of LNG and the second largest producer of helium. We are embarking on an ambitious strategy to maintain and strengthen Qatar's position as a leading LNG producer.

Overview

- According to a report published by the World Bank, real GDP growth is expected to reach 3% in 2019, accelerating to 3.2% in 2020 and to 3.4% by 2021, as the country continues construction operations in preparation for the 2022 World Cup.
- Alternately, the IMF estimates Qatar's real GDP in 2019 to reach 3.1%, with robust growth in the non-hydrocarbon sector.
- Between 2020 and 2023, the IMF projects real GDP growth at about 2.7% annually in Qatar.
- Qatar's GDP expanded by 2% in the first six months of 2018 when compared to the same period the year before.
- Qatar's national budget for 2019 is forecast to achieve a \$1.18 billion (QAR 4.3 billion) surplus.
- Expenditure on major projects declined by 3.6% to \$24.6 billion (QAR 89.6 billion), compared with \$25.5 billion (QAR 92.9 billion) in 2018. This decline is the result of the completion of some major infrastructure projects.
- Qatar's non-oil sector economic growth for the first half of 2018 was 6%.

World Rankings

- According to 2018 World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report, Qatar ranks:
 - Thirtieth globally, and second regionally overall for global competitiveness.
 - First regionally in the Global Entrepreneurship Index.
 - Ninth globally for its adoption of information and communications technology into the country's industries.
 - Tenth globally for its growth of innovative companies.
- According to the World Bank's 2018 Gulf Economic Monitor, Qatar ranks:
 - First for year-on-year GDP growth in the GCC.



- Second for infrastructure quality in the GCC.
- Second for women's labour force participation in the GCC.
- According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Global Report 2018/2019, Qatar ranks:
 - First globally based on the environment and conditions for entrepreneurship.
 - Fifth globally for gender equality in entrepreneurial activity.
- The Global Finance magazine ranked Qatar first in the Arab Region and seventh globally in terms of investment security, according to their Global Safety and Security Standards 2019 report.

Trade

- The trade surplus for the period Jan-June 2019 is at \$23 billion (QAR 83.7 billion).
- Qatar's overall trade surplus reached \$52.6 billion (QAR 191.6 billion) in 2018.
- In 2018, the trade volume between Qatar and its global partners reached \$115.66 billion (QAR 422.18 billion), a 19% increase compared to 2017.
- In 2018, Qatar's exports and re-exports to its global partners reached \$84 billion (QAR 306.8 billion), a 24.8% increase compared to 2017.
- In 2018, Qatar's imports from its global partners reached \$31.6 billion (QAR 115.37 billion), a 6% increase compared to 2017.
- During Q4 2018, Asia was the principal destination of Qatar's exports (82%) and imports (33.6%), followed by the European Union, accounting for exports of 9.7% and imports of 32.2%, and the Gulf Cooperation Council, accounting for exports of 3.9% and imports of 4.9%.
- Exports of foreign goods from Qatar by major partner countries (Q4, 2018)
 - South Korea: 18.1%
 - Japan: 17.2%
 - China: 12.6%
- Qatar's imports of foreign goods by major partner countries (Q4, 2018)
 - United States: 50.1%
 - China: 12.5%
 - United Kingdom: 8.3%
 - Germany: 7%
 - India: 5.5%

Transport Hub

- Hamad International Airport has a current capacity of more than 30 million passengers annually. The airport plays a key role connecting the State of Qatar with more than 160 destinations around the world through Qatar Airways' fleet of more than 250 aircraft.
- Hamad International Airport's Phase 3 expansion project aims to boost capacity from the current 30 million passengers a year to 50 million.
- Hamad International Airport was named the best airport in the Middle East in 2019 for the fifth year in a row, the fourth best airport in the world and received the 5-Star Airport Award at the SKYTRAX World Airport Awards.



- Additionally, the 2019 Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards has named Hamad International Airport as one of the world's best international airports, ranking it in second place internationally.
- Qatar Railways Company (Qatar Rail) is currently leading one of the largest rail projects in the world – designing and developing the country's rail network – and will be responsible for its management, operation and maintenance upon completion.

Economic Reforms

- Qatar has taken significant measures to attract additional foreign direct investment. Businesses setting up operations in Qatar enjoy competitive benefits, including a legal environment based on English common law, transfers that can be made in any convertible currency, up to 100% foreign ownership, and repatriation of profits, while non-Qatari investment projects may be exempt from income tax in accordance with the procedures and regulation stipulated in the Income Tax Law.
- His Highness the Amir of Qatar issued Law No. 1 of 2019 regulating the investment of the non-Qatari capital in economic activity. The law aims to:
 - Allows up to 100% ownership in all sectors and economic and commercial activities.
 - Allow for potential income tax exemptions.
 - Exempt foreign investment projects in the industrial sector from customs duties on imports of raw materials and half manufactured goods required for production.
 - Make the transferring of investment ownership possible.
 - Allow the freedom to transfer investment proceeds.
 - Attract foreign direct investment to Qatar through the establishment of “The Investment Promotion Agency”, in line with objectives of the Qatar National Vision 2030.



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