

Ministry of Foreign Affairs



وزارة الخارجية

The Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking

Vienna 13-15 February 2008

Statement of the State of Qatar's Delegation

Presented by

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Mr. Chairman,

I am very pleased to address you on behalf of my country's delegation on the occasion of the Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking, which derives its significance from being the first international forum to be convened under the United Nations' umbrella to combating the phenomenon of trafficking in persons.

Mr. Chairman,

Trafficking in persons is a world transnational phenomenon with serious implications and consequences at the security, social, economic and political levels requiring promotion of international cooperation with a view to taking effective measures to combat this phenomenon. From this perspective, the State of Qatar's efforts to actively participate in international efforts aimed at combating and eliminating the phenomenon of trafficking in persons springs from the principles provided for in the Qatari Constitution, which states that Qatar's foreign policy is guided by the principles of consolidating international peace and security, respect of human rights, rejection of violence and use of force as well as encouraging settlement of international disputes by peaceful means and cooperation with peace-loving nations.

Within this context, we can refer to the State of Qatar's efforts at the legislative, institutional and awareness raising levels to combating trafficking in persons. These efforts should be considered within the Government's efforts to promote and protect human rights in general.

At the legislative level, and within the State of Qatar's concern with promoting and protecting human rights, the backbone of the policy of constitutional, political, economic, social and cultural

reform adopted by the State of Qatar since H.H. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, took over power, the Qatari Constitution of 2004 dedicates Part 3 (Articles 34-58) to human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Constitution endorses the principle of indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights and hence secures economic, social, cultural, civil, political and collective rights.

Within the framework of strengthening the legislative framework for combating the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, the Qatari Penal Code of 2004 outlaws and punishes numerous acts which internationally-recognize as constituting and amounting to trafficking in persons such as sexual exploitation, prostitution, slavery and practices similar to slavery and coercive labor. It is worth stating that the Qatari Penal Code has adopted the principle of universal jurisdiction with regard to the crimes of trafficking in drugs or persons, the crimes of piracy and international terrorism.

The provisions of the Qatari Labor Law of 2004 are supportive of and complementary to the Qatari Penal Code's provisions. They cover numerous issues relating to work organization, ensuring workers' rights, prohibition of minors' and women's employment in dangerous jobs. Furthermore, Law No. 22 of 2005 on the Prohibition of Recruitment, Employment, Training and Use of Children in Camel Race has also been enacted. The competent authorities are currently studying a draft law regulating entry and residency of expatriates in Qatar and a draft law on trafficking in persons, as well as a draft law for the protection of domestic workers.

The State of Qatar has also ratified the ILO Conventions on Forced Labor. The procedures for acceding to the UN Convention on Combating Transnational Organized Crime are in its final stages following the approval of the Council of Ministers of the State's accession to the said Convention. The Government is also considering ratifying the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Particularly Women and Children "the Palermo Protocol".

Qatar's concern with combating trafficking in persons is reflected in the establishment of numerous institutions dealing with combating this phenomenon as well as with providing shelter for its victims. These institutions including, *inter alia*, the National Office for Combating Trafficking in Persons established in 2005 with the objective of proposing policies, formulation of national plans of action and implementation of laws related to combating trafficking in

persons as well as supervising the Qatari House for Sheltering and Humanitarian Care set up in 2003 with a view to providing assistance and protection to victims of trafficking in persons and helping in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

Furthermore, several institutions dealing with the promotion and protection of human rights have been set up at both governmental and non-governmental levels. At the governmental level, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and several governmental departments have been established. At the non-governmental level, the Qatari Foundation for the Protection of r Child and Woman has been established, as well as the National Human Rights Committee which was established by Law No. 38 of 2002, which was subsequently amended by the *Emiri Decree* No. 25 of 2006 in conformity with the Paris Principles.

Mr. Chairman,

The above-mentioned developments at the legislative and institutional levels have been strengthened by raising awareness activities and capacity building programs. In this regard, reference can be made to the campaigns launched by the National Office for Combating Trafficking in Persons, which have targeted all social groups. In addition to the production of publications, press, TV and radio interviews, the National Office, in cooperation with the competent authorities, has organized numerous training courses and workshops on trafficking for law enforcement agencies. Moreover, the National Office, in cooperation and coordination with the Labor Department, has conducted a number of orientation programs for foreign workers and published the Foreign Worker's Manual in several languages.

Mr. Chairman,

The Qatari experience in combating trafficking in persons is rather characteristic despite its recent inception, since it is dating back to 2003 with the approval of the National Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Persons. Hence the Qatari experience is characterized by the existence of the political will at the highest level and the pivotal role of the National Office for Combating Trafficking in Persons which cooperates and coordinates with all governmental agencies and civil society organizations concerned with measures to combat trafficking in persons. Qatar has also been active at regional

and international forums and conferences on combating trafficking in persons. In this respect, reference can be made to Qatar's participation in the Ministerial Meeting on External Recruitment and Contractual Employment of Labor Sending and Labor Receiving Countries in Asia "Abu Dhabi Dialogue" held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on 21-22 January 2008, which stressed the importance of cooperation among all partners in sending and receiving countries as well as the importance of addressing major issues related to contracted workers and ensuring their protection during all stages of the temporary contracting cycle. It should also be stated here that the National Office for Combating Trafficking in Persons will organize international conference on trafficking in cooperation with a number of universities and specialized agencies in Doha in March 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the efforts undertaken in the field of legislations and the practices and the availability of resources, there are some challenges and temporary difficulties facing the State of Qatar in combating trafficking in persons in an ideal way. Among them are the relatively new legislative and institutional development, the recent establishment of international standards and mechanisms on trafficking the developments as well as the national technical capabilities which are at a stage of building, developing and rehabilitating. It is expected that the State of Qatar will benefit from the activities and programs of the UN Center for Training and Documentation in the Field of Human Rights for Southwest Asia and the Arab Region in Doha, which was established by the UN General Assembly Resolution No. 135 at its 60th Session, in overcoming these difficulties and challenges.

Mr. Chairman

I would like to stress that the State of Qatar, through its membership of regional and international organizations, will spare no efforts to actively participate in supporting all efforts to combat and eliminate the phenomenon of trafficking in persons and we do hope that the efforts of the Vienna Forum will further contribute to combating and eliminating this phenomenon.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the existence of the political will as well as the conducive environment for promoting and protecting human rights and combating the phenomenon of trafficking in persons in the State of Qatar.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.