

THE Pearl



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*Soldering Common Interest:
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سفارة دولة قطر
واشنطن دي. سي.



LETTER from the Ambassador

As we approach a new year, Qatar is beginning to feel the impact of the economic and political decisions it had made in the past decade.

Rapid and systematic progress towards political openness and security is being achieved as economical benchmarks are being set and surpassed in a diverse range of interests.

Solidly founded on natural resources, Qatar's revenues have overflowed into a myriad of auxiliary investments which promise soon to come into their own as important contributors to the nations' wealth.

Education, Sport, Finance, Medicine, Travel and Tourism, Meetings and Expositions, Transportation, Technology and Design are just some of the emerging elements of Qatar's expanding portfolio.

In the past year, all of these projects have gained strength, giving the country a fresh burst of energy in the growing momentum of our vision's fulfillment.

Lending the power of this vision, Qatar's economic successes have—by the nature of our development projects—engendered an active public, strengthening our people through knowledge and opportunity, encompassing them in protection of their basic rights to be healthy and educated, to speak and associate and worship freely.

The culmination of years of planning and preparation is unfolding in success, economically and politically. And soon we will see the election of the parliament, Majlis al-Shura, a natural expression of the dynamic society that is evolving in Qatar.

Honoring the wisdom of tradition and weighing the lessons of modernity, Qatar seems to thrive on the ingenuity inherent in the experiment.

Inspired, we cut new path between past and future and offer a unifying discourse of sincere friendship to all.

Bader Al-Dafa
Ambassador

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Events in Qatar

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Tradition and Elegance Envelop National Day Celebrations

Bestowing a fragrant long-stemmed rose of deepest crimson upon each lady who appeared and with gifts prepared for all who would arrive, Qatar enveloped Washington's elite in an exquisite display of its gracious traditional culture from the moment they stepped into the ballroom of the Four Seasons hotel for the Embassy of Qatar's National Day celebration this September 15.

A glowing panorama of the Doha coastline at sunset graced the recesses of the hall, warmly inviting each to discover a vibrant blue kaleidoscope of images from Qatari life, as the delicately winding melody of traditional strings gently tugged at the listener, like a small child at one's cloak, eagerly inviting guests to come and see, come and see... following the blissful suggestion, invitees found themselves beneath an elegant canopy of burgundy and white, draping with golden accents, in the main ballroom. Bounded by tables filled with delicious foods of every sort, the guests were surrounded by a tantalizing spectacle of traditional Middle Eastern food, savory meats and crispy pastries, fragrant rice and steaming salmon to name only a few.

In the middle of the ballroom glistened a crystalline carving of a pearl, the traditional

source of wealth of the State of Qatar, shimmering under a spotlight.

Beyond that, a large screen revealed the vibrant life of the country from which this all comes; its people and traditions, its dramatic natural beauty, the energy of its industry and strength of its aspirations... and the simple, unifying truth of its vision.

Having come full circle now, a solitary soul is found at the source of the enchanting, interweaving melody, whose magical fingers deftly coax forth the compelling strains which penetrate the gathering celebration and subtly set the seamless ambiance of thousands.

Back at the entryway, an array of dignitaries, public officials, and leaders of the media and academia were greeted by His Excellency Bader Omar Al-Dafa, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the United States and his wife, Mrs. Awatef Al-Dafa, whose graceful gown dazzled with luminous detailing.

Lieutenant Colonel Abdulrahman Al-Hummaid, the Military Attaché at the Embassy of Qatar also formed the receiving party and the array of diplomats from the Washington mission also graced the evening.

Elegant and extraordinary, the evening imbued attendees with a sense of camaraderie as they enjoyed an endless stream of sumptuous offerings and bubbling conversation.

Winding down, guests drifted towards the adjacent ballroom to sip fine coffee in quiet conversation, delecting of exotic pastries and contemplating the untainted delight of children dipping fresh strawberries into tiered fountains of molten chocolate.

A fitting memorial to that momentous day which set Qataris apart as an independent nation, and opened to them the promise of the tremendous potential which all now witness coming to fruition, the Embassy of Qatar's National Day celebration emanated an atmosphere of overflowing generosity; alluding to the boundlessness of a friendship founded on the deepest of human values, born between the two peoples and nations of Qatar and the United States. ■



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Opening Markets and Promoting Transparency, Qatar Invites Foreign Investment

Making a break from regional standard practice, changes in Qatar's legislation have done away with the requirement of a local service agent for foreign companies wishing to do business there. Laying bare Qatar's booming economy for foreign interests, the country is facilitating opportunities for collaboration at virtually every level of its portfolio.

New Rules Favor Foreign Investment

Representative offices may be set up by any foreign company independently now, and are not subject to taxation in Qatar

Effective as 'shop windows' to source business, representative offices can promote a foreign company in Qatar and introduce viable projects.

Foreign firms can also establish a temporary branch under the foreign investment law if the company has signed a contract in Qatar which requires the rendering of service or benefits to the general public.

Such a branch must be registered for the facilitation of a specific contract, an authorization which lapses once the contract is complete.

These types of branches can be subject to taxation under local laws unless an exemption is granted or otherwise applicable, and are calculated less the amount of any Qatari or other GCC participation in the interest.

The vast infrastructural overhaul which will be orchestrated by the Public Works Authority (PWA) in the coming years will offer ample opportunities for foreign contractors with an established legal presence and local offices to have a hand in the dynamic progress underway in Qatar.

Additionally, special zones have been set up within Qatar, such as the Technology Park of the Education City, and the Pearl of the Gulf development now underway, which will provide special advantages to international investors such as tax holidays and exemptions.

Online Visa Renewal for Private Firms

Another measure has been taken to make business in Qatar easier for foreign firms, allowing residency permits for employees of private concerns with more than 300 employees to be issued or even renewed online.

Other immigration services available to such companies through the Internet include

cancellation of residence permits, sponsorship change and change of residency permits from an old passport to a new one.

These services are made available by e-government in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, and can be accessed at the e-government website, www.e.gov.qa.

Foreign Firms to Bid in Public Projects

Foreign contractors can look forward to participating in major public projects in Qatar as bids become opened on a wide-reaching five-year, sixty billion-dollar industrial expansion project through more than twenty-seven large-scale ventures.

The country will be spending at least \$15 billion on complimentary infrastructure upgrades, which will include a massive port facility, a number of road building projects and a variety of skyscrapers.

"We have no problem dealing with foreign contractors, provided they have an office in Qatar," said General Manager of Public Works Authority (PWA), Zayed Mansoor Al-Khayarin.

The PWA is an autonomous body set up under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture (MMAA) last year to execute large-scale public projects.

Mr. Al-Khayarin said PWA will have its own tender committee supervised by a committee of executives drawn from different government departments including the Planning Council.

The committee will announce tenders for major projects, introducing simplified new procedures for the award of contracts. Paperwork previously required has been cut considerably so as to facilitate the rapid implementation of these important public projects.



The vast infrastructural overhaul which will be orchestrated by the Public Works Authority (PWA) in the coming years will offer ample opportunities for foreign contractors with an established legal presence and local offices to have a hand in the dynamic progress underway in Qatar.

**Large Draw for Project Qatar:
Record Opportunity for Dealmakers**

Some of the burgeoning opportunities in Qatar are already being snapped up by the panoply of firms that descended upon Doha early this fall to attend the global exhibition of the construction industry.

From Lichtenstein to Lebanon, a fascinating array of participants from around the world took part in Project Qatar 2004, providing Qatari firms with a record number of new deals and potential business partners as they came together at the international exposition for construction technology and building materials.

This was the first time that the international trade show was held in Doha and coincides with the construction boom

in the country. Some 400 companies from 21 countries including GCC states like Kuwait and UAE, along with firms from USA, Canada, Austria, Belgium, Lebanon, Egypt, France, Germany and Syria, among many others contributed to the fruitful interchange of the expo.

The expo had already attracted a record number of 6,000 visitors by its fourth day, anticipating a total of 15,000 by the closing day of the event which was held from September 19-23, said Fady Jreissati, General Manager of IFP Qatar, the firm organizing the event.

Jreissati said these contacts would likely translate into business deals, estimating that 90 percent of the exhibitors would eventually conclude a deal one way or another.

“Unlike foreign companies that are seeking local agents, Qatari firms exhibiting here are looking for contracts, deals or business leads. And according to the feedback we are receiving from them, these firms are receiving an average of ten to fifteen serious business contacts every day,” he said.

Qatar has sparked private sector interest by introducing the infrastructure and legal framework to protect the growth of the free market economy, providing accountability and transparency necessary for the development of the economy through private sector growth and privatization of some government works.

Project Qatar attracted international and Arab manufacturers suppliers of materials and services in the building and construction technology sectors to exhibit in Doha and cater for the growing needs of the Qatari development projects. A full range of building materials and equipment

Helium Export Set for Next Year

Qatar is expected to market what is the world's coldest liquid — helium — by the middle of next year. A project currently spearheaded by ExxonMobil Corporation in Qatar will make the peninsula one of the largest helium suppliers in the world.

Lighter than air, helium is a colorless, odorless and inert substance which is good for more than making party balloons and squeaky voices. Helium finds widespread use in industry as arc weld shielding and in the world of medicine as a diagnostic aid and for purging operations.

Due to its extremely low boiling point (negative 269 degrees centigrade), liquid helium is used in deep cryogenic and superconductivity research.

In 2000, RasGas and Qatargas initiated a joint study to assess the feasibility of

installing facilities to produce commercial quantities of helium.

The two companies later launched the Ras Laffan Helium Project. An agreement for the design and construction of the resultant helium purification and liquefaction plant was concluded in May last year.

Although the project is a joint venture between RasGas, Rasgas II and Qatargas, operation of the plant is under the aegis of RasGas. Once commissioned, the plant will enable Qatar to offer a full ten percent share of the world helium supply.

ExxonMobil, a major partner in Qatar's hydrocarbon development, is currently the world's largest producer and marketer of refined liquid helium.

Found in natural gas deposits and in the air we breath (five parts per billion), helium is

abundantly in the universe but rarely occurs naturally in quantities large enough to justify economic extraction.

In Qatar, trace quantities of helium were found within the North Field gas reserves. Although their concentration is very small, the total helium contained within the gas reserves is estimated to be 360 billion cubic feet.

While it is generally not economical to recover such a low concentration of helium, a fortunate side effect of Ras Laffan's existing liquefied natural gas (LNG) plants is to concentrate this valuable asset to 0.5 per cent, thereby enhancing the potential for its recovery.

Even though production of helium has yet to begin in Qatar, sufficient sales orders have been secured to guarantee the project's financial success. ■



and new technologies were on exhibit, including electric engineering, lighting and air-conditioning technologies as well as stone, marble and granite technology.

Dollar-Denominated Investments on Offer

Opening more than business opportunities, new investment instruments offered in Qatar open the benefits of one the fastest growing domestic and regional markets to international investors with the *Al Maha Note II*, a structured product supported by Commercialbank's strong track record.

Mr. Parvez Khan, the bank's Head of Investments has said that the new investment service, which is linked to an Emerging Markets Sovereign Bond Fund, is independent of the convulsions of the stock market.

"In order to provide added comfort to the investor the Note has a 100 percent capital protection feature at maturity. Simultaneously, it provides the flexibility to redeem the investment at Net Asset Value (NAV) on a monthly basis from July 1, 2005," said Khan, highlighting the features of the new structured investment product.

Structured by Goldman Sachs International and distributed by Commercialbank, the *Al-Maha Note II* has a rating of Aa3 by Moody's.

With a start date November 1, 2004, the units have been offered for subscription at 1,000 US dollars apiece; with minimum subscription of ten units required and a maximum of 3,000 units allowed, one hundred percent of capital is protected at maturity on 1 July 2014.

The *Al Maha II* also offers guaranteed coupons in each of the first 3 years of the investment, at the rate of 4, 5, and 6 percent respectively.

Established in 1975 as the first private Bank in Qatar, Commercialbank has maintained its leading role in retail, corporate, and investment banking sectors in Qatar through innovation in product marketing and delivery channels.

Doha Stock Market Opens to Non-Qataris

In addition to the creation of new investments by individual interests, the Qatar Ministry of Economy & Commerce has approved the opening of the Doha Securities Market (DSM) for non-Qatari investors to trade in all listed stock.

The decision is expected to maximize possible benefits of new open market policies and enhance the thriving economic situation Qatar currently enjoys, while minimizing any possible associated negative effects.

Non-Qatari investors will soon be allowed to own up to 25% of a listed companies' capital; pending the six-month period which will expire with the turning of the year to 2005 in which DSM companies shall have amended their articles of association accordingly allowing the decision to take full effect.

Massive Response to Qatargas-II Deal

A recent study conducted through the cooperation of the Ministry of Economy and Commerce and the DSM has shown that liberating the financial market will attract investments and finance economic development in the country.

Illustrative of the truth which that theory still holds in practice, a massive positive response met the preliminary information memorandum (PIM) for the bank debt package for Qatargas-II, a report in the Middle East Economic Digest said.

With the Doha Stock Market now open to Non-Qataris, foreign firms bidding on public projects and benefits abounding for firms of every size, Qatar makes investing easy ... and a clear-cut profit.

New guarantees seem to be popping up almost daily—be it dollar-denominated instruments or high-tech financial security measures — showing that the larger public stands to gain from the well synchronized evolution of Qatar's free-market economy.



"The PIM secured commitments in excess of three billion US dollars, encouraging the sponsors of Qatargas-II to proceed with two trains rather than one as originally planned," it said.

About 40 banks responded in late July to the preliminary information memorandum with all proposing to come in at the lead arranger level with tickets of \$100 million.

The lead arranging group with the assigned bank roles is due to be mandated in the third week of this month for the 15-year loan and is expected to include a number of new entrants to the Qatari project finance market.

"With the pricing said to be very attractive and the quality of the bids high, the sponsors have opted to include all the respondents with their stated ticket size in the lead arranging group," the journal said.

The integrated Qatargas-II project involves the delivery of nearly sixteen million tons of LNG annually to the UK with the first deliveries due in late 2007.

The financial adviser on Qatargas-II is the Royal Bank of Scotland and the project legal counsel is White & Case.

Qatar is becoming an increasingly strong capital-attracting country due not only to its promising economy, but also by its excellent track record in long-term foreign currency issuer credit and senior unsecured debt ratings credit.

The Gulf Riviera

If industrialization and dividends don't tantalize, then maybe a place in the sun will...

Foreigners can now have their share of the exquisite turquoise view of Doha bay and Gulf sunshine, at new development called the Pearl-Qatar. Rising out of the sea off Qatar's

coast, this \$2.5 billion artificial island is where, for the first time, foreigners will be allowed to own property in the Gulf state.

A secure and exclusive island retreat, the Pearl-Qatar will bring the ambience and lifestyle of the Mediterranean to the heart of Arabia, on an artificial island which will include villas and buildings that will house 30,000 people, while putting at their disposition 60,000 square meters of luxury retail and restaurant space, three luxury hotels, four marinas, with combined mooring for over 700 boats; along with easy access to the vibrant international lifestyle blossoming in Doha.

Investment and ownership in the project has been opened to foreigners, many of whom have already snapped up the three multi-storey towers planned, reserving 456 apartments in the first 24 hours after they were made available for purchase.

The project is being developed by United Development Company (UDC), a Qatari-Gulf private shareholding firm; the largest on the Doha Securities Market. The multi-million dollar contract for engineering design was awarded to Parsons International Limited, the Middle East arm of the US-headquartered infrastructure development and program management firm.

Callison Architecture of Seattle established the overall concept for the project, providing master planning, conceptual design and construction services which will transform the former pearl-diving site into a development.

Fugro Middle East, part of the Fugro Group of Companies which is one of the world's leading firms in sub-surface exploration and geo-technical interpretation, won the award for structure specific site testing of the area around Porto Arabia, the island's main marina.

The design contract for the first of forty-three villas to be built was awarded to global design and project management consultants KEO International in association with award-winning US architects RNL International.

The Pearl-Qatar is the largest real-estate project in Qatar, creating retail, tourist and leisure opportunities for a variety of businesses.

Residency in the State of Qatar which extends to all dependents is available to foreign property owners, the first of whom will be able to move in at the close of 2006, and certain tax holidays may be applicable to companies participating in the project which is due for final completion in 2009.

Economic Boom Opens Qatar to the World

According to the Emir H. H. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Qatar's laws regulating foreign investment in different economic sectors protect and facilitate foreign investment.

And the proof is in the pudding, as the country's liberalizing moves have engendered widespread confidence in the Qatari economy, attracting investments not only for a number of oil and gas-based projects, but also for a diverse range of small and medium-size ventures.

Qatar has sparked private sector interest by introducing the infrastructure and legal framework to protect the growth of the free market economy, providing accountability and transparency necessary for the development of the economy through private sector growth and privatization of some government works. ■

If industrialization and dividends don't tantalize, then maybe a place in the sun will...



Money Laundering, Terrorism Cut Short in Qatar

Money laundering strategies are being disabled as regional scrutiny and cooperation identifies vulnerabilities and reinforces controls designed to squeeze dry sources of funding to Al-Qaida and related terrorist groups.

A proposal for a regional anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism financing panel, which would include nations of the Middle East and North Africa, was put on the table during a recent regional seminar in Doha.

The anti-money laundering seminar was attended by many regional finance officials and justices, as well as senior executives from leading private banking and financial institutions. Opened by QCB Governor His Excellency Abdullah bin Khalid Al-Attiyah, the symposium was organized by Qatar Central Bank (QCB) in cooperation with Arab Academy for Science, Finance and Banking.

Effective surveillance and use of advanced technology to analyze transactions has protected Qatar from facing major problems in this regard, said Sheikh Fahad bin Faisal Al-Thani, Deputy Governor of QCB, on the sidelines of the symposium.

Qatar has implemented a range of measures meant to impede the flow of funds to identified terrorist entities.

Qatar has strengthened its legislation and oversight since 2002, promulgating Law No: 22 of 2002 to combat money laundering and terrorist financing and establishing a high-level national committee undo terrorist financing schemes, of which Sheikh Fahad is head.

QCB's Director of Legal Affairs, Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Malki, said money laundering and terrorist financing are, "grave economic crimes, which need to be dealt with sternly."

Because of the international nature of the financial nexus, such crimes do not affect

just one country but distort the system, thereby doing damage to all countries.

"For this reason, all countries are co-operating in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing," al-Malki said.

Mr. Serri Siam, an Egyptian judiciary official, said money laundering and terrorism financing were capable of damaging national economies.

"These have to be crushed with an iron hand," he concluded.

Qatar has implemented a range of measures meant to impede the flow of fund to identified terrorist entities.

Strong Anti-Terror Law Established

The anti-terror law passed by Qatar this year does precisely that, prescribing the death penalty for all acts of terrorism which may result in a person's death or involve the use of arms or explosives.

The law (No. 3), promulgated by the Emir His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, is published in the Official Gazette, and will come to force soon.

The Law No. 3 has been carefully drafted to clearly define what constitutes terrorist acts and specifies the punishments for terrorism in whatever form it might take.

"In all acts of terrorism which results in a person's death or involve the use of arms or any other aggravating factors, the death penalty is the sole punishment which shall be invoked in such cases," said H. E. Sultan bin Abdullah Al-Suweidi, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Justice, in an interview appearing in the Golden

Book released by the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI).

The prosecution for terrorist crimes will have no time limit, and sentencing provides for the confiscation of arms, property and any instrument used in committing the crimes. The law places no restrictions upon the Public Prosecutor in instigating legal procedures and enables him to proceed without having to file a complaint.

According to Al-Suweidi, the law authorizes the seizure of all written communications and interception of wire and wireless communications and particulars relating to bank accounts, transactions and safe deposits when necessary for the investigation of terrorist crimes.

Qatar is party to a number international conventions sponsored by the UN on combating terrorism, and combating crimes that endanger the safety of aircraft and the persons on board.

MENA Financial Action Task Force

As this issue went to press, the State of Qatar was slated to take part in a regional ministerial meeting and preparatory activities to establish the proposed anti terrorist panel, taking place November 29-30, 2004, in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Called the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENA-FATF), the regional organization is intended to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

Qatar's delegation was expected to sign an agreement of understanding and participate in the nomination of the president, vice-president and the secretary general of MENA-FATF. ■



Information Technology Gets Official Cadre

A Supreme Council for Communications and Information Technology (SCCIT) has been established by the Emir H. H. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani.

Headquartered in Doha, the council will function independently, organizing the Communications and IT Sector in Qatar to create an environment in which widespread knowledge and use of advanced communications and information technology can flourish in the community.

The SCCIT will develop a national strategy for the Communications and Information Technology Sector, supervising and implementing formal links to national public policies, expediting the use of advanced information technologies, and supporting research in the interest of improving the field.

Provisions and standards for issue of licenses for service providers and related tariffs will emanate from the SCCIT, along with the issuance of these licenses. The council will promote investments in such services, and will be responsible for all related contracts and agreements to which it is party.

The Council will represent the State of Qatar in all conferences and symposia, local and international, which are related to communications and advanced information technologies.

The SCCIT will be managed by a Board of Directors headed by the Heir Apparent His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, as Chairman, assisted by a Vice-Chairman and other Board Members with high qualifications and ample relevant experience in communications and IT. These members will be appointed to four-year renewable terms.

A General Secretariat will be established for the council, which will be headed by a General Secretary nominated by the Chairman and appointed by Emiri Decree.

The General Secretary shall attend the council's meetings and represent the council before courts and maintain relations of the council with other bodies.

The SCCIT shall meet upon the invitation of the chairman, at least four times per year and whenever else it may be deemed necessary. Decisions taken during these meetings will be decided by majority vote at sessions where the Heir Apparent, vice-chairman, and a majority of the Board Members are in attendance. ■

Celebrating Shared Values, Soldering Common Interest: **US Welcomes the Emir**



His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar



His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, accompanied by his Consort H.H. Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned, arrived in New York Sunday night, 19 September 2004, with an itinerary of several days visit in the United States.

Emir of Qatar Arrives in New York

In a gesture of welcome, the Empire State Building—one of the world's most famous sky scrapers and a landmark of New York City— was illuminated in a flood of decorative white and maroon lighting, the two colors of the Qatari national flag which had been hoisted at the tower's sixth floor to mark the occasion.

Sheikh Hamad was the first Arab leader to visit the New York after the tragic events of 9-11, visiting ground zero

and offering his condolences to the suffering families and pledging Qatar's solidarity with the U.S. in the fight against terrorism. He then made a donation of several million dollars; to the Weill Cornell Medical Center's burn unit, where the most severely injured patients from the trade center disaster received care, and to a fund set up for the education of the children of the firemen lost in the tragedy, among others..

An official delegation was on hand, enhancing the effectiveness of the Emiri visit through the presence of the

First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister H.E. Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabor Al-Thani, Private Secretary to the Emir H.E. Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Saud Al-Thani, H.H. the Emir's Secretary for Executive Affairs H.E. Saad Mohammad Al-Rumeihi, the Economic Consultant at the Emiri Diwan H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Al-Ibrahim, the Assistant Foreign Minister for Executive Affairs, H.E. Mohammad Abdullah Al-Rumeihi, Qatar's Ambassador to the United States H.E. Bader Omar Al-Dafa, Qatar's Permanent Delegate to the United Nations H.E. Nasser Abdulaziz Al-Nasr, and Director of H.E. the First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister's office H.E. Sheikh Jabor bin Yousuf Al-Thani.

The visit began with H.H. the Emir's address before the UN General Assembly's 59th session on behalf of the Group of 77 + China in the headquarters of the UN in New York. (see pg. 16)

Qatar Calls for Deep Reform in Middle East: Democracy and Human Rights Imperative

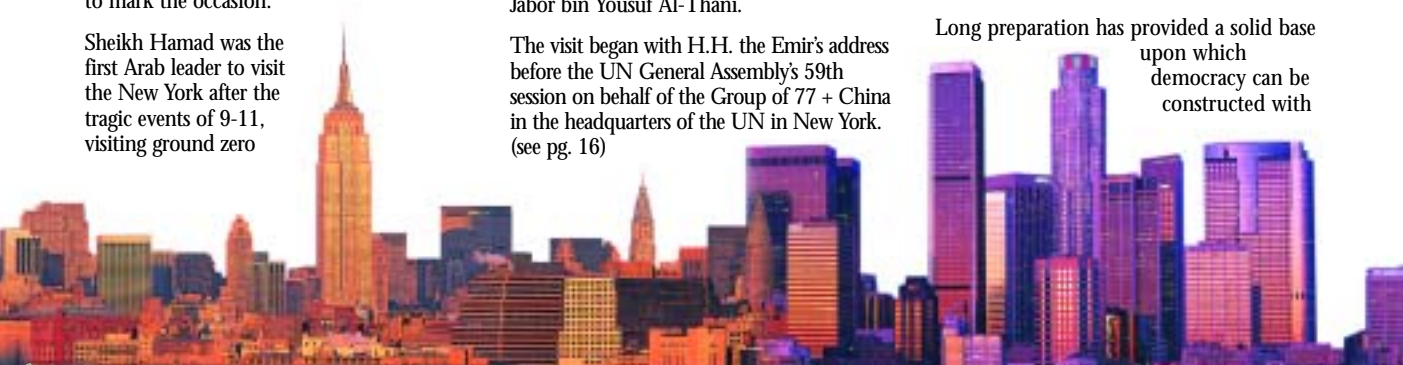
The absolute necessity of achieving regional stability in the Middle East and build up international peace and security resonated in the message brought by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, in his recent visit, as he emphasized the deep human values the two countries share in common.

In an official visit that spanned two weeks and touched five cities, the Emir and his consort spoke frankly about the economic progress and the social aspirations that are changing the face of the Middle East through the metamorphosis of the tranquil Gulf state into a dynamic world actor.

"The world today, with its crises and conflicts which are accompanied by accelerating changes especially in our region, necessitate the devoting of all international efforts, as well as coordination in order to surpass the regional and international hazards we are facing," said the Emir.

The Emir stated that Qatar's mission was clear in calling for the adoption of deep political, economical, cultural, and social reform in the Middle East, "a matter to which we had applied to ourselves a decade ago."

Long preparation has provided a solid base upon which democracy can be constructed with



authentic public participation and active involvement in government and administration.

The country's first parliamentary elections are now being prepared under the new constitution which was endorsed by an overwhelming majority. The maintenance of freedom and protection of the basic rights of all citizens, without any discrimination, is a goal Qatar has slowly building itself up to, said the Emir, "and we hope that all countries in our region would do the same," he reflected.

These comments came during a banquet luncheon hosted by the Qatari-American Caucus in honor of His Highness the Emir and his consort Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned which was held on Capital Hill near the conclusion of their US visit, September 30th.

Strong Growth Drives Discussions

His Highness the Emir conducted a series of meetings during his sojourn with leaders in government and business in New York, Los Angeles, Houston and Washington, DC, reviewing the strong growth that relations between Qatar and U.S. are witnessing in tangible economic measures as well as in more ephemeral—but no less potent—terms of cultural understanding and social development.

Economically, Qatar's huge expansion in production capacity has resulted from a number of agreements and dedicated investments made mostly with American companies which amounted to 40 billion dollars in 2003 alone.

At the same time as Qatari LNG and infrastructure are taking off, American universities are settling down into their branch campuses on Qatari soil. The highest quality of education is considered a building block to establishing a viable democracy, and the synergistic educational experiment established through the Qatar Foundation promises great things for the people of Qatar.

Combining not only different disciplines and ages levels, but also inviting an interactive relationship between the global industrial giants and world-class academic institutions which find themselves neighbors in Doha's Education City.

Sheikha Mozah commented on the project during the Los Angeles portion of the visit, at a banquet on Thursday, September 23, 2004. Some 80 guests, drawn from Los Angeles' business, political, and entertainment circles, met and dined at the Beverly Hills home of Ronald Burkle, President and founder of the Yukaiba Investment Corporation.

She called the Education City, "an engine of change for Qatar."

"We are trying to achieve changes....," she continued, "and we are trying to achieve them in a way that again will make us prosperous countries where the citizens can be united. In order to have effective citizens we need to have effective countries. And to achieve this we need to start with education."

She said that her government had invited the various American universities "to come and open campuses there, to make the environment of the university a commanding focus... We are creating an environment where our people could achieve, because they have the potential but they haven't had the environment, as they deserved. We have the natural resources and we have to couple this with our human resources."

"I think we can give them [the people of Qatar] hope that with reforms and the democratic process, with a good environment, they can also be successful," Sheikha Mozah concluded.

The promise of democracy is deeply tied to the stability of economic freedom; so while Qatar is taking advantage of its natural resources, it simultaneously dedicates more of its GDP to create

tangible benefits for its people. Enhancing fundamental services like health and education

The confidence which world-class corporations place in the State of Qatar is owed to the multiple factors of strength displayed by its economy: sound financial and economic policies pursued by the state, transparent business practices, accountability through direct dealings with the State of Qatar, and the political stability enjoyed by the country.



and improving infrastructure are investments without diminishing returns in the long run.

In a speech at Los Angeles Town Hall earlier that day, following a luncheon banquet hosted by Donald Felssinger, of Senbra Energy, the Emir His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani stressed Qatar's permanent concern with improving and promoting democracy.

The Emir stressed that Qatar's natural advantages — its huge economic resources and strategic location— are resources to be utilized for preparing citizens thoroughly and providing the best opportunities in education, health and culture.

"We are convinced that the future will only be for freedom, a matter which continually prompts us to give full chance to the

Continued on next page 13

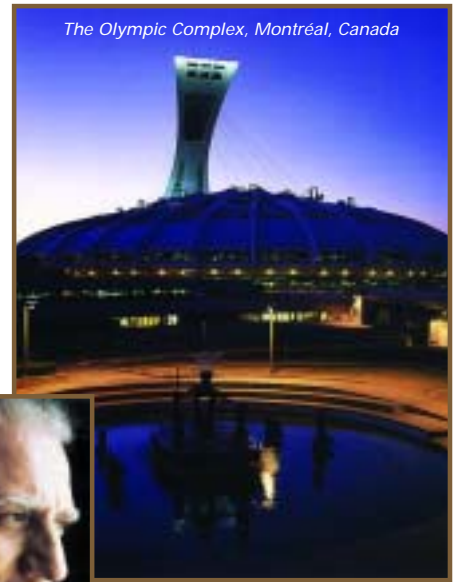


Roger Taillibert, long renowned for his graceful and dynamic architectural creations—including the fantastical stadium for the Montreal Olympics and the Parc des Princes in Paris—is the man behind the blueprints.

Having masterminded breathtaking structures the world over, Taillibert's work now graces Doha with its elegant mastery of structure and function in the form of the Khalifa Sporting Complex and the State-of-the-Art ASPIRE Academy.

His architecture attempts to inspire the innate and unifying human power expressed in sport by orchestrating the tensions inherent in each environment into a symphony for the sight.

Here he offers a fascinating insight into the value of the athletic endeavor, the impetus common to sports and architecture, and the relationship between a structure and those who use it.



The Olympic Complex, Montréal, Canada



Roger TAILLIBERT

The Architecture of Sport

With the Asian Games on the horizon and a strong focus on athletics, Qatar has built world-class sports facilities in Doha which by design bring out the very best in athletes and fill spectators with the passion and beauty of physical competition.

Today, in our society which enthusiastically dehumanizes itself in favor of pointless and limitless consumerism, sport falls a bit by the wayside, though its very nature directly expresses a wholesome power common in each individual being.

Sports Architecture is, in its essence, the art of constructing a universal language spelled out, as it were, in space, expressing a desire of perfect harmony in the organization and distribution of space which unites imagination and ingenuity in serving the needs of man.

Sports Architecture is solid fact that cannot betray human thought. For thousands of years it has appeared in the Mediterranean basin, the cradle of undeniable remains of architectural expression which have serenely traversed the centuries.

In our contemporary society the character of such buildings is determined by function and flexibility which become progressively more ingenious as they keep pace with advances in scientific and human performance, while at the same time imbuing itself with the spirit of athletic endeavor.

Thus, buildings give testimony to the societies in which they are born using means of expression particular to them which necessarily touch the ranks of power as well as the powerless.

What is Game Space?

Above all, (and for every builder who has had to address this problem), game space is a place where man can unleash, either in shelter or in the open, his definitive physical performances.

A sports facility will welcome a different community when found in the mountains than in an urban setting. However favorable the location which receives it or the environment that completes it; the defining features of Sports Architecture discussed here cannot be avoided.

Many laws regulate the organic function of these edifices. Sunlight penetrates it according to a precise pattern, artificial light responds to basic norms of comfort, so that the spectator will perceive a space in which the action is intimate yet entire. The game

space itself bursts out towards the exterior, creating a supplementary dimension to the field of play.

Covered space—from a swimming pool to a gym to a stadium—primarily requires the use of a large scale structural framework. No other building except a sports facility is inscribed dimensions of such grandeur; thus design research of these spaces has focused overwhelming attention on structural performance in recent years.

Contradictory in its essence, the artistry of contemporary architecture is as strict as mathematics and violently lyrical at times, yet with a candor so sincere as to border on the indecent. We must then, when faced with the problems posed by its dimensions, call upon all the laws which define a sporting ground as it insinuates itself into a chosen site.

Whether carved at the foot of a giant mountain, settled upon the seaside, tucked into a peaceful plain or integrated into an industrial city—environmental factors can never outwit the logical and functional proposition of a builder.

The Architecture of Engagement and the Social Dimension

There are immense perspectives within the domain of sport which are natural, trustworthy, and credible. Sports Architecture is expressive without contradicting its static function of regulating space in the performance of the structure itself.

The blueprint must assure the intimacy of the place, its organic function, the relation between function and structure and the insertion of the site in relation to a particular and often difficult environment. Attempts at this type of volumetric conception can hardly remain indifferent to those served by it.

Neither is it imaginable that a human community, brought together in the passion of athletic competition could possibly permit that the context defining this effort be of mediocre



quality, undermining by its sheer existence the very meaning and purpose of the effort.

A sports arena creates an ubiquitous instructive dimension in the way its shapes surge forth from function. Industrial style architecture could never produce the same inspiring intimations, but would in and of itself impoverish the desired goal.

Prolonging intellectual formation by its very presence and dominance of the cityscape, an arena is an urban gathering place intended uniquely for the expression of physical performances. Crucible of the hopes and dreams and struggles of the community; the stadium is a sort of alembic, silently extracting a beneficial common identity from the glorified images of success and failure of the strongest, the fastest and the best.

One could thus say that an athletic facility, modest though it may be, expresses a conviction about the contest in which each athlete will struggle to dominate on the common field of competition. From the humblest to the greatest, the architect must be able to make his work energize and inspire this quest.

Thus we establish a basic understanding that a form cannot by any means admit the glory of deliberately free athletic expression

without any constraint whatsoever. On the contrary, human activity associates itself intimately with the very nature of static effort; a climatic constraint, if you will, which prophecies strength and sensitivity in the face of the unknown.

The Unifying Energy of Sport

Why continue to express over and over, insistently, the criteria which define this envelope of space? Why not become attached to the materialistic definitions of our common spaces? Why ever not, then, render credible all space which shelters sports whatever the social setting?

If we again take up in this dialog the convictions of the Baron de Coubertin, [founder of the modern Olympic Games] we can evaluate together the spirit which presided over the restoration of the Olympic

Games. His message of world citizenship has made it such that the youth of the world are effectively joined as one where natural vitality and athletic activity brings them together.

Drawing from this foundation of athletic and moral excellence, this universal language of creation will be expressed in soul and setting alike— from Tokyo to Mexico, passing through Rome and Munich to Montreal and Athens— as the imagination of man increasingly articulates it everywhere where life is present.

Each day brings within itself a new spirit of the builder; desiring to capture this strength and bring to all an array of the finest ideas, with the vision to build places where architecture will affirm —by the form and technique of its silent presence—the glorious enthusiasm of sport. ■

by Roger Taillibert

Photos this page (from top to bottom): Parc des Princes, Paris; Velodrome, Montreal; Aspire Academy, Doha (inside); Aspire Academy, Doha (outside); Parc des Princes, Paris (two-page spread). All images courtesy of Roger Taillibert, with the genial cooperation of Agence Taillibert, Paris

Continued from page 10

private sector to develop and play its full role in pushing forward economic progress," H.H. the Emir has said, "We are always calling for respecting countries' rights to exercise their sovereignty in accordance with regulations of international legitimacy, as well as we stress the necessity of respecting human rights and non-discrimination of race, sex, color, or religion."

Her Highness Shiekha Mozah continued on this theme as she spoke to a conference of the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee in Michigan, urging the West to shed its bias, decrying that the acts of a few 'deviated individuals' could be taken as a rule to misjudge an entire civilization. Emphasizing critical significance of the dialogue between the Arab world and the West, Sheikha Mozah stressed that channels of communications should be continuously maintained between the two sides.

"The elimination of all forms of discrimination is... an essential prerequisite to create the appropriate and conducive environment for a fruitful and effective dialogue," she posited.

Attracting Investment, Sharing the Wealth

A group of American oil companies hosted the Emir and Sheikha Mozah at a dinner banquet held in the city of Houston, on Monday, 27 September 2004.

Addressing the banquet, the Emir remarked on the State of Qatar's evolution as an attraction for foreign investments, citing the

elite of world-class corporations which have become key partners in Qatar's gigantic oil, gas and petrochemical ventures.

Strong relations between the State of Qatar and the United States Qatari have grown from joint commitment shared by both countries towards peace, welfare and stability in the Middle East and the world at large.

"Partnership between the two countries has all the requirements of success, because it hinges on a broad base of mutual interests," said the Emir.

In 2003 alone, the State of Qatar signed preliminary agreements with foreign companies to launch mammoth ventures with total investments exceeding 40 billion US dollars, of which US companies have taken the lion's share.

These agreements reach the liquefied natural gas (LNG), gas-to-liquids (GTL) and petrochemical sectors, enabling Qatar to supply the US market with about 23 million tons of LNG in the next few years. A trusted strategic ally, Qatar will greatly contribute to meeting the growing demand in the US for new sources of energy.

"The implementation of these ventures will turn the State of Qatar into a major hub for the world's GTL industry, through which we will be able to co-supply the world with another source of clean energy," His Highness said.

The confidence which world-class corporations place in the State of Qatar is owed to the multiple factors of strength displayed by its economy: sound financial and economic policies pursued by the

In an official visit that spanned two weeks and touched five cities, the Emir and his consort spoke frankly about the economic progress and the social aspirations that are changing the face of the Middle East through the metamorphosis of the tranquil Gulf state into a dynamic world actor.

state, transparent business practices, accountability through direct dealings with the State of Qatar, and the political stability enjoyed by the country.

Striving to maintain all elements of strength in the national economy, Qatar will, "earnestly endeavor to improve the investment climate yet further by the constant build up of infrastructures, the setting up of industrial zones and the development of investment-conducive legislations," H.H. the Emir said.

Concluding his address, H.H. the Emir of Qatar expressed hope that cooperation between the State of Qatar and the United States would be further developed to attain yet greater and better results that will be added to the considerable accomplishments already attained.



Following the Emir's words, the Secretary of the State of Texas, Geoffrey Connors addressed the banquet, laying emphasis on the strong relations between the State of Qatar and the State of Texas, and expressing appreciation for the mutual cooperation between the two sides in the energy sector.

"There are mutual interests bringing the two sides together," he said, citing the existing cooperation between Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Social Development and Texas University A&M, a branch of which has been established in Qatar's Education City.

He expressed hope that bilateral cooperation would be further developed, especially in economics and trade.

The flourishing renaissance of Qatar has drawn the attention of several US oil company directors, who addressed the banquet praising the US-Qatari relations on various levels, calling Qatar a pioneer in the spheres of energy and economy, especially in terms of converting natural gas revenues into development for state infrastructure.

Cited as "visionary," and "an example to be followed," the leadership of Qatar was congratulated for putting the country on the right track of development, as hope was expressed that bilateral relations and cooperation between the two sides would be maintained.

Exxon-Mobil, Chevron-Texaco, Conoco-Phillips, Occidental, Global Shell Gas Co., Anadarko, Chevron-Phillips Chemicals, Marathon, and the Arab-American Chamber of Commerce hosted the banquet.

Conclusion

Throughout their visit, the Emir and his Consort spoke of the strong shared commitment Qatar and the United States towards peace, welfare and stability in the world, the flourishing relations between the two countries were based on mutual belief in the deepest of human values.

Concluding their visit, the Qatari mission vivified the leadership's determination to act with a spirit of partnership and mutual confidence to further enhance these relations which offer still wider scopes of cooperation, to be discovered in a spirit of partnership with American collaborators. ■

Thousands Volunteer for Asiad 2006

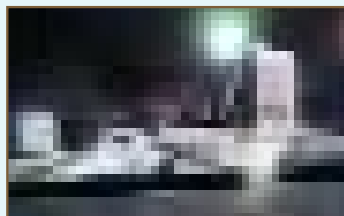
In a bid to stage the best Asian Games ever—since 1951 when they were first held in New Delhi, India—the State of Qatar is now gearing up for the event kick off in December 2006, with over a billion dollars worth of preparations to be made.

As the sports facilities rise on the Doha skyline, volunteers are signing up help make Doha 2006 an affair to remember. So far 8,500 volunteers out of the targeted number of 15,000 have been enlisted by the Volunteers Committee of Asiad 2006.

Key officials at the Asiad 2006 Organizing Committee have stressed the importance of voluntary work as a vital opportunity for those interested in participating in such a huge sports event to get new experience.

Volunteers will be assigned to help athletes, administrators, media, translation, medical services, airline ticketing and reservations and reception.

Qatar will be a center of the world sports during the two weeks of the event when 10,000 athletes and administrators from forty-four (44) Asian countries take part in the 40 sports which will be represented in the Doha Games. With an unprecedented four-hundred eleven (411) events planned on its agenda the year 2006 will see a record set in the history of Asian Games for greatest number and kind of competition.



A view of the Olympic Village



Khalifa Sports Complex
Image courtesy of Roger Taillibert

The Organizing Committee has drawn up a work schedule which will be carried out in collaboration with Asian Olympic Council, to which the State of Qatar has allocated a budget of eight hundred million dollars (\$800 million). Complementary works contracted for housing at the Asiad Project in Hamad Medical City have an additional estimated value of more than five hundred twenty-eight million dollars (\$528 million).

The Olympic Village will be built on a thirty six acre plot north-east of Hamad Medical Corporation. The Village will be divided into three zones: the Audience Zone, International Zone and Housing Zone. It will provide housing for athletes and administrators as well as offices and special facilities for media personnel.

The Audience Zone will be located in the eastern part of the Olympic Village, and it will be open to the public without the need to of a permit for entry. This division will have a number of facilities such as coffee shops, entertainment areas, restaurants, and parking lots.

The International Zone will be subject to strict security measures, and only authorized individuals will be granted access. Catering to participating athletes and delegations, this zone will also offer

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Celebration of UN Family Year Anniversary Brings World Figures to Qatar

Understanding sustenance of the family unit as a political goal which protects the authority of the state and contributes to the cohesion of society will be the main thrust of the gathering.

The basic socio-political unit, the family—in which children are instilled with moral values, nurtured and protected by a mother and father united in marriage—has been the building block of successful civilizations throughout history.

Economic prosperity and social strength are built on a foundation of healthy, resilient families. But in so many countries today the family structure is disintegrating.

In a recent address to the United Nations 59th Session of the General Assembly, Qatar has stressed its interest in the well being of the family unit as closely-knit fabric of society as it had established in its Constitution— -- and the necessity for public authorities to protect the family from the increased illiteracy, poverty, disease, drug use, crime, and social injustice.

Top World Figures Convene for Family Forum

During the 58th Session, the UN General Assembly had welcomed, Qatar's hosting of the crowning event of the year-long celebration of the UN Year of the Family's tenth anniversary, the Doha International Conference for the Family, November 29-30, 2004.

The conference will be held under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned, the First Lady in Qatar and President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs.

This conference will re-affirm the urgent need for strengthening the family to perform its vital social role; providing catalytic support in enhancing concern for the family at the national, regional and global levels.

High-ranking political and religious leaders from all over the world will take part, including H.E. Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor Al-Thani, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, former Malaysian Prime Minister, will be among the speakers.

Religious figures such as Islamic scholar Dr. Yousuf Al-Qaradawi and a Coptic Christian leader from Egypt and prominent diplomats such as Arab League Secretary General Amr Mousa and GCC Secretary-General Abdul Rahman Al-Attiyah have confirmed their participation.

International policies to protect the family from the challenges posed by globalization will be envisioned in Doha.

Some one thousand academics, sociologists, religious figures, high-level representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations have been invited to discuss family values in the third millennium and the challenges posed by globalization to these values.

The basic legal and religious rights for the family of the third millennium will be discussed, along with the stability of marriage, family coherence and the succession of values from one generation to another.

International policies to protect the family and education as basic rights of each individual will also be considered.



H.H. the Emir with his son Sheikh Khalifa.

The Secretary General of Qatar's Supreme Council for Family Affairs, General Abdullah bin Nasser Al-Khalifa described the Doha conference as, "A cry to the world to protect families from poverty, catastrophes and wars."

Family Values: Political Capital

Understanding sustenance of the family unit as a political goal which protects the authority of the state and contributes to the cohesion of society will be the main thrust of the gathering. Highlighting the UN Declaration of Human Rights' treatment of the issue, the conference will encourage people to actively promote policies which protect the well-being of the family.

The Conference will conclude its events by adopting the Doha Declaration which will carry a message to the states of the world emphasizing the importance of reinstating the central role of the family.

The declaration will call upon governments to commit to promoting and protecting the family as the fundamental unit from which civil society is constructed.

A compilation of the events, discussions and papers presented will be published by the Supreme Council of Family Affairs in cooperation with participating family-oriented NGOs. ■



Plea for the Poor: Sheikh Hamad Addresses UN

His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of Qatar, delivered a powerful plea for the poor in an address to the General Assembly of the United Nations. He spoke on behalf of the G77 and China group of nations, which Qatar currently chairs.

In his wide-ranging address, H.H. the Emir covered issues such as globalization, the application of democracy, the challenges facing sustained development, the Palestinian cause, the need for Israel to meet its international obligations on peace and the crisis in Iraq.

If the world is to achieve peace and security it must fight poverty and destitution.

“It is no coincidence that the poorest regions in the world are the ones that have suffered the most complicated regional conflicts,” he said.

“To achieve the aims of security and development at the same time, the international community needs to adopt more equitable policies that do justice to a large segment of the members of the international community, who will lack many of the basic necessities of life.”

The Emir then turned to the issue of globalization, noting that despite its positive effects it had been accompanied by problems that had to be addressed, including the widening of the gap between developed and developing countries, economic deterioration in some countries and adverse effects on the environment.

These factors could act as a catalyst for abhorrent forms of international conflict, he warned.

Obstacles that prevented developing countries from enjoying the benefits of the expanding global economy should be swept away, he urged, calling on the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the eradication of poverty through better integration of poorer nations in the world economy.

World trade should take into account the norms of justice and the rule of law and should be geared to help countries fight poverty and underdevelopment. That would require an end to unfair trade practices, such as the use of agricultural subsidies which protect farmers from competition.

The developed world should speed up its trade liberalization programs by removing obstacles that have prevented developing nations from trading on an equal basis, he said.

H.H. Sheikh Hamad urged the General Assembly to renew its commitment to the Millennium Declaration, noting that the aims set out for Africa and the world's poorest nations appeared unattainable because countries failed to live up to the generous aid commitments they pledged at various international gatherings.

*If the world is to
achieve peace and
security it must
fight poverty and
destitution.*

Speaking on behalf of Qatar, rather than the G77 as a whole, His Highness the Emir noted that the continuing lack of democracy and unwillingness to reform were at the heart of the social and economic suffering plaguing the Middle East.

Political reform to give the public a voice in decision-making has been an essential element in economic progress. States which had managed to achieve economic development and adopt democratic principles have remained vulnerable to sudden economic upheavals.

Progress towards democracy in the South has generally been a half-hearted attempt to meet an immediate problem, only to fail afterwards.

Economic progress requires efficiencies that cannot be achieved through authoritarianism, but only through free discussion and through participation of the people.

Turning to Palestine, he urged the international community to listen to its conscience and to reconsider the position that has allowed the Israeli occupation to crush the legitimate Palestinian dream of freedom and development.

“Compelling Israel to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy is more than a mere duty, because such legitimacy, in my view, should not be applied selectively,” the Emir said. “Israel must fulfill the commitments it has made, including its commitment to the road map,” [peace process], he said.

Construction of the separation wall should stop, in accordance with the ruling of the International Court of Justice, which was endorsed by the General Assembly, which was necessary to enable Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and to establish their independent state, with Jerusalem as its capital.

This was linked to the need for a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace on the basis of Israel's withdrawal from all the land it captured in 1967.

The Emir reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to supporting the reconstruction of Iraq and its territorial integrity and independence. ■



Bridge the Knowledge Gap, Banish Intolerance

Sheikha Mozah Addresses UNESCO's 47th International Conference on Education

"Through education, we must teach our citizens that it is possible and even essential to come together in an attempt to try to understand each other - and moreover, that we can do so without sacrificing our individual values and identities," she said.

This year, the eleventh day of September was marked by a unifying dialogue among the world's cultures at the 47th International Conference on Education in Geneva.

The conference, organized by UNESCO's Geneva-based International Bureau of Education (IBE), was attended by some 100 education ministers, several hundred education experts and a host of representatives from non-governmental, inter-governmental and professional organizations and civil society involved in education.

The participants looked at ways of adapting education to current socio-economic realities, empowering the young to address the needs of global civil society in an increasingly interdependent economic world.

The United Nations Population Fund has estimated that by 2020, eighty-seven percent (87%) of the world's young people will live in developing nations. Developed countries, for their part, will be faced with the demographic challenge of an ever-aging population.

Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned encouraged the group as the conference came to a close, expressing her great faith in the power of education to prepare citizens of the world for a peaceful and cooperative future — and to prepare citizens of individual nations for the cultural transformation that results from globalization.

Sheikha Mozah, wife of His Highness the Emir of Qatar, is the UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education and founding impetus of the million dollar International Fund for Higher Education in Iraq.

Addressing the assembly, Sheikha Mozah posited that it is through education that dialogue is established, relationships are built and cooperative solutions to the problems facing the world today are finally achieved.

"Through education, we must teach our citizens that it is possible and even essential to come together in an attempt to try to understand each other - and moreover, that we can do so without sacrificing our individual values and identities," she said.

Sheikha Mozah further spoke of the damaging effect on education and development which is propagated by armed conflict, urging the global community to take decisive action in dealing with the educational implications of political instability; the ignorance and poverty which only serve to fuel the cycle of violence.

"We have already witnessed the ramifications of intolerance, and many feel helpless in the face of these vicious acts. We must counteract this helplessness by taking a firm stand in supporting an international culture of quality that ensures quality education," she concluded. ■



Sheikha Mozah with Koichiro Matsuura, UNESCO Director General.



H.H. Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned addressed the 47th International Conference on Education in Geneva.

New Places of Christian Worship to Arise in Qatar

A Milestone Not Seen Since the 7th Century

DOHA, Qatar, OCT. 12, 2004 (Zenit.org).- The Catholic community welcomed the concession of land in the State of Qatar, where a church dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary will soon be built.

The laying of the first stone took place last Thursday, on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. In this Arab state, places for Christian worships have not been built since the seventh century.

The church will be built on land donated by the Emir of Qatar, in a residential district of the capital, Doha. The emir has also donated land to Anglicans, Copts, Orthodox and Protestants to build their own churches.

The Parish of St. Mary of the Rosary, which will administer the future church, has about 48,000 faithful — immigrants who came to the emirate for jobs. The birth of the Catholic mission in Qatar dates back to 1956.

Mass is currently celebrated in the Latin, Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara rites, and in various languages, including Arabic, English, Italian, Urdu, Tagalog and Tamil.

"We are very happy," said Bishop Bernardo Gremoli, apostolic vicar of Arabia, who has been on a pastoral visit to the vicariate in recent days.

"For years we have been waiting for this moment: the authorization to build a church. There is great enthusiasm in the Catholic community," he said.

On Wednesday, Archbishop Giuseppe De Andrea, papal nuncio in Kuwait, told the missionary agency Fides: "This is an historic moment, an event of grace for the Church in this part of the world."

"Since Qatar established diplomatic relations with the Holy See in 2003, relations have been cordial," he said. "The emir donated the land to the Catholic Church precisely during the Year of the Rosary; this is why the new church will be dedicated to the Virgin of the Rosary."

Situated in the Arabic peninsula, the emirate of Qatar has just under 800,000 inhabitants, most of whom are Muslims. Its population is made up in general of Arab Bedouins, as well as immigrant workers from nearby Arab states and from Iran, Pakistan, India and the Philippines.

...

Although Islam is the majority religion, the country has some 60,000 Catholic immigrants, especially from the Philippines and India.

Father Justo Lacunza Balda, the director of the Pontifical Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, told Vatican Radio: "These new Christian places, with an inter-confessional dimension, have, in fact, two profound meanings. Above all, they represent a dimension of inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue among the Churches and, in particular, among the Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants and Anglicans."

There is also "profound meaning linked to the inter-religious and cultural dialogue in a country where the official religion is Islam," he said. This suggests the "need for dialogue" through "reciprocal knowledge and learning."

...

Qatar and the Holy See announced the establishment of official diplomatic relations in November 2003. ■

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For the full article please go to <http://www.zenit.org/english/>.



Opportunity of a Lifetime:

Iraqi Students join the Education City

Nine Iraqi students arrived in Doha early last September to take up studies at the Education City, thanks to scholarships granted them by the Qatar Foundation. The students' tuition and living expenses will be entirely met by Qatar Foundation for the duration of their academic program.

The group, which has studied together for the past six years at the School for the Gifted in Baghdad, will begin their university career in Qatar with a one-year course at the Academic Bridge Program (ABP).

The ABP is a specialized program which prepares the most talented regional high school graduates for admission to and success in degree programs at world-class universities in Qatar and abroad.

The year long matriculation will enable students to sharpen their academic and personal skills and to better identify their talents, easing the transition into the rigorous, demanding environment of selective educational institutions.

"We are already extremely impressed by the abilities of these students, who show the potential for high achievement both at Education City and in their future careers," said Dr. John Aydelott, Academic Dean of the Academic Bridge Program. "It's

extremely rewarding for us, as educators, to work with young people who are both very capable and eager to learn," he said.

Alongside other high-potential students, the Iraqi contingent will have intensive coaching in the core skills required for admission to Education City's top-flight universities, including math, computer and English language skills.

Eight of the scholarship students hope to study medicine at Weill-Cornell Medical College-Qatar, while the ninth is seeking entry to the prestigious petroleum engineering program at Texas A & M University-Qatar.

Welcoming the students to Education City, Qatar Foundation Chairperson Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned said matching opportunities to young talent was central to the organization's mission. "Qatar Foundation is regional and international in its outlook. We know you have the capacity to gain from the best education the world has to offer, and the fruits of this investment will be seen in years to come as you contribute to improving the quality of life in your country."

Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned, who also acts as UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education, has launched a

multi-million dollar International Fund for Higher Education in Iraq.

Iraqi Temporary Chargée d'Affaires in Doha, Khawla Shahabeddine Abdul Jabbar said the scholarships were evidence of Qatar's generosity and sense of international responsibility "This noble initiative reflects Her Highness' concern for the welfare of the people of Iraq as a fellow Arab nation. It is the latest of many magnanimous initiatives to provide fraternal support to Iraq during this difficult period in its history."

To acclimate the students to their new surroundings, they began their matriculation in Qatar with an orientation program. The scholars were treated to a tour of the Qatari capital, a visit to the Sea Line beach resort and a moonlight dhow cruise.

"It's been a fantastic few days," said Zaed Salman, who dreams of becoming a doctor. "At the same time, we're aware that there's a very long slog ahead of us. But we know it will all be worthwhile in the end. In Iraq, there's a great need for medical doctors, and being able to study at one of the world's best medical schools is something I never thought possible. This is an opportunity of a lifetime!" ■



H.H. Sheikha Mozah welcomes Iraqi Students to the Education City

World Motorcycling Burns Track In Qatar

New Losail Circuit Hosts Grand Prix



The Deputy Emir and Prime Minister hand trophies to winners

The newly completed Losail International Circuit, only a mirage a little over a year ago, has fully materialized into a world-class motorcycling circuit this month as Doha hosted the World Motorcycling Grand Prix (MotoGP).

The thirteenth in a race of the sixteen-rounds, the October event presented world championship racers the rare opportunity of a having a level field of competition with the element of the unknown, inaugurating the first Qatar Grand Prix as they raced.

Astonished by the circuit, one participant waxed ecstatic about racing on Losail, describing it as, "a bride in the heart of the desert."

Considered to be the world's second biggest circuit after Holland's International Circuit, the Losail track was completed in an astonishing seven months' time, following an agreement between Qatar Motor and Motorcycling Federation (QMMF) and MotoGP signed in June 2003.

The first of its kind in the region, the Qatari raceway is 5.4 kilometers long and 12 meters wide and includes a main straight section 1100 meters long, ten right turns and six left turns.

The Losail track blends some of the most interesting and challenging features from well known raceways around the world and molds them together with built-in safety features of the highest standard.

Equipped to host motorcycle races, the facilities may be used for Formula One races in the future after modifications are made to maintenance rooms.

The new fifty-eight million-dollar racetrack is a result of the multi-billion dollar development projects which have caused world-class sporting facilities to spring up in

the peninsular Gulf state, attracting competitors in a variety of events and preparing Qatar to host the Asian Games in 2006.

The Deputy Emir and Heir Apparent His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Prime Minister H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Thani were on hand to award trophies to the winners of what was a dramatic and surprising race.

The Honda team took the top spots less than two seconds apart, with the Spaniard Sete Gibernau finishing first and Colin Edwards, an American, in second. Ruben Xaus, another Spaniard, took his place on the MotoGP podium for the first time, coming in third place.

World Champion Italian driver Valentino Rossi, crashed out of this race, still leading the field with greatest overall points nevertheless.

The next Qatar Grand Prix is slated for October 1, 2005. The Losail track will host the first race of the 2005 World Superbike Championships this coming February. ■

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THOUSANDS VOLUNTEER FOR ASIAD 2006

entertainment areas, medical services, administrative offices, media services, and a "Media Plaza" where the flags of the participating countries will be raised.

The Housing Zone will consist of 800 residences where the 10,000 athletes and administrators of the participating countries will be accommodated. This area will also benefit from enhanced security measures.

Once the Asian Games are over, the Olympic Village will take on a new significance, as it is rendered anew into a modern Medical Complex of services and facilities with international standards, and will serve as an annex to Hamad Medical City. Thus, the massive yet temporary sports facilities will ultimately be integrated into the long-term national development plans of the country.

The Medical Complex will include three new hospitals: for children, orthopedics and internal medicine. It will also host a home for the disabled elderly people. The Complex will have a capacity of 800 beds and will provide outpatient clinics, dialysis and minor surgeries.

Doha is the first city in West Asia to host Asian Games since Iran's Asiad in 1974. ■



GCC Honors UN Special Rapporteur for the Disabled



Her Excellency Sheikha Hessa Al-Thani, the UN Special Rapporteur for the Disabled, has been honored by the GCC Secretary General, Abdulrahman bin Hamad Al-Attiya, for her outstanding contribution to society in rendering service to the disabled.

The GCC Secretary-General bestowed the GCC plaque on Sheikha Hessa for her distinguished efforts in social work and disability rights at a ceremony held in Doha on July 24.

Sheikha Hessa's honorable achievements are a reflection upon Qatari and GCC women's ability to surpass regional boundaries and become international in scope, read the Secretary General's statement, delivered through proxy.

Sheikha Al-Thani extended her gratitude to the State of Qatar for its support of the office of UN Special Rapporteur and its active role.

"There is an aspiration for more work and achievements to come in cooperation with governments and international and regional organizations which are concerned with disability issues," Al-Thani said.

A Protagonist for the Disabled

Long a protagonist for the rights of the disabled, Sheikha Hessa was appointed by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan as the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the United Nations Commission for Social Development in June 2003, a three year term which concludes in 2005.

The task of the Special Rapporteur is to monitor implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the General

Assembly in 1993, and to advance the status of people with disabilities throughout the world.

Her Excellency Sheikha Hessa spoke about the projects that the office of the UN Special Rapporteur for Disability has taken up since her term began last year (2003). She has submitted working papers to international and



Saeed Al Jabor presents the award to Sheikha Hessa bint Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Thani.

regional conferences, and been very active in the coordination and creation of the International Convention on the Handicapped, an addendum to the Human Rights charter which intends to improve conditions for handicapped worldwide.

A Lifelong Commitment to Enabling Special Needs

Sheikha Hessa's interest in the social and economic dynamics of disability has grown continuously since she earned a bachelor's in Social Sciences and Sociology from the University of Qatar in 1985. She then sought a Masters

degree in Social Planning and Social Services at Helena University, Egypt, in 1999, where her thesis analyzed social care programs for deaf children in Qatar.

Upon completing her Masters, she joined the Documentation and Humanities Research Centre at the University of Qatar (1994-1998). Between 1998 and 2001, she was the Assistant Director in the Office of the Consort of the Emir of Qatar, and Director of International Affairs at the Supreme Council for Family Affairs.

Sheikha Hessa is a founding member of the Qatari National Committee for People with Special Needs. She has served as Vice President of the group since 1999. Sheikha Hessa collaborated in the preparation of a draft law on the Rights of People with Special Needs. She has helped to organize a number of local and regional seminars and conferences in Doha on issues relating to disability including the seventh Scientific Seminar of the Arab Union of the Deaf (Doha, 2000) and the third Gulf Forum on Disability (Doha, 2003), and has participated in many more.

Sheikha Hessa is a member of numerous local and regional organizations, such as the Family Development Centre (Qatar), the Qatari Society for People with Special Needs, the Arab Network of Non-Governmental Organizations (Egypt) and the Arab Council for Childhood and Development (Egypt). ■

UPCOMING EVENTS in QATAR

January 3-7, 2005

Qatar Exxon Mobil Tennis Open

Qatar Tennis Federation

January 8, 2005

Qatar Speed Boats Championship - 3rd Round

Qatar Marine Sports Federation

January 11-12, 2005

3rd Major New Projects in Qatar

Ministry of Industry & Power and MEED

January 11-15, 2005

Egyptian Industrial Products Exhibition

Economical Group

January 15-16, 2005

Second Qatar International Fencing Championship

Qatar Fencing Association

January 22-23, 2005

Qatar Open Golf Championship

Qatar Golf Association

January 22-30, 2005

Doha Song Festival

Qatar Television

January 23, 2005

Qatar Jet Ski Championship

Qatar Marine Sports Federation

January 28-30, 2005

Qatar Environment Day

Qatar Petroleum

January 30, 2005

Qatar Jet Ski Championship

Qatar Marine Sports Federation

February 1-7, 2005

Qatar Cycling Tour

Qatar Cycling Association

February 2, 2005

H.H. the Heir Apparent's Camel Race Final

Camel Racing Committee

February 6, 2005

Start of the Oryx Cup

Maiden Ocean Racing Qatar

February 7-8, 2005

Gas Production and Export Workshop

HE Second Deputy Prime Minister

February 8-12, 2005

6th International Equestrian Championship

Qatar Equestrian Association

February 12, 2005

HH the Prime Minister's Championship for Traditional Sailing Boats

Qatar Marine Sports Federation

February 14-17, 2005

Asian Gymnastics Championships

Gymnastics Federation

February 14-19, 2005

2nd Doha Watch and Jewelry Exhibition

Ministry of Economy and Commerce

February 17-19, 2005

Qatar International Rally

Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation

February 19-25, 2005

Qatar International Sailing Championship

Qatar Sailing and Rowing Association

February 20, 2005

Superbike World Championship

Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation

February 21-24, 2005

Doha Second International Art Design Conference

Ministry of Social and Public Affairs, Qatar Foundation and Virginia Commonwealth University

February 21-28, 2005

International Juniors Squash Tournament

Qatar Squash Federation

February 24, 2005

H.H The Emir's Finals Bowling Championship

Qatar Bowling Federation

February 25-28, 2005

Qatar International Table Tennis Championship

Qatar Table Tennis Federation

February 26, 2005

Annual Qatari Environment Day

Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves

February 28-March 3, 2005

Fifth Doha Natural Gas and Petroleum Conference

Qatar Petroleum

February 28-March 3, 2005

Sixth Doha Oil and Gas Exhibition (DIOGE 2005)

Qatar Petroleum and Qatar Expo

March 1-7, 2005

Qatar Total Women's Tennis Open

Qatar Tennis Federation

March 2-9, 2005

Qatar International Equestrian Festival

Qatar Equestrian Association

March 7-15, 2005

World Telecommunications Development Conference

Qatar Telecommunications

March 11-14, 2005

Qatar Golf Masters

Qatar Golf Association

March 14-15, 2005

International Banking Symposium

Planning Council

March 15-17, 2005

GCC Legal Justice Seminar

Ministry of Justice

March 15-20, 2005

21st Arab Weather Forecasting Committee Meeting

Civil Aviation Authority

March 19, 2005

HH Heir Apparent Championship for Traditional Sailing Boats

Qatar Marine Sports Federation

March 19, 2005

Qatar Open Jet Ski Championship for the GCC

Qatar Marine Sports Federation

March 19-21, 2005

The International Exhibition for Weather Forecasting Instruments

Civil Aviation Authority

March 20-April 2, 2005

4th Doha Cultural Festival

National Council for Culture, Arts and Heritage

Detailed contact information for the above listed events is available on the web at www.ExperienceQatar.com



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