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GENÈVE



الوفد الدائم لدولة قطر  
لدى مكتب الأمم المتحدة  
جنيف

*The Statement of the Head of the Delegation of the State of Qatar  
before  
the Committee on the Right of the Child  
Under Article 8, Paragraph 1 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on  
the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict*

Geneva, 20 September 2007

**Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished members,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

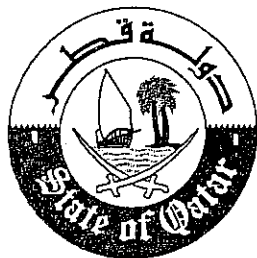
At the beginning, let me on behalf of the Delegation of my country, to express our pleasure to meet today with your distinguished Committee to discuss the Initial Report of the State of Qatar under paragraph 1, Article 8 of the of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. I also would like to express the State of Qatar's appreciation for the role your Committee plays in assisting Members States in improving, strengthening their commitments and implementing the rules and provisions of the Convention and its protocols. In this regard, we confirm Qatar support of and full cooperation with the Committee.

**Mr. Chairman, distinguished members,**

The State of Qatar has concerned itself with the theme of the promotion and protection of human rights including the rights of the child. It has pursued under the leadership of HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, a comprehensive reform policy, constitutionally, politically, economically, socially and culturally. The theme of the promotion and protection of human rights represents the cornerstone of this policy.

The State's concerns in human rights was reflected through the establishment of several institutions, which deal with the promotion and protection of human rights, in a comprehensive and indivisible manner, on both governmental and non-governmental level. On the governmental level, many institutions were established to deal with human rights, such as the Human Rights Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Human Rights Department, at the Ministry of Interior, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, and the National Coordinator Bureau for Combating Human Trafficking. On the non-governmental level, the National Committee for Human Rights was established under Law No 38 of 2002, which has a distinctive feature, inter-alia, of striving to realize the goals enshrined in the Conventions and

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international agreements regarding human rights. It also considers the violation of human rights and freedoms, and proposes appropriate means to address these contraventions and prevent their recurrence, by raising awareness and education on human rights and freedoms.

Its worth mentioning that the Government takes into account the National Committee's recommendations and endeavors to implement them. A number of other civil society organizations dealing with human rights and development have also been established .

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Qatari Constitution enumerated a number of provisions related to the family, motherhood and childhood. Article 21 of the Constitution states that “ **the Family is the basis of society**”, it should be based on religion, morality and patriotism. The Law regulates necessary means to protect the family, strengthening its ties and protect motherhood, childhood and senility under its wing.

Article 22 the Constitution stipulates, “The State should protect the youth and preserve them from the causes of corruption and exploitation and from the evil of physical, mental and spiritual carelessness. It also provides appropriate conditions for them to develop their faculties in various areas, guided by a sound education.”

Fostering what is provided for in the constitution and namely in Article 6 which provides that “the State should respect the International Agreements and Covenants of which it is a party”, the State of Qatar has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its protocols, and has been sought to implement the principles and provisions provided for in the Convention and its protocols. It has also ratified ILO Convention no:182, concerning the Prohibition of the Worst Forms of Child Labour .

The State of Qatar's endeavour to participate and contribute effectively in the international efforts aiming at promoting a culture of peace originating from the principles enshrined in the Qatari Constitution, which states that the foreign policy of the State should be guided by the principles of preserving International peace and security, renunciation of violence and use of force, encouraging the pacific settlement of international disputes, and cooperating with the peace-loving nations. Therefore, the State of Qatar is keen to contribute in an effective way, in the peace keeping forces and the humanitarian operations. As a non permanent member of the Security Council, the State of Qatar also contributes in supporting the Council's efforts regarding the non involvement of children in armed conflicts.

It should be noted that military laws have been reviewed in the State of Qatar in consistence with the State's obligations arising from the international conventions on human rights, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its protocols. The laws in force thus, do not allow conscription. And the Article 11 of the Military Service Law no: 31 of 2006 stipulates the age of twenty to be the minimum age for recruitment of officers, while Article 13 stipulates that candidates for other grades

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should not be less than 18 years old. Moreover, the above-mentioned Military Service Law did not contain any exceptions with regard to the minimum age for military service under 18 years, even in time of war and general mobilization.

**Mr. Chairman, distinguished members,**

Indications of attention to the family and childhood are not confined to the legislative area, but they go beyond to include institutional building, strategies, policies and programmes that sought to translate legislative protection of Children from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, and involvement in armed conflicts, into a concrete reality. In this regards, central institutions have, in the framework of the State, undertaken to implement these policies. In this regard, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs constitutes the first line of protection of family, childhood and motherhood in the State of Qatar. Article 4 of the Amiri Decree no: 23 of 2002 which provides for the restructuring of the Council, that the later shall develop a national plan in the context of the overall plan for the protection and care of the family in different fields, especially in the social, health, cultural, education, economic, environmental, and information. Moreover, the proposition of public policies and legislation to strengthen the role of the family, in addition to expressing opinions on projects of conventions concluded in the area of the protection of the family. It is entrusted with the follow-up and implementation of the International agreements related to the child, in coordination and consultation of the other governmental organs related to the child, and the bodies and general institutions of the child, as well as other governmental organs dealing with childhood. The Supreme Council oversees the implementation of a vital and important programme that devotes its attentions to the deployment of a culture of the rights of the child in different stages of public schools with the collaboration of UNESCO and the Ministry of Education.

**Mr. Chairman, distinguished members,**

Despite the reform undertaken in the field of legislations and the practices in the State of Qatar, as well as the availability of material resources, still the State faces some temporary challenges and difficulties in implementing the protocol in an ideal way. Among them are, the relatively new legislative and institutional development, and relationship of the State with monitoring mechanisms, as well as the technical capabilities which are at a stage of building, developing and rehabilitating. Yet it is expected that the State would benefit from the United Nations Training and Documentation Centre's activities and programme in the human rights domain for South-West Asia and the Arab Region in Doha, that was adopted under the General Assembly Resolution no: 135 at its 60 Session, in overcoming these difficulties and challenges. It is worth mentioning too that the center aims, through training, information, documentation, studies and sharing of experiences to enhance and promote human rights by dealing with governments on the development of policies and strengthening of the principles of human rights. The Centre will be under the supervision of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights in Geneva, and

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will be hosted by the State of Qatar that provides a headquarter and a number of facilities for the said centre which is expected to operate in the near future.

**Mr. Chairman, distinguished members,**

In the State of Qatar efforts have been deployed in order to achieve the goals and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its protocols, and we still have a lot to do. Nonetheless, the Delegation of my country came with an open heart with a view to discuss the report which is before your distinguished Committee, and looks forward to hear your comments on its content. We then stand ready to respond to the questions which will be raised by your Committee.

In conclusion, I wish once again to stress the presence of the political will and supportive climate for the implementation of the Convention and its protocol in my country,

**Thank you Mr. Chairman**