

Universal Periodic Review
(19th session, May –June 2014)
Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information
(to Part I. A. and to Part III - F, J, K, and P)

Qatar

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

A. Scope of international obligations: Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO

I.1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession dd/mm/yyyy</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Not state party to this Convention	<i>Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted</i>		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989)	Not state party to this Convention			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	12/9/1984 Acceptance			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	1/9/2008 Ratification			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)	21/04/2009 Accession			Right to take part in cultural life

II. Input to Part III. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law to items F, J, K, and P

Right to education

Constitutional Framework:

2. The Constitution adopted in 2003,¹ and entered into force in 2005², clearly mentions in its **Article 49** that "All citizens have the right to education; and the State shall endeavor to make general education compulsory and free of charge in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations of the State." In addition, according to **Article 25**, "Education is one of the basic pillars of social progress. The state shall ensure, foster, and endeavor to spread it."

3. Moreover, the Constitution prohibits discriminations and ensures equality, as well as freedom of religion. **Article 18** reads: "The Qatari society is based on the values of justice, benevolence, freedom, equality, and high morals"; **Article 19** adds that "The State shall maintain the pillars of the society and ensure security, stability, and equal opportunities for all citizens"; **Article 34** states that "The Citizens of Qatar shall be equal in public rights and duties" and finally **Article 35** provides that "All persons are equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination whatsoever on grounds of sex, race, language, or religion."

Legislative Framework:

4. The basic legislative framework for education in Qatar is made up of:

- **Law No. 25 concerning free and compulsory education for all children** was adopted in 2001.
- **Law No. 13**, which includes a provision specifying the procedures to be followed for school attendance, the parties responsible for enforcing this Law and the penalties for violating the terms of the Law³.
- **Decree No. 7 of 1980**, which deals with the various legal aspects organizing non-governmental schools.
- **Law No. 11 of 2006** pertaining to independent schools.
- **Decree No. 17 (1997) of the Council of Ministers**, which exempts disabled, non-Qatari students from the cost of textbooks and transportation⁴.

¹ <http://english.mofa.gov.qa/details.cfm?id=80>

² http://www.legalnewsinternational.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=144563&catid=953:moyen-orient&Itemid=299

³ Qatar's Report submitted to UNESCO in 2009 within the framework of the fourth consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the UNESCO's Recommendation **concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** (1974) (covering the period 2005-2008).

⁴ Ibid.

- **Emiri Decree no. 16 (1981)** increased the grant to Qatari students, previously increased by **Emiri Decree No. 21 (1970)** which increased the allowance stipulated in Law no. 9 (1963), regulating social security and grants to needy students.
- **Law No. 2 of 2004 for children with special needs**⁵.
- **Ministry decision No. 6 of 2007** made physical education compulsory at primary schools, and the SEC year 2008 decision No.1 aimed to improve discipline and moral behaviour at school.
- **Emiri Decree No. 37⁶ of 2002** established The **Supreme Education Council (SEC)**⁷, which plays a key role in the development and implementation of the education reform launched in 2001.
- **Ministerial Decree No. 53⁸ of 1994**, which created the Supreme Committee for Diversifying Secondary Education.
- **Statute No. 12 (1996)**, which establishes the right of non-Qatari learners resident in the State of Qatar to textbooks and transport costs, with the aim of according them the right to education on an equal basis with Qatari learners.
- **Statute No. 34 (2004)**, which regulates the University of Qatar.
- **Emiri Decree No. 14 of 1990**, which establishes the Center for Educational [Development and] Research (CEDR) of the University of Qatar.
- **Decree no. 10 (1993)**, which concerns the Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.
- **Emiri Decree No. 22 (2008)** established the Center for Creative Leadership.
- **Law No. 9 of 1976**, which regulates study mission was promulgated, under which students are dispatched abroad to undertake scientific, technical or practical studies to fill the deficit or need required by the country's public welfare.⁹

Policy Framework:

5. In Qatar, in order to realize the recommendations of the Dakar Forum, a **National Education for All Plan** was formulated for the period **2001-2015**. This plan includes an evaluation of the state of education in terms of the Education for All indicators, and an

⁵ http://www.qu.edu.qa/students/services/special_needs/index.php

⁶ Qatar's Report submitted to UNESCO in 2009 within the framework of the fourth consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the UNESCO's Recommendation **concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** (1974) (covering the period 2005-2008).

⁷ <http://www.english.education.gov.qa/>

⁸ World Data on Education, sixth edition, 2006/07

http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/Countries/WDE/2006/ARAB_STATES/Qatar/Qatar.pdf

⁹ See also: Report of the National Human Rights Committee on Implementation of the Recommendation of the 18th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO (1974)

implementation plan geared to achieving the six Dakar goals. With a focus on implementation of the Plan, a set of measures, procedures and programmes was put in place addressing each of the key areas of the plan, namely pre-school education, basic education, the eradication of illiteracy, adult education, and young people outside the education system. During the academic year 2006/2007, Ministerial Decree No. 17 (2006) was issued to examine the possibility of forming a committee responsible for drafting the national report; this committee would evaluate the progress made to date in the area of EFA.¹⁰

6. According to the **Advancing sustainable development: Qatar National Vision 2030**,¹¹ Qatar is engaged in a range of broad-based educational reforms aimed at increasing attainment levels, skills and lifelong learning. Educational policy combines a mix of strategies focusing on quality issues and expanding choice and access, including through the establishment of internationally renowned universities at its Education City. It is also attempting to strengthen links between education and training and the needs of the labour market. Basic schooling of Qataris is now universal in marked contrast to the situation a generation ago.

7. On 28 March 2011 the government launched its **National Development Strategy (NDS) 2011-16**, the first of a series of five-year plans aimed at achieving the aims of the Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030, the country's long-term developmental master plan. In both the NDS and the QNV, excellence in the provision of educational services is one of the overarching themes. Under the strategy, a central goal is the **development of a modern and effective education network that will ensure universal access to high-quality learning for students**, starting from their entry into the system at kindergarten through to their graduation from secondary school. Furthermore, the NDS sets out the need to create **opportunities to develop talents outside the standard curriculum** by opening specialised schools and maximising the use of information and communication technology wherever possible to enhance the learning environment. Among the objectives set by the NDS are to **increase the number of Qataris who complete university studies** and to recalibrate academic programmes so that they optimise talent and capabilities. The strategy also foresees further reforms to the primary and secondary education system to **better prepare graduates for higher education** and eliminate the need for students to take foundation courses. To meet those objectives, Qatar unveiled its 2011/12 budget at the end of March, with education one of the major beneficiaries. The budget, which came into effect on 1 April 2011, foresees a 12% increase in outlays for education, with the total allocation for the system rising to \$5.3bn, up from \$4.7bn under the previous budget.¹²

- **Financing of Education**

8. Qatar has invested heavily in education as one of the basic pillars of social progress. Human capital is important not just for raising productivity, but also for advancing sustainable development. In 1995, the Qatar Foundation (QF) was established with a fund of USD 2 billion to support education, research, capacity building and open dialogue at all levels. At Education

¹⁰ National report submitted to UNESCO in 2007 on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1960 UNESCO's Recommendation against Discrimination in Education within the framework of the seventh consultation of Member States (covering the period 2000-2005).

¹¹ Advancing sustainable development: Qatar National Vision 2030 - QNV 2030: second national human development report, http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Qatar/Qatar_HDR_2009_English.pdf

¹² Global Arab Network, *Qatar Developing Education, Diversifying Economy*, 13 April 2011, <http://www.english.globalarabnetwork.com/2011041310674/Economics/qatar-developing-education-diversifying-economy.html>

City, QF supports elite international education institutions to provide world-class quality education to Qataris and non-Qataris alike, and to help build a skilled human capital base for its present and future development.¹³

9. Qatar is implementing the educational voucher system, which will over time make it possible for parents and guardians of students eligible for State-funded education to use **the vouchers to pay school fees** for the schools of their choice – whether they are independent or private schools. Educational vouchers are financial aid for Qatari students granted by the State to cover tuition fees, in part or in whole, in independent and private schools participating in the voucher system. From their inception, independent schools have been involved in the educational voucher system according to their financial capabilities, since the operational budget of independent schools depends on the number of their students eligible for free education and on the amount allocated to each student. Once all the independent schools have been included, private schools which are characterized by levels of education equivalent to or higher than that of independent schools will also be brought into the system. The educational voucher system will be expanded from the beginning of the 2012-2013 academic year so that the system includes all Qatari students who are registered in the participating private schools. The value of the voucher is 28,000 Qatari Riyal only for the 2012-2013 academic year at all levels. The value of the educational voucher is at the discretion of the Supreme Education Council, which determines the amount annually.

- **Special need education**

10. The SEC is committed to providing comprehensive educational skills to meet the diverse needs of all students and to providing them with high quality learning opportunities. The Education Institute strives to furnish schools with policies and guiding principles relating to the responsibilities which they must fulfil toward students who require additional educational support. This covers students with learning problems (SWLP), students with specific learning difficulties (SWSLD), students with disabilities (SWD), and students with behavioural problems (SWBP).

11. In **Qatar**, there are flexible educational systems parallel to the mainstream education system for those whose circumstances do not allow them to take part in day-time education. The alternatives consist of:

- i) Evening Classes: for those who work or whose circumstances prevent them from attending school in the day, and who wish to attend evening classes.
- ii) Home Schooling: for those unable to attend classes for various reasons.
- iii) Distance Learning: The SEC is making plans for distance learning so as to facilitate the learning and education process.

- **Human Rights Education**

¹³ Advancing sustainable development: Qatar National Vision 2030 - QNV 2030: second national human development report, http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Qatar/Qatar_HDR_2009_English.pdf

12. Some independent schools have taken the initiative to **include human rights as an independent subject**. If this indicates anything, it is that there is a growing concern in the State of Qatar with human rights and fundamental freedoms, which is evident from the succession of related conferences and forums being organized and the parallel conferences, forums, events and awareness campaigns held by the National Human Rights Committee. There are, additionally, the consecutive training courses scheduled by the Committee for staff working in the government sector in general and, in particular, for those working in the education profession and in law enforcement, such as judges, the police, etc. It should be pointed out that the Qatari national education policy, while not making explicit reference to the universality of human rights, nevertheless implies them and contains affirmation of the **values of peace, democracy, absence of racial discrimination, equality, justice, rejection of violence, tolerance and respect for human dignity**.

13. Regarding Qatari schools themselves, it cannot be said that there is an existing national policy concerning implementation of the Recommendation which is the subject of the report. Consequently, there is no committee for the development of this policy and it has no budget allocated to it. However, it is possible to say that human rights are indeed taught as an independent subject in several independent schools and in a manner similar to the level of the University of Qatar, where human rights are taught as an elective subject but are not yet a compulsory subject.¹⁴

14. Last but not least, the National Human Rights Committee, pursuant to its goals as a national organization established under Statute no. 38 (2002) as amended by Statute no. 25 (2006) and Law no. 7 (2008) which strives to protect and strengthen human rights and basic freedoms in the State of Qatar, has formulated a short-term action plan (three years) which commenced implementation in 2008 with the organization and convening of training courses for staff of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and SEC and those responsible for developing and setting curricula. In addition, the Committee approaches many schools at all levels, as well as universities, to deliver lectures and organize workshops on the principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

- **Private Education**

15. The SEC “**Outstanding Schools Initiative**” aims to attract outstanding international private schools to establish campuses in Qatar, serving both Qatari and expatriate families. Nevertheless, the Qatari report points out some challenges and problems that the country still faces: professional staff in the education system require further training so that they may improve their competencies; more cooperation with international organizations is necessary for preparing educational strategies and implementing projects; vocational and technological education must be developed; the use of computer systems and internet networks must be made more widespread.

16. In **Qatar, the Outstanding Foreign Schools Program** founded on the initiative of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Vice-President of the SEC, aims to attract and choose

¹⁴ Qatar’s Report submitted to UNESCO in 2009 within the framework of the fourth consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the UNESCO’s Recommendation **concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** (1974) (covering the period 2005-2008).

schools of excellence from different parts of the world to open branches in Qatar, as well as to serve the educational needs of Qatari students and residents alike. Moreover, the education and training strategy for 2011-2016 aims for business sectors to participate in developing the infrastructure for vocational training and education, by developing a framework for national competencies and national standards for vocational education and standards.

17. The essence of **Qatar's public education development initiative**, announced in 2004, consists in the establishment of State-funded schools which enjoy independence and are known as independent schools. These are schools which offer model curriculum design, teaching methods, group work and community participation and encourage creativity and originality. These schools rely on national curriculum standards and close monitoring of the teaching in independent and private schools to formulate effective systems and policies that will ensure the desired options and alternatives are provided by private schools, in line with the output standards which the SEC seeks to achieve in accordance with the vision and aspirations of the State, particularly after Emiri Decree No. 14 (2009) under which all schools operating in the country came under the supervision of the SEC.

18. Private education in Qatar constitutes a large proportion of the country's education sector in terms of number of students and schools. The State pays considerable attention to private education, encouraging it to play its part in contributing to national revival and development projects since it represents a fundamental element in the revival of society and its drive to keep pace with the progress of modern civilization. Given the importance of private education, the State, in the form of the SEC, has been keen to provide guidelines and mechanisms to achieve the goal of a high-quality educational service that responds to aspirations and plays its part in the advancement and prosperity of society.

19. As regards the independent schools, management is chosen after going through a number of measures to ensure leadership capability. Most educational requirements and teaching aids are then made available to ensure proper input to an educational system that expects high quality output.

Cooperation:

20. Qatar is not party to the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (CADE). It did not report on the measures taken for the implementation of the Recommendation against Discrimination in Education within the framework of the Sixth Consultation of Member States (covering the period 1994-1999), however, it reported within the framework of the:

- Seventh Consultation of Member States (covering the period 2000-2005).
- Eighth Consultation of Member States (covering the period 2006-2011).

21. Qatar reported within the framework of the Fourth Consultation of Member States the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (covering the period 2005-2008). It has not yet reported within the framework of the Fifth Consultation of Member States the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 Recommendation (covering the period 2009-2012).

22. Qatar reported within the framework of the Second Consultation (2011) on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education. However, it did not report for the First Consultation (1993).

23. Qatar is not party to 1989 UNESCO's Convention on Technical and Vocational Education.

Cultural rights

Freedom of creative activity, artistic freedoms, right to conduct cultural practices – cultural heritage practice

Institutional Framework:

24. The Emiri Decree No (1 / 2008) was promulgated on the 1st of July 2008 to restructure the Ministerial Council and enrol among its ministries the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage. On 23 June 2009, the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage replaced the National Council for Culture and completed its objectives identified as follows: i) Develop cultural heritage and the development of intellectual production and enrichment, ii) Provide the right climate for the development of artistic and literary production and diversify its sources; iii) Maintain National Heritage and deepen the scientific research and highlight its characteristics; iv) Encourage Fine Arts and dissemination of models and work to develop them; v) Preserve the national heritage of heritage. The Qatar Museums Authority (QMA) has been established in 2005 by Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, former Emir of the State of Qatar. The QMA aims to combine the resources of all museums in Qatar, providing a comprehensive organization for museum development and establishing an effective system for collecting, protecting and preserving heritage.

Policy measures:

25. Qatar works on developing all cultural aspects by establishing new libraries, museums, theaters and arts centers. It also supports publishers and cultural magazines, and holds festivals and various cultural events throughout the year. The KATARAH Cultural Village Foundation is a project of hope for human interaction through art and cultural exchange. KATARAH seeks to increase the dissemination of cultural awareness by organizing festivals, exhibitions, seminars and other cultural activities. Doha has become one of the most active capitals of the Arab culture. It holds various festivals and events on a regular basis, such as the annual Doha Cultural Festival, the Doha International Book Fair, the Doha Arabic Song Festival. Since the ratification of the UNESCO convention for preserving the intangible cultural heritage in 2008, the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage Culture is making efforts to preserve and promote intangible cultural heritage and use it as a driving force for sustainable development. Qatar also had its first cultural property, the Al Zubarah Archaeological Site, inscribed on the World Heritage list on 22 June 2013. UNESCO and KATARAH signed a cooperation agreement on 17 October 2011 in order to raise the profile of the cultural movement in Qatar and to build a common ground for the promotion of dialogue and exchange on culture, artistic intellectual and innovative matters, in addition to contributing to the achievements of the Qatar National Vision 2030. Finally, Qatari women actively participate in the artistic exhibitions organized at home and abroad.

Freedom of opinion and expression

Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints

Constitutional and Legislative Framework:

26. Freedom of expression is protected under Article 47 of the Constitution of Qatar.
27. The Press and Publication Law (1979) regulates all press issues. Under Article 46 it is a crime to criticize the Emir of Qatar or to attribute any statement to him without the express permission of his office. Any violation carries up to six months in prison¹⁵. Under Article 47 of the law, journalists may not publish material that causes “any damage to the supreme interests of the country”, and it bans anything that would imply “offense to the public morals”. The same article also prohibits undermining “the reputation of a person” or his “commercial name”. Article 65 gives power to the Censorship Committee to make unexpected visits to movie theaters in order to verify the compliance of the exhibited materials.
28. Defamation also is considered criminal under Qatar’s Penal Code (2004)¹⁶. Article 326 of the Penal Code imposes up to two years imprisonment for defaming someone. Additionally, Article 327 raises the penalty to three years in prison for defaming a “public employee due to the job or the occupation”.
29. Blasphemy is criminalized under Article 256, providing up to seven years in prison for “insulting the Supreme Being in letter and spirit, in writing, drawing, gesturing or in any other way”. The article also criminalizes “offending, misinterpreting or violating the Holy Koran” and bans “cursing any of the divine religions”.
30. A freedom of information law does not currently exist in the country.

Media Self-Regulation:

31. A media self-regulation body currently does not exist in Qatar.

Safety of Journalists:

32. UNESCO recorded no killing of journalists in Qatar between 2008 and 2012.

Freedom of scientific research

¹⁵ Press and Publication Law (1979)

¹⁶ <http://portal.www.gov.qa/wps/wcm/connect/8abaea8046be1deaee97ef70b3652ad8/Penal+Code.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&useDefaultText=0&useDefaultDesc=0>

33. With regard to contribution of science and technology to development, Qatar reported to UNESCO within the framework of the on-going consultations with Member States on the monitoring of the implementation and a possible revision of the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers. In general, in Qatar, the principles and practices related to the development of scientific research correspond to the provisions of the 1974 Recommendation.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Right to education

34. Qatar should be encouraged to ratify the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

35. Qatar should be encouraged to continue to submit state reports for the periodic consultations of UNESCO's education related standard-setting instruments.

36. Qatar could be encouraged to continue its efforts in improving the quality of education and providing opportunities for technical and vocational training and education for the youth.

37. Qatar could be encouraged to intensify its efforts to provide all children with disabilities with access to adequate educational opportunities and a quality education, and strengthen throughout the country.

38. Qatar could be encouraged to continue to take measures to increase enrolment rates in secondary education and technical and vocational training.

39. Qatar could be encouraged to further strengthen efforts to improve the quality of education both in public and private schools through providing appropriate and continuous training to teachers.

40. Qatar could be encouraged to continue to include human rights in the school curricula.

Cultural rights

41. It is recommended to the State of Qatar:

- i) To continue its efforts on raising the cultural movement in Qatar and to work closely with UNESCO in order to build a common ground for the promotion of dialogue and exchange on culture, artistic intellectual and innovative matters, in addition to contributing to the achievements of the Qatar National Vision 2030.
- ii) To increase awareness of heritage protection and conservation;

- iii) To ensure the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,
- iv) To undertake action to promote the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List
- v) To ensure the effective implementation of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and develop awareness-raising activities to enhance the visibility of the Convention.

Freedom of opinion and expression

42. During the first cycle of UPR¹⁷, Qatar accepted the recommendation to lift restrictions on the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, and to take steps to promote freedom of the press in all forms of media, yet the Qatari Laws such as the Press and Publication Law (1979) continues to contain harsh punishments including imprisonments.

43. Qatar is encouraged to implement reforms to bring its laws and practices in line with international standards for press freedom and freedom of expression including decriminalizing defamation and placing it under the civil code.

44. Qatar is encouraged to develop self-regulation mechanisms of the media.

¹⁷ <http://www.upr-info.org/followup/index/country/qatar>