

# **State of Qatar**

## **Regional Review Report of the State of Qatar on the follow-up of the Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

**Submitted by the National Group for the  
Implementation of the Global Compact for  
Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

**September 2020**

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## **Introduction:**

In line with international and regional attention to migration, which in the past few years has taken the form of large movements of migrants and displaced persons and has been the result of the deterioration of the political, economic and social conditions in some countries of the region, because of internal armed unrest and conflicts, and in light of national principles of respect for human rights, support for the rule of law and openness regionally and internationally to achieve the sustainable development goals, the state of Qatar has been an active supporter of global efforts related to the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

This is done through Qatar's commitment to active participation to the international conferences which took place in New York, Geneva and Mexico, and to the consultations convened by the General Secretariat of the Arab League to develop a common Arab stance in respect to the execution of the commitments cited in the Compact. In addition, Qatar has been committed to the Intergovernmental Conference on the adoption of the Global Compact on Migration held in Marrakech on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2018. In this Intergovernmental Conference, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration was adopted.

In order to implement the commitments and guiding principles of the Global Compact for Migration, the State of Qatar has initiated the formation of a national task force headed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representatives of entities involved in migration policies and other stakeholders in the state of Qatar in order to keep pace with the international efforts to achieve the objectives of the Global Compact, as demonstrated by several operational mechanisms **adopted in this context, which are reflected in the following points:**

### **Comprehensive guidelines on which the agreement is based and its national manifestations:**

This includes the 10 guiding principles set out in Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. These principles are reflected in the national policies of the State of Qatar through the general directives of the state and society and which is based on respect for human rights, values of tolerance and cultural coexistence, support for the rule of law and regional and international openness to achieve sustainable development goals at the international level. This includes as well the establishment of the necessary partnerships and aid to countries with vulnerable economies, assistance to people in times of crisis resulting from armed conflict, natural disasters, etc...., and the polarization of the popular role and civil society organizations having a charitable nature in supporting refugees and displaced persons wherever they exist. We can assert with confidence that there are no contradictions between the State's approach and principles and the guiding principles of the Global Compact.

### **State obligations under the compact:**

These include 23 commitments provided in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which can be aggregated and follow up the extent of its implementation in the following points:

### **Response Fact at the National Level**

**Commitment 2:** Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that force people to leave their country of origin:

- Under Emir's Resolution No. 44 of the year 2008, Qatar's comprehensive vision named "**Qatar National Vision 2030**" was adopted. Taking into consideration that comprehensive development as the main goal of achieving progress and

prosperity for citizens, with Qatar National Vision 2030 aiming to transform Qatar into an advanced country capable of achieving sustainable development and ensuring the continued decent living of its people generation after generation and eliminating all adverse drivers and structural factors that force people to leave their country of origin by securing the establishment of mechanisms that enhance the opportunities for a decent life for citizens.

The State of Qatar, given its natural wealth and the abundance of economic resources, as well as its rational policies based on the foundations of social justice, which is embodied in "**Qatar National Vision 2030**", has made progress in the fields of health, education, housing and social security. These have enabled Qatar to be a state from which people do not migrate. Therefore, we can conclude that the State's response to the commitment contained in the said agreement is clearly existing.

With regards to the paragraph on "Natural Disasters and the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation", the State of Qatar, by virtue of its geographical and environmental location, is not vulnerable to natural disasters and is not receiving migratory waves in the context of major movements such as natural disasters or armed conflicts. However, the State of Qatar is tremendously interested in the climate change issue in accordance with Qatar National Vision 2030, which focuses on the environmental aspect and climate change and the urge to play a creative and outstanding regional role to assess and lighten their negative effects and support the international efforts in this area. This can be seen through the first and second national development strategy plans of Qatar National Vision 2030.

Terms such as "immigration, immigrant, expatriate" are not common terms in the Qatari legal system, as they are replaced by the concept of "expat", who is brought to the country for the purpose of (visit or work) and not for the purpose of permanent residence. It would be useful to highlight the reality of the legal and security protections enjoyed by the expat community, as well as the employment opportunities and services in the areas of health, education, housing and social welfare. This is made in an approach to similar commitments made by the Global Compact on (migrants and expatriates), which falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior, which can be monitored as follows:

**Commitment 1:** Collection and use of accurate data classified as the basis for evidence-based policies:

The General Directorate of Passports of the Ministry of Interior is the main portal to national interest in expatriates, through its implementation of the provisions of the Law No. 21 of the year 2015 regulating the entry and exit of expats and their residence. This portal offers a wide range of data and information on expats entering the State of Qatar and are classified as follow:

- Name
- Nationality
- Date of birth
- Social status
- Profession
- The date of entry and exit from any port in the State
- Purpose of entry (visit, stay, work, tourism, etc.).

The General Directorate of Passports also provides, in the case of entry of expats for work, data concerning the employment status of his work and the sectors in

which he works (government, private, mixed), which enables state stakeholders to plan and formulate policies on the various labor force, population and development affairs (human, economic, or social) and the participation of expats in making these policies, especially the ones working for entities (Planning and Statistics, Permanent Population Committee, Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs).

**Commitment 3:** Providing timely accurate information at all stages of migration, The State of Qatar has developed a comprehensive strategy to improve the gathering, analysis and distribution of data associated with the labor market and the employment of migrant workers. The National Development Strategy 2018-2022 has linked " labor market governance including ensuring current and future labor needs to the provision of reliable data" (Chapter 3: Efficient and Committed Workforce, Result 3). The National Strategy also emphasized the need for labor market governance to ensure that its current and future needs are met by reliable data that are essential for evidence-based policymaking, through better compiling into a key interactive labor market database, allowing coordination among key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Qatar Petroleum, Qatar Education, Science and Community Development Foundation (Qatar Foundation), Qatar Chamber and the General Agency for Retirement and Social Insurance.

The State has also continued its awareness campaigns to introduce the national legislation and the recent labor reforms in cooperation with all concerned parties (providing translated copies of the Labor Law and Domestic Workers Law, issuing a manual on the employment of domestic workers...), the model employment

contract as well as the one concerning domestic workers, sent to the embassies of the State of Qatar in the countries these workers are coming from.

In addition to improving bilateral cooperation and coordination with these countries to exchange information and enable them to maintain the list of authorized recruitment offices and keep the list updated, as well as through Qatar Visa Centers, which ensure the full transparency of the recruitment process and provide accurate information in order to enabling the worker to correctly read the employment contract in his or her mother tongue and sign it electronically in his or her country prior to travel. This will ensure that there is no conflict between offers of employment advertised by the recruitment offices in these sending countries and the legal terms of the contract.

**Commitment 4:** Ensuring that all (expats) have proof of legal identity and acceptable documentation

The essence of this commitment is to fulfil Qatar’s commitment to secure the right of all individuals to a legal identity, by providing its residents (citizens and residents) with proof of their nationality and relevant documents, allowing national and local authorities to verify the legal identity of the expat, as well as civil registry documents such as birth, marriage and death certificates, in order to enable the expat to exercise and enjoy human rights. In order to achieve this commitment, the competent authorities shall comply with the following:

- Adapting travel documents to ICAO specifications to facilitate mutual and global recognition of travel documents, as well as combating identity theft and falsification of documents by using tools that include investing in digitization and strengthening of biometric data exchange mechanisms, while respecting the right to privacy and protection of personal data.

- Strengthen measures to reduce statelessness, ensure that women and men are equally able to grant their nationality to their children, grant citizenship to children born in another State, particularly in cases where the child becomes stateless if not granted. Full respect of the human right to citizenship and in accordance with the national laws.
- Issuing registration cards to all residents of the municipalities of the State, including expats, inclosing key personal information, but should not represent a basis for the right to citizenship or permanent residence (Identity Card).

#### Response Fact

- The Department of Nationality and Travel Documents handles matters related to Qatari nationality and the passports and cards of citizens inside and outside the country through embassies and consulates. Its work is based on laws and regulations governing its area of competence such as Law No. 38 of the year 2005 on Qatari nationality, Law No. 37 of the year 2005 by amending some provisions of Decree No. 5 of the year 1995 on Identity Cards and Decree No. 14 of the year 1992 on passports.
- The past few years have witnessed a tremendous development in the issue of documents and papers, as the pattern of work in the Directorate has changed from manual to electronic, which has contributed to a change in the format and content of documents (passports, IDs, travel document).

- With regard to the Qatari passport and in the context of joint efforts between the General Directorate of Passports, and the Department of Information Systems, the issuance of the Qatari electronic passport was initiated on 20/04/2008, making Qatar the first country to issue the electronic passport among the Arab and Gulf states.
  
- The new passport includes an electronic chip containing vital data (passport holder's photo), text data in both Arabic and English for the passport holder in accordance with the specifications of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). This in addition to a large number of visual and hidden tools in the passport and securing the contents of the electronic chip with the latest internationally recognized protection means by encrypting the data at the time of issuance by a digital certificate recognized internationally.
  
- The Department of Expats Affairs regulates the entry and exit of expats and their stay in accordance with Law No. 21 of the year 2015. This guarantees (the issuance of identity cards to the expats and their personal numbers, establishment identification numbers of the companies they work in), although these cards are documents proving the residence of the expat for the period specified in the card as well as their data in order to disclose his identity.
  
- **On reducing statelessness cases:** This root of this issue has long been related to (economic, geographical and social) factors.
  
- Actions taken regarding this issue include the following:

- Issuance of the Decision of the Minister of Interior No. 1 of the year 1984 to organize temporary permits for stateless persons.
  - All stateless persons were accounted for by this decision, and their data was entered into the database of the automated system. The temporary residence permits granted to them entitle them to enjoy the benefits and rights enjoyed by those who do not have Qatari nationality.
  - The status of persons (stateless) has been modified because they have obtained their original nationalities, and they have been granted legal residence as per their documents.
  - Others (male and female) have obtained the Qatari nationality.
  - A number of females were granted the Qatari nationality for their marriage to Qatari nationals.
  - There have been good results in 2017 and 2018 in reducing statelessness, whether through the granting of the Qatari nationality by naturalization or by marriage or by revising the conditions.
- The Ministry of Interior has dealt positively with the recent letter of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the State of Qatar on encouraging countries to reduce statelessness cases and supporting the UNHCR campaign entitled "Midway Point" to end statelessness in the world within a period of 10 years. The demand was an opportunity for the Qatari Ministry of Interior to invest UNHCR's potential in the following issues:
- Provide technical and legal advice and assistance to concerned administrations on possible ways to reduce statelessness.
  - Raise awareness for staff in these administrations regarding international legal standards aiming to reduce statelessness and related international tools and advanced practices in some countries.

**On ensuring that men and women are equally able to grant their nationality to their children:**

- Article (2) of the Law No. 38 of the year 2005 on Qatari nationality authorized the granting of Qatari nationality to non-Qatari nationals if they meet the conditions of the said article, which also stipulated that the implementation of the rules of granting Qatari nationality should be taken into account, in accordance with this article, giving priority to the person whose mother was Qatari.
- An exception to the conditions specified in article 1 of the Law No. 10 of the year 2018 on permanent residence, on the basis of article 2 of the same law, permanent residence of a non-Qatari may be authorized for the following categories:
  - ❖ Children of Qatari wife married to non-Qatari
  - ❖ Non-Qatari husband of Qatari wife
  - ❖ Non-Qatari wife of a Qatari husband

Article 7 of this Law states the following:

- The husband of a permanent cardholder and his children up to the age of 19 enjoy the privileges granted to the cardholder regarding residence, health and education. The Minister of Interior may exclude the children of the permanent resident card holder from males who have not completed their university studies until the age of 25 and his unmarried daughters of the age stipulated in the previous paragraph.
- This is in addition to the advantages and rights bestowed by law on the permanent cardholder to invest in the activities of the national economy, and to own real estate for housing in accordance with articles 7 and 8 of the same law.

**Commitment 6:** Facilitating equitable and ethical employment and ensuring conditions for decent work

#### Response Fact

In line with Qatar's efforts to strengthen the labor market and protect the rights of both employers and employees in a way that increases competition, attracts investment and stimulates economic growth in the country, and in order to adopt regulations that guarantee more rights and freedoms for foreign expats, and as part of commitments to reform the legislative system to be compatible with the international laws in the field of workers' rights and residence, and in line with Qatar National Vision 2030, the following has been achieved:

- In order to continue to enhance the skills of employees in 14 Qatar Visa Centers, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs in partnership with the ILO has developed a two-day training curriculum that focuses on providing effective information on workers' rights and responsibilities in Qatar, explaining the terms and conditions of the employment contract for workers and documenting their recruitment fees and related costs. Trainers will be trained for the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Interior in January 2021 with the aim of adopting the training curriculum in all countries of origin hosting Qatar Visa Centers.
- Continuation of the Fair Employment Program: The Ministry of Administrative, Labor and Social Affairs has continued to implement initiatives to mobilize support for fair employment as per ILO's general guidelines for fair employment through partnerships with the private sector

and activities concerning constructing competencies (by requesting regular meetings of the two working groups in the field of hospitality and private security on how to properly conduct due diligence for recruitment agencies and service providers).

- Promoting fair employment through public procurement: The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, in cooperation with the International Labor Organization and the U.S. Department of State, in cooperation with Qatar Chamber, Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, organizes meetings of the Employment Forum with public customers. This is the first of its kind in Qatar and at the regional and global level. Senior officials from public institutions in the State of Qatar from various sectors concerned with issues relating to the payment of recruitment fees have been brought together as part of the desired development of the measures and procedures governing fair recruitment, so that forum becomes a platform for public sector clients to reaffirm the policy of commitment not to impose recruitment fees and costs on workers and to pay due attention to contractors in this field.

- **Ensuring conditions for decent work:**

Recalling the above-mentioned reforms in support of decent work and protection of the fundamental rights of expat workers, following the ratification of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Orderly Migration:

- To remove the requirement of "non-objection of the employer" allowing expats to change their work: On 30/08/2020, the Decree of the Law No. 19 of the year 2020 was issued amending certain provisions of the Law No. 21 of the year 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residence of expats and the Decree of the Law No. 18 of the year 2020 amending

certain provisions of the Labor Law issued in the Law No. 14 of the year 2004. Pursuant to the new amendments, both parties to a contract of employment, whether fixed or indefinite, may terminate the contract after the end of the probationary period without giving reasons, provided that the party wishing to terminate the contract should inform the other party in writing that at least one month prior during the first and second years of employment, or two months after the end of the second year of employment. The employee may also terminate the contract of employment during the probationary period in order to transfer to another employer on condition that the employer is notified in writing at least one month before the date of termination of the contract. The new employer is obliged to compensate the contracting employer for the amount of the ticket and the recruitment fee, but the compensation shall not exceed the base wage for two months.

Accordingly, the "no objection letter" requirement was thus eliminated to allow the expat worker to change his employer, ensuring that the worker transfers freely in the labor market.

- The start of the program for the reconditioning of expat workers and the retention of skilled workers. For this purpose, an electronic platform was launched to rotate expat workers in the local market. The second phase of the platform will be launched later, and will include the development and expansion of the platform's services.
  
- Cancellation of exit permit: The exit permit was revoked under the Law No. 13 of the year 2018, which recognized the right of workers subject to the Labor Law to leave the country temporarily or leave definitely the country during the employment contract. The Minister of Interior's

decision No. 95 of the year 2019 also eliminated the exit permit for house employees, employees of ministries and other government entities, public authorities and institutions, oil and gas companies and its subsidiaries, and sea workers in the waters of the State of Qatar and workers in agriculture and herding.

- The issuance of the Law No. 17 of the year 2020 on the minimum wage for domestic workers, which applies to all workers, nationalities and sectors without discrimination, including domestic employees. The Decision No. 25 of the year 2020 of the Minister of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs set the minimum wage at QAR1000.00 per month, in addition to the worker's right of food and suitable housing. If the employer does not provide suitable housing or food to the worker or employee, the minimum housing allowance is QAR500 and the minimum food allowance is QAR300. The minimum wage will be revised at least once a year, taking into account economic factors, including economic growth, competitiveness and productivity, and the needs of workers, employees and their families. The ministry coordinates with employers to amend contracts of employment where the wage of the worker is below the minimum set out in the Ministerial Decision that is applicable after 6 months of its publication in the Official Gazette (published in the Official Gazette No. 15 dated 20 September 2020).
- Tighter control over workers' financial entitlements: To ensure compliance with the minimum wage, the Decree of the Law No. 18 of the year 2020 issued on 30 August 2020 stipulates to increase the penalty for violators of the wage protection system, as the offending

employer is liable to a penalty of not more than one year in prison and a fine of not less than QAR2,000 and not more than QAR10,000 or one of these penalties. In addition, all dealings of the offending employer with the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs are suspended and he is prevented from obtaining any new work permits.

- The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs is working to modernize the wage protection system in accordance with the evaluation conducted by an independent expert in cooperation with the ILO Office in Doha with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of the wage protection system and detecting minimum wage violators through an electronic audit mechanism.
- The new amendment to the Labor Law also approved prison sentences and fines against employers if they fail to perform all workers' benefits at the end of their contract for any reason. Penalties of a fine have been added against an employer who does not respect his obligations to pay the employee before he or she takes the annual leave for the work he or she has performed in addition to the leave salary, or in the event that the employer violates the provisions of Article 70 of the Labor Law concerning the conditions and controls for the seizure or deduction of wages due to the employee.
- The Law No. 15 of the year 2017 was enhanced and, in November 2020, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs adopted a new model contract for domestic workers, supplementing the said Law. The updated model contract explains that normal daily

working hours for domestic workers must not exceed a maximum of 8 hours with the possibility of working a maximum of 2 additional hours. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs collaborated closely with the International Federation of Domestic Workers and the International Labor Organization to organize a celebration on Labor Day for Domestic Workers in June 2019 and 2020. On this occasion, an awareness video on the rights and responsibilities of domestic workers and an information booklet for domestic workers were translated into 10 languages, in partnership with the non-Governmental Organization of Migrant Rights. An information booklet for employers has also been prepared in English and Arabic. These tools are widely circulated through social media, government offices and the International Federation of Domestic Workers.

- In 2020, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs launched a text messages campaign targeting the health and rights of domestic workers during the Covid-19 pandemic. A series of 23 text messages for domestic workers and their employers were translated into 13 languages. A total of 1.85 million text messages were sent to domestic workers working in Qatar and 92,620 text messages to employers with domestic workers.
- **Launch of Workers' Support and Insurance Fund:** Under the Law No. 17 of the 2018, the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund guarantees the speedy payment of financial dues to migrant workers at the end of their service and facilitates the procedures for the worker's return to his country. The decision of the Prime Minister No. 3 for the year 2019 was issued to form the Board of Directors of the Workers Support and

Insurance Fund, which has already started working effectively. The Law allocates an amount equivalent to 60% from the profits of the work permit and renewal fees to the Fund in order to ensure a variety of resources that are sufficient to pay workers and support them.

- Establishment of joint labor committees: In order to strengthen the workers' voice, joint labor committees have been established at the level of companies employing 30 workers and more in accordance with Ministerial Decision No. 21 of the year 2019 on organizing the election of workers' representatives in the labor committees, the Law No. 14 of the year 2004 and the Practical Guide of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs on joint committees. The joint committees are specialized in the study and discussion of all matters relating to labor affairs within the facility, particularly occupational safety and health. They look as well into individual and collective disputes and try to resolve them amicably.
  
- During May and June 2020, the ministry organized weekly workshops and training courses for workers' representatives in the labor committees, and a series of interactive sessions designed to enhance workers' capacities to participate in joint committee discussions on labor organization, production and productivity, health and safety, social services, training programs, diversity and integration in the workplace. The workshops were conducted with the participation of the ILO Project Office in Qatar, the International Trade Union Confederation (**ITUC**), the **Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI)**, UNI-Global and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social

Affairs has sought, through periodic meetings with these committees (including teleconferences) and extensive communication with workers' representatives, to engage in efforts to make explain to workers the methods of prevention from the coronavirus (Covid-19) and provide them with health guidance. The importance of the labor committees is evident in the crisis of the coronavirus (Covid-19); since addressing the social and economic challenges of the pandemic requires the full cooperation of all parties concerned, including the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, employers and workers.

- Adoption of the National Labor Inspection Policy in April 2019: This indicates a major change towards strategic and evidence-based inspections with a focus on data collection and analysis, strategic planning, work, coordinated guidance and training for all labor inspectors, awareness-raising activities, transparency and accountability. The Strategic Unit of the Labor Inspection Department was established in December 2018 with the assistance of coordinators from various departments within the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs. The Strategic Unit developed as well a training plan for the period between 2019 and 2020 in collaboration with the Institute of Public Administration for the celebration of World Safety and Health Day at Work. The labor inspectors have received training on occupation safety and health (OSH), in addition to a training on the following: labor inspection skills, labor law, workers' housing, heat stress management, occupational accident investigations, wage protection, forced labor and employment. The training modules are being developed in collaboration with the

Institute for Management Development, the International Training Center of the International Labor Organization (Turin Centre) and international experts.

- Drafting a national policy on occupational safety and health: The Ministry of Public Health, together with the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, represented by the Occupational Health and Safety Department in the Directorate of Occupational Health and Safety is leading a common work team that drafted a national policy on occupational safety and health. It defines the principles, areas of work and responsibilities of the two ministries. This policy is derived from the occupational safety and health profile and takes into account the relevant ILO standards and instruments. One of the main areas of cooperation is data analysis and collection.
- Support international cooperation in the field of labor and continue the implementation of the Technical Cooperation Agreement between Qatar and ILO 2018-2020, as explained above in detail.
- Within the framework of States' commitments to reform their legislative system to be in line with the international laws in the area of workers' rights and residence, and in line with Qatar National Vision 2030, the authorities concerned have issued the Decree of the Law No. 19 of the year 2020, by amending certain provisions of the Law No. 21 of the 2015, regulating entry, exit and residence of expats, under which the process of transition between employers has been made easy. This will increase competition and allow the employee to change his place of employment, the employer will benefit through access to skilled labor

within the local market. New amendments to the Labor Law also increased penalties for employers who do not pay workers' financial benefits, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the wage protection system, as well as to establish a penalty for employers in violation of their obligation to provide convenient housing for workers as per the standards put by the State. The new amendments included an increase in the number of labor disputes resolution committees, a step taken to address the increase in the number of labor disputes, to ensure that workers had access to their rights and to expedite litigation. This develops fair and ethical employment processes, changes in employers, adjustments in the terms and duration of their stay with minimal administrative burdens, as well as increases access to decent work and respect of international human rights and labor.

**Paragraph (c) of Commitment: To improve regulations governing the work of public and private recruitment agencies in order to comply with international guidelines and best practices, to prohibit recruitment fees or related costs from being imposed on migrant workers by employers in order to prevent debt abuse, exploitation and forced labor, by means of mechanisms that include mandatory and applicable mechanisms for effective regulation and control of the employment sector.**

- Pursuant to the provisions of Article 33 of the Labor Law No. 14 of the year 2004 and its amendments, the licensee is prohibited from hiring workers from abroad on behalf of third parties to receive any amounts from the hired worker as fees, recruitment fees or other costs. The ministry added the above article to the basic contracts (public workers and domestic workers) signed by workers in order to make it clear to the employer and

workers that Qatari Law prohibits imposing any employment fees or other expenses, to prevent the exploitation of migrant workers in this area.

- The State of Qatar regulates the work of recruitment agencies by the Ministerial Decision No. 8 of the year 2005 to ensure that recruitment is carried out by licensed companies which respect all workers' rights.

The state has signed 36 bilateral agreements and 13 memorandums of understanding with countries of origin of the workers in order to provide legal protection to migrant workers before they are employed. The ministry provided the embassies of countries of origin a list of licensed recruitment offices in the State that are followed up and inspected periodically or suddenly to verify that migrant workers are not exploited.

- **Paragraph (d) of the Commitment: "Partnerships with all stakeholders, including employers, migrant workers' organizations and trade unions, to ensure that migrant workers receive written contracts and make them aware** of the provisions cited in them, and the regulations governing international employment and the employment in the country of destination, as well as their rights and obligations and how to access the mechanisms of making complaints and remedial in a language they understand"
- Article 23 of the Law No. 19 of 2020 amends some provisions of the Law No. 21 of the year 2015 to regulate the entry and exit of expats and their residences: "Any natural or moral person are prohibited to employ expatriates without a contract of employment, or the use of expatriates whom the employee brings to work for himself to work for

other entities. In an exception, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs may authorize the employee to lend his expat workers to another employer for a period not exceeding six months, renewable for a similar period. It may also authorize the expatriate to work part-time with another employer in addition to his original work. In any case, the applicant's consent must be obtained, and the entrant of the work must be approved, and the article, therefore, prohibits any employer from employing workers without employment contracts.

- As we have already explained, Qatar Visa Centers ensure full transparency in the recruitment and contracting process and provide accurate information in order to enable the worker to read the employment contract correctly in his native language and sign it electronically in his country before travelling. The Centers ensure that there is no conflict between the job offers announced by the recruitment offices in the countries sending the workers and the legal conditions of the contract.
  
- The Ministry of Administrative, Labor and Social Affairs educates employers and workers about their rights and obligations and informs them of remedies and complaints mechanisms. It also organizes 2 meetings yearly with five global unions representing workers in various sectors including construction, domestic work, security guard and transport, the International Trade Union Confederation (**ITUC**), the **Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI)**, UNI-Global and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), and the International Federation of Domestic Workers (IDWF).

- In order to facilitate workers to find out the easiest way to file a complaint, the hotline of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs has been set up and a specialized team has been assigned speaking the languages of the workers (ten languages) to respond to their inquiries and enable them to file complaints on the ministry's website or through the application "Amerni" for smartphones.

**Paragraph (h) of Commitment: Taking measures prohibiting the confiscation or retention of employment contracts and travel or identity documents without the consent of migrants.**

- The Investigation and Follow-up Department accepts complaints concerning the confiscation of the passports of the worker by the employer and refers them to the Residence Prosecution Office, which will refer them to the Residence Affairs Court, which issues verdicts of convictions. It is understood that the Law No. 21 of the year 2015 in its Article (3/8), it is an offence to seize the passport without reason or legal justification and is punished with a fine of no more than QAR25,000 according to its Article (1/39).

**Commitment 7: Addressing or reducing migration vulnerabilities**

**Paragraph (c) of Commitment: to ensure that migrants have access to justice and effective remedies, particularly in cases of violence, abuse or sexual exploitation.**

The Constitution Article (135) stipulates that "litigation is a protected right and guaranteed to all people. The law sets out the procedures and conditions for exercising this right."

Therefore, this constitutional provision has ensured that expatriates residing in the State of Qatar have resorted to all types of courts and their degrees to get their rights opposed to the perpetrators of crimes committed against them, including crimes of violence and sexual exploitation on an equal basis with citizens.

The Constitution Article (46) also recognized that "**everyone has the right to address public authorities**".

The Constitution thus ensured that migrant workers filed complaints and petitions with the National Human Rights Commission, the Labor Relations Department, Labor Disputes Resolution Committees and the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Interior, which were result from problems arising between workers and employers.

With regard to the Ministry of Interior, the Human Rights Department is the competent entity to deal with complaints and petitions received on the basis of Paragraph 2, Article 2, of its Decree No. 26 of the year 2005. The terms of reference of the Department in performing this function is the Labor Law, the Law on the Entry, Exit, Residence and Employment Contracts of expats, and other relevant laws associated with justice, equity and non-discrimination between a citizen and a resident (employer, worker), or any consideration of race, religion, language, etc.

To confirm the quality of its services in this area, the Human Rights Department has adopted an important initiative of conducting surveys, to determine the satisfaction of workers who did the surveys and to utilize the results of these surveys to improve performance and correct the paths of work.

**Paragraph (h): Develop appropriate and accessible procedures to inform migrants about their rights and obligations in order to prevent migrants from falling into an illegal situation in the country of destination and to prevent trafficking in their labor force.**

Response Fact

- In addition to the mechanisms for making expatriates aware of their rights and duties under the employment contracts between them and their employers, the regulations related to work and entry and exit and residence, as well as under national laws and legislative tools of the Ministry of Interior, through evidence and guidelines or communication with the communities, companies and other means of awareness exercised within the framework of the National Human Rights Commission, the Department of Labor Relations, the Public Relations Department and Human Rights department of the Ministry of Interior.
- There is an advanced mechanism adopted by the General Directorate of Passports in 2018 through the Directorate of Recruitment Support Services. The essence of its work is based on a new electronic service to complete the recruitment procedures of expatriates from eight countries as a first stage initiated by the Ministry of Interior from Sri Lanka. This service enables the completion of the recruitment

procedures of the workers while they are abroad through the Qatar Visa Center abroad.

- The Center operates an integrated electronic system to carry out medical examination procedures, fingerprinting and vital data and to sign employment contracts for expatriates. If the immigrant is found to be eligible for work, a work visa will be issued to him to start work immediately upon arrival in Qatar. Among the benefits of this service are the following:

- Ensuring transparency in the presence of a notarized employment contract enables the expat to know on his rights and obligations while he is in the state of origin.
- Preventing visa trading phenomena.
- Expediting residence procedures.
- Reducing recruitment procedures by saving effort and time.

**Commitment 9:** Reinforcement of the transnational measures to combat migrant smuggling

**Paragraph (b): Using national, regional and bilateral mechanisms to exchange relevant information and intelligence on smuggling, methods of work, financial transactions of smuggling networks and other data to dismantle smuggling networks and enhance joint responses.**

**Paragraph (c): Measures to prevent the smuggling of migrants along the migration cycle in partnership with other countries**

## Response Fact

The competent authority of the Ministry of Interior (the Arab and International Police Communication Department) plays an important role in strengthening security cooperation with the countries in the region and the world in combating transnational crimes, including crimes of smuggling migrants and prosecuting the perpetrators, exchanging information about them, etc., noting the special status of the State of Qatar as a destination for expats for work or visiting, since Qatar does not know irregular migrations in which migrant smuggling offences are escalating. Article 2 of the Law No. 5 of the year 2020 amending certain provisions of the Law No. 15 of the year 2011 on combating human trafficking states that "any person who commits one of the following acts shall be guilty of the offence of smuggling of migrants:

- 1- The illegal entry of a person or persons into a State of which they are not nationals or residents.
- 2- The use of unlawful means to enable a non-Qatari or non-resident in the State of Qatar to remain in Qatar without complying with the legal residence requirements.
- 3- Preparing, managing, providing or possessing false travel documents or identities for the purpose of facilitating the smuggling of migrants.
- 4- Organizing, guiding, agreeing, participating or inciting to commit any of the acts stipulated in this article."

**Commitment 10:** Preventing, combating and eliminating human trafficking in the context of international migration

- a. Encourage the implementation of the Protocol on the Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of Human Trafficking, particularly women and children, which are complementing the United Nations

Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its implementation.

- b. Sharing relevant information and intelligence through transnational and regional mechanisms. Strengthening judicial and security cooperation to ensure accountability and put an end impunity.
- c. Adopt local national training program to train law enforcement officers and enhance their abilities in order to identify the signs of human trafficking such as forced labor or child labor in countries of origin, transit and destination.

#### Response Fact

- It is well known that The State of Qatar is one of the countries that has joined both the above-mentioned Convention and the Protocol, as its response fact to the Protocol on the prevention, suppression and punishment of human trafficking has been distinguished through a wide range of legislative and awareness measures, the most important of which are the following:
  - Issuance of anti-human trafficking Law No. 15 of the year 2011.
  - The establishment of the National Committee against Human Trafficking under Council of Ministers Decision No. 15 of the year 2017.
  - The launch of the Arab Initiative for Building National Competencies to Combat Human Trafficking, with a Qatari funding of \$5.3 million. The training programs of this initiative include law enforcement, public prosecution and judicial agencies, national anti-trafficking committees, victims' welfare institutions and civil society organizations. Its activities continued until the end of 2016 with 56 activities and 1,861 participants.

- The introduction of a section on combating human trafficking at the Ministry of Interior.
- Doha hosted the 13<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice from 12-19 April 2015, in which countries at this important global gathering reaffirmed their determination to join forces to combat human trafficking, as the Doha Declaration of the Conference concluded.
- Doha hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> Interpol International Conference against Human Trafficking, which was sponsored by the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs from 6-7 December 2017.
- Serious and strict procedures on controlling cases of visa trade of which workers are victims, in accordance with Article (4) of the Law No. 21 of the year 2015 regulating the entry and exit of expats and their residence, which stipulates:

(It is prohibited to waive or dispose of personal features to others in any way or to be traded by third parties, whether by waiver, acting or trading in exchange or free of charge), to which the law provides a deterrent penalty (imprisonment for no more than three years, and a fine not more than QAR50,000). The Department of Investigation and Follow-up of the Ministry of Interior prosecutes violators and takes legal action against them and presents them to the Residence Prosecution, Residence Affairs Court, and sentences them. The following table shows in numbers what was completed for the years 2013-2017.

Visa trading statistics	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
Number of companies against whom complaints of visa trading are filed	6	2	6	5	120	184

Number of persons against whom complaints of visa trading have been filed	70	7	8	7	75	1203
Number of cases referred to the Department of Public Prosecutions for visa trading	148	66	72	80	62	132
Number of judgements on complaints filed	267	118	205	66	73	72

The Police Training Institute's workshops on combating human trafficking for the period 2016-2018 are as follows:

SN	Name of the session	Execution dates		Number of participants	Evaluation criteria			Training subjects
		From	To		Scientific content	Lecturers	Overall evaluation	
1	Combating human trafficking	08/05/2016	12/05/2016	19	82%	84%	86%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet services and institutions.</li> <li>• Status of the State of Qatar with regard to combating human beings trafficking</li> <li>• United Nations Charter on Transnational Organized Crimes.</li> <li>• The difference between human beings trafficking and human beings smuggling.</li> <li>• Legal framework for human trafficking.</li> <li>• Identification and treatment of victims of human trafficking.</li> <li>• Investigative techniques.</li> <li>• Smuggling methods in the region.</li> <li>• Criminal investigations to impede human smuggling and trafficking.</li> <li>• Practical applications.</li> </ul>

2	Combatting illegal immigration and human trafficking	15/10/2018	19/10/2018	1	80%	80%	84%	Abroad.
3	International protection in humanitarian crises	02/12/2018	03/12/2018	12	76%	67%	75%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal framework for protection in crises.</li> <li>• Protection in camps and refugee gathering places.</li> <li>• Humanitarian negotiations.</li> <li>• High-risk groups and special protection need.</li> <li>• Durable solutions.</li> <li>• Mechanism for discussion between UNHCR and its partners.</li> </ul>

**Commitment 12:** Enhancing certainty and predictability in immigration procedures for appropriate screening, evaluation and referral

The Arab and International Police Communication Department continues to exercise its competence in the exchange of information and intelligence within the framework of international and regional security and criminal cooperation to combat all transnational organized crime, including human trafficking.

The State is keen to increase transparency in the recruitment procedures of migrant workers and the adoption of technology to simplify procedures and circulate information related to the rights and duties of migrant workers. It is worth mentioning the following:

- Awareness campaigns in the media and social media to introduce national legislation and recent reforms in the field of labor in cooperation with all parties concerned, (providing translated copies of the Labor Law and the Domestic Employees Law, issuing a manual on the employment of domestic workers and providing copies of the model contract for the employment of domestic workers), and sending them to Qatar Embassies in the countries where workers are hired. This is in addition to improving bilateral cooperation and coordination with countries sending workers to exchange information on the list of licensed recruitment offices and to update these lists continuously.
- The establishment of Qatar Visa Centers in countries sending migrant workers with the aim of improving the transparency of the procedures for recruiting workers through signing the worker's contract electronically in their countries before migrating to work, combating imposing recruitment fees on workers in their countries, and eliminating deception practices and replacing contracts. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs in coordination with the Ministry of Interior continues to establish Qatar Visa Centers in the countries sending workers to complete the procedures before the worker comes to Qatar and signs electronic contracts.
- The launch of an electronic platform to rotate skilled labor in the local market, in coordination with Qatar Chamber, which enhances the transparency of the process of transferring skilled and required workers that were dispensed during the Covid-19 crisis to other employers.

**Commitment 13:** Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives

Ensure that any detention in the context of international migration complies with the implemented legal process, is non-arbitrary and carried out by authorized officials for the shortest possible period, regardless of whether the detention takes place at the time of entry, during transit or during return process. Priority is given to non-custodial alternatives.

- Ensure that all detained migrants are informed of the reasons for their detention in a language they understand and facilitate their rights, including contacting consular or diplomatic missions without any delay, as well as legal representatives and family members as per the international law.
- Ensuring the physical and mental well-being of migrants, their access to food, health care and communication with the outside world.

Response Fact

- Given that Qatar does not face waves of irregular mass migrations of foreign workers, resulting in serious violations of human rights as a result of immigration procedures such as forced detention, problems of shelter in poor conditions, separation of family members, detention of children, etc., their recruitment is governed by labor contracts between employers and workers through recruitment offices in (countries of origin), supervised by the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, as well as the organization of migrant labor through bilateral agreements between The State of Qatar and a number of countries of which workers are nationals.

- As long as this concerns foreign workers, it seems useful to refer here to the rights and guarantees available to them as per Qatar’s legal system on security, freedom, protection from arbitrary arrest and detention, within the framework of their stay in the State for work purposes, not in the context of immigration.

**2. The rights for migrant workers are reflected in the Constitution, the Criminal Procedure Law, and other relevant laws as follows:**

**a. Putting the issue in the Constitution:**

The Constitution grants migrant workers with rights relating to equality before the law, access to justice and grievance, security, freedom, and protection from arbitrary detention in the following articles:

- ❖ Articles that generally addressed individuals without distinction between a citizen and a resident:
  - Article (18): Qatari society is based on the pillars of justice, charity, freedom, equality and morality.
  - Article 36: Personal freedom is guaranteed. A person should not be arrested, imprisoned or searched, determining his residence or restricting his freedom of residence or movement, except in accordance with the provisions of the law.
  - Article 35: People are equal in front of the law, not discriminated by gender, origin, language or religion.
  - Article 46: Everyone has the right to address the public authorities.
  - Article (135): Litigation is a protected right and guaranteed to all people and the law sets out the procedures and conditions for exercising this right.
- ❖ Articles that addressed workers and residents in particular:

- Article 52: Every person who resides legally in Qatar shall be protected as well as his money as per the provisions of the law.

The Code of Criminal Procedure: The Law is full of many guarantees that provide protection against arbitrary arrest and detention. These guarantees are as the following:

- The report of the procedure of detention (pretrial detention) by a competent investigative authority, represented by Public Prosecution as an independent, competent and well-appreciated judicial entity (Article 1 of the Law No. 10 of the year 2002 on the Public Prosecution Service).
- Identify cases in which detention (pretrial detention) (Article 110 of the Code of Criminal Procedure) may be held.
- Determining the duration and extension of pretrial detention (Article 117 and subsequent articles of the Code of Criminal Procedure).
- The right of an accused in pretrial detention to apply for provisional release, whether on bail or without bail (Article 119 Procedures).
- The right of prosecutors to enter the designated detention areas to ensure that there is no illegal detention, to have access to records, arrest warrants and detention, to take photocopies of them, to contact detainees and hear from them on any complaint and provide them with the necessary assistance in order to obtain the information they request. (Article 395 of the Code of Criminal Procedure).
- The right of any detainee in a pretrial detention to submit at any time to the administrator a written or oral complaint and demand him to report the complaint to the Public Prosecutor's Office, after it has been registered in a record prepared for this (Article 396, first paragraph of the Code of Criminal Procedure).

- The right of any detainee in a pretrial detention to appeal the order of pretrial detention or the extension of this detention, as Article 157 Proceedings stipulates that (the accused or his delegated person may appeal the order issued to remand him).
- Anyone who is aware of the existence of a person illegally detained or non-custodial place must notify prosecutors (Article 396, second paragraph of the Code of Criminal Procedure).
- Anyone who is arrested or remanded in custody must be informed immediately of the reasons for his arrest, imprisonment or charge against him. He has the right to contact anyone he wants and get the assistance of a lawyer (Article 113 of the Code of Criminal Procedure).
- It should be noted that the phrase "contact anyone he wants" is absolute in the sense that a detainee may contact his family, lawyer, legal counsel, his doctor, consular representative of his country and anyone whom he considers necessary to contact him.
- With regard to the deportation of migrant workers: its legal basis is the Amended Entry Exit Regulation Law No. 21 of the year 2015 as highlighted in the following:
- According to the Law No. 21 of the year 2015, a residence permit for a person in employment is based on a valid employment contract. Therefore, at the expiry of the contract on which residence is granted, the immigrant must leave the country after the expiry of the period granted by law to settle his belongings, based on Article 24 of the law in which it is stated (the immigrant leaves the state if he does not obtain a residence permit in accordance with the provisions of the law. He must also leave the country if the license of residence expires or is revoked for any reason or the purpose for which it was authorized expires, within 90 days of the expiry of the permit or its cancellation or the end of the purpose it is granted).

- The residence permit is revoked on the basis of an order for the deport the worker, in accordance with Article 25 of the same Law, which allows the Minister of Interior to issue an order for the deportation of any individual who proves that his presence in the State threatens its security or safety inside or abroad or is detrimental to the national economy, public health or morals. Also, because of a judicial decision to deport a person on the basis of Article 28 of the said Law.
- The fact that an immigrant remains without residence permit in previous cases makes his stay in the country illegal. Therefore, he must be deported and his departure must be secured, in accordance with the requirements of the application of the Law No. 21 of the year 2015 by regulating the entry and exit of expats and their stay, and in accordance with the procedures of the Investigation and Follow-up Department, which has, for this goal, a temporary and typical detention center that is equipped with the latest utilities for persons to be deported until their final proceedings are completed.

The utilities this center is providing include:

- ✓ Modern and air-conditioned accommodation supplies.
- ✓ Daily subsistence needs.
- ✓ Health services.
- ✓ Leisure services and telephone calls.
- ✓ Execute procedures that required by external personal transactions.

Taking into account the treatment of this category of expatriates in a way that preserves their human dignity in accordance with national and international human rights standards.

- It is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Interior has been keen to facilitate the procedures for the deportation and securing the departure of the above mentioned via many possible facilities for humanitarian reasons, including:
  - Workers who violate the Law No. 21 of the year 2015 and voluntarily surrender for the purpose of travel are not permanently arrested, but their procedures are completed, and their departure secured without being arrested.
  - Persons to be deported and who have lost their passports, there is coordination with their embassies to obtain travel documents to enable them to return to their countries, as well as exempt them from fines for traffic violations they are unable to pay.
  - Issuing tickets to these workers in case they are unable to purchase them.

**Commitment 15:** Facilitating access of expats to basic services

The State provides basic services to workers without discrimination. The right of workers to adequate housing has been established within the model employment contract attached to the bilateral agreements for the employment of expats concluded with their countries. The Ministerial Decision No. 18 of the year 2014 set the requirements and specifications for the appropriate housing for workers. The ministry carries out inspection campaigns to workers' housing in coordination with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Municipality, to ensure the extent of the implementation of adequate housing requirements and health requirements in terms of the number of residents, cleanliness and safety of housing.

The State also guarantees the right of migrant workers to free health care, in accordance with the Law No. 7 of the year 1996 on the regulation of medical treatment and health services in Qatar. Article 7 of the Law No. 15 of the 2017 on domestic employees stipulates the employer's obligation to provide adequate food and housing for the employee, appropriate health care, medicines and medical supplies in the case of illness or injury while doing his work or because of it, without charging the employee any financial expenses.

During the Covid-19 crisis, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs issued instructions to regulate contractual relations between employers and workers, emphasizing that in all cases, even in cases where workers' contracts are terminated, employers are responsible for providing food and housing for workers free of charge, or equivalent cash allowances, until the procedures for the worker's return to his home country are secured at the employer's expense.

**The State also guarantees the right to education for the children of migrant workers in accordance with the provisions of the Law No. 25 of the year 2001, where the Special Rapporteur** on the right to education during his visit to Qatar **acknowledged** the State's efforts to provide education to all residents of all nationalities without discrimination.

**Commitment 16:** Empowering migrants and communities to achieve full integration and social cohesion

Guarantee the right of the expat to family reunification: Believing in the importance of the family and its effect on the worker's psychology, and in realizing the balance between the importance of work and the psychological

health of workers, the Law No. 21 of the year 2015, has authorized the competent authority to grant residence permits to the spouse of the residence permit holder, his male children who have not completed university until the age of 25, and his unmarried daughters. With approval of the Minister of is delegate, residence permits may be granted to the parents of the residence permit holder, if he deems it justified. The children of residents are allowed to work in various areas of the private sector without having to transfer their residence. Note that the fees for services provided by the Ministry of Interior, which are provided and completed electronically, have been reduced by 20% of the value of the fees set for the service.

**Commitment 17:** Abolishing all forms of discrimination and promoting evidence-based public discourse to influence public perceptions of migration

Response Fact

- Article (35) of Qatar's permanent constitution on the rights relating to racial equality and non-discrimination stipulates that "**people are equal with regards to the law, not to be discriminated on the basis of gender, origin, language or religion**". In addition, the permanent constitution contains many legal guarantees relating to the principles of equality, including ensuring equal opportunities, rights, duties and the right of all to litigate, stating that "**litigation is a protected and guaranteed right of all the people and the law sets out the procedures and conditions for exercising this right.**" Qatar has also made important legislative commitments to equality and non-discrimination in its criminal and civil laws.

- In the same respect, the State of Qatar has recently joined the International Agreement on Civil and Political Rights and the International Agreement on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Qatar is also making determined efforts to combat the forms of discrimination through its commitments to implement the Durban Declaration and Program of Action, as part of the process of circulating human rights awareness, the need to respect the rights of others, promote solidarity in society and establish a culture of tolerance and peace.
- The State of Qatar has ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and the ILO Convention 111 on Discrimination in Employment and Profession. It provides periodic reports on measures taken to ensure compliance with the provisions of that Convention so that migrant workers are not discriminated. The State has also strengthened the national legal framework to promote human rights and legal protection of expats and to enable them to have effective remedies. This can be clarified through the fundamental legislative reforms recently adopted in order to ensure that migrant workers, including domestic workers, enjoy their basic rights to work without discrimination.
- To promote broader awareness of discrimination in employment and corrective measures, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the ILO Project Office, have organized a series of thematic days on the Convention on Discrimination in Employment and Profession in 2018-2019. These discussions support the design of two online courses on the 1958 Convention on Discrimination (in Employment and Profession) (No. 111) and the Convention on the Abolition of Violence and Harassment in the Workplace

for the 2019 (No. 190). The online courses are aimed at directors of human resources and social welfare departments of private and public companies, non-governmental organizations officials and government officials, including those in the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs.

**Commitment 18:** Investing in skills development and facilitating mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competencies

Qatar seeks to achieve a more efficient and productive labor market by supporting investments and providing jobs for workers with the required skills, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030, which emphasized the recruitment of skilled migrant workers, and the provisions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Development Strategy 2018-2022 of the need "to focus on raising the efficiency of skilled labor in the Qatari labor market". Accordingly, the ministry is currently implementing the project of retaining and benefiting from skilled labor through the establishment of a sophisticated system to recruit and hire workers in accordance with supply and demand, which contributes to supporting the movement of the labor market and benefiting from trained labor.

In this regard, the start of the program for the reconditioning of expat workers and the retention of skilled workers. For this purpose, an electronic platform was launched to rotate expat workers in the local market. This is done in cooperation with Qatar Chamber with the aim to provide the opportunity for companies that need new employment by contracting with existing workers within the country, who were released due to the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic. The platform is part of the strategic projects of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs to provide alternatives for employment to

Qatari business owners and businesses. The second phase of the platform will be launched later. This phase will include the development and expansion of the services provided by the platform.

It is worth reminding of Qatar's leading initiatives for literacy and building of migrant workers' qualifications (executing a personal skills training program to support workers in their personal and professional lives, with a focus on occupational health and safety, grievance mechanisms and general life advice, support for communication and digital integration of migrant workers, provision of literacy classes in English...), which are carried out by government agencies in partnership with the private sector. Examples of these initiatives are the following:

- ❖ The High Commission for Projects and Legacy has launched a personal skills training program to support construction workers in their personal and professional lives, with a focus on occupational health and safety, worker welfare standards, grievance mechanisms and general life advice" (Training: Workers Welfare).
- ❖ In collaboration with Vodafone, the Ministry of Administrative Development and Labor and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, the Best Communication Program has been launched, which aims to provide ICT tools and internet access in labors' accommodation.

In addition to the "Be Smart and Learn" initiative, which offers a range of interactive learning modules to support the digital integration of migrant workers.

**Commitment 20:** Encouraging faster, safer and less costly remittances, and facilitating the financial integration of migrants

Qatar adopts free remittances as the State does not place any kind of restriction on remittances from migrants to their home countries.

During the Covid-19 crisis, the necessary measures were taken in coordination with the competent authorities to enable all workers to continue to transfer funds to their families in their countries by easy means (via their smartphones), without having to move to banks and exchange companies.

**Domestic workers were also able to open a bank account remotely and transfer funds to their families in their home countries via the mobile application, without going out of their houses.** All necessary facilities were provided for the female domestic workers to open bank accounts and exempt them from the minimum amount to open an account in order to facilitate making bank transfers to their countries and families. The process is carried out remotely by the banks electronic applications. The employer transfers the salary electronically directly to the domestic workers' accounts. They can transfer money to their families in their home countries via the mobile applications (without having to leave the house). A government social media campaign encourages employers to use bank transfers to pay wages.

### **Promising practices**

Promising practices introduced since the launch of the Global Compact include the following:

### **Wage protection**

- The adoption of a non-discriminatory minimum wage issued in the Law and Establishment of the Minimum Wage Commission to monitor its impact.
- Strengthening the wages protection system based on the recommendations of a comprehensive independent assessment.
- Strengthening the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund.

### **Occupational safety and health inspection policy**

- Adopting a labor inspection and occupational safety and health policy to ensure a more strategic, coordinated and data-driven approach.
- Adopting new legislation to better protect workers from heat stress during the summer months.
- Develop a comprehensive training plan for 2019-2021 and provide training on various topics (including labor inspection skills, labor law, forced labor and trafficking) to almost all 200 Labor Inspectors.

### **Sponsorship, recruitment and working conditions**

- Adoption of legislation that dismantled the sponsorship system, including the abolition of requirements for workers to obtain exit permits and certificates of non-objection to change the employers.
- Introducing additional protection measures for domestic workers in a new standard employment contract and developing materials to raise awareness about the rights of domestic workers under the law.
- Adoption of pilot models for fair recruitment and enhanced due diligence through newly formed working groups in the hospitality and security sectors and for public procurement.

### **Forced labor**

- Opening of the humanitarian care home for victims of trafficking, forced labor and exploitation of males and females.
- Develop and provide training courses on forced labor and trafficking for more than 200 Labor Inspectors and front-line staff in the Department of Labor Relations.
- Conduct an analysis of national legislation on the ILO Protocol on Forced Labor.

### **The voice of the workers**

- Adoption of legislation on the election of labor representatives in the joint committees.
- Support for the establishment of joint committees. 107 labor representatives were elected to represent nearly 17,000 employees in 20 institutions within one year.
- Create platforms to raise priorities and discussions arising from joint individual committees - at the level of the main contractor, at the level of the sector and at the national level.
- The formation of a community of specialists on the prevention and resolution of workplace disputes.
- Strengthening the complaints mechanism in the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs by establishing new online complaints platforms and internal support mechanisms to ensure that cases transferred from conciliation hearings to other hearings are well prepared.