

ARC '16

FEATURE STORY

QATAR FOUNDATION'S ANNUAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE SHEDS LIGHT ON NATIONAL 'RESEARCH GRAND CHALLENGES'

Strategic Investment in Research and Innovation to Outline ARC 2016 Programme

Doha, Qatar, 2 March 2016: The Annual Research Conference 2016 (ARC'16), Qatar Foundation Research & Development's (QF R&D) flagship event, is set to take place from 22nd to 23rd March at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC).

Bringing together some of the world's brightest minds, ARC'16 provides a platform to highlight the importance of strategic investment in research and innovation for the benefit of Qatar's society while also addressing the country's national 'Research Grand Challenges' on a global scale.

The Qatar National Research Strategy (QNRS) provides the framework for QF R&D's research objectives and measures of performance by guiding the decisions to invest in research and development programmes that highlight critical national priorities.

"Qatar's research and development objectives are clear - invest in human capital by encouraging continuous innovation and fostering a culture of excellence for the benefit of society. The Annual Research Conference showcases these efforts and promotes closer engagement among national stakeholders and the wider research community. It is a tangible demonstration of our dedication to driving research and development in Qatar," said Dr Nabeel Al-Salem, Executive Director of Outreach and Communications at QF R&D.

He added, "Held under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, the theme of this year's conference is 'Investing in Research & Innovating for Society'. The event will see participation from leading experts, both local and international, to engage in progressive discussions on best practices with the aim of addressing national priorities and tackling the four research grand challenges: water security, energy security, cyber security, and healthcare."

The opening plenary of ARC'16 will include a high-powered keynote panel discussion entitled 'Strategic Investment in Research and Innovation for Society'. This panel features leading industry experts: Dr Elias Zerhouni, President, Global R&D Sanofi France and former Director of the National Institutes of Health, USA; Dr Hassan Al-Derham, President of Qatar University; Mr Suresh Sachi, Deputy Managing Director, Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*Star), Singapore; and Mr Christopher Coburn, Vice President, Innovation, Partners HealthCare, USA. The panel will be moderated by Dr Maher Hakim, Head of Innovation Entrepreneurship Center at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMUQ).

A series of parallel discussions will then follow, investigating key topics in Energy & Environment, Computing & Information Technology, Healthcare, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, and Innovation.

ARC '16

ARC'16 will showcase a number of important local and international collaborations. Guest speakers from Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI), Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute (QEERI), Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), and Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), all members of QF, will be leading the discussions alongside local and international delegates.

The ARC has received over 1,300 scientific abstracts for its 2016 edition, a record number since its inception in 2010, and an 11 per cent increase since last year's conference. Submissions from the local and international community comprise 64 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively, of all abstracts. Additionally, over 650 poster presenters along with approximately 50 oral presenters will have the opportunity to contend for the Best Poster and Research Presentation Awards.

Furthermore, this year's conference will also feature the launch of QF R&D's prestigious Best Research Project Award and Best Innovation Award, recognising Qatar's outstanding, research and innovation projects.

ARC'16 will also include the announcement of successful grant applicants under QNRF's flagship National Priorities Research Program (NPRP) in addition to the 8th Undergraduate Research Experience Program (UREP) competition, through which students gain invaluable research and development experience under the guidance of faculty members.

For more information about the Qatar Foundation Annual Research Conference, please visit: <http://www.qf-arc.org>. For the latest news and announcements, follow the Twitter account @QF_ARC and #ARC2016.

Image Captions

Image 1: Mr Faisal M. Al-Suwaidi, President of Research and Development at Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), welcome remarks at the Qatar National Research Strategy Forum, 2014

Image 2: Mr Faisal M. Al-Suwaidi, President of Research and Development at Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF).

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Note to Editor:

Grand Challenges: The Qatar National Research Strategy (QNRS) has identified four research Grand Challenges facing Qatar. These challenges are characterized as multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional, and multi-sector partnership opportunities for advancing research and development (R&D) solutions.

ARC '16

Energy Security - Qatar's rapid population and economic growth has led to ever-increasing demands for electricity. Strategic steps are needed to secure additional sustainable energy sources, such as solar energy, and to reduce consumption, the economy and the environment. The use of solar energy will provide Qatar with better business opportunities to use its strategic natural resources, gas and oil, to

Water Security - Qatar has very scarce water resources. Its limited groundwater resources have been overexploited and as the reserves deplete quality deteriorates. The State of Qatar depends on desalinated seawater to satisfy 99% of its municipal water demand. As Qatar becomes more dependent on desalinated seawater to satisfy its high demand for potable water, Qatar is looking for solutions to secure its water supply.

Cyber Security- While cyber security is a global concern, Qatar's systems and vulnerabilities are unique given our economy and our operations set up, and thus require solutions that are developed locally with local knowledge.

Cyber security is an ongoing challenge - the science is ever-evolving and the attacks evolve along with the science. Important to the success of preparing and protecting Qatar against cyber vulnerabilities is basic and applied research that will create the new defensive technologies, and accelerate their introduction to practical use.

Healthcare- R&D contributes to a well-integrated and modern healthcare system by concentrating on the integration of primary-quaternary care with academic teaching and research programs, in order to foster translational medicine.

Qatar Foundation Annual Research Conference 2016

Held under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), Qatar Foundation Annual Research Conference (ARC) is QF Research and Development's (QF R&D) flagship event since 2010.

ARC provides a unique platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration between Qatar's brightest scientific minds and leading international researchers as they work to tackle the nation's Research Grand Challenges defined in Qatar's National Research Strategy (QNRS): Energy and Environment, Computing and Information Technology, Healthcare, and Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities. This year it will for the first time unite several major R&D initiatives under the conference's theme, "*Investing in Research and Innovating for Society.*"

About Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D)

Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D) is charged with the Qatar National Research Strategy, dedicated to making Qatar a leading centre for research and development excellence and innovation. QF R&D is home to Qatar National Research Fund, a leading

ARC '16

scientific research funding organization, Qatar Science & Technology Park, an international hub for technology innovation and commercialization.