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## **REACH OUT TO ASIA PARTICIPATES IN PANEL DISCUSSION AT THE DOHA GIFFONI YOUTH MEDIA SUMMIT 2015**

**Doha, Qatar, December 2, 2015:** Reach Out To Asia (ROTA), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), today participated in a panel discussion at the ‘The Doha Giffoni Youth Media Summit 2015’, part of the Ajyal Youth Film Festival.

ROTA’s Executive Director, Essa Al Mannai, was invited to participate as one of four keynote speakers from regional and international NGOs and the cinema industry. The panel discussion focused on children in conflict areas under the title ‘Empowering Youth to Share Their Stories’.

ROTA supports QF on its mission to unlock the potential of young leaders regionally and internationally, and equip them with the tools to become actively involved in building strong and sustainable communities, which is part of the Economic and Social Development goals outlined in the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Commending the focus of the Ajyal Youth Film Festival, Essa Al Mannai said:

“The Ajyal Youth Film Festival provides an opportunity for people of all ages to come together in a collaborative environment to express themselves, and ROTA is thrilled to have been invited to take part in an event so closely aligned with our goal of educating and empowering young people.”

Mr. Al Mannai applauded the festival asserting it added value to the human development sector in the cinema and film industries, which are helping to shed light on human development issues and the world's growing humanitarian crisis. He said they are great awareness building tools that should be utilized more to include the youth in filmmaking to give them a voice and hands-on experience.

In this context, he also called on the global community to engage and empower young people to break the cycle of violence and inspire them to tell their stories, creating content to promote change.

He added that ROTA is a true believer in youth as agents of change, saying: "The central objective of ROTA is to provide an opportunity for education for all young people, and to help them realize their full potential and shape the development of their communities. In these current times of global instability, it is estimated that surging conflict across the Middle East and North Africa alone is preventing more than 13 million children from going to school."

Using Qatar as its base, ROTA has chosen to focus on youth development through education in conflict and post conflict situations. Namely, ROTA is investing its efforts in bringing the global community together to stop thinking of children as merely being affected by conflict. Due to the changing nature of how conflicts are fought around the world, children are targeted and used deliberately as instruments of war – through violence, recruitment by armed groups, physical and sexual abuse, and kidnapping – phenomena well documented by many, including the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

“At ROTA we believe in not merely crafting programs that help young people, but crafting programs that empower young people to be at the center. By encouraging the youth to share their stories and create content, we can truly encourage change and empower people to shape the development of their communities for the future. A child who has been denied an education, or is not engaged, or has not been given an opportunity or indication that the future will be brighter, is the greatest threat we in the field of humanitarian aid face,” concluded Al Mannai.

Mr. Al Mannai’s involvement with the Doha Giffoni Youth Media Summit follows ROTA’s participation at the Social Innovation and Global Ethics Forum 2015 (SIGEF) in Geneva, placing ROTA as one of the leading authorities on education in crisis areas.

The Doha Giffoni Youth Media Summit 2015 is part of the third annual Ajyal Youth Film Festival, which commenced on 29 November 2015 and will run until 5 December 2015 at Katara.

**-ENDS-**

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### **About ROTA**

Reach Out To Asia is a non-profit organisation launched in December 2005 in Doha, Qatar, by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Operating under the auspices of the Qatar Foundation, ROTA is committed to providing high quality and relevant



primary and secondary education, encouraging relationships among communities, creating safe learning environments and restoring education in crisis affected areas across Asia and around the world. ROTA envisions a world, where all young people have access to the education they need in order for them to realise their full potential and shape the development of their communities.

For more information about Reach Out To Asia, please visit: [www.reachouttoasia.org](http://www.reachouttoasia.org)

### **About Qatar Foundation**

#### **Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential**

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organisation that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Qatar Foundation was co-founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Chairperson Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

QF's work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercialising solutions through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>