

MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS OFFICIALLY OPENS DOHA YOUTH FORUM ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

*Three-Day Event Co-Organised By Qatar Foundation Designed To
Empower Young Men And Women To Find Creative Solutions In Tackling
Key Global Issue Of Crime*

Doha, 7 April 2015 – The inaugural Doha Youth Forum on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was officially opened today by His Excellency Mr Salah bin Ghanem bin Nasser Al Ali, Minister of Youth and Sports, during the first session of the Conference.

The event, which has been jointly organised by Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), the Organising Committee of the United Nations 13th Conference on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), is taking place at the Qatar National Convention Centre and is set to conclude on 9 April.

Over three days, 120 student delegates will be working together to come up with creative solutions to global issues on crime prevention and criminal justice before presenting their recommendations to the 13th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice taking place in Qatar next week.

Engineer Saad Al Muhannadi, President of Qatar Foundation, said: “The aim of the Doha Youth Forum is to bring together students with different educational backgrounds, cultures, and nationalities to create relevant and tangible solutions to very real global issues in crime prevention and criminal justice.

“By facilitating this learning process, the Forum is serving as a platform to encourage young men and women to have the confidence to tackle issues head on, whether on a local, regional or international level. This, in-turn, will help to empower these young leaders to become advocates within their own communities. And by investing in these participants, QF is also playing an important role in building strong, sustainable societies and creating a better future for many generations to come.”

He also emphasised that QF’s organisation of the conference was in line with its vision and mission of unlocking human potential and empowering the youth, by providing them with the required expertise and skills to broaden their perspectives, so that they can play a vital role in the development of their country.

A number of dignitaries attended the inaugural session of the Forum that also included students as observers from schools across Qatar.

Opening the conference, the Minister of Youth and Sports, HE Mr. Mr Salah bin Ghanem bin Nasser Al Ali, said: “This Forum is held in preparation for the United Nations 13th Conference on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and is the first of its kind in the history of international conferences in general, and in the history of conferences on crime prevention and criminal justice in particular. It’s a purely Qatari initiative, through which Qatar contributes to international dialogue about issues and challenges facing humanity, and particularly in the fields of education and health.”

He said that different research studies about the youth indicated that education, raising awareness, and empowerment, in addition to self-expression and learning various life and career skills, represented the most important barriers against young people getting involved in crime.

The Minister added: “Your presence here establishes a precedent that the State of Qatar wishes to build on, in order to prepare for various international conferences, which will address different issues and challenges facing the international community. Your serious approach to the agenda at this Forum and the UN 13th Conference next week, and your final report, will lay the foundations of the youths’ contribution to decision making on an international development level.”

UN Goodwill Ambassador, Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol of Thailand, who has led a campaign to end violence against women, said: “The mission of the youth is to promote the rule of law, which is closely linked to sustainable development, as it is the only path to comprehensive development.” She called on society to fight corruption and enhance accountability and transparency.

In relation to violence against women, she said: “It’s not only physical violence that women face, but also psychological violence and discrimination and that this needs to be prevented in a serious way.”

Another keynote speaker, HE Mr. Nasser Abdelaziz Al Nasser, the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations, praised the distinguished organisational partnership of the Forum, which is in line with Qatar Foundation’s efforts to support the youth and the culture of excellence. He said: “History teaches us that the youth lead change. Youth have the capability, the energy and creativity to induce a positive social change, and this necessitates our investment so that they become mature enough through education and adequate job opportunities.”

Mr. Al Nasser added: “A high-level meeting will be held on the 21st and 22nd of April at the UN, with the participation of the General Secretary and religious leaders from around the world, to advocate peace and tolerance. Moreover, work is underway to form a consultative body that includes representatives from different religions to support my mission as the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations.

“International security results from education that will help to avoid the clash of civilisations,” adding that the UN believes that “the youth are the leaders of today, and that they are the ones who we will rely on to build a stable future.”

The opening ceremony concluded with a televised message from HE Sheikha Alia Ahmed bin Saif Al Thani, Qatar’s Permanent Representative at the UN. In the broadcast, she said: “This Forum is a pioneering initiative in the history of UN conferences, as it provides the youth with a unique opportunity of self-expression and it allows them to play their part in influencing the future”. She addressed the students by saying: “You are the builders of the future, and the international community and your countries hope. We are sure that your ideas and vision will have a great influence at the United Nations 13th Conference on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which will be held for the first time in its history in Doha next week.”

HE Sheikha Alia Ahmed bin Saif Al Thani stressed the importance of cooperation so that humanity can enjoy a sustainable world ruled by law, adding that “this is something Qatar believes in, as it has built the bridges of cooperation with all states. Qatar believes that the rule of law is an important element in development and sustainability, and it’s the desired path to build the world we want, and this cannot be achieved without the youth. Hence, Qatar has initiated this Forum, to bring the world’s attention to the importance of youth participation in the decision making process.”

Following the conclusion of the Forum, specially selected students will present their recommendations to the United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which is taking place in Qatar from 12 – 19 April 2015. By giving delegates the unique opportunity to shape international law and public policy, the Forum supports QF’s overarching mission of fostering leaders.

The delegates have been organised into three groups of 30 – 50, and within these groups, they will spend the next two days debating and drawing up proposals on the three designated themes. The Forum will follow a similar agenda to the UN Congress, and the themes include: The Rule of Law, New and Emerging Crime, and Public Participation.

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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. QF was co-founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Qatar Foundation’s Chairperson. 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.

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