

## **DELEGATES AT DOHA YOUTH FORUM ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE PREPARE SOLUTIONS TO PRESENT TO UN CONGRESS**

### ***Qatar Foundation Co-Organised Event Concludes Tomorrow***

**Doha, 8 April 2015** – The second day of the Doha Youth Forum on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice kicked off this morning with a series of comprehensive workshops and plenary sessions designed to enable participants to create, build, and refine their solutions to global issues.

Jointly organised by Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), the Forum is taking place at the Qatar National Convention Centre and will conclude tomorrow. It is being organised in cooperation with 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).

The event represents a unique opportunity to engage the youth in a series of issues related to crime prevention and criminal justice, alongside the role and function of the UN. It encourages students to discuss issues related to the region and find applicable solutions, which will be presented as the Doha Youth Forum Declaration.

Through this Forum, which precedes the 13th UN Conference on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice taking place in Qatar from 12 –19 April, QF is providing an opportunity to develop the local youth, and is helping to unlock human potential and promote a culture of creativity and innovation.

During the closing ceremony tomorrow, 150 delegates will present their findings, which have been modelled around three UN designated themes: The Rule of Law, New and Emerging Crime, and Public Participation. The chosen recommendations will then be presented by students to the UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice next week.

The Forum's second day of workshops provided a unique opportunity for the delegates to interact with each other, and participate in discussions designed to further their

communication skills. It also enables participants to work alongside one of the world's most prestigious global organisations, the United Nations.

Amina Al-Meer, a 16-year-old Qatari student, said: "This is a pretty amazing experience, especially for someone who wants to go into politics when they're older. I think a week from now, when the UN Congress is in session, it is going to be really inspiring watching these politicians work on something that could potentially change the world. It's even more exciting knowing that I will have some sort of input on what's going to happen in the next five years.

"The facilitators have been very welcoming, very supportive of our ideas. They've given us the opportunity to hear what we have to say. And more than that, they've been really helpful. They've enabled us to get out what we want to say without discouraging us. In fact, they've been the complete opposite, they have really encouraged us."

Maryam Al-Thani is a 23-year-old student of International Affairs at Qatar University. She also commented on the role of the mentors, adding: "I think this is an amazing experience. We are finding recommendations to present to the United Nations. We have been split into three groups, and we are currently working on the solutions. This is the first time the Doha Youth Forum is taking place, so we have nothing to go by, nothing to refer back to, no guidelines. This is all our own work. And the facilitators are not here to give us new ideas, but to help us communicate with each other."

Professor David Mednicoff, Director of Middle Eastern Studies and accelerated Masters in Public Policy programmes at the University of Massachusetts – Amherst, is visiting from the United States. Tasked with leading some of the Rule of Law and Social Development sessions, he said: "The main thing really is to be a facilitator to their ideas."

He went on to explain that this is the first time a national youth forum has been attached to a UN Crime Congress, and the solutions should be realistic and relevant. "The students already have some drafts which I have looked at, and they look really interesting. But the key is to work with them to refine some of these ideas, to make them a little bit more mutually compatible with one another, and also to make them more 'ready for primetime'."

Professor Mednicoff praised the participants' dedication, saying: "It has been a lot of work for them. But I have already seen a lot of enthusiasm from the delegates. They seem really involved, and there is a lot of willingness. These are students that are eager and not afraid to tell you what they think. They know that the world is open to them."

Ameena Hussain, from Qatar, is the Director of Student Life at Hamad bin Khalifa University. She reiterated what Professor Mednicoff said, explaining the criteria behind choosing the candidates.

“During the recruitment phase, we wanted students who were obviously interested in the subject matter,” he said. “We were looking for students who were willing to be committed, who were interactive, and who would contribute to the development of the recommendations. We tried to be as inclusive as possible during the application process. We wanted the youth to come from different parts of the world, as we felt this would enrich the Forum.

“Those who are here today are the students who are really interested and committed to benefitting from this experience. And that’s what really matters – having a number of young people in a room facilitating fruitful conversation around the UN agenda themes, and then coming up with a set of recommendations that will hopefully be presented to the Congress and be included in the Doha Declaration.”

**Image Caption:**

**Image 1:** Professor David Mednicoff, Director of Middle Eastern Studies and accelerated Masters in Public Policy programmes at the University of Massachusetts – Amherst

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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. 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.

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