



## Photo Release

# HER HIGHNESS SHEIKHA MOZA BINT NASSER OFFICIALLY OPENS QATAR BIOBANK AND VISITS interim TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (iTRI)

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## *Qatar Biobank Welcomes Participants Following Successful Two-year Pilot Phase*

**Doha, 11 February 2015:** Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), officially opened the Qatar Biobank building in Hamad bin Khalifa Medical City.

Accompanied by His Excellency Abdullah Bin Khalid Al-Qahtani, Minister of Health and Secretary General of the SCH; Dr. Hanan Al Kuwari, Chairperson of the Qatar Biobank Board of Trustees; and Dr. Asma Al Thani, Vice Chairperson of the Qatar Biobank Board of Trustees; Her Highness Sheikha Moza unveiled Qatar Biobank's new state-of-the-art facility at Hamad bin Khalifa Medical City at Building 17.

The opening, which took place on the second day of Qatar's inaugural conference '*Biobanking in the Context of Personalised Healthcare*' hosted by Qatar Biobank, also comprised a comprehensive tour of the new facility to showcase the various services Qatar Biobank provides its participants.

"Biobanking is one of the great healthcare opportunities of our time. Thanks to the visionary leadership of Her Highness, the Qatar Biobank has quickly established itself as the most ambitious of its kind in the region. The data from our noble volunteers will be used to help understand how lifestyle, environment and genes affect health locally, and will play a critical role in helping develop treatments and preventing disease for the health of future generations," said Dr Hanan Al Kuwari.

Her Highness also visited Hamad Medical Corporation's (Hamad) Interim Translational Research Institute (iTRI) to learn more about its ongoing innovative scientific and clinical research programs. Her Highness reviewed the importance of the iTRI facility in nurturing research and enabling the translation of scientific discoveries to aid the development of new medicines, technologies and treatments for better patient outcomes.

Her Highness witnessed how through the Academic Health System partnership the medical landscape in Qatar is developing rapidly, underpinned by clinical and translational research and evidence-based care. The Academic Health System initiative is a partnership between Hamad Medical Corporation, Qatar Foundation member organizations Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar and Qatar Biomedical Research Institute as well Qatar University, Sidra Medical and Research Center, Primary Health Care Corporation and University of Calgary, Qatar.



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### **Qatar Biobank and personalised healthcare**

The inauguration of the Qatar Biobank building follows the conclusion of Qatar Biobank's two-year operational pilot phase, the results of which shed light on a number of findings relevant to the local community, including the fact that 76 per cent of male and 70 per cent of female participants, from a sample of 1,200, are either overweight or obese.

Announced by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser at the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) in Doha 2013, the Qatar Genome Project, a genome mapping of the local population spearheaded by Qatar Biobank, signifies a notable change in future treatment through personalised healthcare.

Additionally, Qatar Biobank's collection of samples and information on the health and lifestyles of large numbers of the national population makes vital medical research possible for scientists in Qatar, the region and the world.

With plans to initially collect samples from more than 60,000 participants from the local population, Qatari nationals, or people who have resided in Qatar for more than 15 years, are eligible to participate through the contribution of samples.

This contribution involves attending an assessment session at the Qatar Biobank clinic that lasts less than three hours, and comprises the collection of a series of measurements including an individual's height, weight, blood pressure, and blood, urine and saliva samples. The health information obtained from medical records, DNA, lifestyle, and environmental exposures has the potential to provide further insights into the management and prevention of debilitating diseases common in Qatar.

### **Supporting a healthy community**

Alongside Qatar Biobank, QF has a number of other successful initiatives and programmes to support the health and development of the community.

The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) promotes greater global collaboration in healthcare innovation and best practice, highlighting QF's mission to inspire and promote healthcare development and reform through a global network of high-level policymakers, academics and experts.

Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar is integral to QF's contributions towards the Qatar National Vision 2030 by providing the finest education possible for medical students thereby producing a highly skilled biomedical workforce for the country.

Another of QF members, Qatar Diabetes Association, endeavours to help people of all ages with diabetes, and those at risk of developing it, by providing innovative patient care, diabetes education, workshops and youth camps that are designed to help people manage their condition.

Also falling under QF's healthcare umbrella is Sidra Medical and Research Center, which aims to set new standards in patient care for women and children in Qatar.



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The Qatar Biomedical Research Institute is another entity that supports QF in its mission to promote a culture of excellence in Qatar and the region. Research conducted by the Institute is focused on improving healthcare diagnosis, treatment and preventative approaches for different disorders prevalent in Qatar.

To become a Qatar Biobank contributor, please fill out a form at:

[www.qatarbiobank.org.qa/participating/what-involve](http://www.qatarbiobank.org.qa/participating/what-involve) or for more information please call:

+974 4439 8899 or email [takepart@qatarbiobank.org.qa](mailto:takepart@qatarbiobank.org.qa)

### **Image Caption:**

#### **Image 1:**

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, during the opening of Qatar Biobank's Building 17 in Hamad Medical City.

#### **Image 2:**

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, with the Qatar Biobank team during the opening of Building 17 in Hamad Medical City.

#### **Image 3:**

- 1) Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development
- 2) Prof. Alexander Knuth, Medical Director, National Center for Cancer Care and Research

#### **Image 4:**

From left to right, not including HH:

- 1) Dr. Hanan Al-Kuwari, Managing Director, Hamad Medical Corporation
- 2) Prof. Ibrahim Janahi, Executive Director of Research, Hamad Medical Corporation
- 3) HE Abdullah bin Khalid Al Qahtani, Minister of Public Health
- 4) Prof. Abdulbadi Abou Samra, Chairman, Department of Internal Medicine, Hamad Medical Corporation
- 5) Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development
- 6) Dr. Jassim Al-Suwaidi, Executive Director of Research, Heart Hospital, Hamad Medical Corporation



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#### About Qatar Biobank:

Qatar Biobank is a member of Qatar Foundation, working with the Supreme Council of Health, Hamad Medical Corporation and supported by scientists from Imperial College London, Qatar Biobank will enable medical research on health issues that prevail in Qatar.

Through its collection of samples and information on health and lifestyle from large numbers of members of the population of Qatar, Qatar Biobank will make vital health research possible for researchers in Qatar, the region and the world.

Qatar Biobank is a unique resource that will raise Qatar's profile in biomedical research regionally and globally. To find out more about Qatar Biobank's important work to improve the health of Qatar's future generations, please visit <http://www.qatarbiobank.org.qa/home> and engage with the organization on Twitter [https://twitter.com/Qatar\\_Biobank](https://twitter.com/Qatar_Biobank).

#### For more information:

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