PRESS RELEASE

HBKU research institute's humanitarian technology used by emergency responders following Ecuador earthquake

Doha, May 4, 2016 – Technology developed by the Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), one of Hamad bin Khalifa University's three research institutes, has been used to provide information to local responders following the 7.8-magnitude earthquake which shook Ecuador on April 16.

Social media data collected and categorised with QCRI's Artificial Intelligence for Disaster Response (AIDR) technology and MicroMappers can be used to provide insights following an emergency. MicroMappers is collaboration between the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) and the digital volunteers response agency, Standby Task Force.

Data from the text and images collected can help humanitarian decision-makers direct resources to the areas most in need.

QCRI senior software engineer Ji Lucas, who is among the scientists who developed the technology, said AIDR provided information from 57,184 tweets in categories including infrastructure damage and urgent needs, following the earthquake.

"Together with our partners in SBTF we elected to do a small MicroMappers deployment to support their Ecuador response. The results were given to their humanitarian partners," Lucas said.

"Every time we activate we aim to make a difference while learning and improving our technology."

AIDR and MicroMappers have previously been deployed via UN OCHA and SBTF to assist with emergency responses following the 2015 Nepal earthquake, Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu the same year, and with typhoons Hagupit and Haiyan in the Philippines in 2014 and 2013.

ENDS

About Qatar Computing Research Institute

Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) is a national research institute within Hamad bin Khalifa University. As a national research institute, QCRI aims to build Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by focusing on large-scale computing challenges that address national priorities for growth and development, supporting Qatar's transformation from a hydrocarbon-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. In doing this, QCRI conducts world-class multidisciplinary computing research that is relevant to the needs of Qatar, the wider Arab region, and the world. It performs cutting-edge research in such areas as Arabic language technologies, social computing, data analytics, distributed systems, cyber security and computational science and engineering. The research conducted at QCRI is aligned

with the Qatar National Research Strategy and supports the strategic priorities outlined in the Qatar National Vision 2030.

For more information, please visit www.qcri.qa.

About Hamad bin Khalifa University

Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, is an emerging research university that is building its foundation upon unique collaborations with local and international partners. Located in Education City, HBKU delivers undergraduate and graduate programs through its College of Science and Engineering, Law School, College of Public Health, Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies, and its College of Humanities and Social Sciences. It also provides unparalleled opportunities for research and scholarship through its research institutes, and its Center of Executive Education delivers customized programs for the business community of Qatar and the region, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.