

QATAR OFFICIALS JOINED BY DUTCH DELEGATION IN TALK ON HEALTH INNOVATION AT QATAR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY PARK

QSTP's Latest TECHtalk On Technology Innovation In The Life Sciences And Economic Building Blocks Of A Knowledge Economy

Doha, Qatar, 28 April 2015: Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), part of Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), recently hosted a special edition of its acclaimed TECHtalk series. The talk explored technology innovation in the life sciences and economic building blocks of a knowledge economy – both shared economic ambitions of Qatar and the Netherlands.

This latest session hosted three high profile speakers from The Netherlands and Qatar: Dr Bertholt Leeftink, Director General, Enterprise & Innovation, Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs; Professor. Dr Jan Raaijmakers, Chairman, Top Sector Life Sciences & Health and Professor of Pharmaceutical Technology Assessment; and Professor Hilal Lashuel, Executive Director, Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI). The TECHtalk gathered key players from across Qatar's health and innovation ecosystems, including representatives from Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH).

QSTP's efforts to promote innovation in key sectors, including health, are part of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development's (QF) unique approach to research and development, which helps deliver economic diversification and home-grown technologies that benefit Qatar and the rest of the world.

Professor Hilal talked about QBRI, a research and development entity under Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), which aims to improve health care through innovation. Speaking about the potential of Qatar's own health ecosystem, QBRI's Executive Director, Dr Hilal Lashuel, stressed that Qatar is an ideal place to pioneer innovative Diabetes prevention programmes. Qatar's plans for building a strong national health system and the relatively small size of its population, which can reduce barriers to rolling out impactful public health programmes, were cited as strengths in developing solutions that can benefit Qatar and the world.

In his speech, Professor Hilal said: "The future is bright here. Mission driven science and technology development coupled with academia, industry and government

partnerships, provide a strong foundation for achieving greater integration, effectiveness and efficiency not only within QF, but also at the national level. Strategic international partnerships are further catalysts for innovation and capacity building."

Dr Leeftink gave an overview of Dutch policies and financial instruments promoting innovation that supports the creation of a knowledge-based economy. He detailed the Netherlands' ambitious goal to spend 2.5% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on research and development (R&D) and to rank among the world's top five knowledge economies by 2020. In addition to health care, he indicated that energy, water and agriculture are top priority sectors for the country's national development.

His keynote speech was well received by local officials who share a commitment to innovation and overall development of a knowledge-based economy. In addition to learning from the Netherlands, the talk was an opportunity for Qatar-based economic and innovation experts to share their insights into local and regional innovation in the healthcare sector.

Professor. Dr Jan gave a high-level overview and history of Life Science and Health innovation in the Netherlands, focusing on three important stages of development: cell and molecular biology, genomics, and the convergence of different scientific disciplines. Specifically, the Netherlands has made notable contributions in microbiology, invention of the electrocardiogram, artificial kidney, heart-lung machine, artificial heart, oncology, medical equipment, and the development of vaccines. Collaboration and convergence were cited as building blocks of innovation to address specific health challenges in the Netherlands, Qatar and around the world.

He said: "What QSTP is doing now for the development of technology's role, especially the growing interest in the health field, is a wonderful thing indeed. We are here to intensify our ways of cooperation and exchange of the most important experiences and information to get the best results, in addition to opening new markets and opportunities for innovators and those who are interested."

The TECHtalk was accompanied by a robust question and answer session where experts engaged a packed room of researchers, entrepreneurs and students in discussion.

QSTP's TECHtalks continue to be a sought-after forum for knowledge-transfer to technology focused entrepreneurs, SMEs and professionals in Qatar. It is one of several on-going QSTP programmes supporting technology development, innovation and commercialisation in Qatar.

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Notes to Editors:

About Qatar Science & Technology Park

Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), part of Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), is Qatar's primary incubator for technology development, fostering the environment required for accelerating commercialisation of research and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship. QSTP focuses on four themes as per the Qatar National Research Strategy (QNRS) announced in 2012; Energy, Environment, Health Sciences and Information & Communication Technologies. QSTP is located in Qatar Foundation's Education City and has access to the resources of its cluster of leading research universities.

Members within the QSTP Free Zone include SMEs, international corporations and research institutions, which have collectively committed to investing in new programs, creating intellectual property, enhancing technology management skills and developing innovative new products in line with the QNRS. QSTP supports QF R&D's economic and human development objectives for Qatar and is increasingly being recognized as an international hub for applied research, innovation, incubation and entrepreneurship.

For more information, please visit the QSTP website at www.qstp.org.qa.

About Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D)

Leading Qatar's vision to become an international center for research and development excellence and innovation, QF R&D is home to Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), a world-class hub for technology innovation and commercialisation, as well as the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), a globally renowned scientific research funding organization, and prominent research institutes operating at the frontiers of science, including Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI), Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) and Qatar Energy and Environment Research Institute (QEERI).

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