



## HER HIGHNESS SHEIKHA MOZA ATTENDS QATAR FOUNDATION ANNUAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2018 – ARC'18

*Her Excellency Sheikhha Hind gives Opening Remarks to Local and Global Audience*

**Doha, Qatar, March 19, 2018:** Her Highness Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, and Her Excellency Sheikhha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani, Vice Chairperson and CEO of Qatar Foundation, today attended the Qatar Foundation Annual Research Conference 2018 (ARC'18). The event, which opened this morning at the Qatar National Convention Centre, is being held under the theme 'R&D: Focusing on Priorities, Delivering Impact'.

The two-day conference brings local and international perspectives to the pivotal issue of how Qatar's research and innovation efforts can address the nation's greatest challenges, and make a mark in the global marketplace. The opening day of ARC'18 was also attended by His Excellency Dr. Khalid bin Mohamed Al-Attiyah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs, and His Excellency Dr. Mohammed Bin Saleh Al-Sada, Minister of Energy and Industry, together with other dignitaries and 2,600 delegates from Qatar and around the world.

Giving her opening remarks to the ARC'18 audience, Her Excellency Sheikhha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani, Vice Chairperson and CEO of Qatar Foundation, said: "The Annual Research Conference 2018 stems from Qatar Foundation's efforts to address major national challenges by contributing to the establishment of a diverse and sustainable economy, while providing effective and impactful solutions.

"We believe that research, technology, and development are among the most important elements of a competitive and diverse economy, and are therefore a key priority at Qatar Foundation, along with empowering and activating research innovations across the Qatar."

The seventh edition of ARC – which is organized by Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D) – provides a platform for knowledge-sharing and multidisciplinary collaboration. The global gathering has introduced three new tracks, each centering on a pivotal element of Qatar's R&D ecosystem.

Day one of ARC'18 featured expert-led panel sessions and presentations of impactful research projects focused on the four thematic pillars defined in Qatar's National Research Strategy (QNRS): Energy and Environment; Computing and Information Technology; Health and Biomedical; and Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities.

The opening day of the conference also saw Her Highness Sheikhha Moza present the ARC'18 'Best Research Project Award' to Dr. Talal Khader Talal, of Hamad Medical Corporation, and Dr. David Armstrong, of the University of Southern California, in recognition of their collaborative project 'Tackling Diabetic Foot Ulcer'; and the ARC'18 'Best Innovation Award' to Hamad Bin Khalifa University, in



recognition of the Advanced Transcription System (QATS), an Arabic language speech recognition technology, developed by Qatar Computing Research Institute.

The conference's keynote speaker, Vivek Kundra, former Chief Information Officer of the United States, told delegates about the need for nations to put "the building blocks of innovation" in place, saying: "Next-generation economies need to think internationally and systematically from day one, with a 20-year view, while attracting the best and brightest innovators and ensuring investments are focused.

"The wonderful thing is that, through technology, an idea can now reach global scale really quickly. Research and development succeeds where countries have been able to attract global talent not just to build great research institutes, but to identify a path to commercializing their technology.

"There is no monopoly on thinking. You just have to be able to unleash your citizens' creative spirit, dreams, and aspirations to build your nation's next economy."

Kundra then joined His Excellency Dr. Al-Sada and other members of a multinational panel for a session reflecting the overarching theme of ARC'18, as they explored pathways to research and innovation that provide solutions to national needs, support economic diversification, and generate new revenue streams through commercialization.

"We are living in a time of turbulence, transition, and transformation," said Deborah Wince-Smith, President and CEO of the Council on Competitiveness, who moderated and participated in the session.

"We have moved into a new world where the pace and acceleration of knowledge discovery is happening at warp speed, and this will have a huge impact on the way we work and live. International collaboration is absolutely imperative to make any advances in the large-scale commercialization of technology, and it also requires long-term investment – from both the public and private sectors – in supporting entrepreneurship and unlocking the power of individuals to continue to drive the innovation cycle."

Throughout the opening day of ARC'18, delegates – including R&D stakeholders from government, industry, academia, and the private sector; and local and international researchers, innovators, experts, and thought-leaders – participated in sessions, presentations, and activities under the three conference tracks.

The Innovation Track unveiled a new event for the Middle East, 'The Future Is Now', presented by Qatar Science & Technology Park and Singularity University (SU), which is focused on how rapidly-accelerating technologies will reshape industries, societies, and lives. As well as showcasing 16 global start-ups and their groundbreaking ideas and products, 'The Future Is Now' saw some of SU's top speakers provide their insights on the impact that exponential technologies will have on economic prosperity, business, energy, manufacturing, and healthcare and medicine.

"We are now in the same stage of exponential growth that we witnessed in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, when electricity was invented," said David Roberts, Distinguished Faculty, SU. "We live in an era where Artificial Intelligence will bring great added-value to simple things like cars and phones."



Under the ARC'18 Research Strategy Track, the role of R&D in building a strong, sustainable, and globally-competitive economy was at the center of a special panel session involving six panelists from three nations. 'Research and Innovation for Qatar's Competitiveness' saw Professor Low Teck Seng, CEO, National Research Foundation, Singapore, state: "We have to ask ourselves where the next major company in our nation is coming from - it must be something that we have invested in, and that dovetails with the needs of industry.

"We want to fund areas of science that are relevant to our countries, but that also have global impact, areas that link to an economic narrative but whose outcomes also help us to resolve issues. To be competitive, you need to be relevant."

Meanwhile, the conference's Researchers Track presented 55 of Qatar's best research projects to a local and global audience through a series of sessions built around the four conference pillars, each focusing on a research area identified as a priority for the nation. Topics included energy and environment solutions for the oil and gas sector, energy efficiency and water security, diabetes, cybersecurity and data science, education, population and economic sustainability, and culture and communication. A further 270 projects were showcased to delegates through the ARC'18 poster presentations display, with entities and companies involved in R&D in Qatar also exhibiting their ongoing research activities and projects.

Day two of ARC'18 will further explore the Research Strategy Track, which will see Qatar's R&D stakeholders launch the process of updating the QNRS. In addition, the day will feature a series of interactive workshops, followed by a closing plenary session that will identify recommendations or the next stage of the QNRS process.

For more information about ARC'18, please visit [www.qf-arc.org](http://www.qf-arc.org).

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### **Qatar Foundation Annual Research Conference 2018**

Held under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), Qatar Foundation Annual Research Conference (ARC) is the flagship event of Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D).

ARC provides a unique platform for knowledge-sharing and collaboration between Qatar's brightest minds in research and innovation and leading international researchers, with the goal of addressing priority areas defined in Qatar's National Research Strategy (QNRS): Energy and



Environment; Computing and Information Technology; Health and Biomedical; and Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

### **Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D)**

Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D) is charged with the Qatar National Research Strategy, dedicated to making Qatar a leading center for research and development excellence and innovation.

QF R&D is home to Qatar National Research Fund, a leading scientific research funding organization, and Qatar Science & Technology Park, an international hub for technology innovation and commercialization.

For more information, please visit [www.qfrd.org](http://www.qfrd.org)