

## **WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY**

*Event Organized by Qatar's Ministry of Public Health*

**Doha, Qatar, March 29, 2017:** The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) will join key local stakeholders at an event to mark World Autism Awareness Day at Al Shaqab on April 1.

The aim of this event, held under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Qatar, is to raise awareness around autism, a mental health condition developed in early childhood. World Autism Awareness Day was first proposed by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation (QF), to the United Nations in 2007 and was adopted without a vote by the UN General Assembly. The first World Autism Awareness Day was celebrated on April 2, 2008.

The Al Shaqab venue in Education City will feature several organizations exhibiting their work on autism, and will include an information zone for the general public and families with children or other members who have autism, as well as activities such as horseback riding, football, and volleyball.

Egbert Schillings, CEO, WISH, said: "QF is committed to helping children with autism spectrum disorder and their families. It is because of Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of QF and founder of WISH, that World Autism Awareness Day is bringing a message of support and recognition to people around the globe. Building on our WISH 2016 policy report on autism, we continue to honor that commitment through projects and programs both in Qatar and abroad. We thank all of our partners in this endeavor."

WISH, an initiative of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), has a longstanding commitment to raising awareness around mental health issues and developing evidence-based research to address related policy challenges in areas such as dementia and autism. WISH recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Mental Health Friends Association 'Weyak' to establish a collaborative framework that promotes mental health in Qatar through the mutual exchange of ideas, information, awareness events, and research studies.

In June 2016, WISH partnered with the Atlanta-based Carter Center Mental Health Program to implement the Rosalynn Carter Fellowship for Mental Health Journalism (RCJF) in Qatar. The program helps journalists to produce high quality work that reflects an understanding of mental health while raising the visibility of conditions in the region. Four Doha-based journalists were selected to participate in the RCJF training that took place at the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, from September 12-14, 2016. The Advisory Board of RCJF in Qatar, chaired by Egbert



Schillings of WISH, met on March 19 to discuss steps to further enhance this program and choose a second cohort of Qatar-based journalists for the fellowship.

WISH is currently part of a joint research project with the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) and the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI) to support the health and wellbeing of children with autism in Qatar, with a focus on the implementation of the nascent national autism strategy, led by MoPH, across the health and education systems, as well as social and community support systems. Based on this shared mission, each center will carry out autism research in the field of its own scope and expertise.

To read the full WISH 2016 Report on Autism, click here <http://bit.ly/2fH1sbn>

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### **About the World Innovation Summit for Health:**

The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) is a global healthcare community dedicated to capturing and disseminating the best evidence-based ideas and practices. WISH is an initiative of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) and is under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, its Chairperson.

The inaugural WISH Summit took place in Doha in 2013 and convened more than 1,000 global healthcare leaders. Through international summits and a range of ongoing initiatives, WISH is creating a global community of leading innovators in healthcare policy, research and industry.

Together, they are harnessing the power of innovation to overcome the world's most urgent healthcare challenges and inspire other stakeholders to action.

### **Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential**

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from a carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, QF is chaired by 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 commercializing solutions



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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.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>