

Press Release

For immediate Publication

HER EXCELLENCY SHEIKHA AL MAYASSA BINT HAMAD BIN KHALIFA AI THANI INAUGURATES EMPOWER 2015

This Year's EMPOWER is launched under the title "Youth Development for Peaceful Societies" focusing on Personal Leadership, Service Learning and Global Citizenship

Doha, Qatar, Thursday 12 March 2015: On Thursday, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Reach Out To Asia (ROTA) Chairperson, inaugurated EMPOWER 2015 at the Students Center, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Educational City. In its seventh consecutive year it is launched under the title 'Youth Development for Peaceful Societies.'

The EMPOWER 2015 opening ceremony was attended by HE Mrs. Sumeyye Erdogan, Deputy Chairman of Kadem, Women and Democracy Association, Turkey. She is also the daughter of the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Mrs. Erdogan is participating in EMPOWER 2015 in the framework of the celebration of the Qatar Turkey 2015 Year of Culture. The ceremony was also attended by HE Doctor Sheikha Aisha Bint Faleh Bin Nasser, ROTA Board Member, HE Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdullah Al Thani, ROTA Goodwill Ambassador, Mr. Essa Al Mannai, ROTA Executive Director, and a number of Qatari and Arab VIP guests.

Now in its seventh year, EMPOWER is organized by ROTA which is a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF). The event supports QF's commitment to unlock human potential and build strong, sustainable communities in Qatar and the region.

HE Sheikha Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani said: "For the seventh consecutive year, we are proud to launch EMPOWER. It is a conference organised and owned by youth and is being introduced to youth. It focuses on three main pillars: Personal Leadership, Service Learning and Global Citizenship. The young people taking part in the conference have chosen 'peace' to be their message for EMPOWER 2015, to enhance and promote peace ethics and

values among their peers around the globe, particularly for those whose hopes and dreams are affected by conflict and war. I can proudly say EMPOWER 2015 acts as a platform to promote peace to the youth of the world to help build strong and sustainable communities.”

Some 450 young people between the ages of 16-27 years are attending EMPOWER 2015 representing 23 countries including KSA, UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Cambodia, Malaysia, Azerbaijan, UK, Netherlands, Greece, Ethiopia, Canada, USA, Kirgizstan, Bolivia and Sri Lanka. There is also a number of Qatari participants taking part at EMPOWER.

HE Dr. Sheikha Aisha Bint Faleh Bin Nasser said: “This is a highly anticipated, critical opportunity for the world’s young people to talk about the issues that matter to them and learn from each other on how best to tackle these issues in their community. We are absolutely thrilled to see how EMPOWER, which started with around a hundred people in 2009, has become an influential force for change, resulting in powerful declarations crafted by the youth, which have grabbed the attention of leaders well after the event’s conclusion.”

The opening ceremony witnessed the announcement of ROTA’s youngest and newest Goodwill Ambassador, Ghanem Mohammed Al Muftah. Essa Al Mannai said: “As we are celebrating the seventh year of EMPOWER, I am proud to announce Ghanem Al Muftah, a twelve-year old boy, as ROTA’s newest Goodwill Ambassadors. EMPOWER 2015 is the best opportunity to make this announcement amongst his peers. Ghanem has defeated his disability setting a role model for the whole world that the word ‘impossible’ vanishes in the face of strong will and determination.”

The Kuwaiti artist, Humood Al Khadher also performed a beautiful musical piece to the audience. For the first year, the youth have invited Humood to perform as his songs reflect values, ethics and humanitarian messages.

At the end of the ceremony, the names of two winners of “TAMM” Network for Voluntary Work were announced. The winners will travel to Spain to attend El Classico between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid. The prizes were handed by Mrs. Amal El Mannai, Executive Director of Social Development Center (SDC).

EMPOWER 2015 takes place from March 12th to 14th with a full programme of workshops, panel discussions, off-site visits, debates and focus group discussions. Speakers and panellists are drawn from Qatar and around the globe.

Join the conversation on Twitter by using **#EMPOWER2015**. Or watch us live on: <http://rchout.org/empower-live-stream>

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About ROTA

Reach Out To Asia is a non-profit organization launched in December 2005 in Doha, Qatar, by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Operating under the auspices of the Qatar Foundation, ROTA is committed to providing high quality and relevant primary and secondary education, encouraging relationships among communities, creating safe learning environments and restoring education in crisis affected areas across Asia and around the world. ROTA envisions a world, where all young people have access to the education they need in order for them to realise their full potential and shape the development of their communities.

For more information about Reach Out To Asia, please visit: www.reachouttoasia.org

About Qatar Foundation

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

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