



الأسرة
Qatar Foundation
للتربية والتعليم وتنمية المجتمع
for education, science and community development

Doha, March 25, 2008

**Concluding Remarks and Follow up for the Workshop
on Environmental Health Challenges in the Middle
East
March 23-25, 2008
Doha, Qatar**

The environmental challenges as we know from Qatar have been very much focused on the protection and preservation of our natural environment, for example ocean life, drinking water, air quality and waste disposals.

But this workshop has enabled us to see a new perspective of environmental concern causing serious health risks in Qatar. And this new perspective has to do with the health care settings where there are areas of risk that we have not yet shed enough light about its implications on human health.

We learned from this workshop that the public is constantly exposed to chemicals, such as dioxin and mercury, which can trigger strokes, heart attacks and other diseases depending on the levels of toxin in the blood, and more importantly, these cases have not been investigated sufficiently in Qatar.

It is also very interesting to note that what is being planned and built must not cause harm to people and that the built environment must meet the minimum standards in the areas of health and environment. As we saw in some presentations, the water storage tanks sometime are not maintained properly with cyanobacteria breeding in those tanks and this water was not checked which goes through to houses as drinking water.

We also acknowledge that in addition to all the other environmental problems facing Qatar there is need to consider taking a multi-disciplinary approach by bringing people from different disciplines such as biomedical, environmental and educational sciences to work towards creating healthier cities in Qatar and the region.

Following this workshop, Qatar Foundation plans to take a series of actions:



- ✚ First, At the National level, Qatar Foundation will take action in consultation with all the Qatari stakeholders (National Health Authority, Hamad Medical Corporation, Supreme Council for Environmental and Natural Reserves, Qatar University, SIDRA Medical and Research Center, Education city Branch Campuses, University of Calgary for Nursing and Industrial partners (such as Qatar Petroleum and others)) to set up a National Consultative Committee on Environmental Health involving relevant experts who will draw up the Qatari framework, policy and guidelines to mitigate environmental health risks arising from exposure to harmful chemical or environmental conditions, particularly in health care settings.
- ✚ Second, Qatar Foundation will become partner to create at the regional and the international level, a Council for Environmental Health in partnership with the World Health Organization in order to bring the latest medical and health care practices to Qatar and the Middle Eastern countries. The coordination of implementation in Qatar can be carried out through various channels already in existence through National Health Authority, SIDRA Medical and Research Centre, Qatar Science and Technology Park and Hamad Medical Corporation subject to the availability of personnel and appropriate facilities.
- ✚ For a longer perspective, Qatar Foundation will engage partners to create an integrated research program on environmental epidemiology and toxicology in order to prepare the required professionals to ensure that initiatives put in place will be sustained by qualified people as well as to serve the needs of public health.

On behalf of the Workshop Scientific and Organizing Committees