



### Qatar's Educational Reform Plan

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Doha (April 27, 2003):** Members of the Supreme Education Council hold the first roundtable to discuss Qatar's Education Development Plan at the Ritz Carlton Hotel this evening. The two-day discussion focuses on the reforms infrastructure, implementation strategy, and roles and responsibilities for the education and evaluation institutes. The two Institutes are solely responsible of the implementation strategy with the mission to develop new curriculum standards, establish different models of primary and secondary schools, provide systematic professional development for teachers and establish a national evaluation system for students and schools.

The roundtable participants are HE Dr. Ahmed Abu Sharbak, Minister of Education; HE Sheikh Abdulla Bin Saoud Al-Thani, Director, Central Audit Bureau; HE Sheikha Al-Mahmoud, Undersecretary of Education; Dr. Sheikha Al-Misned, Vice-President for Scientific Research and Community Service, University of Qatar; Dr. Mohammed Al-Sada, Technical Director Qatar Petroleum; Mr. Mohammed Khaled Al-Mana, Chairman Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Badr Darwish, Managing Director Modern Home; Dr. Khaled Abalzamat, Coordinator of the SEC. Directors of the institutes, Dr. Darwish Al-Emadi and Mr. Adel Al-Sayed, and a team of international experts in education, will participate in the discussion.

Dr. Sheikha Al-Misnad, SEC spokesperson commented that this forum helps SEC members to gain a full understanding of the reform plan recently approved by an Emiri Decree that established the SEC under the chairmanship of the Heir Apparent. "The SEC is a ten-member government body responsible for setting and overseeing education policies in Qatar. The members realize that education has become a national concern. This concern was explicitly addressed in several articles of the draft constitution emphasizing that education is the right of every citizen and that the state will extend efforts to make public education compulsory and free. The constitution also stipulated that Education is a significant foundation for the progress of the society and assured freedom of expression and scientific research. Hence we are obliged to establish a solid education system principled on "quality in education", decentralization, accountability, variety and choice. Those fundamentals will help us create a generation that values civil society, respects institutions and is aware of their rights and responsibilities", she added.

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sada the second spokesman for the SEC, remarked that the roundtable provides the members with an opportunity to thoroughly examine the components of the reform plan, particularly the implementation strategy and its timeline. The primary objective of the plan is to ensure that the future outcomes of the proposed education system provide the local job market with skilled national human resources. The reform also calls for school autonomy, new curriculum standards that enhance our national priorities and a national evaluation system reinforcing accountability and providing parents with choices about which schools their children may attend.

Dr. Darwish Al-Emadi, Director of the Education Institute, stated that his institute is envisioned to provide variety and diversity in education to promote talent and excellence. The cornerstone of the education system is the school. "Our plan calls for improving schools administration, reinforcing quality in education and ensuring that Qatari students receive the best education to compete for admissions in selective universities worldwide. To meet the state's needs of qualified national human resources, we must prepare students to gain the skills and technical knowledge necessary to take full advantage of their country's national resources. We are also working in collaboration with the SEC members to promote a culture of democracy among our youngsters in terms of benefits and responsibilities and to motivate them to seek excellence and recognition regionally and internationally."

Mr. Adel Al-Sayed, Director of the Evaluation Institute stated that the reform plan is projected to have an impact a variety of stakeholders. Therefore we will solicit inputs from stakeholders to address their concerns which can be incorporated into the implementation phases. The two institutes are currently working on a communications strategy to address key elements of the Qatari society and engage educators, businessmen, employers, government agencies, decision-makers and media in outreach activities to enhance understanding of the reform and its objectives.

For further information please contact Howaida Nadim, Communications Coordinator, Supreme Education Council