

Qatar Reinforces Human Rights Based Drug Policy Through National Forum



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By Haroon Rashid Qureshi

Qatar reaffirmed its leadership in promoting a human rights based approach to drug prevention and treatment during the Fourth National Human Rights Forum held in Doha. The forum brought together national and international experts policymakers civil society representatives and global organizations to address drug related challenges with a strong focus on dignity health and evidence based solutions.

Speaking with Rahbar Kisan International RKI on the sidelines of the forum, Dr Rayana Ahmed Bou Hake Director of the World Health Organization Office in Doha said global efforts to prevent and treat drug addiction continue to face serious challenges. Different countries follow different models while the rapid spread of new and synthetic drugs often outpaces research treatment and policy responses. Although decriminalization is widely discussed she noted that practical evidence on what works remains limited.

Dr Bou Hake stressed that drug addiction should be addressed primarily as a health and human rights issue rather than only through security or judicial measures. Global health guidelines updated in 2022 and 2023 emphasize making life saving treatments such as naloxone and naltrexone widely available and ensuring proper training for their use.

She underlined that recovery from addiction is not only medical but also requires behavioral

social and psychological support. Research into vaccines and immunotherapy for addiction is ongoing and may offer future solutions though the complexity of the brain's reward system requires further study. She added that large scale research artificial intelligence and neural modeling could help identify more effective prevention and treatment strategies.

Prevention among young people was highlighted as a key priority. Dr Bou Hake said school and university programs must raise awareness without encouraging risky behavior. Early detection and intervention she noted are more effective than relying solely on specialized institutions after addiction has progressed.

The forum also addressed stigma and discrimination faced by people affected by addiction. Dr Bou Hake said lack of dignity remains a major barrier to recovery and reintegration and called for a comprehensive societal approach involving families educators healthcare professionals media and policymakers.

She praised Qatar's cooperation with the World Health Organization through training programs for families doctors and pharmacists using human rights based tools that can be adapted internationally. She concluded that initiatives led by Qatar and the National Human Rights Committee frame addiction as a shared societal and human rights concern ensuring humane inclusive and effective responses.

