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## Regional Dialogue Forum on Human Rights to Promote Equality, Combat Discrimination Launches

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Doha, July 15 (QNA) – The two-day regional dialogue forum on “human rights: promoting equality and combating discrimination in the context of migration” launched Monday.

The forum is organized by the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) in cooperation with the United Nations (UN) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Human Rights Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA), and the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions (ANNHRI).

With the participation of experts from Qatar and several countries around the world, the forum aims to come up with international human rights methods to promote equality and non-

discrimination, address racism and racial discrimination, and raise understanding of the challenges and practices in addressing racism and discrimination and promoting the rights of immigrants.

HE Chairperson of the NHRC Maryam bint Abdullah Al Attiyah underlined in a speech at the opening of the forum that promoting equality and combating discrimination are part of the priorities of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries that are seeing notable transformations when it comes to equality and non-discrimination and increasing care for the rights of expatriate workers.

HE Al Attiyah said that all measures taken by sisterly countries are welcomed, just as developments related to achieving equality and eliminating discrimination taken by Qatar were welcomed, which included legislative reforms that guarantee and protect the rights of expatriate workers based on the Permanent Constitution of Qatar which stipulates equality as one of the components and basic pillars of Qatari society and in fulfillment of the international obligations in the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and other related treaties.

Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030 contributed to strengthening this path and the NHRC will continue to work with all its national, regional, and international partners to achieve further

progress, Her Excellency added.

HE Chairperson of the NHRC also underlined that the forum will provide a good opportunity to exchange experiences, best practices and challenges facing its topic. She expressed her hope that its recommendations will contribute to drawing a road map for the future and her aspiration to continue joint work to promote human rights and move forward in developing regional and international standards of equality and non-discrimination.

Her Excellency called on national human rights institutions in the region to continue their efforts to achieve further progress including increasing awareness and education programs in the field of human rights in general and in the field of equality and non-discrimination in particular.

HE Chairperson of the NHRC Maryam bint Abdullah Al Attiyah thanked in her speech all parties involved in organizing the forum.

On his part, HE Secretary-General of the ANNHRI Sultan bin Hassan Al Jamali affirmed during his speech that ANNHRI has a strategic plan that includes a set of goals and activities in partnership with the UN Development Programme, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, League of Arab States, Arab Charter Committee on Human Rights, Arab Institute for Human Rights, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and other stakeholders

from civil society organizations and international organizations.

HE Al Jamali highlighted that ANNHRI has worked over the past 13 years to promote and protect human rights in the Arab region through hundreds of awareness-raisings, educational, coordination and training activities, including conferences, forums, dialogues, workshops, and courses that were aimed to build and refine skills in various fields of human rights, as well as integrate and target groups from outside national institutions, including governmental institutions, parliaments, the judiciary, and civil society organizations according to the nature and subject of the activity, in addition to activists, journalists, and human rights defenders.

Al Jamali said that over the past 13 years, the ANNHRI has enhanced the protection and promotion of human rights in the Arab region, which it did through carrying out hundreds of educational, awareness-raising, coordination, and training activities, such as conferences, forums, dialogues, workshops, courses, task forces, guides, and efforts to teach and improve human right skills, in addition to reaching out and including parties beyond National Human Right Institutions (NHRIs), these include government institutions, parliaments, the judiciary, civil society organizations, activists, the press, and human right defenders, depending on the nature and needs of the activity.

Moreover, he added that the ANNHRI's objective was to deal with discrimination by limiting and fighting it off, to ultimately create a generation imbued with a culture of human rights.

The Secretary-General of ANNHRI said that there is a direct relation between all of the aforementioned efforts and the forums theme, including challenges relating to security and human rights, combating hate speech and extremism, codes of conduct for public officials and security personnel, enhancing civic space and freedom of opinion and expression, human rights education, and combating discrimination against women and other marginalized groups, in addition to the future of education on discrimination and ways of overcoming it.

Al Jamali urged active parties to take part in enhancing knowledge of international standards and mechanisms for combating racism and racial discrimination, exchanging best practices and experiences of governments and NHRIIs in this regard.

In his address to the Forum, Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Mazen Shaqoura said that fighting discrimination and racism is crucial to achieving a just and equitable society where all individuals can enjoy their rights without discrimination or bias, as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Shaqoura praised the significant progress made by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in relation to human rights, as they have all ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and made significant progress in its

implementation.

The Regional Representative added that there is progress on policies and practices protecting the rights of all individuals in the region, including migrants.

Shaqoura pointed out that several GCC countries have adopted comprehensive legal frameworks to prevent discrimination based on race or nationality and are making significant reforms in this regard.

He said that there is a noticeable increase in GCC countries interaction with human rights mechanisms, which is a positive development that enables more cooperation on capacity building and raising awareness about the importance of protecting human rights for all individuals.

Shaqoura continued by saying that these efforts do not merely support human rights, rather they also help in creating more cohesive and just societies.

In a related context, the Regional Representative explained that due to the mandate entrusted to the High Commissioner's Office to promote and protect human rights, organize discussions, provide technical support to states, and build the necessary capacities to protect human rights, this forum was organized to discuss combating racial discrimination, international standards for fighting racism, legal frameworks for migration in the region, positive experiences, and best

practices of states and NHRIs regarding fighting racial discrimination.

Shaqoura called on all relevant parties to continue cooperation and joint work to enhance human rights in the region, achieve further progress and success in protecting human rights, and combating all forms of discrimination, expressing confidence that joint efforts will lead to positive and sustainable results for the benefit of all individuals in the GCC countries, looking forward to constructive and fruitful discussions that contribute to enhancing human rights and achieving equality in the region.