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Qatar before the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Background: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the CRPD) is the first human rights treaty of the 21st century and the first binding instrument specifically focused on protecting persons with disabilities within the framework of the UN's universal system of human rights. The CRPD came into force on May 3, 2008, and as of December 3, 2016 it has been ratified by 168 states. The CRPD developed the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 34) to monitor compliance with the Convention by States Parties. The main role of the Committee is to review the reports (both the initial and the periodic reports) submitted by States Parties pursuant to Article 35 of the CRPD. In accordance with the CRPD Article 35, States Parties are required to submit to the Committee "a comprehensive report on measures taken to give effect to its obligations [under the CRPD] ... and on the progress made in that regard" within two years after the entry into force of the present Convention for the State Party concerned, and subsequently they must submit periodic reports every four years "and further whenever the Committee so requests." Qatar ratified the UNCRPD in May 2008 and is obliged as a signatory nation to implement a number of social and legal measures to become fully compliant. Aim: The aim of this paper is to identify Qatar's degree of compliance with the CRPD as per the last available CRPD reports. Subsequently, we list recommended actions toward Qatar's compliance with the Convention. Findings and recommendations: On June 19, 2012 Qatar submitted its report to the Committee on its compliance with the Convention. Following review of the Qatar report, the committee made six concluding observations.

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The six observations made by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on Qatar's compliance with the Convention: The legislation revolves around a medical (treatment) model of disability, in contrast to the convention's call for a social model and the human rights approach. It is necessary to safeguard non-discrimination, adopting the inclusive social model. Accommodation and accessibility are not in line with the Convention. There is an absence of specific legal and policy frameworks to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, and reasonable accommodation is not sufficiently guaranteed. Lack of consultation and participation of persons with disabilities in the drafting of regulatory policies that affect them. Lack of systematic information. There is no independent internal mechanism to coordinate policy on the rights of persons with disabilities and monitor the implementation of the Convention. The Committee's six concluding observations on the rights of persons with disabilities indicate that Qatar, similar to many other countries, has a long way to go before reaching compliance with the convention. As a first step towards compliance with the Convention, Qatar action regarding the six issues highlighted here is key, and can be as follows: Adopt a social model whereby the state moves beyond the assistance-based approach to the development of actual individual rights enforceable in a court of law, considers disability rights as validity standards, and regards the field of conflict of rights as other rights or fundamental legal interests. Prevent discrimination by adopting an inclusive social model, as well as via adapting both the situation strategy (equality focused on the situation) and the identity strategy (acknowledging the rights of specific persons or groups). Provide accessibility through universal design and reasonable accommodation. Consult and include persons with disabilities in the drafting of regulatory policies that affect them. Collect systematic (research and statistical) data on persons with disability for use in the development and implementation of policies. Put in place an independent internal mechanism to coordinate policy on the rights of persons with disabilities and monitor the implementation of the Convention. Acknowledgement: This presentation was made possible by the support of the NPRP grant 7 - 380 - 5 - 051 from the Qatar National Research Fund. The statements made herein are solely the responsibility of the authors.