

Towards Qatar's National Strategy: Issues and Challenges

Mohamad Khalid Al-Mana

It is a matter of pride and pleasure, for me, to have the privilege to talk to you today, through this intellectual event to contribute in the formulation of the first national strategy for the State of Qatar and drawing tools and spirit inspired by the directives of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, who sought Progress and prosperity for Qatar, its people and its future generations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From private sector perspective, the attempt to tackle the challenges facing the Qatar national strategy is not isolated from the four pillars of Qatar National Vision. Rather private sector institutions and personnel, are active and central players in the process of human, social and economic development undertaken in Qatar. The challenges the private sector is facing, even somehow specific, remain general ones for decision makers, the civil society institutions and the whole Qatari social strata.

Honored audience,

The formulation of a national strategy capable of confronting and coping with global changes and elevating Qatar and its people to the ranks of the major powers in the world is not easy. Given the real dimensions of the challenges that may confront us, which is already set up by history, geography, customs, traditions and religious and cultural heritage.

I do imagine that the first and most important challenges we face is our relationship with the surrounding environment. At the end of the last century the communism theory and the socialism fell, whilst the world is moving towards capitalism. The latter is recently struck by the financial crisis that threatens its existence. At the same time, governments have started together Or individually seeking to rescue the system through some preventive actions or to inject huge investments to avoid the collapse of major symbols of capitalism. This situation has revealed a serious deficiency in the world economy. Such system failure would necessarily result in a new financial and economic system. Will we be able to explore and predict the features of the new system, that future generations will inevitably deal with?

The second challenge is how to harmonize our values, our culture, and our customs and traditions with the culture of the other with all its new or even odd values and concepts so that we may be able to reach the year 2030 and rank among the developed nations.

Will we still be able to preserve our cherished traditions, morals and behaviors?

In the same context the issue of women's participation in the process of comprehensive and sustainable development becomes an absolute necessity and not just a symbolic participation. Equipped with science, and knowledge and relevant experience in conjunction with its capacities and potentials, women must participate actively in the design and formulation of the new features of our future.

Honored attendance,

Qatar National Vision has confirmed the need to upgrade human resources as Man is the very tool and aim of development process. Where there is, dignified life and health care Man becomes creative, fruitful and innovative. The progress we desire depends primarily on the advancement of knowledge. For Qatar to reach the developed countries standards, it must have the creative knowledge capable of compensating the wide gap existing between the innovative West and the copying Orient. This matter requires a review of the current education curricula that are based on memorization rather than understanding and innovation.

Dear colleagues,

These challenges, are not only ones that we face.... There are so many that some will be discussed in this outstanding meeting and others will inevitably emerge during the implementation period within a context of political and economic globalization.

Therefore, the formulation of a successful strategy should possess a degree of flexibility without missing basic goals and objectives. In addition, those who will implement or support the national strategy should be able to design an integrated system, seeking to achieve harmony and coherence among the pillars of comprehensive development and guaranteeing that continuous monitoring

and evaluation of performance remain our main tools to achieve these goals.

Therefore, broad participation at the grassroots level is an important tool for the implementation of this strategy. The more the relationship between the grass-roots and the leadership positions, continue to have effective communication channels for ideas flow and views in two ways in a free and transparent environment the more we expect a good implementation outcome. There is no person who has the whole truth and the absolute right. Thus the interaction of official agencies and civil society institutions and all members of the society constitute a real guarantee for the success of the strategy implementation.

Honorable audience,

Government agencies have proved over the past years their ability to achieve fruitful interaction with the private sector and its institutions. Thus interaction has led to the creation of a strong private sector, but still unable to compete with major economic entities. Whereas it has funds, it lacks the technical expertise that enables it to cope with tough competition. This situation urges both the government and the private sector to think about a mechanism to improve private sector institutions' performance and change the culture of the Qatari investor has long depended on the often selling and promoting of the goods of others without even being able to provide his own basic needs.

The overall strategy of the State of Qatar with all its aspirations and expectations, will continue to depend on our ability to translate the theoretical framework into practical reality that we can feel and touch in all our behaviors, thoughts and development plans.

May God guide you all to achieve the best for Qatar, its people and its inspired leader, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani and his Heir Apparent, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

Mohammad Khalid Almana