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As of 2011-10-14



Permanent Mission of  
the State of Qatar  
to the United Nations



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the Dominican Republic  
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**The International Conference on the  
HOPEFOR Initiative (Doha- 27 to 29 November 2011): Improving the  
effectiveness and coordination of military and civil defence assets  
for natural disaster response**

**Conference Information Note**



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## 1- Background:

In the coming decades, the humanitarian caseload is likely to increase due to continuing, protracted complex emergencies and global challenges which exacerbate or create new humanitarian needs. Natural disasters, not least due to climate change, are predicted to occur more frequently and with increased intensity. This development raises the question of how local, national, regional and international capacities for preparedness and response to natural disasters can be strengthened. Significant challenges to improving response effectiveness include further developing regional and sub regional mechanisms to assist and expedite neighbours in helping neighbours, especially in the use of foreign military and civil defence assets (MCDA).

Recently, there has been a marked increase in the deployment of foreign military and civil defence assets to support the international humanitarian efforts and assist countries affected by large-scale natural disasters. Over the past decade, military forces have been increasingly engaged in supporting natural disaster response, both domestically and internationally. These military forces have often played an effective and necessary role in response to natural disasters.



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The HOPEFOR initiative was launched by H.E. Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar, in June 2010 in New York, aiming at improving the use of military and civil defence assets in relief operations. Notable calls have also been made for a more effective response to natural disasters, most prominently by His Excellency Dr. Leonel Fernandez, President of the Dominican Republic, and His Excellency Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey, at the high level General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly on 23 September 2010. Qatar, the Dominican Republic, and Turkey have decided to join efforts in presenting the HOPEFOR initiative and initiating a process of reflection on improving the effectiveness and coordination of MCDA for natural disaster response.

After the launching of the initiative, several in-depth consultations have taken place with a wide range of stakeholders to further refine the HOPEFOR initiative. On 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2011, the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar addressed the President of the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly on the steps taken regarding the HOPEFOR initiative. The background paper entitled



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“HOPEFOR Initiative - A Global Cooperative Framework to Improve the Effectiveness of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Relief Operations” prepared by Qatar and consulted with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, was then shared among the wider membership of the United Nations.<sup>1</sup>

### **The HOPEFOR initiative: aims and objectives:**

In a context of growing humanitarian needs, MCDA are often called upon to support and compliment relief efforts for natural disaster response. These assets can make an important contribution to such efforts, but recent experiences also show insufficiencies and gaps in their use. The aim of the HOPEFOR initiative is to address these gaps for the purpose of improving humanitarian civil-military coordination and ensure that the use of MCDA in support of natural disaster relief operations is undertaken in an appropriate, effective and coordinated manner, in support of the UN humanitarian-emergency response system towards large-scale natural disasters.

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<sup>1</sup> Outlined in the annex of the letter dated 28 February 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly. (A/65/772)



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The initial background paper of the HOPEFOR initiative addressed numerous gaps within the existing civil-military coordination framework, based on these gaps, a series of options were identified to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian civil-military coordination and the use of MCDA in natural disaster response.

The HOPEFOR initiative intends to support efforts to further develop and implement selected options. Initially, HOPEFOR could encourage the establishment of a global network of civilian and military practitioners, drawn from both assisting and affected States. It would also promote regional and sub-regional arrangements including through the creation of a humanitarian-military centre of excellence in Doha.

The HOPEFOR initiative will support and complement the current international humanitarian response structure, while ensuring that any new initiative would not duplicate, compete with or otherwise hinder it – in terms of finances, assets, personnel, or attention. In addition, the HOPEFOR initiative will fully respect the fundamental humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, independence and assistance based on



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needs, and adhere to the Oslo and MCDA Guidelines, particularly the principle of last resort, with regard to the use of foreign MCDA.

## **The International Conference on the HOPEFOR Initiative: The Way Ahead**

Qatar, in collaboration with the Dominican Republic and Turkey, will convene an international conference on the HOPEFOR initiative to be held in Doha from 26 to 29 November 2011, for a wider group of states, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

The International Conference will discuss the concept of the HOPEFOR initiative, consider the options outlined in the initial background paper and recommend steps for their implementation at the national, regional and international level, as appropriate, in close collaboration with Member States, regional and international organizations and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, while fully respecting humanitarian principles and the relevant guidelines on the use of MCDA.



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The International Conference will identify specific actions for implementation, such as encouraging the establishment of a "global network of civilian and military practitioners", drawn from both assisting and affected States, and the promotion of regional and sub-regional arrangements including through the creation of a humanitarian-military centre of excellence in Doha.

Qatar, in collaboration with the Dominican Republic and Turkey, will report on the outcome of the Conference to the United Nations General Assembly, with the aim to contribute to the UN's continuous efforts to strengthen the international response to natural disasters.

In preparation for the International Conference, Qatar, the Dominican Republic and Turkey co-organized a workshop on the HOPEFOR initiative last June, with the participation of civil-military coordination experts drawn from states, United Nations humanitarian actors, regional organizations, and non-governmental organizations. The overall objective of the workshop was to discuss and refine the options listed in the Initial Background Paper with a view to informing the expert-level consultations during the Conference.



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## **2- Information for participants:**

### **Part 1 - Expert-level meetings of the International Conference (27-28 November 2011- Doha)**

The International conference will consist of a two day expert-level consultations that will be held 27-28 November 2011 at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Doha.

#### **Day One: 27 November 2011:**

The first day of the Conference will consist of three parallel expert-level cluster discussions that will discuss three cluster of options identified in the initial background paper (A/65/772): (1) Training and Doctrine; (2) Operational Capacity; (3) Preparedness.



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The objective of the three expert-level consultations is to engage all participants in an interactive to discuss and refine the options listed in the Initial Background Paper.

For cluster one, the objective of this discussion area will be to identify existing capacities and make concrete recommendations which will enhance global training and doctrine for military and humanitarian actors to work more effectively during natural disaster response operations.

For cluster two, the objective of this discussion area will be to enhance information sharing between military and humanitarian actors engaged in natural disaster response, identify modalities to enhance and expand the global pool of civil-military coordination expertise, and refine coordination structures to increase the effectiveness of the civil-military dialogue early in the response.

For cluster three, the objective of this discussion area will be to identify preparedness initiatives, including necessary agreements and procedures to enhance the requesting, reception, and implementation of foreign military assets in natural disaster response operations. The primary



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emphasis will be in defining rapid and effective tools for states and the United Nations to call for, receive, and effectively utilize external military assets.

Suggestions coming out of these consultations should provide recommendations to be included in the final outcome document and inform the discussion on day two of the conference on the two specific actions for implementation of the initiative, (1) the establishment of a "global network of civilian and military practitioners from both assisting and affected States", and (2) promoting regional and subregional arrangements, including through the creation of a humanitarian-military centre of excellence in Doha. ~~No list of speakers will be established (??).~~

**A note for Participants: Member States, UN Agencies and other humanitarian organizations are encouraged to make brief interventions (does not exceed 3 minutes) in the interactive discussions. There will be no established list of speakers during the expert-level meetings; instead an open discussion is encouraged.**



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**Reference documents:** The main documents during these cluster discussion is the Initial Background Paper for the Initiative (A/65/772\*). Other guiding discussion papers will be posted on the Conference website.

### **Day Two: 28 November 2011:**

The Second day of the Conference will consist of two panel discussions that will discuss the two specific actions for implementation of the initiative, (1) encouraging the establishment of a "global network of civilian and military practitioners from both assisting and affected States", and (2) promoting regional and subregional arrangements, including through the creation of a humanitarian-military centre of excellence in Doha.

**Panel One:** reflections on the establishment of a "global network of civilian and military practitioners from both assisting and affected States" will consist of a number of presentations that will showcase existing networks and their experiences. The objective of panel one is to engage all participants to take part in an interactive discussion to share their experiences and expectations towards a "global network of civilian and military practitioners from both assisting and affected States".



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**Panel Two:** reflections on the tasks that will be undertaken by the humanitarian-military centre of excellence in Doha", will consist of a number of presentation that will showcase experiences, including of existing Centres of excellence. The objective of panel two is to engage all participants to take part in an interactive discussion to share their experiences in promoting regional and subregional arrangements in the area of responding to natural disasters and their expectations from the humanitarian-military centre of excellence in Doha.

**A note for Participants:** States, UN Agencies and other humanitarian organizations are encouraged to make brief interventions (does not exceed 3 minutes) in the interactive discussions. There will be no established list of speakers during the expert-level meetings; instead an open discussion is encouraged.

**Reference documents:** The main documents during these cluster discussion is the Initial Background Paper for the Initiative (A/65/772\*). Other guiding discussion papers will be posted on the Conference website.



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## **Part 2 - High-Level Plenary meeting of the Conference (29 November 2011- Doha).**

The high-level meeting of the International Conference will be held on Tuesday, 29 November, from 10a.m. to 12:45p.m. The high-level meeting of the International Conference will be under the auspices of His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar. The high-level meeting of the Conference will consist of keynote speeches of high level dignitaries and participating ministers, and the presentation of the conclusions of the discussions on the recommendations for implementation and the draft report of the Conference that will be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly for consideration. **See Conference Agenda for details.**

### **List of speakers for the high-level meeting of the International Conference.**

The inscription for the list of speakers for the high-level meeting of the Conference (Tuesday, 29 November) will be available at the Registration desk, from 8a.m. to 10a.m. on Tuesday, 29 November. Inscriptions shall be on a firstcome, first-served basis. Heads of delegations are asked to



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limit their statements to 5 minutes, on the understanding that this will not preclude the distribution of more extensive texts.

### **Date and Venue of the Conference**

The Conference will be held from 27 to 29 November 2011 at the Ritz Carlton Hotel Doha . The contact details are:

Fax: 44435836 / 44435154

Email: [pcoc@mofa.gov.qa](mailto:pcoc@mofa.gov.qa),

### **Hotel Accommodations**

The Government of the State of Qatar will provide accommodation for the head of delegation (Minister) 1+2 (Deputy Minister) +1, (Experts) 1 only, and two representatives of each relevant UN agency and Humanitarian organization (2). The Government of the State of Qatar will cover the costs of accommodation and meals.

### **The designated Hotels in Doha, Qatar:**

The Ritz Carlton Hotel

email: [mesufji@mofa.gov.qa](mailto:mesufji@mofa.gov.qa), [pcoc@mofa.gov.qa](mailto:pcoc@mofa.gov.qa)

fax: +97444357358, 44435836 / 44435154

### **Travel arrangement**



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The Government of the State of Qatar will cover the costs of travel for:

- 1- the head of the delegation from a LDC, if Ministerial status (Business class), if less than Ministerial status (economy class). Plus one member of His/Her delegation (Economy class).
- 2- the head of the delegation from a developing country only. if Ministerial status (Business class), if less than Ministerial status (economy class).
- 3- the costs of travel for one representative only of each UN agency and Humanitarian organization (Economy class).

Information for the travel arrangement should be emailed to : [mesufji@mofa.gov.qa](mailto:mesufji@mofa.gov.qa), or faxed to: 44435836 / 44435154

Delegations from developed countries are responsible for their travel costs and arrangements. Arrival and departure information of their delegations should be email to: [pcoc@mofa.gov.qa](mailto:pcoc@mofa.gov.qa), or faxed to: 44435836 / 44435154

## **Transportation**

The Government of the State of Qatar will provide local transportation for the delegations from the time of their arrival in Qatar until the departure. The costs for transportation will be covered by the Government of the State of Qatar.

## **Visa :**

After we receive all details of participants we will send letters to all Qatar Embassies abroad to issue the visas free, and the participants who don't have Qatari Embassies in their countries will be granted visas upon arrival at Doha International Airport.



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In order to inform our embassies abroad, kindly inform us of the city of departure.

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