

(Translated from Arabic)

State of Qatar

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Date: 3 June 2007

Subject: Qatari legislation on drinking water and sanitation

Sir, thank you for your letter of 24 April 2007 addressed to the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations Office at Geneva, requesting an answer to some questions on equitable access to drinking water and sanitation. I have pleasure in providing you with the information set out below.

The State of Qatar has enacted a number of laws on water and sanitation, which mainly regulate the conservation of drinking water, the digging of wells to store water and the provision of sanitation in order to protect the health of nationals and residents. Of these laws, we mention:

- Council of Ministers decision No. 1 of 1971, regulating the digging of artesian wells
- Act No. 8 of 1948, concerning public hygiene
- Act No. 30 of 1995, amending some provisions of Act No. 8 of 1948, concerning public hygiene

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- Act No. 4 of 1982, concerning the exploitation and protection of vital water resources in Qatar
- Decree Law No. 30 of 2002, promulgating the Environment Protection Act
- The implementing regulation for the Environment Protection Act
- Annex 2 to the implementing regulation, concerning standards and norms for protection of the environment
- Annex 3/2: quality standards and norms for public water
- Annex 3/3: drinking-water standards and norms
- Annex 3/4: sea water quality norms
- Annex 4: norms and specifications for harmful substances discharged into water
- Annex 4/1: norms and specifications for some substances discharged into water
- Annex 4/2: proscribed liquids and soluble non-liquids discharged into water
- Act No. 1 of 1988, regulating the digging of groundwater wells
- Decree Law No. 29 of 1995, amending some provisions of Act No. 1 of 1988, regulating the digging of groundwater wells (serial No. 14/1995, vol. 1, p. 3)
- Decree Law No. 17 of 1993, amending some provisions of Act No. 4 of 1983, concerning the exploitation and protection of vital water resources in Qatar
- Act No. 31 of 1995, amending some provisions of Act No. 4 of 1983, concerning the exploitation and protection of vital water resources in Qatar

With regard to the institutions responsible for supplying drinking water, before 2000, responsibility for managing water issues in Qatar mainly devolved on the Ministry of Electricity and Water, which took care of all aspects of production (desalination) and the transportation, distribution and sale of electricity and water in Qatar.

In 2000, the Ministry of Electricity and Water became the Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation, otherwise known as *Kahramaa*. The Government gradually privatized the production (desalination) sector, hiving it off from the rest of the electricity and water supply chain, so that *Kahramaa* no longer has any responsibility for producing electricity and water. This activity is now undertaken by private companies, which have long-term agreements, known as energy and water agreements, with *Kahramaa*.

Although *Kahramaa* has its own budget and operates as wholly government-owned concern, the Government continues to pay heavy subsidies on electricity and water.

The task of evaluating and developing water in Qatar is not confined to *Kahramaa* alone but involves a number of key government bodies, including the Planning Council, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture, the Department of Agriculture and Water Research, the Drainage Department, the Urban Planning and Development Authority and the Public Works Authority.

As for sanitation, we should like to draw attention to the following points:

The first sanitation network in Qatar went into operation in 1966. A number of projects have been carried out since that time and the sanitation network now covers approximately 70 per cent of all populated areas in Qatar. The Public Works Authority is in the process of connecting all real property to the sanitation network. A total of 200,000 cubic metres of wastewater is treated every day by the Authority's sanitation plants.

The State has earmarked 8.4 billion rials for sanitation in the framework of the Authority's plan, enabling the Authority to carry out several huge sanitation projects. The network is expected to cover around 90 per cent of populated areas when these projects are completed in the near future.

Allow me to assure you that we are mindful of our obligations with regard to human rights instruments and standards and endeavour to fulfil them with the requisite transparency, because we are convinced that human rights are the cornerstone of the comprehensive constitutional reform policies in which everyone places their hopes.

In conclusion, we assure you that we are fully ready to reply to any other requests for clarification on the above-mentioned subject or any other subjects of mutual concern, in the interests of the promotion and protection of human rights.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of our highest consideration.

(Signed): Khalid bin Jasim Al Thani
Director
Bureau of Human Rights
