

# Workers' Welfare Key Messaging and Statistics

## February 2021

### Supporting facts and details

#### A fair employment system in line with international standards

- Qatar has undertaken comprehensive reforms to its labour market to benefit employees and employers alike. Current laws include:
  - **Minimum wage of Qatar 1,000 (September 2020):** A new minimum wage of QAR 1,000 per month will apply to all employees across all sectors in Qatar, including domestic workers. In the event that the employer does not provide adequate accommodation or food for the worker or the employee, the minimum accommodation allowance shall be 500 Riyals, and the minimum for the food allowance shall be 300 Riyals. The new minimum wage comes into force in March 2021.
    - The minimum wage was decided following extensive consultation with a specialised national committee composed of relevant authorities in Qatar.
    - The Minimum Wage Committee was also established and tasked with periodically reviewing the impact and application of the minimum wage of workers and domestic workers.
    - The non-discriminatory minimum wage is the first law of its kind in the region.
  - **The removal of No-Objection Certificates (September 2020):** Qatar has removed the No-Objection Certificate requirement with immediate effect, allowing employees in Qatar to terminate their contract once they have provided at least one month's written notice if they have worked with the employer for two years or less, or two months' notice if they have worked with the employer for over two years.
  - **Full removal of exit permits for expatriates (2018-2020):** Exit permits were removed in 2018 and expanded to include all workers in 2020. The only exceptions include members of the armed forces and a maximum of 5% of a company's workforce in special roles. The law states that expatriates have the right to leave the country temporarily, or to depart from the country permanently during the validity of the labour contract and without first obtaining permission from their employers.
    - The employer also has the right to submit a prior reasoned request to ADLSA including the names of those whom they deem necessary to obtain prior approval before leaving the country due to the nature of their work, provided that it does not exceed 5% of employees.

- **Preventing passport confiscation:** Qatar has implemented strict measures to prevent passport confiscation, including fines of up to QAR 25,000.
- **Restriction on summer working hours between 15<sup>th</sup> June and August (2007):** Work done under the sun or in open workplaces between 11:30 and 15:00 has been banned and morning working hours have been restricted to a maximum of five hours. The sanction against violating the summer working hours law is the closure of the work site for a period of up to a month through a ministerial decision. The closure period depends on the severity of the violation, while further legal action can also be taken.

### **Safeguarding the health and wellbeing of all workers during the health crisis**

- The State of Qatar has implemented extensive measures to support the health and wellbeing of all expatriates in Qatar. Measures include:
  - **Accessible healthcare:** Individuals requiring medical consultation are seen by doctors and medical personnel when needed. Regular COVID-19 testing and monitoring is available for all citizens and residence in Qatar. Those testing positive receive immediate medical treatment in line with Qatar's national response plan.
    - Coronavirus testing is free for all Qatari residents and citizens, and anyone who tests positive immediately receives high-quality medical treatment at no cost.
  - **Wage Protection** The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (ADLSA) is working with companies to ensure the daily needs of workers are met, and wages are paid on schedule.
    - The Government has guaranteed that migrant workers who are in quarantine or undergoing treatment will receive full salaries and has allocated QAR 5 billion (USD 1.37 Billion) to pay the salaries of workers and rents of the employers, which can be accessed via banks.
    - Through the electronic Wage Protection System, the ADLSA is working 24/7 to monitor compliance and follow-up with companies found to be delaying payments.
    - Online exchange services to exchange and send money abroad without local fees have been made available.
  - **Accessible Communication:** The government is conducting large-scale, multi-language efforts to educate citizens and residents about what they can do to prevent the spread of coronavirus, inform them of the government's response, and provide accurate and up to date information on the COVID-19 vaccine.
    - A series of roundtable discussions have been held with labour attaches and expatriate community leaders. The government asked the leaders to help raise awareness around health and safety measures, assist in monitoring the on-the-ground situation in their community, and alert officials to any concerns.

- A national multimedia campaign has been launched via SMS, social media and radio targeting expatriates, including domestic workers and their employers to spread awareness of COVID-19, the government’s preventive measures and the vaccine.
- The ADLSA launched a 24/7 hotline service in several languages to receive workers’ grievances.
- Videos with infection control tips have been distributed in English, Hindi, Malayalam, Nepali, Urdu and Tagalog.
- Interviews with medical officials on local Asian language radios stations have been conducted to further distribute accurate information.
- Qatar has worked with companies to raise awareness for workers around preventive actions, including hygiene, sterilisation and cleaning of sites and buses, as well as controlled entry and exit to workplace.
- Qatar’s 16000 hotline call center can support in multiple languages to ensure everyone has access to accurate information.

### **Protecting workers through strict enforcement**

- In April 2019, HE the Minister of Administrative Labour and Social Affairs signed a decree regulating the conditions and procedures for the election of worker representatives in **Joint Committees**.
  - In each facility employing 30 or more workers, a “joint committee” shall be formed, comprising representatives of the employer and workers.
  - All facility workers will elect their representative to the Joint Committee, while the employer chooses his representatives on the committee from among his employees who legally represent him or to whom he delegates some of this management powers.
- In October 2018, the **Workers’ Support and Insurance Fund** was established with the aim of securing workers’ financial payments awarded by Labour Dispute Settlement Committees when a company becomes insolvent and is unable to pay workers.
- In 2017, Qatar introduced **Labour Dispute Settlement Committees** to improve workers’ access to justice. When a dispute arises, workers and employers first present the dispute to the ADLSA, which will take the necessary measures to resolve the issue amicably (within a period not exceeding seven days)
  - In June 2020, the ADLSA and the Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC) opened an office to facilitate the implementation of judgments made by Labour Dispute Settlement Committees against companies violating Qatar’s Labour Law No (14) of 2004. The office aims to speed up the registration of rulings and appeals and implementing judgments, which can include the seizure of property and assets electronically from companies in violation of the law.
  - Foreign workers can also submit their complaints online via the “Amemi” application. This procedure enables workers, who would not be able to go directly to the Ministry, to submit their complaints while ensuring that the confidentiality of those complaints is maintained.
- In November 2014, Qatar established a **Wage Protection System** for workers subject to the labour law to ensure wages are paid in full and on time. The system compels companies in Qatar to open bank accounts for employees and to transfer wages electronically without delay. Companies who are found in violation of

the WPS are punished by imprisonment for a maximum period of one year and fined up to QAR 10,000. The fine for violators was recently increased from the previous amount of QAR 6,000.

- Qatar has so far established **Qatar Visa Centres (QVCs)** in six countries, creating a unified visa system that expedites the recruitment process and protects the rights of workers by eliminating exploitative practices in their home countries. QVCs have been opened in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and the Philippines.
  - The services provided by QVCs abroad to expatriate workers include biometric data capture, vital data registration, medical examinations and contract signing.
- Qatar is in regular contact with the world's leading human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, to continuously improve our practices.

### **The 2022 FIFA World Cup™**

- After winning the right to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) developed a set of **Workers' Welfare Standards** to keep workers safe and healthy.
  - All SC workers are protected by the **Workers' Welfare Standards** – a contractually binding document that ensures all individuals contributing to the delivery of SC projects are treated with dignity and respect, in accordance with universally accepted principles of human rights.
  - These standards cover each workers' entire employment journey – from recruitment to repatriation – and are enforced by a robust, four-tier audit system that includes a third-party independent monitor, Impactt Ltd.
- The SC is dedicated to making the lives of workers better. Whether through training programmes to improve workplace skills, or awareness sessions to educate them about the importance of better diets, the SC oversees the entire journey of workers during their time on World Cup projects.
- The SC works with recognised partners both locally and internationally to deliver sustainable, long-term solutions for workers.
  - The SC works with experts such as BWI, Impactt Ltd, the ILO, Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar Deloitte, PWC, TechNiche and ADLSA to ensure the health and safety of workers.
  - This demonstrates the SC's commitment to improve the lives of all workers involved in the 2022 FIFA World Cup™.
- The SC has delivered a range of health and safety measures, including medical checks. Heat stress management systems, training and up-skilling to ensure workers stay safe.
  - Innovative, ground-breaking initiatives are used to enhance safety and leave a lasting legacy in Qatar and across the region.
  - The SC utilised existing Workers' Welfare (WW) skill-set and infrastructure to tackle and contain COVID-19 through a series of pro-active measures. The SC continues to monitor the situation daily.
- The SC has taken the opportunity of the FIFA World Cup™ to tackle a complex, global issue such as the payment of illegal recruitment fees.
- The SC's WW mandate has evolved into a wider scope to include tournament-centric services associated with hosting a mega-event.

- The SC has a responsibility to ensure the well-being of all workers involved in Host Country operations, including manpower and professional services in areas of security, accommodation, transport, and workforce management.
- Almost 60 projects have been assessed to ensure a holistic approach to protecting workers linked to 2022.

### Difficult questions

**1. According to the Qatar government's records, how many foreign nationals have died in Qatar between 2011 and 2020?**

The health and well being of everyone living in Qatar is of the utmost importance to the government. Over the last two decades, we have transformed our healthcare system to meet the medical needs of our diverse population. All citizens and foreign nationals have access to the free first-class healthcare, and we will continue to implement evidence-based policies to further

Improve the healthcare of the population.

More than 1,5 million expatriates from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal currently live in Qatar. This includes men and women employed across a range of blue, white and pink-collar jobs, as well as children, students and senior residence Millions more have lived in Qatar during the last 10 years and returned home.

Qatar takes health and safety of its population very seriously. Unfortunately, of the millions of residents from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal who have lived in Qatar from 2011 to 2019, a small number have sadly passed away while in Qatar.

The mortality rate among these communities is within the expected range for the size and demographics of the population. However, every lost life is a tragedy, and no effort is spared in trying to prevent every death in our country.

Regarding workers specifically, during the past decade there has been a steady decline in the mortality rate due to the extensive health and safety reforms we have introduced to our labour system. We expect this downward trend to continue in the future.

**2. What measures has the Qatar government taken to reduce the number of deaths among foreign nationals, in particular so-called natural deaths?**

Qatar registers a natural cause of death in cases where a person has died from age, illness or disease as opposed to accidents or violence.

As part of all employment contracts, foreign nationals have access to free first-class healthcare. The scope of Qatar's health services has been expanded in recent years to support a wider range of medical conditions, and Qatar invests more per capita in healthcare than any other GCC country.

As part of the government's efforts to further reduce the mortality rate, Qatar has raised awareness of health risks such as smoking and an unhealthy diet, strengthened health and safety laws, launched mental health initiatives including a mental health hotline in multiple languages, imposed strict penalties for dangerous driving, and encouraged an active lifestyle.

## **Workers' Welfare**

### **Workers' Welfare Key Messaging and Statistics February 2021**

#### **Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy**

The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) was established by the State of Qatar in 2011 to deliver the Infrastructure and host country planning and operations required for Qatar to host a historic FIFA World Cup™. Which accelerates its progress towards achieving national development goals and creates a lasting legacy for the country, region, Asia and the World.

The stadiums, non-competition venues and wider infrastructure that the SC and our stakeholders are delivering will contribute to a compact and connected FIFA World Cup™ with sustainability at its heart.

#### **Workers' Welfare**

Workers' Welfare has always been at the forefront of the SC's work, with dedicated teams working on welfare issues since 2013. The current Workers' Welfare Department (WWD) is housed within the Office of the Secretary General and has a vision for an amazing tournament that achieves best practice in workers' welfare and supports human and social development in Qatar.

Winning the bid to host the FIFA World Cup 2022™ was not just about the opportunity to host the biggest sporting tournament on the planet, but also about making a bold move in creating a social and human legacy. Through programmes including Workers' Welfare, the SC harnesses the power of football to stimulate human, social, economic and environmental development in communities across Qatar, the region and Asia.

Shortly after we won the hosting rights for Qatar 2022, the SC carried out critical groundwork to fully understand the environment and identify any gaps in welfare practices. This led to the establishment of the Workers' Charter in 2013 that, in turn, formed the blueprint for the Workers' Welfare Standards (WWS) published in 2014, and subsequently updated in 2016 and 2018.

The WWS are embedded in the SC's tendering process and are contractually binding. They were developed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our workers through three key pillars covering ethical recruitment, accommodation and the work environment. The SC continuously monitors the impact of our standards on workers, and the progress we are making in enhancing their wellbeing. This is done through a comprehensive reporting system –conducted both internally by the WWD, as well as through our external monitor, Impact Ltd.

Both the Workers' Charter and the WWS were issued before a shovel hit the ground on any of our projects. You can access our standards here:

<https://www.qatar2022.qa/en/opportunities/workers-welfare/our-standards>

The SC also works with international partners, such as global trade union Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI) and Impactt to audit and inspect our project sites and workers' accommodations and train inspectors and auditors with the goal of enhancing our programme and welfare standards for workers.

Our work is accelerating Qatar's ongoing efforts in spearheading labour reforms for migrant workers. The Government of Qatar works closely with local and international partners and is an emerging leader in the Gulf

region for raising labour standards and ending the exploitation of workers. The recent labour reforms that signaled the end of the Kafala system and introduced a non-discriminatory wage are further evidence of the country's commitment to creating a modern and dynamic labour system that will benefit workers, employers, and the nation alike.

## **Workers' Welfare**

### **Our Legacy**

The SC undertook many initiatives to reach out to workers and improve their overall health and well-being. These include:

#### **SC's Universal Reimbursement Scheme**

There are over 25M people worldwide affected by the practice of charging recruitment fees, which is illegal under international law, Qatari law and prohibited by our WWS. Many of our workers have inevitably paid recruitment fees in their home countries, but are unable to provide any proof – hindering reimbursement by their employers.

Through the SC's universal reimbursement scheme, the SC has shifted the burden of proof from workers to contractors, ensuring workers are fully reimbursed. As a result, workers are now able to better support their families and build a future for themselves.

Eleven of our contractors have extended this scheme to non-SC workers, demonstrating the human and social legacy of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™.

- 48,814 SC and non-SC workers are projected to receive QAR102.5M, of which QAR 78.2M has been reimbursed
- 47,230 hours spent on ethical recruitment audits since 2016

#### **Grievance Mechanisms (Access to Remedy)**

The SC recognizes the importance of giving workers a voice and encouraging worker empowerment. We have introduced several access to remedy mechanisms, including the appointment of Workers' Welfare Officers on all our programmes, and the establishment of our flagship grievance mechanism, Workers' Welfare Forums. The forums allow workers to elect workers' representatives to speak on their behalf about any concerns they have without fear of retaliation.

The legacy of this initiative goes beyond the SC environment as 12 contractors have decided to implement the forums for more than 12,590 non-SC workers. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (MoADLSA) have also shown interest in the SC model having observed several forums and representatives' elections, with the aim of replicating our model nation-wide.

The SC has also set up a Grievance Hotline, so workers can repost any concerns directly and anonymously back to us.

- 86 operational WWF and three Project Workers' Welfare Forums (PWWF)
- 13,100+ workers covered by the forums – 79% of the SC current workforce
- 12 contractors are conducting WWF for non-SC workers – covering 12,590 workers
- The SC WWD attended 328 online video conferencing meeting with WWF representatives during April 2020 to January 2021, out of approximately 500+ online WWF meetings
- A total of 874 grievances have been lodged via the hotline, 865 of which have already been resolved – 98.9%

#### **Electronic Health Records**

In early 2018, the SC collaborated with The Phoenix Partnership (TPP) to set up electronic medical records for workers. This is a first-of-its-kind healthcare initiative for workers in Qatar, offering workers a single medical record that any health practitioner can access.

## **Workers' Welfare**

All SC workers registered on the system undergo a comprehensive medical screening carried out by Qatar Red Crescent (QRC) and funded by the SC. The results form part of their centralized medical records, which can be accessed by clinics at the stadium and accommodation sites, as well as QRC-operated health centres.

- 27,544 comprehensive medical screenings conducted in partnership with QRC
- To date, 95,561 workers have registered with TPP, of which 14,554 workers are currently active

### **Nutrition Programme**

Through our partnership with Weil Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCMQ), we delivered a first-of-its-kind Nutrition Programme to improve dietary habits and raise awareness of the importance of health amongst our workers. WCMQ experts assess around 1,500 workers each year and provide them with training and awareness on leading a healthier lifestyle. We are also utilising their nutrition expertise to develop healthier menu options on site and in accommodation, in collaboration with contractors and catering supply companies.

- Year 2 health assessments (1,020 Workers); workers awareness day (700+ Attendees); print/video awareness campaign distributed at accommodation and construction sites; new menus developed, costed out and final report submitted
- Year 2 health assessments (1,379 workers); training and awareness sessions completed for 1,379 workers and contractors in January and March 2020; and virtual training for caterers administered to 27 catering staff serving contractors at Asian City in September 2020
- WCM-Q submitted winter health screening plan and currently finalizing visual elements of the awareness campaign which will be distributed across sites and accommodation at a later stage
- Communications campaign approved, including posters, roll-ups and an animation translated into 10 languages. Materials will be sent to print for distribution across sites and accommodations in 2021

### **Mental Health**

The SC collaborated with Qatar's Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) and Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) to develop a dedicated mental health care pathway for our workers to eliminate barriers in seeking mental health support. The pathway includes targeted screenings and dedicated clinics providing free consultation and treatment for workers. Over 4,000+ workers have been screened to date.

### **Heat Stress Study**

The SC collaborated in a major study commissioned by the ILO and MoADLSA to study the impact of heat stress on workers in Qatar. The summer 2019 research was carried out by heat stress experts FAME Lab and covered different shifts, nationalities, work designation and ages at an SC site.

The study demonstrated that the SC operates comprehensive heat stress management plans, with a raft of preventative measures already in place. This includes empowering workers to self-monitor and pace their workload, according to weather conditions.

### **StayQool**

As part of our heat mitigation strategies, the SC has collaborated with TechNiche and Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU) in Qatar to develop a revolutionary bespoke cooling suit "StayQool" designed to replace outdated construction coveralls. StayQool can reduce thermal skin temperature by a maximum of 8C, helping workers to stay cool and comfortable during the summer months.

- 50,000+ suits are being issued in a phased deployment, along with 20,000 balaclavas
- 28,000 StayCool suits deployed by end of summer 2020
- 3,500 cooling vests distributed to SC workers in 2018
- 10,000 cooling towels distributed to SC workers in 2017



## **Workers' Welfare**

### **Workers' App**

We have launched a dedicated mobile application for workers to provide a variety of services to improve their day-to-day lives in Qatar. The app includes finance and remittance functions, leisure and social activity information, health and nutrition advice, storage of personal documents, amongst a host of other features.

### **Training and Upskilling**

Workers' health and safety is a top priority for the SC. We partnered with Qatar International Safety Centre (QISC) to develop workers' technical and soft skills to equip them for the future, while also improving job performance and safety. Our training courses aim to ensure all workers are offered a smooth transition into working and living in Qatar through a comprehensive induction that covers information of their rights, access to remedy, cultural awareness, and trade-specific health and safety awareness.

- Eight key courses have been rolled out for workers and key contractor since 2017. Contract with QISC ended in October 2019 with a total of 20,671 workers trained
- New agreement started for year 2020 with a total of 2,022 people trained as below:
- 760 workers received the Workers' Welfare Induction Training
- 790 workers received Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Training
- 166 workers received Workers' Representative Training
- 177 workers received OHS Trade Specific Training
- 55 clinicians received OHS Training for Medical Staff
- 67 clinicians completed Basic Life Support and / or Advanced Cardiac Life Support Training
- 1 HSE staff member received Highfield Level 2 Award in Food Safety for Catering
- 3 HSE staff members received BBS Leadership Training
- 3 HSE staff members received Highfield Level 3 Award in Food Safety for Catering
- 57 people trained in 2021 to date
- 23 workers received Workers' Representative Training
- 31 camp facilities management and 3 WWD HSE personnel received Legionella, Mold, and other Toxins within Accommodation – Awareness Training

### **Covid-19 Measures**

In common with the rest of the world, the Covid-19 pandemic presented an unprecedented challenge for the SC. Our first priority was to keep our workers safe and minimize the spread of infection. We quickly implemented a range of proactive measures, in line with COVID-19 safety guidelines recommended by Qatar's MoPH.

We immediately implemented disinfection protocols at our medical facilities, and established quarantine rooms at all SC sites and accommodation. We ensured every project site received masks and sanitisers, and that our workers were social distancing. We immediately demobilized high-risk workers who had chronic diseases and/or were above 55 years and relocated them to a centralized accommodation facility. They continued to receive their salaries and other benefits, including free food and accommodation.

Our proactive strategy enable us to manage the spread of COVID-19 on our projects for up to six weeks until the first case was reported. We leveraged our existing network of medical clinics across all SC sites and accommodation to provide medical care.

In May 2020, the SC established a 1,000-bed capacity Isolation facility, with the guidance and approval of MoPH. The WWS-compliant facility enabled the SC to monitor and maintain strict quarantine protocols while treating workers infected with COVID-19, and minimize the spread of infection. On 13 August 2020, the Isolation Facility was closed following a significant drop in the number of active cases.

## Workers' Welfare

Throughout the pandemic, the Workers' Welfare team has maintained constant communication with workers to raise awareness of the various precautionary measures in place for their safety. We also worked closely with specialists at the MoPH and the Mental Health Service at HMC to develop a mental health awareness campaign, to provide support through these challenging times.

As part of the campaign, we delivered five videos with mental health professionals and four infographics to raise awareness on stress, anxiety, social isolation, depression, wellbeing and physical health. This content was translated into eight languages and distributed to more than 18,000 workers via SMS. For maximum impact we also shared this content with 15 embassies with high numbers of workers in Qatar, to be passed on to SC and non-SC workers. We also developed a COVID-19 awareness app that to date has already had over 207,000 downloads. We are working closely with our contactors to ensure strict compliance with our safety protocols so that workers are protected at all times.

- 300,000 masks distributed to 19,000 workers
- 285 COVID-19 site welfare inspections since March 2020
- 785 workers treated in the SC Isolation Facility throughout COVID-19

You can find more information on our COVID-19 safety for workers here:

<https://www.qatar2022.qa/sites/default/files/documents/workers-COVID19-measures-EN.pdf> (Above statics as of January 31, 2021)

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