

Technical Framework of Qatar's Foreign Aid Policy: Guiding Documents and Operative Institutions

Rangka Kerja Teknikal Dasar Bantuan Asing Qatar: Dokumen Panduan dan Institusi Pelaksana

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Abstract

This paper presents essential aspects of the State of Qatar foreign aid policy (QFAP), which is closely tied to the wider country's foreign policy. The study traces and explains vital foundations of the country's foreign aid policy framework and its decision-making process, mainly the guiding documents and operative institutions. Evidently, the content and structure of these two technical elements reflect the political and socio-cultural background as well as the regional and global surrounding of the state of Qatar. Although it is an emerging donor, Qatar's aid documents and institutions are showing radical development and prestigious institutionalizing. The technical guidance and the inclusiveness of QFAP documents and widespread operations of its institutions show that Qatar has further benefited from its partnerships and global engagements to advance its aid policy making. This research used face-to-face interviews with key Qatari officials and scrutinized the state official documents and quoted speeches and statements, in addition to other relevant academic materials.

Keywords: Foreign Aid Policy, Qatar, Documents, Institutions, Policy-Making.

Abstrak

Artikel ini membentangkan aspek dasar bantuan luar negeri Qatar (QFAP), yang berkait rapat dengan rangka kerja umum dasar luar negeri yang lebih luas. Kajian ini mengesan dan menerangkan 2 asas penting rangka kerja dasar bantuan asing negara dan proses membuat keputusannya; iaitu dokumen panduan dan institusi pelaksana. Melalui kajian ini, jelas menunjukkan bahawa kandungan dan struktur kedua-dua elemen teknikal ini mencerminkan latar belakang politik dan sosio-budaya serta persekitaran serantau dan global negara Qatar. Walaupun Qatar merupakan penderma yang

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baru menonjolkan diri dalam lanskap bantuan global, namun dokumen dan institusi bantuan Qatar menunjukkan ia sebagai perkembangan positif dan institusi yang berprestij. Panduan teknis dan keterangkuman dokumen QFAP dan operasi meluas institusinya menunjukkan bahawa Qatar telah terus mendapat manfaat daripada perkongsian dan penglibatan globalnya untuk memajukan pembentukan dasar bantuannya. Kajian ini dijalankan berdasarkan temu bual langsung dengan para pegawai Qatar dan pakar yang berkaitan, di samping menganalisis dokumen dan laporan rasmi negara, memetik ucapan dan kenyataan rasmi, serta mengambil kira sumber akademik dan saintifik lain yang berkaitan.

Kata Kunci: Dasar Bantuan Asing, Qatar, Dokumen, Institusi, Proses Pembentukan Dasar.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of new aid donors, of which some are Muslim states, exposed the global aid system to diverse and different aid behaviours, policies and frameworks. Besides some other Muslim countries, particularly in the Middle East, the state of Qatar has been rapidly involved in the aid giving activities and aid donorship. This tendency has been more visible since a new Amir came to power in 1995 in which many political and economic aspects of the country were changed. A part of that, Qatar's aid behaviour which has been framed to be more institutionalised and recognised regionally and globally. This paper provides a technical outlook about Qatar's foreign aid policy framework in relation to its guiding documents and operative institutions which reflects the policy and decision making in the country.

1. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Although Qatar's proactive foreign policy agenda sets the basis for its aid policy, there are several other elements that effectively and technically contribute to the outlook and framework of this policy. These elements were perceived through interviews and examining the official aid documents of the concerned institutions and organisations in the country. Combining and understanding these the nature and function of such elements will provide a comprehensive knowledge about QFAP framework as well as its policy and decision-making process. This paper considers two interrelated elements of QFAP: 1) the guiding documents, and, 2) the operative institutions.

Guiding Documents for QFAP

There are several guiding documents that provide practical and administrative orientation to QFAP, inspire its mission and goals, and regulate its operations and programmes. These documents represent the state's hierarchical system as well as the accumulated technical knowledge that Qatar has been acquiring throughout the past decades.

1.1.1 Emiri Decrees, Directives and Speeches

The nature of the political system in Qatar, as an absolute dynastic monarchy, makes the Emir's decisions, directives and speeches very effective and instantly considered by all institutions especially those associated with foreign policy. As the state's decision-making structure is highly personalised and centralised to the Emir and the ruling family, significant decisions are made top-down by the Emir, his heir, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with the Emir often being personally involved in foreign policy issues (Khatib, 2013, p. 418). Thus, the personal ideas and preferences of the Emir that are mentioned in his formal speeches, decrees and directives are prioritised and absorbed in all ministries and institutions. In terms of foreign aid, the Emir's guidance plays a major role in setting and implementing the country's aid policy and orienting its institutions.

The notion of the Emir's guidance and its effective role in QFAP has been mentioned throughout all interview sessions. Going through the Emir's speeches and directives, it is evident that foreign aid and its policy are well noted and highly considered. Foreign aid has been repeatedly mentioned in the Emir's speeches on many occasions such as, UN General Assembly meetings, bilateral meetings, media statements, Emiri directives among others. For instance, Qatari Emirs (the father and son), have constantly emphasised during their speeches in the annual meetings of the UNGA on Qatar's efforts in development and humanitarian programmes.

All Emir's speeches and preferences, related to QFAP, are reflected by the Amiri Diwan into statements and directives that are delivered to the concerned ministries and institutions. The aid initiatives, and non-systemic aid that are announced by the Emir, are transferred to those institutions as Emiri orders for consideration and implementation. For example, aid directives have been issued by the Amiri Diwan for supporting and providing aid to the Gaza strip in 2008, to Yemen in 2012, to Syria in 2014, etc. (Diwan, 2018). These directives, depending on the

scope and subject, aim to show the state's response to challenges and crises facing humanity in many parts of the world (MOFA.2019).

Furthermore, the Emiri speeches and directives do not only set the strategies and vision for QFAP, but provided, to some extent, technical guidance about recipient countries, sectors and potential projects and partners. For example, administrative notes related to aid and aid policy are issued when the Emir conducts visit to other countries which might receive aid from Qatar. This has been constantly observed in the Emir visits to several developing countries such as Jordan, Tunisia, Turkey and Ghana.

1.1.2 Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV)

Qatar's National Vision 2030 (QNV), which is the comprehensive development strategy of the State of Qatar, supported by its leadership, was initiated in 2007 under the guidance and leadership of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifah Al Thani. It was adopted pursuant to the Emiri decision No. 44 of 2008, for the achievement of progress and prosperity in the country and the transformation of Qatar into an advanced state with the capability to achieve sustainable development and securing a high living standard for generations to come (MOFA, 2012b; MDPS, 2018). Further to its vision and general framework that empower fairness and prosperity inside the territory of Qatar (Miller & Al-Mansouri, 2016, p.55), it directs the country's contribution to the prosperity and well-being of other parts of the world.

The QNV document is a working manual that is mainly concerned with the outcomes as target, not the means. QNV offers a general framework for national development strategies, trends and available options, that reflect the aspirations and culture of Qatari people, focusing on 4 pillars of development: human, social, economic, and environmental (GCO, 2018; Diwan, 2018). Each one of these pillars has an immediate connection with the foreign aid policy. For example, for the social development pillar of international cooperation, it is mentioned as a target for "bolstering the regional role of Qatar economically, politically and culturally." The QNV considers international cooperation as an integral aspect of the national development process (MDPS, 2018; MOFA, 2017). It identifies the most significant aims in the field of international cooperation, namely, improving the regional and global role of the State of Qatar economically, politically and culturally, particularly within the framework of the GCC, the Arab League, the OIC and the UN System

and its affiliated entities;, and helping to establish international peace and security through political initiatives and offering humanitarian assistance (MDPS, 2017, p.267).

Outcome Number 4 in the QNV, International Cooperation is:

“As a responsible member of the international community, Qatar will contribute towards international peace and security through political initiatives and development and humanitarian assistance” (QNV, 2008, p.23).

According to Ministry of Planning Development and Statistics’ (MDPS) report (2015) on actualizing it, the QNV helped Qatar to shape an international aid strategy of which frameworks related to neighbouring countries and the Arab and Muslim worlds are set. The QNV pays enough attention to the foreign policy tying it to the goals of the comprehensive development. More importantly, this document represents an advanced stage of policy development related to QFAP. It gives a framework to the national development strategies (NDS), patterns and accessible alternatives, mirroring the yearnings and culture of Qatari individuals and setting ways to tackle principle challenges at national and global level.

Therefore, the QNV plays a crucial role in setting a strategic vision for the formulation and operation of QFAP. This would facilitate Qatar’s goal to be a respected member of the international community. Inspired by the QNV, Qatar has persisted in consolidating and building its international cooperation profile using bilateral, regional and multilateral arrangements and programmes. Involving in mediation and conflict resolution efforts and other diplomatic initiatives is a practical reflection of this inspiration. Moreover, the QNV document considers the frameworks and concepts adopted by the UN such as in development and climate change. Thus, QNV is considered as a passage for going into the international stage with the purpose of establishing a solid foreign policy and foreign aid policy. It additionally helps Qatar to grow its political organisations beyond the traditional frameworks based on a focused and clear vision that is in harmony with its deviant foreign policy agenda.

1.1.3 Qatar National Development Strategy (NDS)

Initially, the National Development Strategy (NDS), which was launched in March 2011, contained practical approaches and mechanisms about the QNV 2030’s pillars and commitments. NDS aims to support the state in its efforts to achieve a sustainable development path that will bring about prosperity, and harmonise economic, social and environmen-

tal outcomes. To date, Qatar has gone through 2 NDSs; the first covering the period 2011–2016, and the second covering the period 2018 – 2022. Both are designed to set a path towards the achievement of Qatar's comprehensive development that is one of the main goals of the QNV.

Qatar's NDS provides a technical framework and means for the state to implement the SDGs, in particular as set in SDG 17 and financing for development. It sets tangible strategies and measurements for implementing international conventions, resolutions of UN agencies and regional organisations and provides the indicators required for measuring progress towards international development goals (MDPS, 2017, p.269). Additionally, it enables foreign aid institutions to play a catalytic role in international development and in implementing Qatar's foreign aid policy as it sets targets for these institutions, enabling them to implement their projects in a timely and professional manner. The NDS provides a detailed and distinctive way for the State of Qatar to air its desire to pass on the significance of sustainable development throughout the globe. Thus, it gives Qatar an opportunity to strategically highlight its contribution to the Global Partnership for Development, including humanitarian aid and substantial spending on development assistance.

Besides, NDS sets specific outcomes, main outcomes and intermediate outcomes, and targets to be achieved by the Qatari government in the field of global partnerships for development. Such targets facilitate the distribution of task among ministries, government institutions, the private sector and NGOs. By following an outcome-based key arranging policy, all concerned parties are integrated into a coordinated process that anticipates accomplishing Qatar's position globally. In this regard, NDS sets the sectoral challenges and the required responses and initiatives, from aid institutions, to address and overcome these challenges and creating a favourable environment in the international cooperation sector.

Moreover, NDS places a practical hierarchal coordination mechanism that is headed by MOFA and regulated by its policies. Such a mechanism encourages MOFA, aid institutions and other partners to act on national and international development to guarantee a coherent international activity of all State sectors in an integrated and meaningful manner (ibid, p. 269). Qatari institutions and organisations as well as the international organisations are included in this coordination mechanism. Another aspect of this coordination with the MOFA is related to facilitating and enhancing the development and building capacity of institutions concerned with foreign aid and its policy.

1.1.4 Qatari Laws on Regulations on Charity Operations

As the contribution of the non-governmental organisations was constantly increasing due to the proliferation of charities and development organisations in Qatar since the early 1990s, a policy framework was needed to regulate their activities and to legalise the operations of these entities outside the country. Besides, the terror allegations towards Islamic charitable organisations, especially after the 9/11, necessitated putting in place a regulation mechanism for all Qatari organisations and charities that are involved in foreign aid activities. The state of Qatar and some of the Qatari charities have been explicitly accused of terrorist activities and supporting radical Islamic insurgencies such as Alnusra Front in Syria and Taliban in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the increasing reports about money laundering provided another reason that motivated the State of Qatar to pursue such a legal framework and controlling mechanisms.

Essentially, the Qatari Constitution of 2005 established Shari'a or Islamic law as the primary source of legislation in Qatar. Qatar has put in place certain laws for legalising local organisations and charities as well as regulating their operations inside and outside the country. For example, Law No. 8 of 1998, which regulated both private associations and foundations was in turn superseded by Law No. 12 of 2004 (the 2004 Law), which regulates all foundations and associations established for charitable, humanitarian, social, cultural, scientific, and professional purposes. A significant role of these Laws was related to hierarchal administrative responsibility for registering and monitoring these organisations. Another legislation is Law No. 13 of 2004 which established the Qatar Authority for Charitable Activities (QACA), tasked with the responsibility to regulate donations, supervise charitable and philanthropic foundations and associations, and conduct charitable and humanitarian activities entrusted to it by the state and funded by donations from the Emir (ICNPL, 2017, p. 32).

Another related legal framework, mainly set to combat terror financing and money laundering, is Law No. 4 of 2010 replacing Law No 28 of 2002. The Law enabled the state institutions in reviewing financial transactions and financial activities as well as enforcing measurements and standards to ensure apposite oversight of these financial transactions (Almeezan, 2018). Also, this Law showed Qatar's commitment to be aligned with the international standards adopted by major international organisations and other donors. It has established an effective legal and regulatory framework for government and other organizations to coordinate efforts in ensuring proper use of aid resources and efficiency of

partnerships with local agencies in the recipient countries. Evidently, this Law has also contributed to improve efficiency and transparency of Qatari foreign aid.

Essentially, the most important legislation in this regard is Law No. 15 of 2014, which is pertaining to the Regulation of Philanthropic Activities (2014 Law). The law regulates aspects related to registration and licensing of aid organisations and collection of donations, ensuring transparent reporting of their overseas activities, and setting funds transfer mechanism to recipient countries and partners. The importance of this law originates in two aspects. First, it was issued along with the establishment of a government authority to implement it, which is the Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities (RACA). Second, it focuses on aid organisations and provides very strict procedures for them to follow in terms of working in the development and foreign aid areas. This law is considered a significant milestone in the QFAP, especially in issues related to the non-governmental part of Qatari foreign aid and the progression towards setting up a foil against terror. It provides a global solid footing for the State of Qatar to minimize the terror accusations against its organizations and aid funds and transfers.

The 2014 Law replaces any earlier contradictory law, which means that other laws regulating social, cultural, scientific, and professional associations are still in force. Moreover, it contributes in developing the administrative capability of the Qatari aid Institutions. Likewise, it demonstrates that the public governmental system, which legitimises the charity operations, is contributing viably to the foreign aid policy. Such impact will certainly augment the government efforts to eradicate extremism and maintain development programmes. In addition, this Law, with RACA role, provided a systematic and legal coordination framework for all charitable efforts and various aid operations of Qatari organisations.

1.1.5 International and Regional Organizations, Treaties and Agreements

As the state of Qatar has been seeking to establish its presence in the international community, it has made concerted efforts to join many international and regional organisations, ratify concerned treaties and signed related agreements and conventions. Besides its active membership in the UN, OIC, AL, GCC, and recently becoming a participant in the OECD DAC, Qatar has joined more than 328 regional and Interna-

tional organisations (MOFA, 2017). Also, Qatar has signed more than 600 bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements (Almeezan, 2018), of which many are concerning international cooperation issues and for the sake of international development (MOFA, 2017). For example, Qatar has ratified the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. Thus, Qatar has been keen on actively participating in boosting international cooperation in various fields, by signing related treaties and contributing to various related organisations.

Moreover, Qatar has adopted the goals and resolutions of UN conferences that address the issues of sustainable development and climate change within the priorities of the development agenda and achieving global welfare like MDGs and SDGs. Qatar also, in collaboration with other partners, hosts international forums and conferences that are related to boosting international cooperation and enhancing international development and aid policy. For example, Qatar hosted the South-South Cooperation Summit in 2005 and donated USD20 million; the Second International Conference on Financing for Development in 2008; the 13th United Nations conference on Trade and Development (UNCTED); the Climate Change Conference in 2012, and recently the High-level Conference on Financing for Development and the Means of Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in November 2017.

This behaviour by the Qatari government is considered as a pragmatic policy reflection for the principles of the Qatari state that are mentioned in the country's Permanent Constitution. Articles 6 and 7 of which stipulate: "The State shall respect international charters and conventions, and shall strive to implement all international agreements, charters, and conventions it is a party thereof." Such behavior is also a real conversion of the QNV 2030 document which takes into account Qatar's partnership for development and international development agenda. This has been confirmed throughout the interview sessions; with many respondents expressing that Qatar's involvement in the international community has affected its foreign aid policy aspects.

In fact, this involvement of Qatar in international treaties and conferences, especially in development cooperation, has three reflective dimensions in the QFAP. First, it has helped Qatar improve its policy-making aspects and built up the capacity of its institutions and aid frameworks and enabled it to adopt international aid standards. Second, it has facilitated Qatar's alignment and integration into the global aid sys-

tem and its affiliated frameworks. Lastly, this relation has increased Qatar's commitments and obligations towards the international development agenda, which might be one of the reasons that explain the rapid increase in the value of Qatari foreign aid.

Institutions for Qatar's Foreign Aid Policy

As a part of its institutional development and for the importance of the foreign aid policy implementation, the State of Qatar has established several technical institutions whose mission is to disburse foreign aid and monitor its operations as well as to ensure its efficiency in achieving targeted outcomes. QFD, the Department of International Development at the MOFA and RACA are mainly the technical public institutions working for this purpose. In addition to that, the Qatari government has enhanced the establishment and the operations of numerous development organisations and charities (NGOs) that are operating in many parts of the world. Previously and similar to other GCC countries, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) used to be considered also as an actual aid institution that played an effective role in the formulation and implementation of aid policy especially through its direct relations with the royal leadership (Villanger, 2007, p. 235). Collectively, all these institutions contribute to Qatar's foreign aid policy at different levels including international aid framework and global partnerships for development. These institutions are as listed below.

1.1.6 Amiri Diwan

The Amiri Diwan, which is the sovereign body and the managerial office of the Emir, stands as the highest-ranking authority and decision-making institution in the state's foreign aid policy. As the seat of standard of the State of Qatar, it goes about as a nexus between the Emir and all government and non-administrative bodies inside Qatar and externally (Diwan, 2018). Besides its multi-tasking and complex assignments and obligations, the Amiri Diwan has the most effective hierarchical authority in Qatari foreign aid and its policy. Throughout the past decades, the Amiri Diwan has been the major policy source for QFAP. It provides general direction and guidance as well as technical advice when needed. The Diwan also ensures that the vast majority of Qatari aid policies are shaped in accordance with Qatar's priorities and high-ranking state principles. The Diwan is led by Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al

Thani, the Emir, who is the most prominent member in the Qatari foreign aid decision-making.

The Diwan was constantly referred to by respondents as the main source and hierarchal administrator for QFAP. Many of them confirmed that it is the most influential institution in policy formulation and decision making. Some interviewees referred to the Amiri Diwan, when referring to other indirect related institutions, such as the MOF, as the institution with the maximum power to direct all state entities. An important aspect that has been revealed about the Amiri Diwan is related to its role as a manifest symbol of the ruling family. Many respondents stated that the Qatari leadership guidance and influence is mainly disseminated through this institution, confirming it has the most effective influence on all policies including foreign policy and QFAP.

1.1.7 Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

As it holds responsibility for Qatar's international cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is the central specialist in managing and implementing, supervising, and overseeing the country's foreign aid and its policy. MOFA leads all the institutional courses of action and arrangements of Qatar's foreign aid. Currently, the International Cooperation Department, which was the focal body entrusted with such exercises since 2010, is legitimately responsible for incorporating and checking all administration and non-government Qatari foreign aid. It is responsible for forming the country's foreign aid policy; organising and directing aid in accordance with Qatar's priorities and international resolutions; monitoring and evaluating official development assistance (ODA) and proposing the level of assistance; offering technical assistance to the recipient government and non-government bodies; and concluding partnerships with regional and international development organisations (MDPS, 2015, p.243). The division is additionally entrusted with the provision of regular and irregular reporting about Qatar's foreign aid such as Annual Reports and technical notes (MOFA, 2012a, p.72). These reports provide an overview of its international cooperation activities and the flows of its aid disbursements to countries, regional and multilateral organisations.

Previously until 2010, MOFA's role in international cooperation policy and in the management of aid activities was assigned to the Department for International Development through the Office of the Undersecretary for International Cooperation. Generally, and throughout the past two decades, MOFA has been leading the policy of international co-

operation and its pillars, including the QFAP. The role of MOFA is primarily in two interrelated aspects, internally and externally. Internally, it coordinates links with several governmental and non-governmental organisations and provides needed technical guidance. Externally, it sets up as a solid system of aid with the foreign nations, including the usual review and screening of foreign aid strategy based on the interests and advantages for Qatar.

In the course of the interviews, the majority of the respondents highlighted the role of MOFA in leading and developing QFAP locally and internationally. In the interview with the Director of the Department of International Cooperation, he said: "...The MOFA role, represented in Department of International Cooperation, is very essential in Qatar's foreign aid policy. Besides leading all local aid organisations and NGOs, we establish partnerships with all external partners bilaterally and multilaterally. We aim to improve our aid policy that matches with the prestigious foreign policy of Qatar."

Some of MOFA's actions and decisions in relation to QFAP including humanitarian response are proposed through the Qatari diplomatic missions that are in various parts of the world, where ambassadors raise matters for the Ministry for its action and coordination. The ministry effectively acts as a gatekeeper for all activities, frameworks and strategies related to aid and aid policy. The hierarchical position and technical capacity of MOFA allows it to have a crucial influence on all other governmental and non-governmental aid agencies including the ability to enforce desirable mechanisms and strategies.

1.1.8 Qatar Fund for Development (QFD)

Similar to other GCC states and many international donors, Qatar has established its specialised foreign aid institution, the "Qatar Fund for Development" (QFD). It was established by Law No. 19 of 2002 and was aligned later with the Qatar National Vision 2030 to implement external aid projects and deal with the technical global collaboration objectives. QFD is the public development organisation that manages and operates Qatari foreign aid at the international level. It is the technical authority that focuses mainly on longer-term development sectors such as education, health, social services, and economic empowerment as well as infrastructural projects and humanitarian and relief efforts.

As defined in its charter, the Fund's main objectives are to provide grants, loans, and technical assistance to developing countries or legal persons belonging to any of these countries as well as contributing to the capital of development finance institutions and other international and foreign development institutions (Almeezan, 2018). QFD, on behalf of the State of Qatar, is committed to "improving the livelihood of communities around the world and delivering Qatar's international commitments for supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mainly no. 3, 4 and 8 and considering other SDGs related to humanitarian operations such as those in SDG 2 and 6 (QFD, 2018).

The main role QFD plays, as the national aid agency of Qatar, is to technically represent the country in its aid-giving through its bilateral and multilateral cooperation and engaging with local and international partnerships based on recipient needs and mutual interest. The fund channels a high percentage of the country's official aid. For example, in the years 2016, 2017, and 2018 QFD dispensed the amounts of USD507 million, USD673 million, and USD585 million respectively to around 80 countries worldwide (QFD Annual Reports, 2016, 2017, 2018). It manages the financial transactional payments and monitors project implementation in the targeted countries. QFD is the individual institution that provides aid through a variety of financial instruments including grants, soft loans, commercial loans, guarantees and development investments.

Even though the Fund has been operating for a relatively short time, it has made great strides in international development cooperation. Besides its cooperation with many active actors including Qatari NGOs, Qatari government ministries and agencies and the private sector, QFD sets partnerships with bilateral, regional and international organisations and deals directly with the governments of developing countries in the course of financing development projects. QFD's ability to establish partnerships is evidently successful especially with international organisations such as UN agencies and regional aid institutions. For example, in the past five years only, QFD has signed partnership agreement (MOUs) with more than 10 of the UN agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, and UNDP. QFD also coordinated continuously with local and international partner organisations to plan and implement rapid humanitarian responses for countries in need such as Syria, Palestine and Sudan.

During the interviewing process, the Director of the Fund stated that the QFD had made remarkable progress in highlighting the role of the State of Qatar in the field of international development and reflecting

its efforts as well as meeting its international commitments. He affirmed that QFD's work was not confined to only to the provision of financial grants, but rather it succeeded in leveraging other international donors to finance projects in countries that are prioritised by the State of Qatar. Reviewing the QFD's reports, it is found that certain sectors like education, healthcare and economic empowerment are prioritized in its operations. Although financing infrastructural projects are obviously favoured in the QFD's policy, it also funds a variety of fields such as relief programmes, budget support and economic development.

Moreover, in line with Qatar policy, the Fund has launched several initiatives in response to regional and global challenges. For example, QFD has financed three initiatives in Palestine, Syria and India and Bangladesh; 1) WAJD Initiative, USD10 million, in Palestine 2014 for empowering Gaza orphaned children; 2) QUEST initiative, USD 150 million, in Syria, 2015 to provide education and training to approximately 400,000 Syrian refugees within Syria and in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey; 3) the Qatar Creating Vision Initiative, in India and Bangladesh for treating 5.5 million children with blindness. Also, QFD is increasingly setting more partnerships in the areas of Refugees and livelihoods such the USD 50 Million project for supporting Rohingya refugees in Malaysia.

1.1.9 The Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities (RACA)

Recently, there have been increasing local and global challenges that faced the philanthropic sector and operations of aid organisations including the terrorism links allegations against Qatar and its organisations. Responding to that, the state of Qatar has set the Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities (RACA) which was established in 2014 by the Emiri Resolution No. 43, as a public corporate institution. The establishment of RACA was considered as part of a new movement of regulation aimed at reshaping the Qatari philanthropic sector and its wide range of programmers and activities inside and outside Qatar (ICNPL, 2017, p.39). The purpose of this decision was to make all charitable and philanthropic entities subject to a separate regulatory scheme that considers their specific nature and ensures alignment with the state's overall aid policy and Qatari laws.

The role of RACA is to regulate the operations of humanitarian and charitable associations and foundations and provide all support to

facilitate their operations inside and outside Qatar including promoting of philanthropic values. It is charged with registering all these humanitarian and development organisations, monitoring their funding transfers related to philanthropic work and supervising their philanthropic activities such as collection of donations and types of projects. Besides ensuring that such philanthropic funds are not used for illegal or money laundering purposes, RACA investigates the identity of the partners of these originations in the recipient countries. RACA is considered the vital authority that coordinates all the charitable originations and facilitates their programmes especially in its relations with the very concerned parties such as Qatar's Central Bank, Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs and Qatar State Security who all are the members of its Board of Directors.

RACA staff, when interviewed, seemed to be very familiar with the philanthropic sector in Qatar including the background and nature of all charities. They stressed that RACA plays an essential role in the QFAP framework especially in those aspects related to the NGOs in terms of their operations, transparency and capacity building. The RACA documents and reports show that it puts in place several plans and strategies to ensure the compliance of charitable associations and foundations with Qatari Law and policy. Generally, and technically, RACA has been one of the tools in QFAP that has been used by the Qatari government to reduce the terror accusations and control aid and philanthropic organisations. It has helped Qatar to achieve its goals of combating terrorism, improving its image in the international arena as a moderate Muslim donor, and enhancing its involvement in international aid system. Moreover, it is contributing to make Qatari charitable giving and non-governmental aid more focused, transparent and aligned with local and global frameworks.

1.1.10 Qatari Charities and Foundations

Qatar, like other Gulf countries, witnessed a rapid proliferation of foundations, civil society organisations, NGOs and charities that operate in disbursing aid and implementing development and humanitarian projects. Many of these organisations are representing some ruling family members and private sector figures (businessmen) who want to have a charity wing to their businesses either for fulfilling Islamic obligations or for other social purposes such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). These charities and organisations contribute a significant proportion of Qatar's foreign aid and play an essential role in mobilising resources and funds as well as serving as implementing agencies outside the borders of Qatar (MDPS, 2015, p.245).

Consequently, these organisations play significant roles in the QFAP setting which can be articulated in three interrelated dimensions. First, these organisations represent more of the implicit aspects of the policy, mainly the socio-cultural and religious background of the Qatari people and their insights into the country's aid policy. They can target sectors and geographical areas and implement activities that official government intuitions are unable to reach due to political and administrative constrains. Examples of these are the religious activities like construction of mosques and orphanages and supporting Islamic centres and Qur'anic schools. Another example is operating in countries where Qatar has no diplomatic presence such as in Syria, After the "Arab Spring," and Yemen, after the Gulf crisis.

Second dimension is related to the nature of funding. These organisations can mobilise funding and obtain resources through media and social campaigns as well as their networks. Such funds are obtained through using slogans like "brotherhood solidarity," "good neighboring" and Islamic concepts like Zakak, Sadaqat, and Waqf. They may go beyond that to express humanitarian values such as giving to the needy and helping the vulnerable. They can incorporate both social and public funding for supporting their programmes and operations outside the country.

The third dimension is related to the project scope and volume of the given aid as these organisations can intervene in small scale projects, and work with tiny local stakeholders (partners) in the recipient countries. Such interventions by official aid institutions are impossible due to certain logistics and administrative constrains. For example, some of these organisations are funding small projects like medical screening campaigns, academic scholarships, provision of school stationery, etc. Such interventions effectively contribute to increase the number of local partners and widen the spectrum for Qatari aid and its frameworks.

The role of these organisations in Qatar's aid and its policy has been regularly praised by many respondents. When analysing the background of the Qatari charities and organisations, three different categories are identified: 1) Public Organisations such as Qatar Charity, Munazzamat Aal-Da'wa al-Islamiia, Afif Foundation, and Qatar Foundation; 2) Technical Organisations such as Qatar Red Crescent (Health), Education Above All (Education), Silatech (Economic Empowerment), and Reach Out to Asia (Education); 3) Organisations that are established and funded by members from the ruling family or public figures such as Sheikh Eid Charity, Sheikh Thani bin Abdullah Foundation for Human-

tarian Services (RAF), Hamad and Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani Charitable Foundation, Sheikh Nasser Bin Khaled foundation and Alfaisal without Borders foundation . An example of each individual category is elaborated as follows:

1.1.10.1 Qatar Charity (QC)

Qatar charity is considered the biggest and the leading organisation in disbursing the Qatari aid for development and humanitarian purposes. It was founded in 1992 to help orphans as a result of the war in Afghanistan then turned to be an organisation working on various development and humanitarian programmes. Currently, QC operates in more than 50 countries and has more than 25 offices, mainly in the Muslim majority countries. In addition to its worldwide operations including conflict zones such as Syria and Yemen, it has a wide-range of partners both local and international NGOs and UN agencies. Its operations in development fields focus mainly on health, education, food security, empowerment, housing and social care, while its humanitarian programmes go mainly to shelter, health emergencies, food and financial aid. It also funds and implements several religious-based projects such as construction of mosques and Islamic centres and provision of financial payments to the poor (*Kafalah*). QC's annual average budget is around USD 250 million generated mainly from donations, Islamic trusts (*Waqf*) and government funds (QC, 2018).

QC is considered an essential aid organisation that represents the non-governmental Qatari aid sector in the international development and humanitarian efforts as a funding and implementing agency. QC's rising position as an international NGO, operating in various parts of the world with abundant resources, makes it a recognised milestone in QFAP especially with its variety of aid programmes. QC's widespread global partnerships especially with the UN agencies contributes to strengthening Qatar's position as a recognised aid player. However, this makes QC's operations and activities more framed and determined by the aid policy framework of the country. Considering the fact that it does not have any immediate connection with the Qatari imperial family, is an evident example that QC represents a joint cooperation among the state's policy, people's interests and private sector contribution.

During the interviews, QC was repeatedly mentioned, by many respondents, as a manifesting instance of Qatar's organisations involved in the international development and humanitarian efforts. Furthermore, respondents from QC emphasised that the organisation's contribution in

the international aid system is derived from Qatari society's values, principles and cultural heritage. They also affirmed that charity is still the core principle of their organization, although it receives funding and support from the governmental institutions and private sector. Interestingly, they brought development concepts and issues such as transparency, accountability and governance which show the decent level QC has reached as a Qatari development organisation.

1.1.10.2 Qatar Red Crescent (QRC)

Qatar Red Crescent (QRC) is considered a technical aid institution due to its focus mainly on the healthcare sector as per its mandate and connection with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRCRC). QRC was established in 1978 as the first volunteer charity organization in the country. In terms of funding, QRC also plays a major role as recognised national funding instrument that raises funds from a variety of sources such as private sector and the local people. Its funding resources are mainly from government, people's donations and social and media campaigns.

Its programmes largely aim to alleviate human suffering in four key areas; emergency relief efforts, health care, water and sanitation, shelter, food and supporting vulnerable communities (QRC, 2018). With annual budget of around USD 50 million and 25 field offices, QRC operates in more than 47 developing countries, including conflicted zones, such as Ethiopia, Myanmar, Yemen and Nepal. In fact, QRC operations framework is determined by two main factors; the State Policy and IFRCRC federation mandates. Reviewing its activities and programmes as well as its geographical existence, shows that it is connected to the state policy and the inclusion of efficacies into its operations. For example, all QRC field offices are in Arab and Muslim countries.

As QRC was the first Qatari charity association established in the country and due to the government's direct involvement in its funding and operations, it is considered a semi-public institution. During the interviews, QRC was referred to, by many respondents, as a prestigious Qatari development and humanitarian organisation. Meanwhile, its staff confirmed that QRC gives a high consideration to the state's aid policy and follows its outlines, they stated that its operations are based on the recognized core international humanitarian standards and principles. Apparently, QRC plays a significant role in presenting and strengthening Qatar's contribution in the international aid particularly in humanitarian

aspects; QRC is a visible sign of Qatari aid. Also, as a standardized organization, QRC provides an interactive platform for Qatar to build up its aid capacity and policy development. Its aid framework, practices and operations are plainly connected with foreign aid policy of the State of Qatar.

1.1.10.3 *Sheikh Eid Charity (SEC)*

Many members of the royal family, Al-Thani family, have established and funded charities and organisations that carry their names. SEC was founded in 1995 by Sheikh Eid bin Mohamed Al Thani and was primarily to provide aid and services to victims of natural disasters, and to support educational projects. Currently, SEC is one of the largest charitable organisations in the Middle East and provides aid to more than 47 countries around the world in various areas of disaster relief, construction, culture, education, and health. It supports various activities such as distribution of food supplies, medical campaigns, construction of mosques and financial aid to patients and students. With an average annual budget of USD 100 million, its revenues are generated mainly from individual donors, revenues from Islamic trusts (*Waqfs*) and government support.

SEC, and other similar organisations, represent a visible feature of the ruling family involvement in the country's foreign aid at development and humanitarian aspects. When examining the scope of SEC operations, it is found that all of its activities and programmes are exclusively in the Muslim countries (SEC, 2016). Most of its operations are focusing mainly on projects that are within the Islamic concept of *Ajr* (Reward) such as mosques and Islamic centers, Dawah activities, orphan centers and drinking water wells. Although these operations are development and welfare related, especially the educational and social programmes, they are within the umbrella of Islamic beliefs of doing good and can be considered faith-based projects.

Apparently, such organisations do not only signify the ruling family contribution in the Qatari foreign aid, but they denote the wealth and power associated to Al Thani family as well as its charity and religious practices. In terms of funding, they form common schemes for people, ruling family and the state. In addition to those charities and organisations, that are announced in Amiri Decrees, most of these organisations get funds and establish partnerships with the government to implement project overseas. Practically these organizations operate in many Arab and Muslim Countries and target various sectors and projects at different

scales. Although, these charities have been exposed to some terror funding accusations, their local partnerships in the recipient counties have been reflected in popularity and appreciation for the sponsoring figures from Al Thani family. This might correspond to some contentions that Qatar's elite can be understood to desire a leading role in the Middle East and beyond (Kaussler, 2015). A notable observation in this research, revealed by certain respondents, that the presence of such organisation in a certain needy country would increase the likelihood of future intervention of the Qatari foreign aid. Lastly, these charities show a sophisticated administrative style of the Qatari organisations especially with their well-funded operations and decent institutional capacity.

CONCLUSION

Exploring Qatar's foreign aid policy, as an emerging Muslim aid donor, has revealed various technical and institutional aspects. Qatar has progressively developed its policy making and adopted a progressive framework that comprises technical aspects related to its political and administrative orientation, legislative outline, and institutional capacity. As a Muslim rich tiny state donor, Qatar's domestic aspects such as the political monarchical system and the socio-economic and cultural background obviously shape the country's aid policy, alongside the external effects related to the regional and global factors. Apparently, the guiding documents and the operative institutions form an essential part of QFAP framework and reflect the recent progressive development in the Qatari state and its decision-making.

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