



## **Press Release**

### **“Investment Banking is crucial catalyst in enhancing economic efficiency”: Leading Arab Economist**

Qatar has become the nerve centre of Arab economic success

**Doha, December 14, 2005:** The role of investment banking is a crucial component for increasing the efficiency of Arab economies, according to leading economic expert HH Sheikha Hanadi Nasser Bin Khalid Al Thani, Vice Chairperson and Managing Director of Amwal during her keynote speech delivered today at the 9th Arab Economic Forum in Doha.

Addressing an audience of around 600 financial and political experts at the forum, Sheikha Hanadi was optimistic about the future of Arab economies consolidating their leadership in the global financial landscape. She highlighted the success of her home country, Qatar, as a trendsetter in capital generation, helping speed up the economic growth that the energy-rich nation already enjoys.

“Qatar has leapt ahead to becoming the nerve centre of the Arab economy’s internationally recognized economic performance,” said Sheikha Hanadi. “Against the backdrop of fast improving macro-economic conditions, enhanced regulatory environment facilitated by the formation of the Qatar Financial Centre and the continuous development of the Qatari capital markets, Qatar’s financial industry is taking the country to greater milestones this decade.”

She lauded the role of platforms such as the Arab Economic Forum that helps cite the potential of Arab economies to an international audience. She hoped that Amwal’s partnership with the Qatar Business Foundation in hosting the prestigious forum this year will reiterate the need for a more dynamic investment environment and help induce capital inflow into the country.

“Business opportunities are endless and the capital market is reflective of it,” she explained, “with 10 IPO’s slated for FY 2006, numerous advisory opportunities in real estate and restructuring of family groups, the deal flow for investment banking is very robust. She added that the country’s stock market capital that now represents nearly 300 per cent of Qatar’s GDP (as of September 2005), has risen over five fold in the past three years and is poised for further growth.”

Under the visionary leadership of its political heads, Qatar boasts of being one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Its GDP has doubled in five years, setting a new record in 2004 with an increase of 20 per cent over 2003 to reach US\$ 28.5 billion.



Sheikha Hanadi added that forging ahead, Qatar aims to consolidate its leadership position through further capital injection. Nearly US\$100 billion is earmarked for investment up to 2010 and GDP projected to grow at more than 10 per cent per annum. "Economic infrastructure is poised for increased efficiency, while liberalization of the economy and a greater role of private sector are expected to help attract foreign direct investments," she told the forum.

Similarly, on the asset management side, she said there is tremendous demand for investment products such as the IPO Funds, Islamic Private Equity, Fixed Income Funds and Real Estate securitization opportunities that offer diversification and cater to the varying risk–return profile of investors.

Citing the role of Amwal in boosting the country's economic success, Khaled Hassan Rashed, Director of Amwal said, "Fuelled by the soaring capital levels enabled by Qatar's economic boom, Amwal has in a very short time set a benchmark in contributing to the economy.

"When a country grows, the needs of the financial community increases. This is where Amwal comes in. As a one stop shop for all the investment needs of our diverse range of clients, we keep ahead of the exciting pace of economic development and offer unparalleled services to boost the investment climate in Qatar".

Rashed highlighted Amwal's unmatched track record as in being the first asset manager to launch an investment fund (the "Qatar Gate Fund") registered in Qatar for investment to both Qatari's and expatriates. Amwal is also the founder of the Al-Mahfatha portfolio, which invests in listed securities on the Doha Securities Market. Amwal has also been the lead advisor on some of the most note-worthy corporate finance deals in the State of Qatar including the Al-Waab project, First Finance Company and Doha Insurance.

Rashed concluded "Established in 1998, primarily as a financial advisor on investment products, Amwal has now grown into a full fledged investment banking firm with a solid track record. We currently manage close to QR200 million in assets and are confident of broadening the spectrum of our offerings with tailored financial solutions to meet the diverse investment needs of various audiences."



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