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QATAR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE BECOMES HOST OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL BRAIN RESEARCH ORGANISATION IN MENA REGION

Collaboration To Advance Neuroscience In Qatar And Across Middle East And North Africa

Doha, Qatar 24 January 2015: Qatar Foundation Research and Development's (QF R&D) Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI) and the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO) have established the IBRO-Middle East/North Africa (MENA) sub-regional headquarters in Qatar and designated QBRI as the host organisation.

The announcement comes out of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in Doha by QBRI and IBRO, one of the world's leading global scientific, education and advocacy organisations in neuroscience.

The agreement supports Qatar Foundation's mission to promote a culture of excellence in Qatar and the region, and innovate and build capacity to underscore Qatar's pioneering role as an emerging centre for healthcare innovation in support of the Qatar National Vision 2030. Improved healthcare diagnosis, treatment and preventative approaches for different disorders, including illness relating to the brain, are a key area of focus of healthcare research conducted by QBRI.

The MOU jointly supports the planning, organisation and management of high level neuroscience schools, symposia, conferences or any other research and educational activities throughout the MENA region. It further encourages the development of partnership and networking opportunities between relevant regional stakeholder groups, including academia, industry, NGOs and government organisations.

As part of the MOU agreement, IBRO has pledged financial support and will provide annual funding for IBRO-MENA Committee activities. The Committee's objective is to support and promote the field of neuroscience suited to the needs of the MENA region, and Dr. Hilal A. Lashuel, QBRI Executive Director have been named as chair, and Dr. Omar El-Agnaf of Qatar Foundation's Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) has been chosen to serve as a co-chair. Last month QBRI hosted the IBRO-MENA Neurogenetics School, "*Genetic Basis of Neurologic and Psychiatric Disease*," with the support of IBRO funding where students from Qatar and across the MENA region undertook theoretical and practical studies in neurogenetics.

The school was followed by a landmark two-day neuroscience symposium, “*Neurological and Psychiatric Disorders: From Mechanism to Therapeutic Strategies*” which was the first of its kind to be held in Qatar. Researchers from Hamad Medical Corporation, HBKU, and QF partner university, Weill Cornell Medical College, participated as instructors and guest speakers and were instrumental to the success of both events.

Encouraged by this partnership, Dr. Hilal A. Lashuel, Executive Director of QBRI, commented: “This strategic partnership complements and extends ongoing QBRI neuroscience activity and offers unique opportunities for young scientists in Qatar and the MENA region. The partnership aims to create and support education and training programmes that are suited to local needs and promote neuroscience careers for young researchers in the region.”

Pierre J. Magistretti, IBRO President added: “We look forward to this very important collaboration with QBRI to promote neuroscience in the region. IBRO very much appreciates the commitment of QBRI to host the MENA – IBRO office, a commitment that is a guarantee for success for this initiative”

As part of its activities, QBRI also has a dedicated research programme focused on the understanding of the genetic causes of diseases and conditions in Qatar with a particular focus on autism, intellectual disability and epilepsy.

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About Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D)

Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D) is charged with the Qatar National Research Strategy, dedicated to making Qatar a leading centre for research and development excellence and innovation. QF R&D is home to the Qatar National Research Fund, a leading scientific research funding organisation, the Qatar Science & Technology Park, an international hub for technology innovation and commercialisation, and research institutes operating at the frontiers of science, including the Qatar Biomedical Research Institute, the Qatar Computing Research Institute and the Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute.

About the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO)

IBRO is a global federation of neuroscience organizations dedicated to the support and promotion of the field of neuroscience around the world, with special emphasis on building capacity, assisting young researchers and strengthening partnerships in developing countries. Founded in 1961, IBRO now includes 85 member organizations in more than 60 countries.

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