Speech by Federal Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle at the opening of the second day of the Business and Investment in Qatar Forum

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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Qatar and Germany. I am therefore very pleased to welcome you to Berlin to the “Business and Investment in Qatar Forum”.

Qatar has seen remarkable economic development in recent years. At the same time, it has become an important player in international affairs. For us, Qatar is a key economic and political partner.

Germany and Qatar are advocates for free trade and global exchange. We have the shared interest to strengthen foreign trade and promote investment world-wide.

The economic ties between Germany and Qatar are already diverse and fruitful. The activities of German companies regarding the building of “Qatar's Future City” Lusail, gas exploration, or the development of Qatar’s rail-network are proof for that.

Germany is the natural partner for Qatar’s transformation from an oil-and-gas-driven economy to a sustainable knowledge-based economy.

German technology and know-how perfectly match Qatar’s development priorities in the field of infrastructure and renewable energy.

The commendable work of the Qatar Foundation is another example of our shared interests. Qatar and Germany have drawn the same conclusion. The future success of our societies is not determined by the resources that can be found beneath our feet. It is determined by what can be found between our ears.

But we can still do more. Germany and Qatar should become even closer partners in the promotion of science and research.

The European Union is facing serious economic challenges. I can assure you, for Germany the project of European integration is not one policy option among many. The

EU

is the cornerstone and the strategic framework of our security and our prosperity.

We have done what is necessary to keep the Eurozone together and to put it on a sounder footing.

And we will continue to do what is necessary in the future. The doomsayers underestimate our ability to implement reforms and our European solidarity.

The

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is home to four out of ten of the world's most competitive economies. The success of past Qatari investments in Germany and other European countries has shown that you know how to handle your money wisely. I am sure that you realize that there is much more money to be earned by investing in Germany and Europe.

The Arab world is witnessing dramatic changes. So far, we have only witnessed the first few minutes of an historic hour.

Qatar is playing an important part in these transformation processes. As countries like Egypt, Libya and Tunisia are building their political future they need economic assistance. The transition societies need investment and jobs, particularly for their young people.

The countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council play a very important role in this regard.

Germany and the European Union will not stand aside and are ready to share the burden. Germany is actively engaged in the Deauville-Partnership and has established transformation partnerships with Tunisia and Egypt.

History has taught us a valuable lesson. Long-term political, social and economic stability can only be based on freedom and participation. We stand ready to support all countries that take this path.

We need considerable determination to end the Syrian crisis. Germany wants to strengthen the National Coalition under the leadership of President Moaz al-Khatib and the new Prime Minister Hitto. Our priority is to help them deliver aid to the Syrian people. Together with our

partners in the Friends of Syria group we are currently setting up an international Trust Fund for Syria that will provide relief and reconstruction support in opposition-controlled areas.

The “Business and Investment in Qatar Forum” is a great opportunity for our two countries. I am personally committed to intensifying our bilateral relations. There are many opportunities to do so.

I wish you fruitful meetings and a successful forum!

Thank you.

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