

# WIRTSCHAFTS FORUM NAH- UND MITTELOST<sup>®</sup>

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## "Global cooperation on health has strengthened during the course of the pandemic"

Interview with H.E. Dr. Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari, Minister of Public Health of the State of Qatar, by Helene Rang



Ministry of Public Health, Doha

**Q**atar has, already in previous years, emphasised investments in its healthcare sector and public health. Do you see an even stronger commitment to this amid the current pandemic?

Over the last ten years Qatar has increased hospital capacity by creating ten new hospitals and twelve new primary care health and wellbeing centres, giving it amongst the most modern healthcare facilities in the world. It is exactly because of this investment that we were able to rapidly utilise and expand capacity in our COVID-19 hospitals at the height of the pandemic, ensuring that everybody who needed hospital care was able to receive it free of charge.

This meant that at the height of the pandemic acute occupancy only reached 72% and ICU occupancy only 76% while infection rates among staff remained very low. So, if anything,

the investment over the last decade has proved really valuable in our fight against COVID-19 and underscores the need to continue to invest in health well into the future.

**You yourself, Your Excellency, have had stints abroad that have allowed you to develop a thorough understanding of all that is necessary to stimulate international cooperation in the health sector – from the grand schemes to the small details. Where do you see global cooperation headed and which areas are to be prioritised in such efforts?**

Global cooperation on health has absolutely strengthened during the course of the pandemic, and the importance of World Health Organisation (WHO) – through which health systems have come together to fight the virus – cannot be overstated. Only last week I participated in the WHO meeting of health

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