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Arabs must set timeline for adopting democracy: FM



First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister H E Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabor Al Thani

DOHA: First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister H E Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabor Al Thani yesterday underlined the importance of the issue of democracy terming it as multifaceted and said Arab governments must set timetable to establish democracy.

Addressing the closing session of the 5th Doha Forum on Democracy and Free Trade, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem said democracy can be achieved only in phases and that the government and the people need to work hand in hand for it to be accomplished. The governmental should accept the establishment of democracy in

the region in a gradually and systematic way while the people should be eager to adopt democracy.

Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem stressed the need to provide a clear vision and programmes for the democratisation process. Arab governments, if willing to adopt democracy, should provide as well bases of democracy and freedom namely to adopt the rule of law, setting rules to organise democracy, free trade, equal opportunities, fight corruption, freedom of expression, and respect for individual rights of citizens, the First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister said.

Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem

expressed his concern that the Arab streets would resent if the Arab governments fail to take executive measures to apply well-programmed democracy, stressing that harmony in application of the democratisation process and provision of a calm climate is required to avoid any disorder or chaos. "Democracy needs a decision, a legislative will and laws to achieve it."

Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem reiterated the need for a gradual application of the democratisation process and 'we should not lie to people without drawing up a specific timetable and clear crystal programmes on when we will start and when such a democratisation process

would be completely applied".

Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem pointed to the pre-oil era in the Gulf region when there were no proper houses, no hospitals and no other services.

"But now the people have become aware, reached a (elevated) standard of life and people have started to question their right of expression and other rights. It is natural thing to start democratisation process in Qatar with the participation of women, he said adding it was an important issue that was realised by a vision and wise decision by the Emir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani."

— QNA