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The massive international criticism of the last to two years surrounding the staging of FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar utterly ignores a number of key aspects which will make the run up and implementation of this premiere global sporting event unlike any previous or future World Cup. All stakeholders, on any side of this equation, pro or con, might want to consider these additional aspects:

For the first time ever, an event of this magnitude has to be implemented within in such a small geographic region. Coming from large geographic entities like Brazil (8.5 Million km²) and Russia (17 million km²), with their very specific regional and logistical issues, the same size event will then take place in an arid country of just 11.000 km², with currently developed areas of just above 1,200 km². To compound this challenge, most of the affected real estate is already densely inhabited by close to 1,7 million people; a number which is to grow to 2,7 million by 2022. Unlike large scale countries, stretching the effects of run-up and implementation across a large region and affecting relatively few people, every aspect of life, business, social relations and human interaction in Qatar will be affected for at least ten years counting.

(The tremendous demands to field an additional work force of several ten thousand educated, well trained and highly motivated staffers to fulfil all conceivable service, support, management and organizational requirements, which such is needs to be developed on top of the current work force, also does have the potential the reshape the role of women and expatriate residents and workers in this society)

The final gun of World Cup 2022 will not constitute the end to this humongous transformation process

While already hosting a plethora of international conferences and sporting events on an annual basis, Qatar has so far hardly experienced at any one time the influx of more than a several thousand sports visitors, athletes, media and officials in total. Just consider one set of numbers in this context: with a current (2013) hotel bed number of approximately 10.000, Qatar will have to host at the peak of the World Cup, some additional 300.000 visitors, media workers, service providers and official sponsors.

FIFA requires hosting nations to provide for at least 60.000 hotel rooms, about six times more than currently available. Whichever multiplier is actually used, it might as well apply to any other services, HR, event, tourism, entertainment options and infrastructure needs, required to eventually host the world.

World Cup of the Region – first time in Arab Muslim country – part of the inevitable (sports) emancipation from Western dominance (if football is international that its marquee event must also be staged in all regions of the world)

While voices in the Northern hemisphere have demanded for World Cup to only be staged in a ‘perfect location’, this claim looks quite different if viewed from an African, Mid-Eastern or even central Asian perspective.

At this time, and for many World Cup cycles to come, Qatar is the only country from the Maghreb, far across Central Africa and Asia, which is both able and willing to host and underwrite an event of such epic proportions in a larger cross-regional context of over 3 billion people.

(Legacy)

In addition to the required sporting venues, Qatar is also in progress to enhance, and many areas build from scratch the core infra-structure, transportation and industry basis necessary to sustain a World Cup. Unlike many previous hosting nations, where the games have often been the defining purpose of all investments, the World Cup in Qatar is designed to serve as a catalyst to drive and deliver an even much more ambitious goal. With Qatar the National Vision 2030, Qatar has embarked on a 20 plus year unprecedented comprehensive social, human, environmental, economic and comprehensive development program with the goal to change the current national economy from the export of liquefied natural gas toward a knowledge based economy. While the total directly World Cup related projects might run up to USD 15 bn, Qatar National Vision includes project valued at USD 300 bn.

Utilizing the know-how, expertise and human resource amassed to initially deliver the 2022 threshold, and future potential bench marks as future Summer Olympics, Qatar is destined to embark on a challenging route to leverage its economic and human turn-around across the Muslim-Arab hemisphere. Already, Qatar has become a key player in political, economic and broad based charitable involvement across the region, yielding a power of influence way above and beyond its modest size and population.

With a refined outcome of the Qatar National Vision processes, these newly developed assets may then also provide key economic and political leverage to Central and South East Asia with its strong Muslim communities. For more than 10 year, the dominant national charity organization “Reach out to Asia - ROTA”, as well as the cross-continental activities of Aspire Academy is testimony to this vision.

And the overall 2022 tournament set will be epic, as it does have the potential to become the most impressive World Cup since Germany 2006, with a legacy which will not just transform an entire country within the span of just one generation, but also held to redefine the power of international sports in the definition and rapprochement of adjacent cultures.

In the end, the overall success of this World Cup will not be measured in tons of concrete poured and cast iron (verbaut), but in the way, an entire population opens up, involves itself and welcomes the world to its doorstep. And in Qatar, due to the geographic limitations and the very limited time available, it will massively affect every single person, male or female, citizens or resident to an extent, no other country has been exposed to in relevant history in a constructive way.