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LUCIA GUARANO

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The meeting is an important part of the prominent businessmen's two-day itinerary in Doha, which is focused on forging new business ties and interaction with representatives of the local business community and the main political figures of Qatar.

Speaking to Qatar Tribune ahead of the visit, Marcegaglia said that his group believed that Qatar would become one of the most important engines of growth in this part of the world.

"With this visit, we aim to enlarge our presence in Qatar and extend it to other businesses, apart from the building sector in which we already have our presence.

Our aim is to expand into the petro-chemical and manufacturing sector," he added.

Marcegaglia also met top Qatari businessmen, members of the QBA and board members of the QCCEI on Tuesday.

Italian Ambassador to Qatar HE Andrea Ferrari and representatives from a number of Italian companies in Qatar, such as ENI, Finmeccanica, Snam Gas and Cimolai, also attended the event.

The Italian group, which has been present in Qatar since 2007 with its branch Marcegaglia Gulf has operations across the world with 50 manufacturing plants in Italy, UK, Poland, Russia, China, US and Brazil.

"We chose Qatar in 2007, at a time when many other business operators were making a beeline for Dubai because we thought that the country's economy had all the features of solidity and stability and a pragmatic and forward-looking political class committed to development," Marcegaglia explained.

"This was why we selected Qatar as our hub for direct investment in the Middle East," he added.

In the three years that Marcegaglia has been active in Qatar, the group has taken part in a number of infrastructural projects such as Ras Laffan project and many others and is planning to expand its activities in 2010.