



**UNITED NATIONS**  
EGYPT



## **UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM EGYPT**

**Submission by the United Nations Country Team for  
the Fourth Cycle Universal Periodic Review of Egypt**

July 2024

List of Contributing Entities	
International Labour Organization (ILO)	
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)	
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO)	
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)	
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)	
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	
United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)	
World Health Organization (WHO)	



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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. This submission is a joint undertaking by the UNCT for the upcoming UPR of Egypt. It provides an assessment of key human rights developments since the third cycle UPR of Egypt.

## II. GROUPS IN FOCUS

### **A. Women's rights**

2. A 2019 constitutional amendment established a 25% quota for women's representation in Parliament. In 2020, the Senate Law reserved 10% of its 300 seats for women. By January 2021, women's representation in both Parliament and the Senate exceeded these quotas, reaching 27.7% and 13.3%.
3. After the President ordered women's inclusion in the State Council and Public Prosecution in 2021, 98 women judges were appointed,<sup>1</sup> representing less than half a percent of the total number of judges. While women have moderate representation in higher government roles, gender parity remains lower in local government and private sector.
4. In 2021, the MoL issued decrees expanding women's participation in the workforce, allowing them to work in any field except manual labour in mining and quarrying, and jobs endangering reproductive rights unless these are administrative and supervisory roles.
5. There is still no comprehensive law addressing VAW, including domestic violence, or spousal abuse. In 2021, the Penal Code was amended to combat VAW, reclassifying sexual harassment from a misdemeanour to a felony. The minimum imprisonment for sexual harassment increased,<sup>2</sup> and harsher penalties apply if the offender has authority over the victim.
6. Ministerial Decision No.827 (2021) established a Unified Service Centre to Protect Women from Violence with UN support. The Centre, currently under development, will handle VAW complaints through ministry representatives, coordinate responses, and provide protection and temporary accommodation and legal, psychological, and social services for survivors during investigations.

7. Egypt strengthened its policy and legal framework to end FGM. Among married women aged 15-49, 86% have undergone FGM, with 74% of these procedures performed by doctors.<sup>3</sup> The 2021 amended Penal Code, imposes harsher punishments, including up to 20 years imprisonment for perpetrators and those requesting FGM. Doctors involved face a five-year ban from practice. The amendments repealed the clause on “medical necessity” for FGM from Penal Code.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, FGM persists due to entrenched social beliefs. In 2023, Egypt developed a framework for integrating population and reproductive health education into national curricula. The national committee that aims to enhance reproductive health education started with primary schools, with plans to expand in subsequent years to university levels.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Promote women’s leadership, representation, participation and adopt further policies that address structural barriers hindering women’s occupancy of decision-making positions.**
- **Adopt legislation to enact local councils (which has a 25% quota for women) to fulfil constitutional commitments on advancing women’s leadership and participation at local level.**
- **Enact a law criminalizing all forms of VAW, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, marital rape, institutional violence, virginity testing, and honour crimes.**
- **Implement policies and programmes addressing the root causes of harmful practices and establish effective prevention measures and reporting mechanisms for FGM.**
- **Conduct nationwide awareness campaigns to overcome social stigmas and reach broader audiences.**
- **Enhance access to sexual and reproductive health information, including materials on family planning.**
- **Consider developing policies and establishing mechanisms to support victims of violence, particularly women and girls subject to domestic violence, and increase the number of legal aid offices across the country raising awareness of their services.**

#### **B. Children’s rights**

8. Despite legislation setting the minimum age of marriage at 18 years, nearly one in every 20 girls aged 15-17 years, and 1 in every 10 adolescent girls aged 15-19 years are either currently married or were married before turning 18.<sup>5</sup> The prevalence of child marriage is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where adolescent girls are three times more likely to marry below the age of 18 compared to their urban peers. Moreover, there are no legal penalties for anyone who marries or solicits the marriage of a child.
9. Decree 35/2020 established the Tripartite National Steering Committee to implement the National Action Plan for Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Egypt and Support (2018-2025). Decree 215/2021 determined a list of hazardous child labour prohibiting employment of children younger than 18 years in accordance with the ILO

Worst forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No. 182), and increased the minimum age for vocational training from 13 to 14 years, in line with the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).

10. According to Act No.76 (1973) amended in 1975, exceptions to forced labour include an exception on military service. There are young persons who carry out civic functions, as part of their military duties, including in the development of rural and urban sectors; agricultural and consumers' cooperative associations; and in production units of factories. This is not compatible with the provisions and exceptions of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).<sup>6</sup>
11. Children above the age of 15 are being transferred to adult or military courts if they are prosecuted with an adult. In some cases, children are dealt with by the general prosecution and not by the specialised child prosecution.
12. Article 107 of Child Law No. 12 of 1996, as amended by Law No. 126 of 2008, stipulates that the placement of a child shall be for an undefined period (the maximum limit for misdemeanours is 5 years and 10 years for felonies). The law stipulates an expert to file a bi-monthly report on the child's condition and subsequent follow-up. However, there is no mechanisms for implementation nor for follow-up.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Effectively implement its legislation on the minimum age of marriage and take measures to encourage reporting of such cases; and promote awareness on the criminalisation of child marriage and its solicitation.**
- **End conscription for non-military (civic) purposes, except on a voluntary basis, in accordance with international standards.**
- **Accelerate the establishment of specialized child courts and specialized child prosecution offices throughout the country with adequate human, financial and technical resources, and ensure legal aid for accused children.**
- **Publish accurate, sex and age disaggregated and regularly updated statistics concerning children in contact with the justice system.**
- **Ensure that children's detention is used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period and that it is reviewed on a regular basis with a view to its withdrawal and prioritize non-judicial alternatives for child offenders.**
- **Amend the Child Law to limit the maximum detention period and establish mechanisms to follow monitor the implementation of the bi-monthly expert report and its follow-up.**

#### **C. Persons with disability**

13. 2023 official statistics indicate that persons with disability are 10.64% of the population.<sup>7</sup> They often experience difficulties in accessing services. Justice system services inadequately support them in courts, police stations, and pretrial detention.

14. A troubling trend persists wherein some factories hire workers with disabilities without integrating them into the workforce. Instead of fulfilling the 5% quota for workers with a disability, they opt for paying them a nominal amount, reportedly 1000 EGP monthly, to stay at home, thus falling short of inclusive practices.
15. A 2022 national Study on Violence Against Women with Disability (SVAWD) found that 61% of married women with disabilities were subjected to violence by their husbands, 48% of the respondents experienced violence by other family members since the age of 15, 8% were harassed on the streets in the 12 months preceding the survey alone – 66% of whom took no action in response.<sup>8</sup>
16. Decree 252/2017 mandated schools to provide access to inclusive education to enable the enrolment of children with disabilities. While the number of students with disabilities integrated into schools has grown, only around 12% of those in the age group 5-17 with a disability are currently in school. In 2018, only 43% of 15 to 29-year-olds with disabilities have attended school, compared to 89% of those without disabilities.<sup>9</sup> There is also a 28% gap in literacy rates for 15-year-olds and older persons with a disability (38%) and those without (66%), indicating that the former have lower access to basic education or lower learning outcomes.<sup>10</sup>
17. Lack of relevant data on children with disabilities poses a critical barrier to effective planning and programming of education and delivery of services.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Remove barriers in obtaining access to public services, including to justice system services for persons with disabilities.**
- **Ensure the employment quota for workers with a disability is respected and applied in the public and private sectors.**
- **Ensure that persons with disabilities are protected against violence and abuse and ensure their equal access to basic services.**
- **Accelerate investments and reform to shift from special and segregated education to inclusive education for children with disabilities.**
- **Promote a conducive learning environment for students with disabilities in the education system, working to change perceptions /attitudes of teachers; incorporate subjects concerning disability and inclusion in teacher training.**
- **Implement policy recommendations in the SVAWD to advance the rights of women with disabilities.**
- **Ensure the availability of reliable data on children with disabilities, their educational situation, available services, the barriers they encounter in learning and participation.**

#### **D. Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers**

18. Access to legal residency continues to be challenging for asylum-seekers and refugees, and those seeking international protection with increasing wait-times. Residence

procedures are centralised in one immigration office in Cairo, with a constrained capacity. This hampers the ability of asylum-seekers and refugees to regularise their stay in a timely manner, which, in turn, exposes them to the risk of arrest and impedes their ability to effectively access their rights, including legal stay.

19. Children on the move, especially unaccompanied minors, are reportedly subjected to immigration related detention, where they may be at risks. The NCCM adopted Standard Operating Procedures for the protection and assistance of child asylum seekers, refugees and victims of trafficking (2020). These create a pathway into guardianship, temporary care arrangements, case management and assistance instead of immigration detention.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Put an end to immigration detention for children and ensure access of monitoring entities to places of detention.**
- **Simplify the residency regularization process with clear guidelines to minimize bureaucratic obstacles for migrants, and decentralize asylum-based residence procedures, and consider shifting to GoE-UNHCR asylum procedures with joint documentation that is inclusive of asylum-based residency and with an extended validity.**

### **III. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS**

#### **A. Fundamental freedoms**

20. Concerns remain over the Egyptian security forces' dispersal of peaceful sit-ins, protests, mass arrests, and subsequent criminal procedures, including under counterterrorism laws. Concerns for use of excessive or disproportionate force in policing demonstrations also remain.
21. Media and CSOs' websites and virtual network services have been blocked obstructing freedom of expression, and access to information.<sup>12</sup>
22. The Trade Union Act No.213 (2017), as amended by Law No.142 (2019) recognizes the right to freedom of association. However, there are several provisions that contravene ILO Convention No. 87, including excessive registration requirements. In 2020 the MoL established a grievances committee for aspiring independent trade union committees to overcome registration obstacles. Up to date, the committee facilitated the registration of 27 independent trade union committees, with at least 50 pending cases.
23. The Law Governing the Pursuit of Civil Work (No.149 of 2019) and its regulations sets conditions for the registration and CSOs work, including access to funding, the authorities' monitoring powers, and broad discretion to regulate and dissolve



organizations.<sup>13</sup>

24. Many HRDs have reportedly been subjected to intimidation, criminal investigation and arbitrary detention for their peaceful activism or perceived criticism of the Government. Many have been reportedly subjected to travel bans and asset freezes.<sup>14</sup>

**Recommendations:**

- **Ensure the respect of the rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, and release all detained for exercising these rights, lift travel bans and asset freezes.**
- **Guarantee the right of peaceful assembly and ensure that security measures in relation to assemblies are undertaken in line with international human rights norms and standards, including the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.**
- **Take measures to ensure a safe and conducive civic space, including by reviewing the 2019 NGO Law with a view to removing restrictive requirements regarding registration and operation.**
- **Ensure that no arbitrary arrest and/or unlawful detention is carried out against HRDs, lawyers, and journalists.**

**B. Right to Life, Liberty, and Security of Person**

25. While torture is prohibited under the national law, serious discrepancies between the CAT definition and that incorporated into the Penal Code create actual or potential loopholes for impunity.

26. Death penalty is retained as a punishment for a high number of crimes, including those that do not meet the “most serious crimes” threshold, and for certain crimes the death penalty is mandatory. Several vaguely and broadly defined terrorism-related crimes are punishable by death penalty. The Human Rights Committee stressed that death sentences have been imposed in the context of unfair trials, including mass trials and trials in military and Emergency State Security Courts (ESSCs).<sup>15</sup> Egypt does not publish statistics on executions or death row; there are reports that executions have been carried out without allowing family visits or timely notification.<sup>16</sup>

**Recommendations:**

- **Bring the crime of torture under national law in conformity with CAT, and ensure prompt, efficient, and independent investigation of allegations of torture and ill-treatment, and accountability.**
- **Ensure that pardon or commutation of the sentence is available in all cases, regardless of the crime committed.**
- **Consider a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to abolishing it and accede to ICCPR-OP-II.**

- **Publicly provide full and accurate data on death sentences and executions, and notify families and legal counsels in advance.**

### **C. Justice Administration**

27. Pretrial detention continues to be used extensively and can extend to two years. In certain incidents, individuals are held in pretrial detention beyond the maximum allowed period under national law, including by adding detainees to new cases under similar charges.
28. Before lifting the state of emergency in 2021, there was an increased jurisdiction of emergency courts and military courts to prosecute individuals, in trials that do not adhere to fair trial guarantees, including mass trials. These courts continue to hear cases brought before 2021. The ESSCs' sentences cannot be appealed, and military courts' sentences may only be appealed to the Supreme Military Court for Appeals presided by a military judge.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Take comprehensive legal reforms to reduce the maximum duration of pretrial detention and increase the recourse to pretrial detention's alternatives.**
- **Take steps to ensure strict adherence to fair trial and due process guarantees, including by emergency courts.**
- **Review the jurisdiction of emergency and military courts to ensure that trials in such courts are exceptional, and that such courts cannot be used to prosecute individuals for exercising their rights and freedoms.**

### **D. Freedom of religious belief**

29. In its NHRS, Egypt aspires to promote religious tolerance and diversity. This is often manifested in the endowment and restoration funds for religious sites to demonstrate Egypt's multi-cultural heritage. Egyptian law recognizes only the three Abrahamic religions: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, excluding other religious or belief communities. Religious and belief minorities, including Coptic Christians, Shi'a Muslims, Jehovah's witnesses, Jews, Bahá'ís and atheists, continue to face varying forms of discrimination, such as restrictions on the building and operation of worship places and burial sites, access to documentation and social services, restrictions on public practice of faith, prosecution under blasphemy laws, and acts of violence and sectarian attacks with impunity.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Recognize and protect the rights of all persons belonging to religious minorities and their identity and heritage.**
- **Take concrete measures to combat all forms of discriminatory practices or stigmatization against minorities and amend existing laws to ensure freedom of religion or belief for all groups.**

#### **IV. HUMAN RIGHTS AND COUNTER TERRORISM**

30. The NHRS acknowledges that countering-terrorism and protecting and promoting human rights are complementary goals. In the context of counterterrorism operations, particularly in Sinai, and in parts of the Nile Delta, and the Western Desert, the Egyptian military has conducted demolition of homes, commercial buildings, farms, and the consequent displacement of civilians.<sup>18</sup>
31. The 2020 amendments to anti-terrorism laws expand the definition of “terrorist entity,” the offense of “funding terrorism,” and the effects of the decisions to place individuals on the “terrorist list.” Law No.135 (2021) amending provisions of Law No.10 of 1972 allows for dismissal without disciplinary action of public sector employees included in the “list of terrorists” as entailed in provisions of Law No. 8 of 2015.

##### **Recommendation:**

- **Review the anti-terrorism legislations, policies and measures and ensure their consistency with international human rights law. Ensure that they address crimes that are solely terrorist in nature.**

#### **V. HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING**

32. Despite Egypt’s efforts, various forms of trafficking still exist, including labour and sexual exploitation of female migrant workers, child trafficking and temporary or “summer” marriages of women and girls for sexual exploitation, prostitution and forced labour. The National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking is not yet fully operational and remains under-utilized.
33. The National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons launched the third National Strategy<sup>19</sup> on Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Persons (2022-2026). It forms the base of the new action plan building on what was achieved upon the completion of the previous national strategy (2016-2021).

##### **Recommendations:**

- **Fully operationalise and strengthen the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking.**
- **Amend Law No. 64 of 2010 on combating trafficking in persons to include a reference to the restitution and compensation of survivors, and publish information on the Law’s application in practice, including the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions, and sanctions imposed on perpetrators of trafficking.**
- **Reinforce the specialized assistance available to victims of trafficking, including psychosocial support, healthcare and legal assistance.**
- **Include a specific definition of forced labour in the new labour law.**

## VI. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ESCR)

### **A. Right to work**

34. The official unemployment rate dropped from 8.3% (2020) to 7.1% (2024). The unemployment rate for women in general from 13% (2022) to 13.4% (2023) after having decreased between 2020-2021. These figures do not capture the large share of informal labour and withdrawals from the labour sector, especially among women.
35. To combat the worst forms of child labour, Decree 111/2021 was adopted regarding regulations and standards for Dual Education System service providers for children (14 years and older) carrying out their on-the-job training. It limits children's training-hours and necessitates injuries' insurance coverage.
36. The MoL Decree 78/2021 established an executive Child Protection Unit to oversee the implementation of the NAP and serves as the permanent institutional mechanism to support child labour elimination and protection. MoSS Decree 767/2022 amended Child Labour Centres bylaws to better establish its organizational structure and provide protection and support to working children.
37. Occupational safety and health standards were not always sufficient in various industries, and workers are in situations that endangered their health or safety.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Increase efforts to reduce unemployment, particularly among women and youth, with a view to moving gradually towards the full realization of the right to work in just and favourable conditions.**
- **Amend sections 98(b), 98(b)bis, and 174 of the Penal Code promptly to limit compulsory labour as punishment related to political or ideological views.**
- **Amend the existing labor law to advance women's rights to include extended maternity and paternity leaves.**
- **Expand essential interventions for preventing and managing occupational diseases and injuries, and provide occupational health services to all workers, including those in the informal sector, small- and medium-sized enterprises, agriculture, migrant workers, and contractual workers.**

### **B. Right to social security**

38. The Social Insurance and Pensions Law No.148 (2019) unified the regulatory framework, consolidating four previous social insurance laws into a single legislation, merging the Government Social Insurance Fund and the Public and Private Social Insurance Fund, and

covers employees, employers, Egyptian nationals working abroad, and workers in irregular employment. The law provides a comprehensive range of benefits, including pensions, work injury, unemployment, and sickness benefits, marking a significant step towards universal protection.

39. A substantial budget increase in the social protection package<sup>20</sup> to safeguard households' purchasing power and mitigate the cost-of-living crisis was announced.

**Recommendations:**

- **Effectively implement Law No.148 and extend it to informal workers.**
- **Increase budget allocation for social security and ensure that social benefits are regularly indexed to the real living cost to ensure adequate standard of living.**
- **Ratify ILO Convention on social security (minimum standards), 1952 (No. 102).**

**C. Right to an adequate standard of living**

40. Egypt's *Hayah Kareema* presidential initiative represents a major effort to overcoming territorial unbalances, reducing development inequalities and aiming at a dignified life for all Egyptians. It addresses multi-dimensional poverty and unemployment rates, through improving the economic, social and environmental standard of families in 4500 villages, focusing on the poorest rural areas in 20 governorates estimated to represent 58% of the Egyptian population.<sup>21</sup>

41. A cost-of-living crisis has unfolded since 2022. Official figures estimate that inflation surged with significant effects for poverty, food security and healthcare. Electricity prices have increased due to removal of fuel subsidies.<sup>22</sup> Social spending has also shrunk.<sup>23</sup>

**Recommendations:**

- **Conduct an assessment of the potential impact of economic reforms including the removal of subsidies on ESCR, and on poverty and inequality reduction.**
- **Implement a fiscal floor for social protection expenditures, ensuring a minimum core obligation for upholding ESCR.**
- **Improve the living conditions and access to health care, education, public transport, electricity, waste disposal services and other services.**
- **Expand the revolving fund mechanism for households to have access to improved water sources to cover the remaining 3% of population.**

**D. Right to adequate housing**

42. Egypt issued its first human rights-based National Housing Strategy (NHS) addressing key challenges: urban development, existing housing stock, low-income housing, and sustainability, institutional and administrative support, and knowledge enhancement. Significant progress was made in implementing the strategy. Established in 2021, the Urban Development Fund replaced the informal settlements development fund and has provided alternative housing-solutions for thousands of families, while addressing

broader urban development and regeneration challenges. The rise in the cost of housing has made it challenging for families to access adequate housing.

43. The Social Housing and Mortgage Finance Fund has expanded its “Housing for All Egyptians” programme, benefiting over 430,000 people (22.3% women, 5% people with disabilities, and 18.5% self-employed). The fund produced 52% of all public housing, improving targeting and subsidy mechanisms, and recently launched a green housing programme. It is also expanding rental housing to bridge affordability gaps and utilize millions of vacant units.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the NHS and advance the implementation of rental housing projects to bridge affordability gaps and utilize vacant units.**
- **Strengthen alignment with social protection mechanisms to advance the right of housing for all vulnerable groups.**

#### **E. Right to access safe drinking water and sanitation**

44. Water scarcity is a key sustainability threat for food production as Egypt relies almost entirely on irrigation. Climate change, water resources are decreasing primarily due to rapid population growth. Egypt has already approached the water poverty threshold and is facing a water deficit.
45. Egypt receives financial assistance, incl. loans annually for the water and sanitation sector, which has significantly increased access to clean water for almost all Egyptians and around 80% access to sanitation, with further improvements anticipated from the *Hayah Karima Initiative*. Challenges regarding water quality and quantity remain in rural and old urban areas.
46. The UN supports<sup>24</sup> Egypt in complementing large water and sanitation facilities with medium-scale and decentralized low-tech solutions that align with current capacities, create local job opportunities, and offer better potential for local replication and scale-up. Since 2020, and through government replication, more than 2.5 million inhabitants are benefitting from improved access to safe water at home and improved sanitation and sewage water treatment.
47. Egypt evaluated WASH in healthcare facilities and public schools across various governorates leading to an improvement plan, including the procurement and distribution of WASH supplies and training on infection prevention and water quality testing.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Review water and sanitation planning and financing systems to prioritize investments based on knowledge, maximizing impact and sustainability.**

- **Map, scale and implement alternative low-cost, innovative, and environmentally resilient WASH solutions, especially in rural areas, to complement large-scale infrastructure.**

## **F. Right to health**

48. Around 1.17% GDP is allocated to Government spending on health in the new general 2024-2025 budget. Egypt's 2023 National Health Strategic Framework aims at achieving universal health coverage (UHC). There were presidential initiatives to address health challenges, this includes the "100 million Healthy Lives" (2018), and the 2022 Mental Health and Addiction platform which improve access to quality health services. Despite expanding family planning options, unmet family planning needs persist particularly in rural areas and Upper Egypt. Most primary health care units and hospitals have family planning clinics, but not all offer the full range of contraceptive methods.

### **Recommendations:**

- **Expand the coverage of communicable disease prevention, treatment and care services to community and closed settings.**
- **Fully implement the UHC Law and reach high quality universal coverage by 2032 as outlined by the Government.**
- **Ensure universal access to quality health services for all without discrimination.**
- **Enhance governance of health systems, move towards its digitalization and improve production of quality health products.**
- **Monitor and analyse health inequities using cross-sectoral data to inform national policies that address social and economic determinants of health, and establish monitoring systems of social determinants of health, and mobilize financial, human, and technological resources to that extent.<sup>25</sup>**
- **Further increase budgetary allocations in accordance with constitutionally agreed stipulations to ensure the realization of children's right to health.<sup>26</sup>**

## **G. Right to education**

49. Literacy rates remain a challenge in Egypt, with 76.5% for men and 65.5% for women.<sup>27</sup> Women living in Upper Egypt are more likely to be illiterate. The out-of-school rate for children of primary-age and adolescents/youth of lower and upper secondary school age, for both sexes, has decreased steadily since 2019.<sup>28</sup> In 2021, 44.57% of students, of both sexes, at the end of primary education has achieved at least a minimum proficiency level in reading.<sup>29</sup>

50. In 2023, the government launched the Investment Framework for Girls in Egypt at the CSW showcasing the "Noura" and "Dawwie" programmes which aim at empowering girls. These initiatives focus on enhancing girls' social, health, economic, and digital assets, while also improving access to tailored services and addressing negative social norms in rural areas. The primary goals include reducing school dropout rates and mitigating child marriage incidents in the long term.



51. Challenges persist, including gaps in early childhood education funding and legal protections against corporal punishment in schools. According to the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report,<sup>30</sup> Egypt was among the largest providers of student' scholarships, encouraging attendance by the poorest populations.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Ensure that all children have equal access to free and quality primary and secondary education.**
- **Expand support for the Girls' Investment Framework and address disparities in educational participation across regions and demographic groups, including based on gender, poverty, geography (urban or rural), and disability.**
- **Intensify efforts to address illiteracy and dropout rates among women and girls, particularly in rural and remote areas and belonging to disadvantaged groups.**
- **Ensure the minimum age of employment is aligned with the end of compulsory education.**
- **Strengthen efforts to increase the percentage of boys and girls in pre-primary and tertiary education.**
- **Further increase budgetary allocations in accordance with constitutionally agreed stipulations to ensure the realization of children's right to education.<sup>31</sup>**

#### **H. Right to food**

52. The war in Ukraine and global prices' increase for commodities triggered food price spikes in Egypt, with food inflation peaking at 73.6% in September 2023. This has pushed many, in particular rural families, into poverty and food insecurity. Egypt ranks 57<sup>th</sup> out of 121 countries, indicating a moderate level of hunger.<sup>32</sup> Challenges persist in food affordability, quality, and safety, as Egypt continues to import more than half of its staple foods. In 2024, the first phase of a significant agriculture development project begun to enhance food security and reduce Egypt's dependence on food imports, marking a critical step towards mitigating vulnerabilities in the food supply chain.<sup>33</sup>

53. Egypt suffers from a triple burden of malnutrition, with stunting, overweight, obesity and anaemia affecting children under five, adolescents and women within reproductive age, contributing to an intergenerational cycle of food and nutrition insecurity and poverty.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Ensure better access to food by groups in vulnerable situations by scaling up social protection and poverty reduction programmes and enhance targeting/inclusion of these programmes to address vulnerabilities.**
- **Enhance approaches to food systems transformation through operationalizing the National Committee for Food and Nutrition Systems, enhancing monitoring and reporting mechanisms for food and nutrition security, and implementing national food system pathways.**
- **Integrate nutrition-specific and nutrition sensitive interventions into national programmes based on the National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy as well**



as at health and social services facilities.

- **Improving nutrition screening services at Health and Social services facilities to identify and manage different types of malnutrition.**
- **Strengthen and monitor and regulate the implementation of food safety and food marketing legislations and policies to ensure the right to safe food for all.**

## **I. Right to participate in cultural life**

54. Egypt actively implements provisions that promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and expressions for enhancing the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions.<sup>34</sup> The number of museums has increased to around eighty in total, promoting people's access to cultural life. Additionally, Egypt is committed to ensuring cultural rights, including social and economic rights for artists, artistic freedom, and the safeguarding of indigenous communities' ancestral knowledge and cultural and natural heritage.

### **Recommendation:**

- **Preserve cultural heritage and cultural expressions by strengthening cultural policy and strategies and promoting public-private partnerships, while taking measures to ensure community participation, engage practitioners, cultural defenders and civil society, and groups in vulnerable situations including minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, young people and individuals with disabilities, with a focus on gender equality and non-discrimination.**

## **VII. RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

55. Egypt's national development strategy is captured in its Vision 2030.<sup>35</sup> The UNSDCF (2023-2027) details priority areas of cooperation to advance the SDGs. Egypt's 2024/2025 budget underscores a strong commitment to social spending, allocating EGP 636 billion to subsidies, grants, and social benefits.<sup>36</sup> The *Takaful* and *Karama* initiatives – Egypt's flagship social protection programmes – have reached over 4.67 million households (approximately 17 million individuals), with benefits increased by 40% in 2023 and an additional 15% boost announced in 2024,<sup>37</sup> achieving 93% of the programmes' target.<sup>38</sup>

56. The national poverty rate declined from 32.5% in 2017 to 29.7% in 2019/2020. While updated official poverty rates are not available, the most recent estimates pre-date COVID-19 and the 2022-24 socioeconomic crisis, both widely expected to have increased poverty and vulnerability.<sup>39</sup> Interest payments on debt accounted for 29.4% of total expenditures, 36.7% of the national revenue, and 11.4% of GDP for the fiscal year 2024/2025.<sup>40</sup>

57. There are high debt service costs and shrinking fiscal space for social spending which could further reduce critical ESCR investments needed to reduce poverty and inequality.

Budget deficit has augmented due to increase in debt service payments and revenue drops linked to the war in Gaza that has impacted tourism and revenues from the Suez Canal.<sup>41</sup>

58. IMF identified social discontent as a potential medium risk with high impact due to the high inflation, real income loss, spillovers from conflicts (including migration), and worsening inequality.<sup>42</sup>

59. In the education sector, the Government continues to prioritize human capital development through the "Education 2.0" reform programme aiming to modernize curricula and improve digital literacy, targeting 25 million students by 2030.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Continue to strengthen national measures and international cooperation to realize the right to development and consider using human rights impact assessments to evaluate the potential impact of relevant policies, and projects.**
- **Scale up investment, expand coverage and strengthen shock-responsiveness of social protection to move people out of, and protect them from falling into poverty.**

### **VIII. HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

60. Egypt has made progress with its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It has revised its targets to reflect a stronger commitment to low-carbon development. The 2023 NDCs, include accelerating the goal of generating 42% of its energy from renewable sources by 2030, five years earlier than the initial target of 2035. Egypt aims to reduce emissions from the electricity sector to 80 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030, instead of the previously planned 70 million tons. This updated strategy aligns with Egypt's broader climate action plans, which include transitioning towards renewable energy, enhancing energy efficiency, and incorporating green technologies and aligns with the Egypt's Vision 2030.

61. The MoEnv launched National Strategy for mainstreaming gender in climate change in Egypt 2011 on the inclusion of gender in environmental work. Egypt also launched the Climate Change Strategy 2050 launched in 2022. The 2023 National Urban Policy aims for more inclusive and sustainable urbanization by analyzing current and future urban systems, fostering city competitiveness, balancing population distribution, and promoting local economic development. The government endorsed new urban upgrades and regeneration approach to improve living conditions.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Implement the Climate Change Strategy 2050 and integrate climate data into existing monitoring, early warning, surveillance, and data collection systems.**
- **Review the national strategic vision for urban development 2052 based on the newly endorsed National Urban policy to ensure people centred, smart, and**

adequate cities and human settlements.

- Ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to support youth engagement in environment-related action.
- Invest in resilience-building and adaptation to climate change, and accelerate transition to green economy, including focus on “just transition”.

## **IX. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION & CAPACITY BUILDING**

62. Egypt’s vision for human rights education and capacity-building as stipulated in its NHRS intersects and is consistent with international initiatives to enhance and establish Human Rights Education as a long-term investment to protect and promote human rights.

### **Recommendations:**

- Ensure that human rights education is imparted all levels of schools and in universities with a view to strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Build the capacity of the criminal justice and law enforcement agencies, including the police, the Public Prosecution, the judiciary, the Administrative Prosecution, and the State Council, on international human rights standards.
- Enhance the capacity of state officials on the rights of people in vulnerable situations, including children, persons with disabilities and people on the move.

## **ANNEX**

### **List of Abbreviations**

<b>CAT</b>	Convention Against Torture
<b>CEDAW</b>	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
<b>GoE</b>	Government of Egypt
<b>HRDs</b>	Human Rights Defenders
<b>ICCPR-OP-II</b>	Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Electricity

<b>MoEnv</b>	Ministry of Environment
<b>MoETE</b>	Ministry of Education and Technical Education
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MoL</b>	Ministry of Labour
<b>MoSS</b>	Ministry of Social Solidarity
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>NCCM</b>	National Council for Childhood and Motherhood
<b>NCW</b>	National Council for Women
<b>NHRS</b>	National Human Rights Strategy
<b>SOEs</b>	State Owned Enterprises
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>VAW</b>	Violence against women

<sup>1</sup> According to the last official statistics released in 2015 and published by the National Council of Women, women shaped less than half a percent of the total number of judges working in Egypt's judiciary system (there were around 12,000 male judges). Even with the new 98 judges the percentage is still less than half a percent.

<sup>2</sup> The punishment increased from six months to two years, and fines from 3,000-5,000 EGP to 100,000-200,000 EGP.

<sup>3</sup> CAPMAS (2021). Egypt Family Health Survey 2021 (EFHS 2021).

<sup>4</sup> Article 61

<sup>5</sup> Census 2017.

<sup>6</sup> [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID,P13100\\_COUNTRY\\_ID:4118604,102915:N](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:4118604,102915:N)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.unodc.org/romena/en/Stories/2023/December/unodc-and-egypt-partner-to-guarantee-access-to-justice-for-persons-with-disabilities.html>.

<sup>8</sup> The study was conducted by the National Council for Women, Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics and the UN: <https://egypt.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/03/violence-against-women-with-disabilities-study>

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> MOETE, 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Official statistics provide estimates of the numbers of children with disability at the national level, it lacks accurate segregated data that would inform decision making with regards to their access to education and the provision of adequate learning opportunities that address their individual learning needs.

<sup>12</sup> See in this regard also: CCPR/C/EGY/CO/5, 2023, para.45.

<sup>13</sup> Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/EGY/CO/5, 2023, para.49.

<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/EGY/CO/5, 2023, para.49.

<sup>15</sup> Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/EGY/CO/5, 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Committee against Torture CAT/C/EGY/CO/5, para 37.

<sup>17</sup> Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/EGY/CO/5, 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, A/HRC/40/61/Add.2, 2019, para 57.

<sup>19</sup> The Strategy follows the four pillars approach (Prevention, Prosecution, Protection, and Partnership).

<sup>20</sup> Hayah Kareema Initiative (see below).

<sup>21</sup> Hayah Karima interventions include basic infrastructure (construction, renovation or upgrading) at village and district levels for water, sanitation, natural gas, electricity, optical fibre network, cell towers, housing renovation or construction, irrigation and wastewater treatment, economic and agriculture structures, rural roads, educational and health facilities, sports facilities and more. The infrastructure investment is accompanied by institution capacity building, investment in human capabilities, including adult literacy and digital literacy, economic empowerment, especially of women, agriculture productivity enhancement, family development actions, better targeting of social safety nets, youth development programs, health and education services, entrepreneurship training and micro-credit and job creation initiatives, civic education training.

<sup>22</sup> Egypt's MoE announced a 26% increase in electricity tariffs starting 2 January 2024 within the framework of austerity measures of subsidies removal.

<sup>23</sup> Official figures estimate that inflation surged from 5.1% (2020) to 27.4% (May 2024), with significant effects for poverty and food security. The pound also lost more than two-thirds of its value against the dollar since 2022 after a series of devaluations. Coping with higher prices has been the primary economic challenge at the household level, with evidence of negative coping mechanisms such as reducing meals, foregoing needed health care, and taking on personal debt. At the same time social spending has shrunk while government debt as a percentage of GDP has risen (86.2% to 96.4%), indicating increased vulnerability to economic shocks and a further constraint on fiscal space.

<sup>24</sup> Support extended since 2017 until present.

<sup>25</sup> To meet the 3% constitutionally mandated government allocation to health according to the budget functional classification and the GDP figures in the 24/25 budget document it is important that Egypt allocate an additional EGP 222.3 billion.

<sup>26</sup> In order to meet the 3% constitutionally mandated allocation to health according to the budget functional classification and the GDP figures in the 24/25 budget document, the government would need to allocate an extra EGP 222.3 billion on top of current allocations.

<sup>27</sup> According to 2017 data.

<sup>28</sup> According to UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS): The out-of-school rate for children of primary age, for both sexes, has decreased steadily since 2019, from 2.55% (2019) to 1.24% (2020) and 0.46% (2021). The out-of-school rate for girls of primary school age specifically went from 2.38% (2019) to 1.05 (2020) and to 0.32 (2021). Similarly, the out-of-school rate for adolescents and youth of lower and upper secondary school age, for both sexes, has dropped from 20.82 (2019) to 18.91 (2020) and 16.01 (2021).

<sup>29</sup> UIS.

<sup>30</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718>.

<sup>31</sup> In order to meet the 4% constitutionally mandated government allocation to pre-university education according to the budget functional classification and the GDP figures in the 24/25 budget document, the government would need to allocate an extra EGP 430 billion on top of what has been allocated in the fiscal year 23/24.

<sup>32</sup> The 2023 Global Hunger Index.

<sup>33</sup> In 2023, Egypt formed the National Committee for Food and Nutrition Systems along with national pathways for food system transformation as follow up to Egypt's participation in the Food Systems Summit.

<sup>34</sup> For instance, the Festivals Associated with the Journey of the Holy Family was inscribed on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity in 2022. The Egyptian authorities organized the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ICH Convention in Egypt by inaugurating the House of Heritage at Fusutat Crafts Centre, celebrating the cultural diversity in the country. In 2023, Diarna (or Our Home) annual exhibition organised by the Ministry of Social Solidarity provided opportunities to showcase handicrafts from across Egypt with the arts and culture belonging to Amazigh community in the Siwa Oasis as the guest of honour.

<sup>35</sup> <https://mped.gov.eg/Highlights?id=1&lang=en&Egypt-Vision-2030-Launch>.

<sup>36</sup> [Egypt's FY 2024/2025 budget - FrontierView](#)

<sup>37</sup> February 2024, source: Promoting Inclusive Human Capital Development and Building Resilience in Egypt through Cash Transfer Programs (worldbank.org).

<sup>38</sup> The Government has meanwhile launched several initiatives to support SDG progress in line with the updated *Egypt Vision 2030*. This includes "Decent Life", the primary programme for improving the quality of life in poor villages through strengthened infrastructure, access to basic services, decent employment opportunities, and women's empowerment." <https://www.hayakarima.com/goals.html>.

<sup>39</sup> World Bank database: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=EG>, and <https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/477989.aspx>.

<sup>40</sup> Ministry of Finance Financial Statement on General Budget for fiscal year 2024/2025.

<sup>41</sup> Egypt's macroeconomic prospects improved in the first half of 2024 following the \$35 billion deal with the UAE for developing Ras El Hekma that helped address the foreign currency shortage and opened space for subsequent policy reforms. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain, including related to the Gaza crisis, debt burden, and fiscal space.

<sup>42</sup> IMF Report n°24/98, April 2024.