

وزارة التخطيط والتنمية الاقتصادية
Ministry of Planning and Economic
Development



Overview

Egypt Human Development Report 2021

Development, a right for all:
Egypt's pathways and prospects



“States should undertake, at the national level, all necessary measures for the realization of the right to development and shall ensure, inter alia, equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income. Effective measures should be undertaken to ensure that women have an active role in the development process. Appropriate economic and social reforms should be carried out with a view to eradicating all social injustices.”

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Foreword

Egypt's Human Development Report 2021 - *Development, a right for all: Egypt's pathways and prospects* comes at a critical stage in Egypt's history as well as the world and tracks the course of an entire decade in the nation's journey. This period of 10 years is a brief moment compared to the lives of nations, but it shows the significance of long decades due to the major events, changes and challenges Egypt has gone through in this time.

The political movement witnessed in Egypt since 2011 and the consequent political and security instability, amid a regional and international environment filled with challenges, had a negative impact on the performance indicators of the Egyptian economy. The economy had long suffered from structural imbalances until the Egyptian people moved boldly to regain their country's capabilities through the inspiring revolution of 30 June 2013, whose source of strength was a great people defending their national identity and principles and rejecting the domination of dark forces that oppose the principles of citizenship and the civil state.

This revolution served as a spark for years of construction and continuous hard work, based on comprehensive planning and an ambitious vision defined by the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030. This is the national version of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030 has been fostered by the successful implementation of the national economic and social reform programme, which began in November 2016. By implementing this programme, Egypt carried out many legislative and institutional reforms while working to achieve macroeconomic stability, control fiscal and monetary policy, conduct structural reform in many sectors, improve the business environment, intensify investment in infrastructure projects, stimulate comprehensive and sustainable economic growth driven by the private sector as an effective partner for the government working to achieving development, while also expanding social protection programmes to mitigate the impact of reform measures on those who are most in need.

At the heart of all these efforts comes the strategic objective of improving the quality of life for Egyptian citizens by intensifying investment in human capital, conducting serious reforms, and implementing major development projects and initiatives in education, health, housing and utilities, in order to provide adequate housing and a decent life for Egyptians, with the utmost importance given to empowering youth and women politically, economically, and socially within a more general and comprehensive framework

approach of the Egyptian State to ensure human rights, the foremost of which is the Right to Development. We have a firm belief that the human being is the main actor in achieving development, which is also their desired goal.



Once these efforts had started to pay off, the Egyptian economy began to recover, as shown by many positive indicators, especially in growth and employment rates. However, a new challenge then appeared in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis hit the global economy, creating an unprecedented level of stagnation. The reform efforts achieved by Egypt in recent years had the advantage of enhancing the ability of the national economy to withstand the pandemic, and this was reinforced by the rapid action and effective handling of this crisis by the Egyptian State. The State took into account the balance between preserving human health and continuing economic activity, and as a result, the Egyptian experience in dealing with this pandemic has received international praise.

Despite the outcomes achieved due to the efforts exerted over recent years, we are fully aware that the challenges are not over yet, but we have the will and are ready for the hard work needed, inspired by the tireless determination of those great people to transform these challenges into promising opportunities for development and a better life. Comprehensive and sustainable development requires years of continuous hard work and diligent efforts in which all development partners from the private sector and civil society cooperate with the government and all Egyptians at home and abroad.

Having taken pride in witnessing the preparation of this commendable issue of the Egypt Human Development Report for 2021, we would like to show appreciation and praise for the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme team to prepare the Report, and we look forward to benefiting from the reform process and challenges, to develop an ambitious programme that takes us forward on a path illuminated by work and hope for a new era of development in Egypt.

Hala El Said
Minister
Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

Foreword

Egypt's Human Development Report 2021 - *Development, a right for all: Egypt's pathways and prospects*. Twelfth in the series of such reports undertaken in Egypt since 1994, the Report is a unique reflection on Egypt's development in the last 10 years as we enter the Decade of Action to 2030.

The Report is timely in its focus on the Right to Development, as all United Nations Member States celebrate 35 years since they collectively adopted in 1986, the Declaration on the Right to Development, which recognized development as a basic human right – a right for all individuals and peoples, everywhere, without discrimination and with their active participation.

The Report analyses a pivotal period in Egypt's modern history, as that decade 2011-2020 has witnessed radical transformations, starting with the 25 January 2011 revolution and what ensued in June 2013, leading up to a new constitution in 2014 thus stabilizing the country. This was followed by important reforms in economic and social policies, tackling chronic development challenges, in pursuit of a comprehensive renaissance that would take Egypt towards a better future for all.

Egypt embarked upon a bold National Program for Economic Reform in late 2016, which succeeded in achieving macroeconomic stability. When the COVID-19 wreaked havoc on the global economy in 2020, Egypt was one of few countries that were able to maintain positive economic growth despite the pandemic.

And throughout its journey of economic reforms, Egypt put human development at the center. The average lifespan of Egyptians increased, the death rate of children under five decreased, the number of children enrolled in education increased, with a growing percentage of them moving on to higher education, while the number of Egyptians living in informal neighborhoods decreased.

Egypt also overhauled its social protection systems, transforming them to focus on empowering its citizens, expanded to cover 3.8 million families in 2021, and Egypt has reinvigorated its commitment to the role of women as effective and equal partners, indispensable in achieving sustainable human development.

In parallel Egypt paid great attention to preserving its vital environmental assets. Egypt prioritized reforming

its energy ecosystem, greatly reducing energy subsidies, improving energy efficiency and shifting to renewable energy sources, and aims to cover 42% of its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2035. Strengthening governance and improving the administrative apparatus remained an important endeavor in Egypt, including improving financial management systems, combating corruption, better qualifying executive cadres, with emphasis on youth, alongside promoting decentralization and digital transformation.

The Report is felicitous in examining development gaps and challenges of the remaining decade for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It delivers important data and analysis to support Egypt in its second phase of structural reforms, following the success of the macro economic reforms; and offers recommendations regarding ongoing development priorities.

Looking towards the future, with Egypt's vision aligned with that of the globally agreed Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Africa's Agenda 2063, the Report sees Egypt enhancing its commitment to guaranteeing the Right to Development for all Egyptians through: strengthening financing for development and increasing investments in it; developing the information base necessary for sound development planning and monitoring; accelerating inclusive digital transformation through investment in infrastructure and expanding digital service delivery; and continued institutional and capacity development to enhance the efficiency and quality of basic public services.

I congratulate the authors on their rich collection of data and analyses, and hope that this report will not only inspire decision makers, but also the business community, researchers and most importantly Egypt's citizens into more concerted action towards the bright future that Egypt deserves.



Randa Aboul-Hosn
Resident Representative
United Nations Development Programme

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Introduction

The Egypt Human Development Report 2021 is of particular significance, coming a decade after the publication of the previous Human Development Report in 2010. As a result, the new report covers an unprecedented period in Egypt's history, from 2011 to 2020, which includes two revolutions. These upheavals changed the course of the development process in Egypt. The 2021 Report aims to provide an in-depth analysis of a set of key human development issues that significantly affect work to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Report provides an analytical review of the policies adopted and implemented during this period and their impact on Egyptians. Building on those findings and on the Government Action Programme, it puts forward a set of policies for the future that would further boost the process of human development that Egypt has initiated.

The Egypt Human Development Report 2021 is entitled *Development, a right for all: Egypt's pathways and prospects* and seeks to monitor and analyse the progress made over the past decade in the areas of sustainable development, from the perspective of the Declaration on the Right to Development which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1986. This declaration consolidated the right of developing populations to choose their development path and achieve their true independence without external intervention and according to their national values. The Report discusses the course ahead for the various reforms taken by Egypt in light of the plans and strategies prepared and in light of the evolution of views on development at the global level, as well as the relevant successful international experiences and expertise.

The Report is being published amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has claimed millions of lives worldwide, has battered national economies and global markets, and has had an impact on international financial, political and economic systems. Understandably, this crisis casts a shadow over the discussion of the issues included in this Report and must be addressed directly. The Report outlines the policies and measures Egypt has implement-

ed to combat the outbreak of COVID-19 and to reduce its anticipated negative impacts on growth, the budget deficit, the balance of payments, and the performance of various aspects of the national economy, especially the tourism and aviation sector, Suez Canal revenues, and remittances from Egyptians abroad. At the same time, Egypt will have to reconsider priorities in terms of its plans and policies in order to recover and re-launch itself on the path to sustainable development, with its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Egypt has gone through many major political, social and economic developments since the revolution in January 2011, but was able to regain control over its capabilities. The country then began a new phase aimed at achieving sustainable economic and social development, strengthening political stability and security, combating terrorism, protecting borders, improving public services, consolidating principles of governance and tackling corruption.

Following the stabilization of the political situation in 2014, the priority was to pave the way for the development process. Egypt's government started working on two parallel tracks: the first track was to re-establish and strengthen the pillars of the Egyptian State, while the second track was to move forward profoundly with the development process in all its aspects.

Egypt's development pathway was based on two key pillars: a new Constitution that would establish a new social contract responsive to the people's demands, and a sustainable development strategy that would shape the country's vision of the future, in addition to responding to the international commitments related to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Emanating from the key concept of the Declaration of the Right to Development, which puts people at the centre of change and development, the Egypt Human Development Report 2021 is based at its core on "people as the real wealth of nations", as described in the first Report on human development, issued in 1990. This report emphasized that economic growth is a means in its own right but is not the main goal of development.

This concept was reflected in Egypt's 2014 Constitution, which included principles that establish the rights of Egyptians to a dignified life in all its aspects. In Article 1, the Constitution adopts the principle of citizenship as a basis for the State's system of governance, which means that the citizen's eligibility to obtain their rights is guaranteed by law without discrimination. In Article 4, it is stipulated that national unity is based on the principles of equality, justice and equal opportunity for all citizens, thus ensuring the equality of women with men in rights as a rule. Moreover, Article 9 guarantees equal opportunities for all citizens without discrimination.

The Constitution also includes principles that establish the rights of Egyptians to a dignified life in all its aspects, as Article 27 stipulates: "The economic system aims at achieving prosperity in the country through sustainable development and social justice to guarantee an increase in the real growth rate of the national economy, raising the standard of living, increasing job opportunities, reducing unemployment rates and eliminating poverty." For the first time, the Egyptian Constitution stipulates a minimum percentage of the Gross National Product (GNP) be directed to government spending on health (3 percent), education (4 percent), higher education (2 percent), and scientific research (1 percent), regarding these areas to be among the most important elements supporting human development.

The Constitution also affirms the equitable distribution of the earnings of development, the reduction of disparities between incomes, and the commitment to a minimum wage and a pension, as well as a maximum wage for workers in state bodies. The Constitution also emphasizes balanced geographical, sectoral and environmental growth, and requires attention be paid to small and medium-sized enterprises and that the informal sector be regulated and integrated. It also stresses the importance of maximizing investment in manpower within the framework of sustainable development. Moreover, the Constitution stipulates special provisions for the protection and preservation of the environment in Articles 45 and 46, which stipulate the imposition of political and social obligations to protect the environment as one of the pillars of sustainable development.

The Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, launched in February 2016, represents the general and comprehensive framework for development in Egypt, as well as acting as the governing framework for development plans and programmes. It was developed according to a participatory approach to which development partners from the government, the private sector, civil society, and academic experts contributed. This vision is consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals and the 'African Union's Agenda 2063'.

The strategy includes a road map that maximizes the benefit of Egypt's potentials and competitive features and aims to achieve inclusive growth and to build a just and cohesive society characterized by equal rights, economic, social and political opportunities, and one which provides the highest degree of social inclusion, while supporting various segments of society and achieving protection for those who are most in need and the most vulnerable groups. The vision considers the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment to be an issue that crosscuts all its pillars; whether those related to economic development, education, health, or social justice.

This overview gives a brief presentation of the key points of the Report. It is divided into three main parts. The first part presents the conceptual framework and methodology. The second monitors and analyses the pathways of Egypt during the past decade by shedding light on the drivers of human development from the perspective of the Right to Development, which includes issues of investment in human capital, economic reform, social protection, women's empowerment, management of environmental protection systems, and governance, in addition to presenting the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on these issues. The third part presents the prospects for realizing sustainable development, which includes the principles governing the development process in Egypt, the goals to be achieved, and the mechanisms necessary to implement a new decade of achievements from 2021 to 2030, based on the 'Decade of Action' set out by the UN to accelerate achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Conceptual framework and methodology

Development is a human right which implies the need to observe many principles, including participation, peace, equality and rule of law. According to Article 8 of the Declaration on the Right to Development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1986: States “should undertake, at the national level, all necessary measures for the realization of the Right to Development and shall ensure, inter alia, equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income. Effective measures should be undertaken to ensure that women have an active role in the development process. Appropriate economic and social reforms should be carried out with a view to eradicating all social injustices”.¹

The Egypt Human Development Report 2021 puts forward a number of approaches to advance the Right to Development in Egypt including: investing in human capital, promoting economic and social reform, enhancing environmental sustainability, empowering women, and strengthening governance.

The Report considers the latter two issues; empowering women and strengthening governance, to intersect with all the other approaches. For example, economic and social reforms require parallel policies to empower women both economically and socially. They also require strong and supportive institutions that are able to implement reforms and policies effectively and efficiently. The Report also assesses that these stimuli will not only boost human development, but ultimately function as building blocks on the path to achieving sustainable development. The aim is not only to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, but to foster long-term sustainable development beyond 2030.

Methodology and report development process

The Egypt Human Development Report 2021 is based on an analytical methodology that relies on a variety of primary and secondary sources. The experts who drafted the Report conducted a number of interviews with groups of specialists and decision makers to deepen their understanding of a range of different issues and policies and to verify data and information.

The Report used data from local, regional and international sources, and looked at the results of indicators related to the Sustainable Development Goals and to national sustainable development goals. The most important databases for analysing the demographic situation and economic performance at the macro, sectoral and geographical levels include Egypt’s economic census of 2017/2018; the income and expenditure surveys of 2015, 2017 and 2019; and the population census of 2017. Other databases used include the general state budget and final accounts, and national accounts data over the past 10 years. The Report also relies on the Central Bank of Egypt’s database on monetary and foreign trade indicators.

In addition, the Report relied on a set of reports on human development, both international and national, which helped generate fruitful comparisons between Egypt and other countries, where applicable. The countries compared are drawn from the 10 that precede Egypt on the Human Development Index in the 2019 and 2020 rankings; other Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) non-oil exporting countries; and other countries classified by the World Bank as middle-income.

A range of other sources were also used in the drafting process, including the 2014 Constitution, various laws and regulations, national and international reports, the Sustainable

Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030, the Administrative Reform Vision, the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, and Voluntary National Reviews, in addition to the various statistics and data contained in the self-assessment report within the framework of the African Peer Review Mechanism. Reports and statements issued by the National Council for Women and the Egyptian women's observatory on Egyptians' perceptions of women's economic participation and women's rights, reducing the gender gap, and the political, economic and social empowerment of women were also used.

The process of preparing the Report involved cooperation with a number of Egyptian government agencies in order to provide the necessary information, documents and data.

The preparation of the Report was led by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, and the Report has been comprehensively reviewed by a number of experts and specialists in the topics it discusses, including former ministers; research institutes; academics; experts in economics, political science and social policies; and representatives of civil society.

Egypt's development pathways 2011–2020





Egypt's development pathways 2011 – 2020

During the period from 2011 to 2020, Egypt's development process faced many challenges at the national, regional and global level. Despite these challenges, sustainable human development was the focus of the structural reforms Egypt adopted, especially during the past six years, to enhance development and realize the Right to Development for all Egyptians. This was reflected in issues related to investment in human capital, economic reform, social protection, ecosystem management, women's empowerment and governance. The Report highlights the development process in Egypt from 2011 to 2020 by focusing on these issues.

According to the data included in UNDP's Human Development Report 2020, titled 'The next frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene,' Egypt maintained its ranking of 116th out of 189 countries, and retained its position as a country with a high development index. For the first time ever, Egypt's 2020 Human Development Index (HDI) was higher than the Arab world's average. Egypt ranked 102nd out of 189 countries, according to its gross national income per capita. Even though Egypt's HDI ranking has not changed between the 2019 and 2020 human development reports, there was an improvement in the value of the index from 0.701 in 2019 to 0.707 in the 2020 report, and the HDI sub-indices also saw improvement over the same period.

As in its previous editions, the 2020 Human Development Report does not focus solely on the Human Development Index, but also looks at other dimensions such as social inequalities, gender and environmental performance. When inequalities are taken into account using the Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index, Egypt's HDI loses 29.4 percent of its value, and Egypt's ranking drops by nine positions compared to its ranking on the HDI.

Investment in human capital: Towards a modern system of education, health and adequate housing

Investment in human capital is one of the basic elements for society building and a fundamental human right. It is also considered the core of the sustainable development process. This investment is linked to a set of direct and indirect personal and social gains and returns, rendering its role essential in achieving the various goals of development in all its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Individuals with better health and a higher level of education effectively contribute to the service of the societies to which they belong. They are more likely to work, produce, innovate, deal with crises, and solve or adapt to problems, compared to individuals who are less healthy and less educated. In addition, they are more aware of and show a greater tendency to follow sustainable production and consumption patterns that address environmental and climate challenges. They are also more likely to achieve higher levels of personal income that will enable them to escape the cycle of poverty and secure an acceptable standard of living.

Likewise, the right to adequate housing is fundamental to human rights and human dignity. Accordingly, working to increase efforts promoting the right to adequate housing affects the whole development process and is considered one of the main entry points for investment in human capital. Therefore, investment in the human capital agenda tends to capture the attention of decision makers in most countries, and is also a spending priority for governments.

In the past years, Egypt maintained its commitment to introducing reforms in the areas of health, education, scientific research and proper housing, along with focusing particularly on the dimensions related to quality and competitiveness, whether through the commitments provided in the 2014 Constitution regarding these sectors, or adopting

three full themes in the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030 regarding investment in human capital; including two themes within the social dimension, namely “health” and “education and training,” and a theme within the economic dimension, namely “knowledge, innovation and scientific research.”

Education

Pre-university education

In 2014, the government adopted the Strategic Plan for the Development of Pre-University Education 2014-2030, and in 2018, Egypt launched the National Education Project, which took three years to be developed. It aims to focus mainly on public schools, which represent the vast majority of the educational sector in Egypt. Both the public and private sectors contribute to provision of pre-university education in Egypt, but the public sector is of greater relative importance in the education system. Public pre-university education during the period 2010/2011 to 2019/2020 was associated on average with 90 percent of pre-university students, 86 percent of schools, and 87 percent of classrooms.²

The performance of the pre-university education sector in Egypt has improved over the past 10 years according to accessibility indicators, as net and gross enrolment rates at all educational levels have increased. These successes have been concentrated in the primary education stage. Accordingly, Egypt is seeking to increase enrolment rates at the lower secondary and secondary stages in line with the principle of compulsory education through secondary school as established by Article 19 of the Constitution.

Data on enrolment rates for both boys and girls show a decline in the gender gap during the period between the academic years of 2010/2011 and 2019/2020, with the net enrolment rates for girls exceeding those of boys at all levels of pre-university education, which generated a negative value on the gender

gap index according to data for 2019/2020. On the other hand, the geographical gaps in enrolment rates between rural and urban areas have improved significantly over the past decade. Nevertheless, enrolment rates across all educational stages in rural governorates are lower than the rest of Egypt.

The Egyptian educational system also provides the opportunity for persons with disabilities to enrol in education as a basic principle of equality of access. Educational services are available to persons with disabilities, as well as to those who are gifted in sports and who are academically distinguished through schools and classes dedicated to their needs. However, the educational services provided to these groups are still limited in quantity, quality and geographical distribution compared to others.³ It is worth noting that the current Government Action Programme (2018/2019-2021/2022) targets the opening of 1,600 new classrooms for people with visual and hearing impairments by the end of 2022.⁴

In terms of educational outcomes, the pre-university education system in Egypt has made progress on a number of indicators. Dropout rates decreased between 2010/2011 and 2018/2019, especially at the lower secondary stage, dropping from 5.5 percent for boys and 4.7 percent for girls in 2010/2011 to 2.8 percent for boys and 2.6 percent for girls in 2018/2019. The transition rates from the primary to the lower secondary stage have also increased, as have the transition rates from the lower secondary stage to the secondary stage (for both public and technical schools).

In general, Egypt is still seeking to improve the indicators on the quality of education to keep pace with the improvements made on the access to education indicators. The most important indicators on the quality of inputs of the educational process are the average class size and the student-teacher ratio, as a high number of students per class undermines participation and interaction for both students and teachers. Moreover, a high num-

ber of students per teacher limits the teacher's ability to focus on students and to apply teaching methods that develop their skills and stimulate creativity, critical thinking and problem solving. The average class size at all educational stages increased between 2010/2011 and 2019/2020 to reach its maximum of 53 students at primary stage and 49 at lower secondary, while the student-teacher ratio stabilized at all educational stages except for the pre-school stage, which saw a significant decrease in the ratio in this period—a positive indication.

The overall indicators of classroom size should be treated with some caution, in light of the growing populace of school age children eligible for basic education in Egypt, which is much higher than other countries. These indicators also conceal the disparity between different geographical areas and do not reflect some of the infrastructure problems that students and teachers may face in schools, which varies from one place to another. Studies show that the positive effects of reducing class densities are more pronounced in kindergarten and the third grade of primary school, as well as in classes made up of students from low-income families, and those taught by less qualified and trained teachers. In this context, in April 2020 Egypt announced an ambitious plan to establish about 27,000 new classrooms at a cost of more than EGP 6.8 billion, with the aim of reducing class sizes.

Technical education

Ongoing efforts have been made to develop technical education by changing the admission prerequisites and the curricula for all majors to bring them in line with the requirements of the labour market and the needs of the local environment. Furthermore, efforts are being exerted to provide equipment and educational technology and to develop the existing technical education schools through the establishment of workshops and training centres to serve the community. Moreover, some technical education schools qualify to transform into “applied technology schools”,

which work or coordinate with colleges of technology to grant an Egyptian certificate of international quality. They primarily focus on the priority sectors of the Egyptian economy in the fields of energy, information and communication technology, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. However, the outputs of this type of education are still far lower than the expectations and needs of the business sector at the qualitative level.

Higher education

Egypt has launched the Higher Education and Scientific Research Strategy 2030 and the National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2030. The number of public and private universities has also increased, and there has been greater diversification of educational programmes. Regional diversity of educational provision has also been addressed. However, the highest unemployment rates are still found among graduates of higher education.

Scientific research

The number of Egyptian-authored scientific research papers published in internationally indexed journals increased from 14,100 papers in 2014 to 21,961 in 2018. In addition, Egypt's ranking in the Global Innovation Index increased from 107th (out of 128 countries) in 2016 to 95th (out of 126) in 2018.⁵

Health

Egypt has developed a National Population Strategy and its five-year plan of action (2015-2020), which is based on a set of themes related to family planning and reproductive health, providing family planning services with health insurance and all government hospitals and treatment institutions, and providing an adequate balance of family planning methods, as well as working on integrating population issues into the education and awareness process. In this regard, the operational plan of the National Family Development Project 2021-2023, which aims to improve the quality of life of Egyptian citizens by controlling population

growth, is based on a range of themes, namely economic empowerment; service intervention; cultural, media and educational intervention; digital transformation; and legislative intervention.

Between 2014 and 2020, Egypt adopted a set of policies and launched a number of health programmes and initiatives. They aimed at achieving the strategic objectives of the health sector, which are related to improving the public health of citizens within a framework of justice and equity, achieving universal health coverage, and improving health sector governance.

Programmes and initiatives for treatment and control of diseases

A set of initiatives and programmes have been launched that target diseases that impact Egyptian citizens most. The aim is to reduce the prevalence of such diseases and reduce mortality rates in the short term until the completion of the new health insurance system. The latter had already begun its journey when the Comprehensive Health Insurance Law was issued. In 2014, a national campaign was launched to eradicate hepatitis C, of which Egypt had the highest prevalence in the world. The campaign succeeded in controlling and treating the disease. The campaign contributed to shortening the treatment period from 12 to 3 months, and increasing recovery rates from about 50 percent to over 98 percent, and achieving financial savings in treatment costs estimated at about EGP 8 billion. The treatment cost per patient decreased from US\$900 (2014) to less than \$200 (2016). Other initiatives included the elimination of waiting lists for critical operations and procedures (2018); the '100 Million Healthy Lives' initiative for early detection of noncommunicable diseases and the provision of the necessary treatment for free (2018); the '100 Million Healthy Lives' initiative to support Egyptian women for early detection of breast tumours and other women's non-communicable diseases (2019), and the Early Detection of Obesity, Stunting and Anaemia Among School Students (2019).

Expanding availability, equipping hospitals and ambulance stations, and initiating the health system automation

From 2015 to 2018, hospitals and specialized centres were established and developed across the health sector at a total cost of about EGP 9.2 billion. In addition, the number of government ambulance centres nationwide doubled between 2010 and 2020. Egypt has also paid great attention to improving the management of the health sector by providing accurate and updated health data to support the decision-making system through a unified and integrated database. This database links all health facilities and facilitates the availability of information and the automation of health services.

Organization and development of the pharmaceutical industry

In 2019, the Egyptian Authority for Unified Procurement, Medical Supply and Technology Management and the Egyptian Drug Authority were created to activate plans and policies for medicines and medical technology and enhance the strategic medical stock in Egypt. They also aim to establish an integrated database for medical technology in all public health facilities to follow up on needs, use, maintenance and training, and develop the storage, transportation and distribution system for medical products and supplies.

Health programmes and initiatives have led to an increase in the performance rates of the units that make up the health system in Egypt, including hospitals and health centres. They have also contributed to improving a number of indicators related to the quality and output of health services in Egypt. It is possible to identify Egypt's public health reality through the indicators of life expectancy at birth and the infant mortality rate. In Egypt, the average life expectancy at birth increased from 70.3 years in 2010 (68.2 for men and 72.6 for women) to about 71.8 years in 2018 (69.6 for men and 74.2 for women).⁶ In addition, the under-five mortality rate in Egypt declined from 28.8 deaths (30.3 boys and 27.2 girls) in 2010

to about 20.3 child deaths (21.5 boys and 19 girls) per 1,000 live births in 2019. The current under-five mortality rate in Egypt is less than the maximum target of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is 25 deaths per 1,000 live births. Consequently, this represents significant progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This rate is also lower than the corresponding rates in a number of comparable countries such as South Africa (34.5), the Philippines (27.3), and Indonesia (23.9). However, these countries are ahead of Egypt according to the 2020 Human Development Index.

While there has been progress in Egypt in the education and health sectors and their allocations, the lack of functional funding remains a key challenge to the two sectors. As a percentage of public spending and GDP, the rates of functional government spending on education and health have decreased, despite the increase in the absolute rates of spending on both sectors, and the government's ability to meet its constitutional targets with regards to total spending in health and education. This is mainly due to the unprecedented increase in public spending during the last four years, in addition to the increase in GDP during the years preceding the COVID-19 pandemic. This may negatively affect the quality of educational and health services provided considering the need for more supplies and equipment due to the increase in demand for the services of the two sectors.

Adequate housing

Egypt is one of the countries that accounts for the right to housing, and this concept is included in the 2014 Constitution. Article 78 of the Constitution stipulates that the State shall ensure the citizens' right to decent, safe and healthy housing in a manner which preserves human dignity and achieves social justice.

In 2014, an ambitious social housing programme was announced, whereby 1 million housing units will be established to enhance the availability of adequate housing for everyone, especially those with low and middle incomes.⁷ As of 30 June 2020, the number of beneficiaries of the Social Housing Program was about 312,000. They had received monetary support of up to EGP 4.9 billion from the Social Housing and Mortgage Finance Fund. Moreover, mortgage financing of about EGP 30.8 billion was paid by mortgage agencies (banks and mortgage finance companies).⁸ The total number of people who received support from the Social Housing and Mortgage Finance Fund in the previous year (June 2019) amounted to about 248,000 beneficiaries, of whom about 20 percent were women.⁹ During the 2019/2020 fiscal year, there were nearly 4,000 beneficiaries (of whom about 25 percent were women), who received estimated support of EGP 907 million and mortgage financing of EGP 6.9 billion.¹⁰

Table 1

Total beneficiaries of Social Housing and Mortgage Finance Fund support (cumulative as of 30 June 2019), by gender

Gender	Number of beneficiaries	%
Male	198,185	80
Female	49,844	20
Total	248,029	100

Source: Social Housing and Mortgage Finance Fund (2019).

In the context of the policies pertaining to providing proper housing for citizens, Egypt reduced unplanned and unsafe areas and

increased coverage of water and sanitation services.

As a result of the efforts exerted by the State in dealing with unsafe areas, the population of these areas decreased by 35 percent in 2019. The Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030 aims to reduce the population of unsafe settlements by 100 percent by 2030.

During the development of informal and unsafe settlements, the basic services needed

by citizens such as schools, places of worship, youth centres, health centres and others were considered in order to ensure a safe environment. This approach may conform to the guideline for “implementing cross-cutting strategies for the realization of the right to housing.” The number of unsafe settlements developed from 2014 to 2020 amounted to about 296 out of a total of 357 settlements.

Governorate	Share of unsafe settlements in governorate	Share of upgraded unsafe settlements
Cairo	29	46
Ismailia	18	72
Alexandria	15	55
Sharqia	0.2	55
Assiut	0.1	86
Marsa Matrouh	0.1	72

Source: Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities (2020). The Ministry's Report.

Economic reform in Egypt: Paving the way for a development shift

Egypt's Constitution affirms the need for an equitable distribution of the outcomes of development; a reduction in income disparity; balanced geographical, sectoral and environmental growth; the fostering of small and medium-sized enterprises; and the regulation and integration of the informal economy. The Constitution also emphasizes the importance of maximizing investment in human capacity within the framework of sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030 and the Government Action Programmes emphasize that upgrading and improving the livelihood of Egyptian citizens constitutes the main objective of all development policies and programmes for this period and beyond.¹¹

Since 2016, Egypt has embarked on implementing an ambitious national programme for economic and social reform. It aimed at stabi-

lizing macroeconomic indicators, providing a stable environment that enhances confidence in the Egyptian economy and its ability to attract high investment rates to achieve comprehensive development. The programme focused on reducing public debt rates and the volume of government borrowing, allowing the provision of an appropriate amount of financing for the private sector and productive projects, bridging the balance of payments gap and the return of foreign direct investment flows. Furthermore, the programme aimed to enhance the ability of the Central Bank of Egypt to manage a flexible exchange rate system, and to gradually shift to a system that targets low inflation rates to maintain the real incomes of citizens and the competitiveness of the Egyptian economy. The Report shows that the economic reform programme promoted the completion of several major projects in the areas of infrastructure, housing, utilities and transportation.

Various international financial institutions have hailed the success of Egypt's economic reform experience, and the International Monetary Fund has clarified in its successive reports that the Egyptian economy continues to perform well despite difficult global conditions. This led to achieving a growth rate of 3.6 percent in 2019/2020 and 2.8 percent in 2020/2021, with an expected growth rate of 5.4 percent in 2021/2022. Accordingly, Egypt was one of the few countries in the world that experienced positive growth rates in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The budget deficit declined to 7.6 percent of GDP, and unemployment decreased to 7.3 percent in the same year. In addition, there has been a decrease in the current account deficit, a recovery in tourism prior to the pandemic, and a decrease in total public debt, supported by financial control measures and high growth. The Fund also praised the strength of the banking system in terms of liquidity, profitability, capital, and its resilience in absorbing shocks.¹²

Despite the success of many economic and financial reforms, there are still pressing challenges that Egypt needs to address. These include identifying innovative development financing mechanisms in light of limited domestic resources, relatively low savings rates, and temporary setback in foreign investments (especially direct investments) due to COVID-19. There is also a need to increase growth rate of the manufacturing sector, and of public and private investments in this sector given its importance in growth and employment. In addition, non-tariff and export restrictions (such as technical and import requirements) represent challenges to Egypt's foreign trade performance.¹³ Moreover, there is a need to improve economic databases to enhance the ability to assess and foresee potential alternative policy outcomes.

Despite a decrease in poverty rates to 29.7 percent in 2019/2020 from 32.5 percent in 2017/2018, the first such decrease in 20 years, more programmes are still needed to support

this downward trend in poverty rates. The recent decline in poverty rates indicates that structural reforms and social protection measures have begun to yield results for vulnerable groups of the population. This is especially true of the various initiatives to improve the standards of living of those in poverty, the most important of which are the Dignified Life initiative and Egypt's Rural Development Project, with a total budget of around EGP 700 billion over three years, to develop and enhance Egyptian villages through projects in various areas, especially education, health and infrastructure.

The high rate of population growth may be the most important challenge facing the development process in Egypt in recent years. The population growth rate was 2.62 percent in 2016/2017 and declined to 1.79 percent in 2018/2019. This growth puts pressure on Egypt's resources in terms of subsidies and provision of health and education services, allocation of sufficient resources for investment in infrastructure and scientific research, and improvement of services and their geographical distribution. The issue of high population also emerges as one of the most important issues facing the social policy system, especially the issues of social protection and social and health insurance. Analysis of the characteristics of poverty in Egypt show that poverty and family size are significantly correlated. This analysis also shows that the low quality of education and its weak ability to fulfil the needs of the labour market are materially associated with the risk of poverty. These issues lead to a lack of skills and engagement in sporadic marginal work outside establishments. The executive plan of the National Project for Family Development 2021-2023 aims to control population growth and upgrade population characteristics by reducing the reproductive rate from 3.4 children per woman (according to 2017 census data) to 2.4 children per woman by 2030 and 1.9 children per woman by 2052.¹⁴

Balanced regional development

Statistics show that the 10 governorates that make up the southern region of Upper Egypt, from Fayoum to Aswan, together accounted for about 16 percent of GDP in 2012/2013, with this figure decreasing to less than 12 percent in 2017/2018. Lower Egypt and the governorates classified as urban governorates therefore contributed 88 percent of all economic activity. It is noted that the contribution of the Suez Canal region was high compared to the governorates that make up Greater Cairo and the Upper Egyptian governorates during the same period. This means there is a need to work on alleviating regional imbalances, especially with regard to the governorates of Upper Egypt, despite the efforts and investments directed at this region. It must be noted, however, that this analysis is limited to one indicator only, that of GDP generated by governorate/region.

Different indicators, which are more specific or detailed, can also be used, such as the average wages in the different governorates. The data show that five governorates in Upper Egypt are at the bottom of the list in terms of average wages, and that governorates that are characterized by tourism and/or petroleum activity (such as Red Sea and Matrouh) are the highest in wages. However, it is also the case that wage inequalities are not strong, with the highest average wages 3.3 times the lowest.

Poverty rates show greater disparity: the poverty rate in Port Said is less than 8 percent, while it is 66.7 percent in Assiut, more than eight times greater.¹⁵ These statistics show the correlation between the modest ability of the governorates of Upper Egypt to contribute to GDP on the one hand, and their low average wages and increasing rates of poverty on the other.

Social protection: Towards a more inclusive and empowering social contract in Egypt

The 2014 Constitution and the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030

provides the legal, institutional and political framework necessary to deal with the issue of social protection from a holistic and inclusive perspective. The ultimate goal is to achieve social justice by moving from protection to justice through empowerment, and by working to expand Egyptians' choices by enhancing their capabilities and enabling them to access assets and resources. The limited impact on development of the various social protection networks deployed in past years has made a review of the social protection system in Egypt necessary.

Since 2016, specifically after the adoption of the national programme for economic and social reform, a shift occurred in the philosophy around social protection in Egypt. Radical legislative reforms were carried out on some components of the social protection system. This includes the issuance of the Social Insurance Law (Law No. 148 of 2019) and the Comprehensive Health Insurance Law (Law No. 2 of 2018). The policies that followed are largely consistent with the shift in views of social protection in international development discourse to seeing it as an inclusive right. These transformations represented a qualitative leap in the functions of social protection, from the protective function characterized by relief efforts to preventive and reinforcing functions.

In fact, social safety nets in Egypt are not limited to government offerings. In Egypt, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have a long history of providing aid and support to the poor. Islamic and Christian institutions have also played, and continue to play, a role in supporting the poor and providing aid. This is in addition to informal networks, which express the strong values of social capital in Egyptian society.

Egypt has worked to modify the philosophy by which social safety nets operate, such as the validity of targeting, so that cash and in-kind transfers do not go to non-intended recipients. It considers empowerment an essential component of the programmes offered by

the Ministry of Social Solidarity. It also seeks to link cash transfers with economic and social empowerment programmes, the inclusion of all vulnerable social groups, and a focus on the poorest and most needy geographical areas, which contributes to achieving equity.

Takaful and Karama

Egypt began implementing a broad programme for social protection in 2015. The *Takaful and Karama* programme is designed as a conditional cash transfer programme which provides income to support poor families with children under 18 years of age. According to the 2019 data, it covers nearly 2 million families.¹⁶ The *Takaful* branch targets women in particular, with women making up 90 percent of the total beneficiaries. Therefore, the Ministry of Social Solidarity began to work deliberately on the component of economic empowerment through a set of programmes aimed at providing job opportunities and qualifying the poor to engage in the labour market, such as the *Forsa* programme, the *Mastoura* programme, and other programmes. These programmes fall within the framework of active labour market programmes and are an essential component of the social protection package in any society.

In 2020, the number of cash support beneficiaries in all forms reached 3.8 million families in February 2021, after 1.7 million beneficiaries of the social security pension were transferred to *Takaful and Karama*. Spending on cash support programmes developed over the period from 2012/2013 to 2019/2020. Since 2012, there has been a successive growth in spending on cash support programmes, from EGP 3.6 billion to EGP 18.5 billion. It is worth noting that this programme managed in its first year to target 510,000 beneficiaries, which rose to 2,280,000 in 2017, representing a significant increase. As part of the programme evaluation, there is a need to verify the validity of the targeting. All data were reviewed by using a number of mechanisms at that time, and those who were not eligible were excluded. As a result, the number of beneficiaries in 2019 was 1,990,000, both male and female, after the

beneficiaries of the social security pension were transferred to *Takaful and Karama*.

Takaful and Karama has deployed a number of targeting approaches such as the direct targeting of poor families and of women under *Takaful*, and the direct targeting of older persons and persons with disabilities under *Karama*. The programme covers all 27 governorates but has a greater focus on Upper Egypt, where the highest rates of poverty are found.

The launch of the *Takaful and Karama* programme focused attention on empowerment, as did the issuance of the Social Security Law, reflecting Egypt's clear awareness in that continuing to work using traditional tools and methods would only lead to an expansion of beneficiaries of social safety nets, whether or not they were eligible. This would increase the financial burden on Egypt in such a way that cannot be reduced over time.

Improving the subsidized food commodities

Approximately 69 million people benefit from Egypt's ration card system, and nearly 79 million benefit from the bread subsidy system, with spending on these two programmes amounting to about 6 percent of state budget expenditures.¹⁷ The new system works to redistribute the subsidies to those who deserve it in an efficient and equitable manner. The six years since 2014 have witnessed a lot of efforts to develop the system. In 2014/2015, a system of points for unused bread subsidies was introduced (a cash subsidy of 10 piasters for each loaf that was not received) at an additional cost of EGP 4.4 billion. The monthly cash support per person on ration cards was also increased from EGP 15 to EGP 18 in July 2016, then to EGP 21 in November 2016. From 2018 to 2019, the data of the beneficiaries of the support system was updated by verifying the ration cards to reach only eligible beneficiaries. The monthly cash support for an individual on ration cards was increased from EGP 21 to EGP 50, an increase of 140 percent.¹⁸ The reform of the food subsidy system was part of an integrated policy package that seeks to increase the efficiency of targeting the poor.

Developing the social insurance system

The social insurance system in Egypt faces many problems, most notably low coverage, insurance evasion, and negative incentives in laws that do not encourage either employers or employees to make insurance payments. As a result, the government fails to collect contributions from both parties.¹⁹ This is in addition to a large informal sector outside the scope of insurance protection. The coverage rate of male workers in 2018 was about 30 percent, compared to 39 percent in 2012, 43 percent in 2006 and 50 percent in 1998. The situation was slightly better for women, with about 43 percent covered in 2018 compared to 41 percent in 2006 and 61 percent in 1998.

The new Social Insurance and Pensions Law (Law No. 148 of 2019) was promulgated to confront these challenges and work to fundamentally resolve the financial entanglements, ensure fair pensions for the beneficiaries, and achieve financial sustainability, in addition to ensuring the detailed extension of insurance coverage for casual workers, both in the agriculture sector and outside it. Moreover, the law ensured that the insurance system includes several types of insurance, such as insurance for the elderly, disability insurance, life insurance, workplace injury insurance, sickness insurance, and unemployment insurance.

Expanding the health insurance system

Egypt's health insurance system has faced a number of challenges for decades, most notably the lack of coverage. Those outside the formal sector do not benefit from health insurance coverage, and the families of those insured are also not covered. The total number of insured people in 2018 was about 55.6 million, half of whom were school students, and nearly one quarter of whom were employed, i.e., nearly 12 million employed people. This is slightly more than half the number of employees, which was estimated at a total of 22.5 million in the same year.²⁰

Despite the development of the health insurance system coverage rate since 1990 and

the expansion of the base of the insured, the percentage of private spending on health by citizens indicates the poor quality of services provided to them. The coverage rate in 1990 reached nearly 10 percent, with 56 percent private spending on health. With the addition of other groups to the health insurance system, the base of coverage expanded to reach 37 percent in 1995, with 51 percent private spending on health. The coverage expanded to 45 percent in 2000, with an increase in the percentage of private spending on health to 61 percent. By 2015, the coverage rate had reached 58 percent, with 62 percent private spending on health.

As for the level of insurance health care, the General Authority for Health Insurance continues to be the only service provider through its units, and this led to the slow expansion of health insurance on the one hand, and the lack of competitors on the other, which affected the quality of services provided. The Comprehensive Health Insurance Law (Law No. 2 of 2018) was introduced to address these challenges and represents a major legislative reform of this system. The philosophy governing this reform is based on principles of inclusion. In addition to coverage for all citizens, the family is considered the unit of coverage, not the individual, as was the case in the past. Inclusion is not limited to that aspect only; in addition, all health services are covered. The second important and governing principle of the universal health insurance system is to ensure governance. The system is based on the separation of funding from service provision. The World Health Organization has praised the universal health insurance system and considered it fundamental to health system reform.

Spending on social protection programmes

In recent years, especially after the start of the economic reform programme, there was significant growth in spending on social protection programmes. According to a report on the Ministry of Finance's data for 2019, the financial

allocations for subsidies in the State's general budget increased during the past five years from EGP 198.5 billion in the 2014/2015 budget to about EGP 327.7 billion in the 2019/2020 budget, a growth rate of 65 percent. The subsidies were restructured to reach their beneficiaries, so that 82.6 percent of the subsidies were allocated in the 2019/2020 budget to social protection programmes, compared to

50 percent in the 2014/2015 budget. Energy subsidies (petroleum products and electricity) were rationalized in favour of social protection programmes. This change in the subsidy system increases the benefits to the poorest and most eligible, and decreases the benefits to richer groups, helping to achieve more equity in distribution.

Year	Petroleum subsidies	Foods/goods subsidies	Total subsidies	Social benefits
2009/2010	66.5	16.8	93.6	4.5
2010/2011	67.7	32.7	111.2	5.3
2011/2012	95.5	30.3	134.9	5.3
2012/2013	120.0	32.5	170.8	20.8
2013/2014	126.2	35.5	187.7	35.2
2014/2015	73.9	39.4	150.2	41.0
2015/2016	51.0	42.7	138.7	53.9
2016/2017	115.0	47.5	202.6	64.2
2017/2018	120.6	80.5	243.5	77.8
2018/2019	84.7	87.0	203.7	76.0
2019/2020	52.9	89.0	149	128.9
2020/2021	28.2	84.5	115.1	181.1

Source: Ministry of Finance (several years).

Renaissance of Egyptian women: Leading roles and societal contribution

Based on the principle of the Right to Development, the Egyptian State has, during the past few years, exerted many efforts to promote the inclusion of women and their issues in various policies, and to enhance their political, economic and social roles. These efforts have seen positive results despite major obstacles. The country's 2014 Constitution and subsequent amendments in 2019 devote significant attention to the issue of gender equality and the promotion of women's rights. Since 2014, several laws and decisions related to women have been issued, such as Law No. 78 of 2016, which amended some provisions of the

Penal Law relating to female genital mutilation (FGM), increasing the penalty for those who carry out FGM. Some provisions of Penal Law No. 58 of 1937 were also amended in accordance with Law No. 6 of 2020. They provided for penalties related to those evading alimony payments, in addition to criminalizing all forms of bullying. Furthermore, several important laws ensured gender equality in opportunities and rights, such as the Investment Law No. 72 of 2017, the Comprehensive Health Insurance Law No. 2 of 2018, Law No. 10 of 2018 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Inheritance Law No. 219 of 2017, amending the provisions of Law No. 77 of 1943.

Many laws and decisions were promulgated

during the first half of 2021 supporting the rights of Egyptian women and girls, perhaps the most important of which is the promulgation of Law No. 10 of 2021 which amended some provisions of the Penal Law related to the crime of FGM, and the issuance by Minister of Manpower of Resolutions Nos. 43 and 44 of 2021. These resolutions repealed previous resolutions that discriminated against women and lifted the ban on women's employment in several industries, professions and activities, and explicitly reiterate women's right to work at night should they request to do so.

In 2017, which was announced as the Year of Women, Egypt adopted the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030, which highlights the role of women as active players in the process of achieving sustainable development. The strategy is comprised of four pillars: political empowerment and decision-making positions, economic empowerment, social empowerment, and protection. All four pillars are considered to intersect with cultural promotion and awareness raising.

Political empowerment

The 2014 Constitution restores women's rights and confirms the importance and centrality of their role in society. The Constitution explicitly stipulates equality between men and women in civil, political, economic and social rights. It guarantees women the right to assume public and senior management positions and to be appointed to judicial authorities and bodies. It also guarantees adequate representation for women in parliaments. A quarter of the seats in local councils are allocated to women. At least a quarter of the seats in the House of Representatives are allocated to women, and no less than 10 percent of the total seats in the Senate. In the Senate 2020 elections, the president allocated 20 percent of the seats he was allowed to appoint (a third of the total) to women, bringing the number of women appointees to 20. In addition, a woman was appointed for the first time to the position of deputy speaker. In the parliamentary elections

of 2021, there was a significant increase in the percentage of women obtaining seats. The number of women in the parliament reached 162, or 28 percent. In the previous parliament, the percentage of women had been 25 percent. The number of women in the Senate was 14 percent, the number in the Cabinet 25 percent, the number in deputy minister positions 27 percent, and the number of deputy governors 31 percent. This led to an improvement in Egypt's ranking in the Political Empowerment Subindex on the Global Gender Gap Report on the Status of Women's Political Empowerment in 2021 to 78th place out of 156 countries, which is the best classification the country has achieved in the past 10 years.

It should be noted that there are ongoing efforts to help women assume leadership positions. In the case of judicial bodies, Egypt has developed a number of mechanisms, including criteria for selecting candidates for judicial positions that avoid discrimination against women and prioritize competence, with women starting to be appointed in all institutions and at all judicial levels. This was clearly reflected in the directives of the president to the Ministry of Justice regarding the appointment of women to the State Council and the Public Prosecution, adopted by the Supreme Judicial Council in May 2021, in line with the constitutional provisions that guarantee equality between citizens. In particular, Article 11 states that the State shall guarantee women's right to be appointed to judicial bodies and authorities and confirms the eligibility of Egyptian women to hold various positions.

Economic empowerment

Despite the clear improvement in unemployment rates among women, these rates are still high compared to the same rates among men, and women's participation rate in the workforce is still low. One of the ways Egypt is attempting to promote women's economic empowerment is by providing microfinance to women. The end of the first quarter of 2019 experienced a growth in the values of microfinance balances at the Financial Regulatory Authority's institutions, and in the number of

beneficiaries, compared to the end of the first quarter of 2018. Women accounted for the largest share of microfinance recipients.

Many efforts have been exerted to enhance financial inclusion for women. They include the execution of a memorandum of understanding between the Central Bank of Egypt and the National Council for Women to enhance financial inclusion through raising saving rates and encouraging women's entrepreneurship by boosting their access to financial services;

especially banking services, under the umbrella of financial inclusion. They also aimed to increase financial awareness by disseminating financial knowhow among women, school pupils and university students.²¹ Despite the remarkable improvement in some financial inclusion indexes included in the Global Financial Inclusion Index, the percentage of men and women empowered to access financial services is still poor. Moreover, there is a clear gap between men and women in these indexes.

Table 4

Women and the labour market: Unemployment rate among those 15 years and above by gender and governorate, 2019 (%)

Governorate	Male	Female	Total	Governorate	Male	Female	Total
Cairo	7.9	25.6	11.4	Beni Suef	1.6	16.4	5.2
Alexandria	7.8	24.2	10.9	Fayoum	2.7	7.6	3.5
Port Said	8.8	25.7	12.7	Minya	2	19.2	4.6
Suez	11.8	27.7	15	Assiut	3.4	25	5.8
Damietta	16.5	39.3	21.1	Sohag	2.8	25.1	5.1
Dakahlia	3	19	5.5	Qena	3.2	21.9	4.8
Sharqia	4.1	34.1	10.2	Aswan	7.4	23	10.5
Qalyubia	6.1	19.8	8.9	Luxor	1.6	43.5	5.5
Kafr El-Sheikh	4	13.5	6.4	Red Sea	7.7	52.5	14.8
Gharbiya	3.9	14.6	6.5	Al-Wadi Al-Jadid	0.5	24.3	7.3
Menoufia	3.8	9.6	5.2	Marsa Matrouh	4.6	40.7	8.1
Beheira	4.5	19.8	7	North Sinai	6.6	48.8	15.6
Ismailia	3.5	25.8	8.7	South Sinai	0	0	0
Giza	5.3	24.1	7.9				
National rate	Male		Female		Total		
	4.8		22.7		7.8		

Source: Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (2020), Labour Chapter, Yearbook.

Social empowerment

Reproductive health is one of the most important issues affecting economic and social development. Women who enjoy good reproductive health are more inclined to in-

vest in health and education for themselves and their children. Egypt has paid attention to the reproductive health issue; the National Population Council issued the National Reproductive Health Strategy 2015-2020, which includes three main themes: supporting and

strengthening the health system, raising community awareness, and developing and supporting reproductive and sexual health programmes for adolescents and youth.²² The maternal mortality rate decreased significantly during the period from 2010 to 2018, declining from 54 in 2010 to 52 in 2014 and then to 44 in 2018. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, Egypt ranks fourth out of 19 countries in the Middle East and North Africa, with a total score of 0.639. The fourth rank is the best that Egypt has obtained during the past 10 years.

Protection

The National Council for Women has issued the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2015-2020, which included four main themes: prevention, protection, legal prosecution and interventions, to ensure raising awareness of violence forms against women and raising awareness of women-supporting laws and proper procedures to protect women. In 2020, the government approved a draft law on the confidentiality of the data regarding the victims of sexual harassment and assault, which confirms Egypt's keenness to protect women by providing them with an appropriate environment to report attacks without fear of societal repercussions.

The National FGM Abandonment Strategy 2016-2020 was also issued, which aims to reduce FGM rates, activate and amend legislation criminalizing FGM, educate society about its harms, and tighten controls on and punishments for doctors to stop them performing FGM. Also, the Penal Law was amended according to Law No. 78 of 2016 to increase the penalties for FGM, raising the crime from a misdemeanour to a felony. The new punishment includes a prison term of five to seven years for those practicing FGM, which may reach up to 15 years if such an action leads to permanent disability or death. The amendment also stipulates that the person requesting FGM be performed be punished by imprisonment if the crime is committed at his/her request. At the same time, Law No. 10 of

2021 was promulgated, amending some provisions of the Penal Law related to the crime of FGM. It introduced a set of amendments to completely stop any manipulation by using any legal loopholes to escape punishment, including the deletion of any reference to the use of medical justification, and the introduction of independent penalties for doctors and nurses.

Providing legal support to women is one of the priorities of the National Council for Women. The Council established the Women's Complaints Office and created branches in all governorates, to represent the link between the Council and women who are subjected to any kind of practices that constitute discrimination or violence against them or a violation of their rights guaranteed by the Constitution and by law, or violation of the principle of equality and equal opportunities, whether in the public domain, at work, or in the family environment.

Managing the environmental protection ecosystem in Egypt: Towards achieving environmental sustainability and addressing climate change risks

The Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030 recognizes the environmental dimension of sustainable development. The strategy aims to integrate environmental aspects into the various economic sectors, to achieve effective management of natural resources, preserve natural assets in Egypt, and ensure the rights of future generations to development. This would support economic competitiveness, create job opportunities, end poverty and achieve social justice. The 2014 Constitution provides for special provisions for the protection and preservation of the environment in Articles 45 and 46, which stipulate the imposition of obligations to protect the environment as a pillar of sustainable development.

Egypt ranked 94th out of a total of 180 countries in the 2020 Environmental Performance Index, with a total of 43.3 out of 100 points.

The Report shows that the improvement of the Egyptian position was the result of the improvement in scores on air quality, freshwater and sewage management, in addition to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as a result of the reform of power policies, expansion in the use of renewable energy and improvements in energy efficiency. Despite the adopted reforms, problems related to air, water and soil pollution negatively affect the local and national environment. As a result of the large population and economic growth, and the production of large quantities of waste, Egypt faces a number of environmental problems caused by air, water and soil pollution that put great pressure on its limited natural resources. Due to the limited economic opportunities and the poor infrastructure in some areas, Egypt is experiencing increasing rates of migration from rural to urban areas, adding more pressure on these already overstretched urban environments.

Air pollution

Air pollution is a difficult challenge in Egypt and has a significant negative impact on public health. Suspended particulate matter, especially PM2.5, has negative health effects. Among the national initiatives of priority in this regard is the establishment of a national system for monitoring, reporting and verification, in addition to developing several programmes that address climate change as part of the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030.

Water

According to the Report, Egypt depends for its freshwater resources on the Nile River, at an estimated rate of 97 percent. This makes water security highly vulnerable to any developments that may occur in upstream countries. In addition, there are potential impacts of climate change. It is also expected that the average per capita share of all possible freshwater resources in Egypt will decrease rapidly and enter the cycle of water poverty quickly due to the limited water resources and the increasing population. This poses a serious

threat to human health and the environment.²³ The government plans to implement various projects that ensure efficient use of water resources, increase the availability of freshwater resources, and improve water quality. This includes the expansion of water reuse, projects for lining and coverage of canals and drains, projects for developing irrigation methods, and expanding desalination of seawater and groundwater.

Solid waste

In Egypt, solid waste is a major environmental issue. The increasing rates of waste production are attributed to population growth, changes in consumption patterns, changes in waste characteristics, the low level of technology used for disposing of waste, and a lack of sustainable financing. All these issues represent a major challenge facing Egypt. It should be noted that the Waste Management Regulation Law, which was enacted in 2020, reinforces a set of integrated principles for waste management, such as the polluter pays principle and the extended producer responsibility principle. The new law also reinforces the principles of reducing waste generation and the necessity of reusing and recycling waste. In addition, achieving the system's financial sustainability has been one of the most important challenges over the past years.

Climate change

Egypt has taken many steps towards achieving climate adaptation, and its various institutions developed several adaptation strategies. The Cabinet issued the National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change in 2011.²⁴ The Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation also developed a climate change strategy in 2013 that targets adaptation in the water sector.²⁵ The Environmental Affairs Agency also issued a national strategy for gender mainstreaming and the role of women in climate change in Egypt.²⁶ While these plans and adaptation policies are deemed to be appropriate, their implementation is still in the early stages.

Energy

Egypt has embarked on an ambitious energy subsidy reform programme, aiming to phase out these subsidies within five years. Renewable energy is one of the climate-friendly sustainable energy options that have been recently expanded in Egypt, given its strong potential to develop renewable energy sources. Egypt's sustainable energy strategy aims to achieve the goal of producing 42 percent of installed electric capacity using renewable energy sources by 2035. Currently, Egypt's renewable installed capacity is about 5.8 gigawatts. In order to develop the renewable energy market, Egypt has made significant improvements to its renewable energy policy framework, which has attracted more private investment. Egypt has also adopted a set of enabling policies, including the feed-in tariff for renewable energy supplies, a net consumption measurement policy, and competitive bidding and tender procedures.

Governance: Towards an effective ecosystem for managing the affairs of the state and society

Over the past 10 years, Egypt has made steps to strengthen governance through developing clear policies and programmes in various fields and on a number of issues. This comes as part of the objectives set out by the 2014 Constitution with regard to political rights, including the consolidation of the values of democracy and freedom, the guarantee of the freedom to form political parties, and the freedom of thought, opinion, belief and creativity.

There are a number of relevant indices and reports related to governance issued by different international organizations, and represent the main reference for many countries and different bodies to monitor the state of governance therein, such as the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators, the UN E-Government Survey, the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings, the International Budget Partnership's Open Budget Survey, and the Ibrahim Index of African Governance issued by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

Governance and counter-terrorism

In the first half of the decade, Egypt witnessed a wave of terrorism and extremism that has played a major role in escalating the challenges it faces around development. They resulted in many economic losses. However, Egypt has managed to reduce terrorist attacks through two basic approaches. In terms of the security approach, it has cut the supplies of terrorist groups, has gone after such groups, and has increased the readiness of anti-terrorism forces. The second approach is developmental: establishing developmental projects in areas which are otherwise likely to host terrorist groups. It has also launched initiatives and awareness campaigns to protect society against terrorism and extremist thought. Religious, cultural, and media institutions play a vital role in such initiatives and campaigns, as do women's institutions.

In addition, Egypt supports international cooperation efforts to combat corruption and has implemented actions on this front, including during its non-permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council from 2016 to 2017, representing Africa, and its presidency of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee. In this role, Egypt managed to obtain a set of UN Security Council resolutions in the field of counter-terrorism, particularly Security Council Resolution 2354 (2017) on implementation of the Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorist Narratives, and Security Council Resolution 2370 (2017) on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons.

In terms of the legislative framework, Egypt's Constitution obliges the State to combat terrorism in all its forms. Law No. 94 of 2015 addresses counter-terrorism and took into account the resolutions related to combating terrorism issued by the Security Council and international agreements on this issue, as does Law No. 8 of 2015 on terrorist entities and tracking terrorists' activities. Law No. 175 of 2018 covers crimes using IT and criminalizes hacking or attacking the country's information systems. Egypt has also set up a unit to

combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism. It should be noted that Egypt is keen on cooperating with international and regional organizations in the field of combating terrorism and enhancing security and stability, and supports the exchange of experiences and developing counter-terrorism efforts at both the international and the regional level.

Counter-terrorism efforts were coupled with developing the prison system in Egypt and transforming them into reform and rehabilitation centres, and many prison visits have been organized for media and for local, regional and international human rights organizations. Furthermore, the Law Governing the Pursuit of Civil Work No. 149 of 2019 and its executive regulations of 2021 (PM Decree 2021/104) were issued, reflecting the importance of civil society as a key partner in the development process, including materials that enhance the role of this sector and enable it to achieve the goals entrusted to it. The National Human Rights Strategy 2021-2030 was also developed.

During the past 10 years, the State has carried out many structural reforms related to the management of the electoral process, in order to enhance its integrity and transparency. The National Elections Authority was established as an independent body which manages the presidential, parliamentary and local electoral processes. Several controls were developed for the financing of electoral campaigns and for strengthening civil society's oversight of the electoral process.

Administrative and financial reform

In 2014, an integrated vision for administrative reform was launched in Egypt. It aims at developing an efficient and effective administrative apparatus characterized by governance, subject to accountability, and strongly contributing to achieving the development goals of the State and to raising the level of citizens' satisfaction. In implementing this vision and its themes, which included legislative reform, institutional development, capacity-building, automation of government services, and the

creation of databases, the State implemented many measures, including the issuance of Civil Service Law No. 81 of 2016 and its executive regulations. This was a major turning point in Egypt's public administration system.

In 2017, Egypt announced a transformation towards performance and programme-based budgeting, in order to tighten control over expenditures and to link financial allocations to performance indicators by which programmes could be evaluated. It will also contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of development programmes. In addition, the Ministry of Finance and the Egyptian Tax Authority are working on improving the tax system. Egypt is automating the tax system to combat tax evasion, increase tax collection rates, and integrate the informal economy into the formal economy. In addition, in recent years there has been significant development in the Ministry of Finance's financial reporting systems. Reports are now more detailed in terms of information and analysis, allowing for greater transparency regarding the state's economic and fiscal situation. Draft and final state budgets are now published as well as, final accounts, along with other relevant budget documents.

The State has also paid special attention to monitoring and evaluation within its vision for administrative reform. This is to address the issues of weak monitoring and evaluation capabilities regarding data collection and analysis, the absence of a unified system for monitoring and evaluation of national plans, and the weakness of those systems at local levels. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have an important role in measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the implemented programmes and the extent to which they achieve their objectives, in addition to their importance in the decision-making process. Hence, the national system for monitoring and evaluating government performance was established to monitor, follow up and evaluate the performance of all public agencies. This is to address shortcomings with urgent intervention procedures in line with the State's general

budget to ensure efficient resource allocation.²⁷ The integrated system was also established to prepare and monitor the investment plan, within the framework of efforts to develop the planning process and enhance accountability, transparency and effectiveness in the State's administrative apparatus.²⁸

Anti-corruption efforts

Over the past years, Egypt has been taking executive steps aimed at preventing and combating corruption. This aims to implement the constitutional provisions that lay out, in Article 218, the State's commitment to combating corruption and promoting the values of integrity and transparency. Egypt has developed the second edition of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2019-2022. Over the past years, Egypt has worked to enhance transparency and participation, and has followed, in general, an approach related to improving the process of communication with citizens and informing them of developments in various matters through various means, especially social media. For example, the State developed new mechanisms for participation, particularly youth conferences, which are attended by thousands of young people from all governorates, as well as by state leaders, who listen to the different problems and opinions. They act as a forum for government policy through which young people express their views and ideas, which are conveyed to various decision makers. In addition, new positions in the government apparatus were introduced for young people, such as the position of assistant minister or governor and deputy minister or governor. The National Academy for Youth Training has also developed a youth training mechanism, which operates according to a training and educational system targeting young people of both genders.

Digital transformation

The State placed digital transformation at the top of its priorities, given its importance in enhancing governance in terms of improving

spending effectiveness and efficiency, limiting all forms of corruption, enhancing responsiveness, and improving accountability processes. In 2019, Egypt launched the government e-payment system, which aims to boost the performance of public finances through good and effective management of cash flows, and to increase the efficiency of the implementation and performance of the State's general budget.

Egypt is one of the most advanced countries in the MENA region in areas related to digital transformation and financial inclusion. According to the latest report issued by the Arab Monetary Fund regarding modern financial technologies in Arab countries, Egypt ranks first among nine countries in the number of outlets that provide electronic payment services, with 130,000 outlets out of a total of 170,000 outlets in all nine countries. Egypt also ranked first in terms of the number of digital wallets available, with 15.3 million electronic wallets out of a total of 21 million electronic wallets in the nine countries.²⁹

As for the Arab countries that have financial technology (fintech) solutions, Egypt ranked third out of a total of 22 countries, with 11 percent.³⁰

In recent years, Egypt has begun to pay attention to the process of digital transformation and financial inclusion through directing investments to the sector and enhancing information infrastructure, in addition to making legislative and institutional reforms. For example, the contribution of the information and communications technology sector to economic growth increased significantly, from 3 percent in the fiscal year 2013/2014 to 5.7 percent in 2017/2018, increasing further to 11.9 percent in 2019/2020. This reflects the increasing importance of this sector in promoting economic growth. It should be noted that information and communications technology sector investments in the sustainable development plan for 2020/2021 are estimated at EGP 26.5 billion, i.e., 3.6 percent of the total plan.³¹

SDG localization

With regard to the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2014 Constitution sought to empower local management. It ensured support for administrative, financial and economic decentralization in pursuit of social justice. Two draft laws on the general planning of state and local management were subsequently developed, in line with the constitutional provisions related to decentralization. Efforts have begun to promote the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals by empowering local management through a number of programmes. However, it is necessary to build on these efforts by increasing investments directed to the governorates, in addition to issuing the State General Planning Law and the Local Administration Law. These efforts have a significant impact on supporting decentralization, accountability and participation at the local level and enabling governorates to take various decisions according to the priorities and needs of citizens.

COVID-19: Dealing with the crisis and emerging opportunities

The outbreak of COVID-19 caused unprecedented impacts on economic activity all over the world. The attention of countries, including Egypt, has shifted to addressing the pandemic, which continues to drain state resources, ravage the income of millions of individuals, and move them into the destitution cycle. It should be noted, however, that the progress of the national economic and social reform program in Egypt since 2016 has greatly helped its ability to confront the crisis. Egypt issued many proactive measures to confront the negative economic repercussions of the spread of COVID-19. In addition, it responded flexibly to the developments of the situation and worked to achieve a balance between preserving human health and continuing economic activity. Initially, it allocated EGP 100 billion out of the general budget, in addition to developing monetary policies to reduce the negative effects on the sectors most affected

by the crisis. The stimulus packages range from regulatory measures to limit the spread of the pandemic and another set of monetary support measures for specific areas, especially health and social protection. It also ensures that support is directed to the most vulnerable groups, including casual workers.

As expected, as a result of the depth and severity of the crisis, the economic situation was negatively affected. Foreign exchange reserves decreased from \$45.5 billion in February 2020 to \$37 billion in May 2020. Reserves then increased to \$38.4 billion in September 2020, and further increased to \$40.5 billion in June 2021. The target growth rate during the fiscal year 2019/2020 was also reduced from 6 percent to an achieved growth of 3.6 percent, and tourism sector revenues witnessed a sharp decline estimated at 84 percent in the period from April to June 2020, compared to the corresponding period of 2019. Some sectors of the economy showed relative ability to adapt to the repercussions of the crisis: communications and information technology, health, agriculture, the pharmaceutical and chemical industries, and construction.

With regard to the health sector, Egypt adopted a phased plan to deal with the crisis and strengthened the investment plan of the Ministry of Health and Population for the fiscal year 2019/2020 with an additional appropriation of EGP 350 million to increase the capacity of hospitals to confront COVID-19.³² The education sector's performance during the pandemic reflects an acceptable and appropriate level of preparedness to deal with the crisis, especially with regard to the possibility of applying distance education patterns in schools and higher education institutions. Regarding social protection, the State added 100,000 new families to the *Takaful and Karama* programme who were affected by the pandemic. It was also decided to raise the value of the cash transfer programme budget from EGP 18.5 billion to EGP 19.3 billion.³³

Egypt is a leading country in term of its rapid response to the situation of women during

the COVID-19 pandemic. Egypt developed around 165 policies, resolutions and measures through January 2021 that observe women's needs during COVID-19. These measures and policies take into account different groups of women, such as women with disabilities, elderly women, and pregnant women. Egypt is also considered one of the first countries in the world to issue a mechanism to monitor the policies and measures taken in response to the women's needs during COVID-19 outbreak, through the National Council for Women.³⁴

Due to the focus on developing policies and measures directed at women, UN Women and UNDP praised the measures implemented by the Egyptian State in a report that monitored the global gender response. The report showed that Egypt ranked first among North African and Western Asian countries in terms of measures and procedures taken in three areas, including economic protection for women, unpaid care, and combating violence against women.³⁵

As a result of the efforts of the State, with all its governmental and legislative institutions, as well as the private sector and civil society, international institutions have forecast an easier recovery for the Egyptian economy than the countries of the region and praised the measures taken by Egypt. Both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund

pointed out that Egypt is the only country in the region that has succeeded in achieving positive growth rates despite the crisis.

Despite the negative effects of the crisis resulting from the pandemic, there are also opportunities available, perhaps the most important of which is the opportunity to benefit from the decline in trade growth rates and protectionist restrictions by strengthening local manufacturing and better integrating into international value and supply chains, especially in the fields of food and pharmaceutical industries, to meet the increasing demand. In addition, it is a challenge to make use of automation and digitization in the ease and speed of access to vulnerable groups. This challenge has been overcome, which is an added value to the institutional capabilities of the social protection system. These capacities must be further supported by creating accurate information and databases on vulnerable groups that are exposed to poverty, and also by building the capacity of employees and those in charge of targeting in order for the system to become even more accurate. Furthermore, the registration of casual workers in the Ministry of Manpower's database should be optimally used to identify the true size of this sector, the most vulnerable groups, the reasons for their vulnerability and the nature of the work they carry out.

Egypt 2030: A new decade towards sustainable development





Egypt 2030: A new decade towards sustainable development

The world is still living through the ongoing emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic, which revealed fragilities that far exceed the realm of global health. The pandemic has resulted in a deceleration in progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which are now in their sixth year and still represent humanity's outline for a better future. In January 2020, the United Nations declared the decade from 2020 to 2030 to be the 'Decade of Action' in terms of accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the planned action both more difficult and more urgent at the same time. It has also demonstrated the importance of developmental goals and the necessity of working to achieve them, as well as the importance of focusing on the human Right to Development. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people and infected millions, has brought economies to a halt, and has distorted every aspect of modern life. However, it is more than just a health crisis; it became an economic, humanitarian, security crisis, as well as a crisis in terms of human rights. Measures taken to address the pandemic therefore require rethinking not only the approach to managing the development process at the national level, but also regionally and internationally. In addition, countries must factor in the COVID-19 pandemic's implications when considering their plans to achieve sustainable development, as it has consequences for all.

In light of what has been captured in the first part of the Egypt Human Development Report 2021 in terms of major structural reforms in Egypt's development pathway during the last half of the decade 2011-2020, this second part of the Report discusses prospects of future areas of work to further complete the development pathway within the framework of

national priorities identified by the SDS: Egypt Vision 2030. This mandates that Egypt adopt an ambitious plan of action for a new Decade of Action 2021-2030 that will take into consideration the difficult global conditions that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. It relies on innovative programmes that offer smarter solutions to overcome the challenges in various developmental areas and to work on moving forward on the path to achieving sustainable development, based on the principles of equality, inclusion and the capacity to deal with risks in a manner that protects society from any future adverse developments, by incorporating the element of risk hedging as a main component of the development approach and policies. The new decade of achievements sets its sight on Egyptian citizens, and will contribute to boosting current efforts aiming at enhancing the development progress in Egypt to benefit all its citizens without discrimination, leaving no one behind.

Egypt's path to sustainable development in the next decade will likely benefit from the set of developmental practices established during recent years. It has adopted a coherent approach combining the human rights perspective and planning and implementation processes in an unprecedented way, allowing the identification of urgent issues that concern all Egyptians and weigh on executive action, and has dealt with these issues with an unprecedented coherence and comprehensiveness.

It should be noted that achieving sustainable development during the Decade of Action will require the same strong political backing that has been the primary driver of the developmental and structural reforms that were implemented over the past six years, and which reflects a real desire for reform among all individuals in society.

Consequently, the general framework of Egypt's work plan for the decade of achievements is based on a set of elements, including: the principles governing the development process in Egypt, derived from the 2014

Constitution (which contained many elements of the Sustainable Development Goals), the goals are to be achieved via an integrated approach that takes into account the linkages and the interdependency between goals which will contribute to saving efforts and resources, and help design successful implementation mechanisms required to achieve the goals.

The principles governing Egypt's development prospects

Development strategies cannot succeed, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions without adherence to the principles of equal opportunity and of giving everyone a fair opportunity to enjoy the proceeds of growth. Egypt's 2014 Constitution laid down a set of key principles that establish this commitment, and Egypt should continue to follow them on its path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals over the next decade. The Constitution contains various articles reflecting the essence of the Sustainable Development Goals, which emphasize the necessity for the developmental process to ensure equal opportunities for all people in order to realize their capabilities in a framework of dignity and equality, and for all to enjoy a life of prosperity and fulfilment of their aspirations.

The 2014 Constitution includes principles that affirm the Right to Development and establish the right of Egyptians to a decent life in all aspects. It includes the fair distribution of the proceeds of development and a reduction in income and growth disparities, achieving a geographic, sectoral and environmental balance. It also affirmed the importance of maximizing investment in human energy within the framework of human development. Moreover, the Constitution has clearly established the State's role in providing education and health services and fostering scientific research as a right for all citizens and at a quality consistent with international standards. The Constitution also sets out minimum governmental expendi-

ture for these sectors; these expenditures are supposed to gradually increase in line with international spending levels. Egypt is also one of the countries that has enshrined the right to housing in its Constitution; Article 78 mandates that the State shall ensure citizens' right to adequate, safe and healthy housing in a manner which preserves human dignity and achieves social justice.

The Constitution pays considerable attention to the issue of gender equality and the enhancement of women's rights and contains articles that mandate gender equality, non-discrimination, women's right to be appointed to judicial bodies, the protection of women from all forms of violence, and women's participation in political life. It stresses the State's commitment to the international agreements that it has adopted on this topic, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights', and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The Constitution also lists special provisions for the protection and preservation of the environment. Articles 45 and 46 impose major political and social commitments for environment protection as one of the pillars of sustainable development.

Furthermore, the 2014 Constitution also aims to consolidate the values of democracy and freedom, ensuring the freedom to form political parties. Several articles were amended in 2019, and the amendments put in place additional guarantees to enhance the political participation of the most vulnerable, such as women, young people, disabled people, workers and farmers, by ensuring their representation in the House of Representatives. In addition, in Article 218 the Constitution outlines the State's commitment to combating corruption and enhancing the values of integrity and transparency.

In addition to the Constitution, governance represents one of the main components for achieving sustainable development. A common

characteristic among developing countries that have achieved development progress is their adoption of key elements of good governance. Good governance (including the efficiency and efficacy of public services and rule of law) helps in achieving economic growth, as does the quality of institutions. The efficacy of governmental institutions is a major contributing factor in the reduction of poverty, as these institutions are the basis for achieving prosperity and growth. High-quality institutions help make investors feel secure by enhancing issues related to intellectual property, the rule of law, and special incentives. Social and economic goals should be anchored by strong institutions, robust social insurance systems, citizens' enjoyment of freedoms and suitable political representation, and a society anchored on participation and a widespread culture of anti-corruption.

Strengthening security and combating terrorism is another key component for a sustainable development process, as the dire consequences of terrorism can severely impact the process and hinder its achievement. The spread of terrorism and extremism also impacts the confidence of investors, limits foreign direct investment, reduces tourism and causes fear and distress for ordinary people. As a result, the prevalence of terrorism can limit people's political and economic participation and their participation in decision-making processes. In recent years, Egypt, alongside most countries worldwide, has been subject to terrorist attacks that have affected developmental processes. Were it not for Egypt's success in creating security and stability and combating terrorism over the past few years, the country would not have been able to achieve the developmental successes it has. It is therefore essential that security and combating terrorism are included among the governing principles of Egypt's sustainable development process.

Egypt's economic development vision since 2014 has been the continuation of its orientation towards a free economy and the primary role of the private sector alongside a greater

role for the State. The State's role is especially important in establishing and developing strong infrastructure that advances development and in providing more and better services for citizens, as well as its prioritization of the poor, as demonstrated by the construction of social housing projects, the reduction in the numbers of informal settlements, the social protection programmes, and several health initiatives and campaigns. These measures attempt to take into account the balance between considerations of comprehensive development in the long term and pressing problems and need to improve Egyptians' living conditions in the short term.

Sustainable development will not be achieved without strengthening partnerships and regional, continental and international cooperation. Egypt is a pivotal country in the Middle East and North Africa and it is not focused only on the national scale on its path to achieving sustainable development. Egypt also assesses changes at the regional, continental and international level, especially in view of the difficult and volatile regional and global circumstances that threaten the Right to Development. The significance of partnerships and international cooperation in attaining sustainable development is reflected in Goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which outlines the importance of partnerships and cooperation to achieving sustainable development. Egypt is therefore aiming to make progress through boosting these partnerships and through openness to the international community in all its forms, as one of the most important governing principles for achieving sustainable development during the upcoming decade.

Desired outcomes

To achieve sustainable development, attention should be paid to all the developmental goals without distinction. In its progression towards sustainable development in the next decade, Egypt should deal with different structural issues to create a robust

developmental push through focusing on all areas. One of the lessons learned from Egypt's development progress over the past decade is that the partial addressing of some dimensions or levels are not the ones yielding major results. Accordingly, Egypt intends to focus on four basic themes as part of its plan to reinforce the path to achieving sustainable development: leveraging the level of human development in its various aspects; continuing the development push and ensuring inclusive growth; adapting to climate change and improving the environmental situation; upgrading the quality of services and the readiness of public institutions.

Improving all levels of human development

The concept of investment in people has gained attention from successive governments in Egypt, and as a result, various reforms and improvements to the health and education systems and right to adequate housing have been introduced. These reforms primarily aim to expand the provision of services. The next 10 years will witness continued commitment and a clear tendency in Egypt to introduce more radical reforms and real changes in investment in human capital, along with more focus on the dimensions related to quality and competitiveness.

In planning for investment in human capital, Egypt needs to consider the issues of overpopulation and poverty. The population issue is one of the main challenges that affects the development process as it still negatively impacts the returns of development, the quality of life of Egyptians, and the quality of services provided. It is both a cause of poverty and a result of it.

In light of the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, Egypt needs to expand the adoption of the concept of investment in human capital to include five aspects: improving the quality of services in the field of public health; improving the quality of education to include digital skills; ensuring the provision of adequate housing; providing advanced and flexi-

ble social protection mechanisms; and boosting the empowerment of women in all fields.

There is a set of upcoming policies that the government is seeking to implement that represent the targeted goals of Egypt's sustainable development path over the coming decade. These policies seek to increase governmental expenditures on the education, health and housing sectors in order to achieve constitutional targets. They will also increase allocations for asset maintenance and overcoming challenges related to the weak infrastructure of utility services. This is in addition to bridging the increasing gap between educational outputs and the demands of the labour market. These policies aim to review the institutional structures of the health, education and housing sectors; to reduce as much as possible any overlap or conflict in the mandates of the different authorities involved; to support and expand investments in the community education and health systems; and to eliminate informal and unsafe settlements. It also seems necessary that Egypt deal with the increasing pressures on services caused by its continued population growth.

Objectives for social protection include working on expanding the *Takaful and Karama* social safety net programme, with more scrutiny directed at targeting, especially of families living in extreme poverty. Another objective is to increase spending on subsidies and social grants, establishing and unifying databases for all components of the social protection system, strengthening institutional reform and coordinating between the non-governmental entities that provide social assistance and play protective roles such as religious institutions and NGOs. In addition, financial, institutional and human resources should be provided to ensure the effective implementation of both the Social Insurance and Pensions Law (Law No. 148 of 2019) and the Comprehensive Health Insurance Law (Law No. 2 of 2018), as they are the cornerstone of the new social and health insurance system, while supporting moves to eliminate any discrimination or disempowerment.

To further enhance the gains of women's empowerment, the targeted objectives include building human capacities and strengthening gender-based planning; taking gender into consideration when conducting any statistical surveys; strengthening the follow-up and evaluation systems of programmes on women's empowerment; and ensuring the correct and strict implementation of laws relevant to women's rights. This is in addition to supporting interventions related to women's political participation and working on raising awareness of gender issues and overcoming misconceptions, in coordination with civil society organizations, women's empowerment mechanisms, the private sector, and the media.

Strengthening the development push and ensuring inclusive growth

Egypt has made significant achievements in development over recent years and these successes must be safeguarded and expanded, considering the global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of this crisis and other issues such as uncertainty and a scarcity of resources, Egypt is seeking to adopt economic and public policies that take into consideration readiness to manage risk.

In recent years, Egypt has sought to implement a national economic and social reform programme to bring about real structural change. In light of the global economic impacts of the pandemic, Egypt should continue to advance this programme in order to transform its economy into a productive, knowledge-based economy that has competitive capabilities on the global stage. Egypt should focus on productive activities, particularly industry, in accordance with national goals and in conformity with the private sector, which has a key role to play in the development process. It has proven clear that, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, economies that depend on manufacturing industries performed better during both the crisis and the recovery stages.

To continue progressing its development pathway over the next 10 years, Egypt should

also seek to continue its efforts towards structural reform, with a focus on productive activities, and on fostering a business environment that will allow the private sector to play an appropriate role in these activities. It will also seek to reduce the negative effects resulting from Egypt's rising debt service through better management of public debt. It is also seeking to lift customs and non-customs export restrictions and to simplify procedures to boost exports and competition. Furthermore, Egypt will work to support economic policy analysis at the level of decision-making so that it goes beyond the analysis of macro indicators, to assess the extent to which Egyptians' Right to Development has been fulfilled and how well the country's overall economic performance is reflected in their living conditions. It should also analyse the extent to which the distribution of the proceeds of development is equitable, both in terms of individual and regional distribution. Moreover, Egypt is also aiming to promote the optimal use of resources by continuing its efforts to move away from energy subsidies, especially of petroleum and electricity, which are consumed most by the highest income groups. Instead, it will continue to subsidize food and those social programmes that benefit the poorest most, in order to increase distributive justice and overcome poverty.

During the next decade, Egypt is seeking to implement the second phase of its national economic and social reform programme. The programme targets, for the first time, the real economy with serious and purposeful structural reforms, by transforming the Egyptian economy into a productive economy based on knowledge and competitive capabilities in the global economy. This aims to encourage inclusive growth, create decent and productive job opportunities, diversify and develop production patterns, improve the investment climate and business environment, localize industries, and increase the competitiveness of Egyptian exports to achieve sustainable economic development and comprehensive and sustainable economic growth.

The programme includes six pillars, classified into a main pillar that aims to restructure the Egyptian economy with a focus on the real economy, and other, complementary pillars, which include: the business environment and the development of the role of the private sector, the flexibility of the labour market and increased efficiency of vocational training; human capital (education, health, social protection); financial inclusion and access to finance; and the efficiency of public institutions, governance and digital transformation.

The first and main pillar includes three productive sectors which have also been identified as a major priority for the structural reform programme, in accordance with the State's objectives and in agreement with the private sector in order to encourage investment and develop the business environment. The productive sectors that have been identified are the agricultural sector, the technology-intensive manufacturing sector, and the communications and information technology sector. In parallel with the implementation of the various pillars of the structural reform programme, there will be support for the service sectors that complement and support the productive sectors, and which are able to create job opportunities and provide foreign currency. These sectors include logistics, the construction sector, and the tourism sector, in addition to enhancing the green economy.

Adapting to climate change and improving environmental conditions

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the urgent need to restore balance to the relationship between mankind and the natural world, and pandemic recovery measures must therefore also be coupled with moves to tackle climate change. Egypt is highly vulnerable to climate change and faces many risks that threaten its environmental sustainability, and which can be exacerbated by its growing population's increasing demands on an already limited resource base, and the continuing decrease in its freshwater share per capita.

Egypt has made significant progress over the past few years in establishing the institutional framework for dealing with climate risks and developing qualified national capabilities. However, there is an urgent need to develop national capacity with respect to climate science research, in order to better understand climate change and its impacts on coastal areas, water resources and human health. Consumption patterns in Egypt have seen radical changes in recent decades, supported by economic growth, technological developments and social and cultural factors, and this has exacerbated waste-related problems.

To address this issue, Egypt is targeting a number of goals in the decade of achievements, including work on changing consumption habits through education and public awareness, and moves towards building a circular economic model by expanding both recycling and reuse processes. In addition, Egypt is aiming to direct government spending and procurement towards green services and products, to continue promoting the new trend towards green bonds, and to foster a better understanding of the interrelationship between water, energy, food and climate policy. This understanding is important in creating an informed framework to identify the trade-offs and synergies that meet the demands for these resources, without compromising sustainability.

During the upcoming decade, Egypt will continue the implementation of new policies for the development of the solid waste management system and will finalize the ambitious programme to purify Egyptian lakes and develop and maximize their utilization. It will also complete the programme of cleaning and lining of irrigation canals and drains to deal effectively with the issue of water scarcity.

Upgrading the quality of services and the readiness of public institutions

Public services provided by the State to citizens include water and sanitation services, health care, infrastructure, transportation,

lands registration systems, and the issuing of licenses, among others. Citizens usually evaluate governmental performance as a whole through their experiences in obtaining these services, as they are considered the main channel for communication between the people and public institutions, and function as an expression of the principles of governance. The delivery of good public services is characterized by effectiveness in reaching targeted groups and the efficient use of available resources, and accordingly, public services become more competent and efficient when they are closer to citizens and their actual needs. A shift towards systematic decentralization based on protection of the interests of the State and citizens thus boosts efficiency in the provision of services, as a result of the closeness of local bodies to the needs of citizens and their ability to provide better-quality services based on those needs.

The provision of services is linked with the issue of justice, and Egypt will work in the coming decade on providing basic services efficiently and effectively to all citizens, including the poorest, in order to achieve justice among members of society. The link between the concept of justice and the provision of services is due to citizens' levels of satisfaction with public services increases when justice, i.e., distribution of resources and provision of services to the most vulnerable, is taken into consideration.

During the next decade, Egypt will seek to improve the quality of public services by advancing efforts around digital transformation and simplifying governmental procedures. It will also empower local administration by accelerating the issuing of laws on public planning and local administration, as well as by increasing the investments directed to the governorates according to financing formulae that take into account the development disparities between the different governorates.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for public institutions that are ready to respond to and manage crises effectively, and that are able to carry out their responsibilities and allow citizens continuous access to facilities at times of crisis. In this regard, in its quest to achieve sustainable development, Egypt seeks to enhance the readiness of public institutions and their ability to swiftly respond to crises, and to build the human and institutional capacities required to deal with crises, before, during and after they occur. This is to ensure the existence of a strong administrative apparatus capable of addressing crises, and that is responsive to the needs of citizens. This can be achieved by strengthening systems for risk analysis, foresight, and capacity-building to deal with crises.

Necessary implementation mechanisms

To ensure that progress is made in achieving the intended goals during the next decade, there are a set of necessary means for implementation that should be considered, as listed below.

- **Financing for development**

Egypt has long faced – and still faces – difficulties in financing development and in limited domestic resources, low saving rates, and weak flows of needed and expected foreign investment. The resources required for the coming decade of achievements, especially in light of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, means that Egypt may need to rethink existing development financing mechanisms adopted by the State. In its pursuit of achieving sustainable development, Egypt is pursuing an approach to strengthening alternative financing instruments, such as public-private partnerships, corporate social responsibility and impact investments, green and SDG bonds, debt swaps, and others, as well as building on and utilizing the efforts of the country's sovereign wealth fund as an important financing tool.

- **Data availability**

Data and information are essential elements of the efficiency and effectiveness of any organization. Accurate data provides a complete picture to allow decision makers to make sound decisions and contributes significantly to monitoring and evaluation processes. One of the most important challenges facing development in Egypt is the problem of deficiencies in databases that are needed for advanced analysis and planning approaches, and the poor predictability of the likely effects of various policy alternatives. Egypt is therefore endeavouring to develop and reform its data and statistics system and to link different databases. These efforts will be a cornerstone for the implementation of the path to achieving sustainable development.

- **Promoting digital transformation**

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and its various economic and social impacts, there is considerable momentum around digital transformation that could provide an opportunity. The issue is of great importance, as has been proven during the pandemic, and which proved the value of investment in it in past years. Accordingly, promoting digital transformation and continuing to adopt policies and approaches that support it will help acceler-

ate the pace of work and achieve the desired outcomes of the decade of achievements. By adopting laws supporting digital transformation and ensuring safe internet use and promoting investment, Egypt seeks to consider digital transformation as part of a bigger framework; namely that of digital inclusion, ensuring that all individuals, including those most in need, have access to digital services and have the required skills to adapt to its numerous advantages and share in its benefits.

- **Development of human capacities**

Developing the capabilities of the employees of Egypt's public administration apparatus clearly contributes to enhancing the efficiency of managing national resources and bolstering the provision of public services. An ongoing process to develop the capacities of public sector employees must therefore be adopted in line with new trends in public administration such as digitization and data analysis, among others, to support the implementation of the sustainable development plan for the decade of achievements. The executive plan for training civil servants who will be relocated to Egypt's New Administrative Capital may also represent a real opportunity for this development, while continuing to include mainstream capacity development.

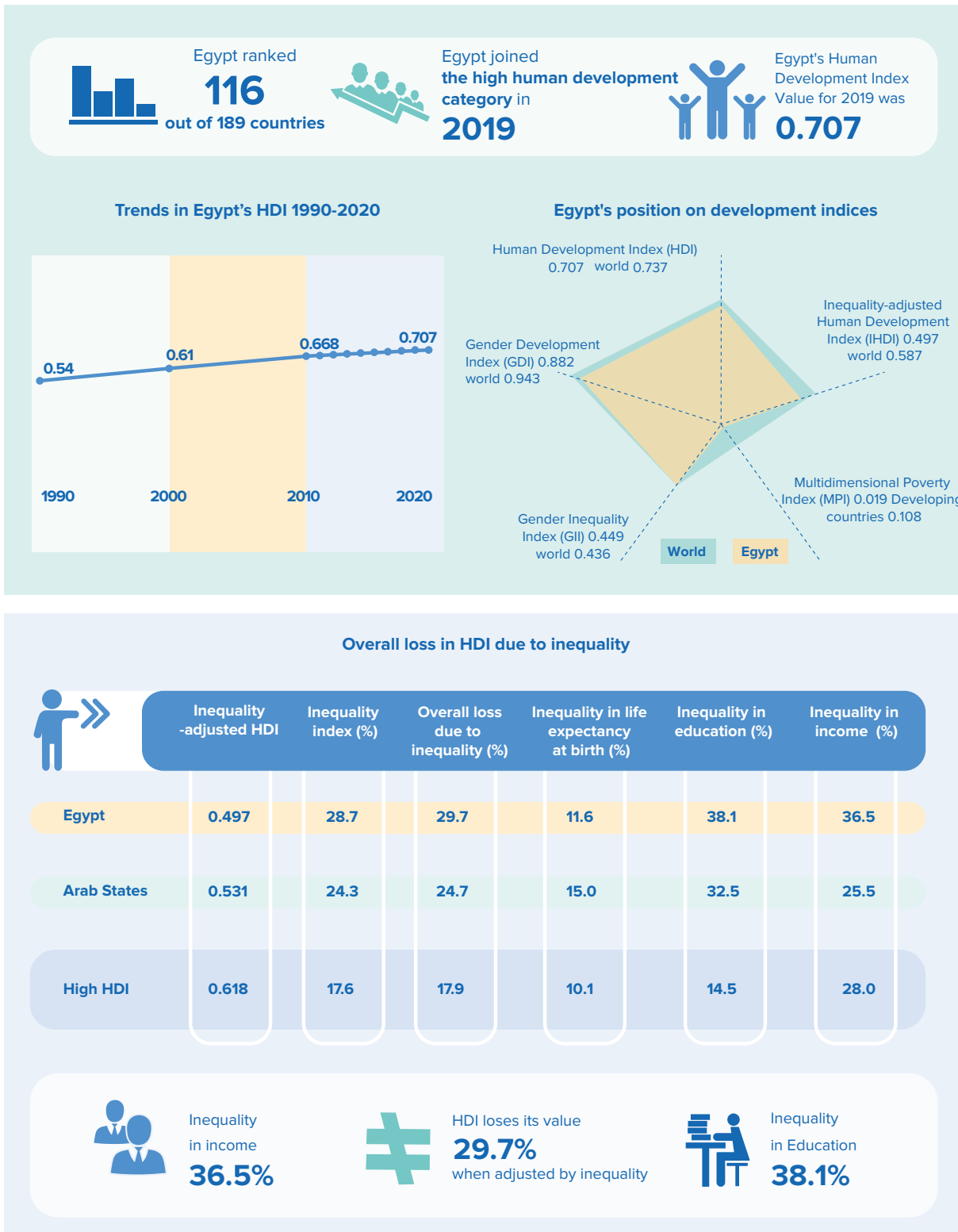
Development in Numbers

2011 - 2020



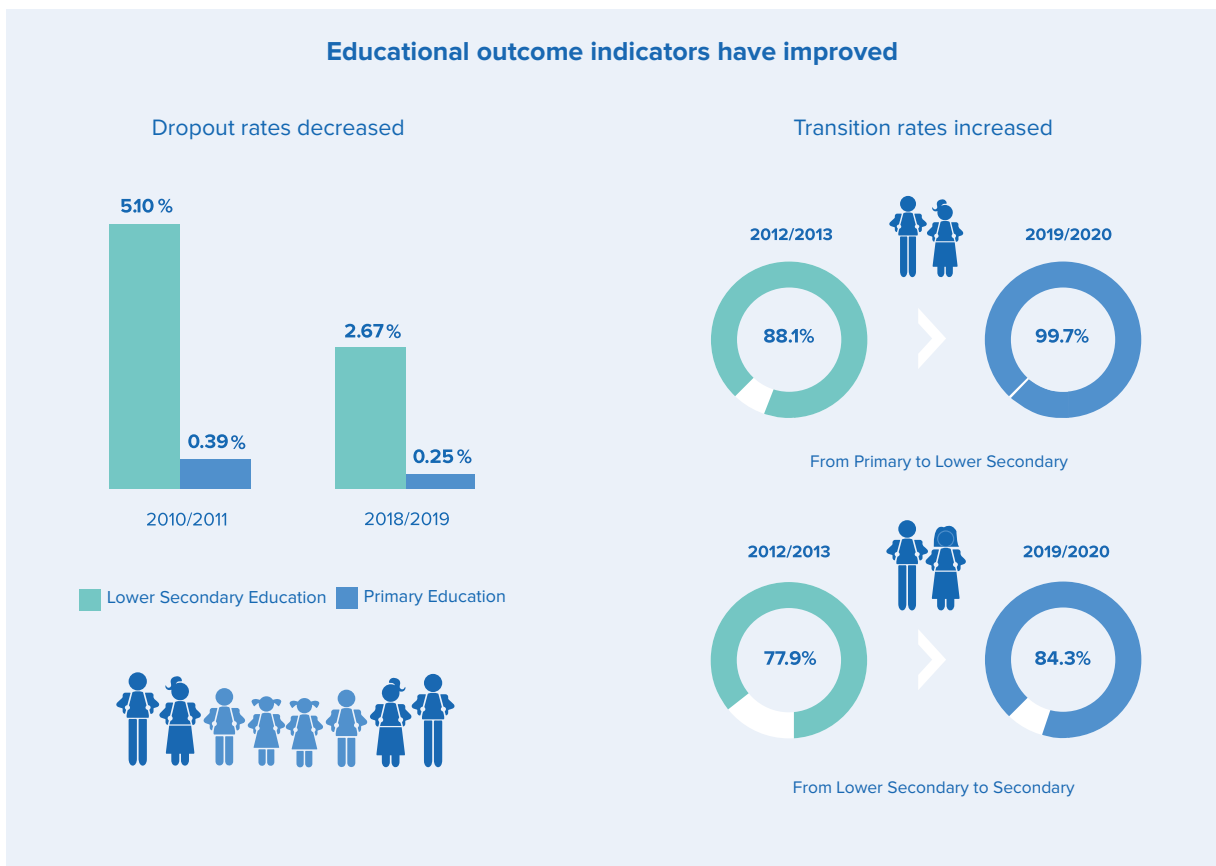
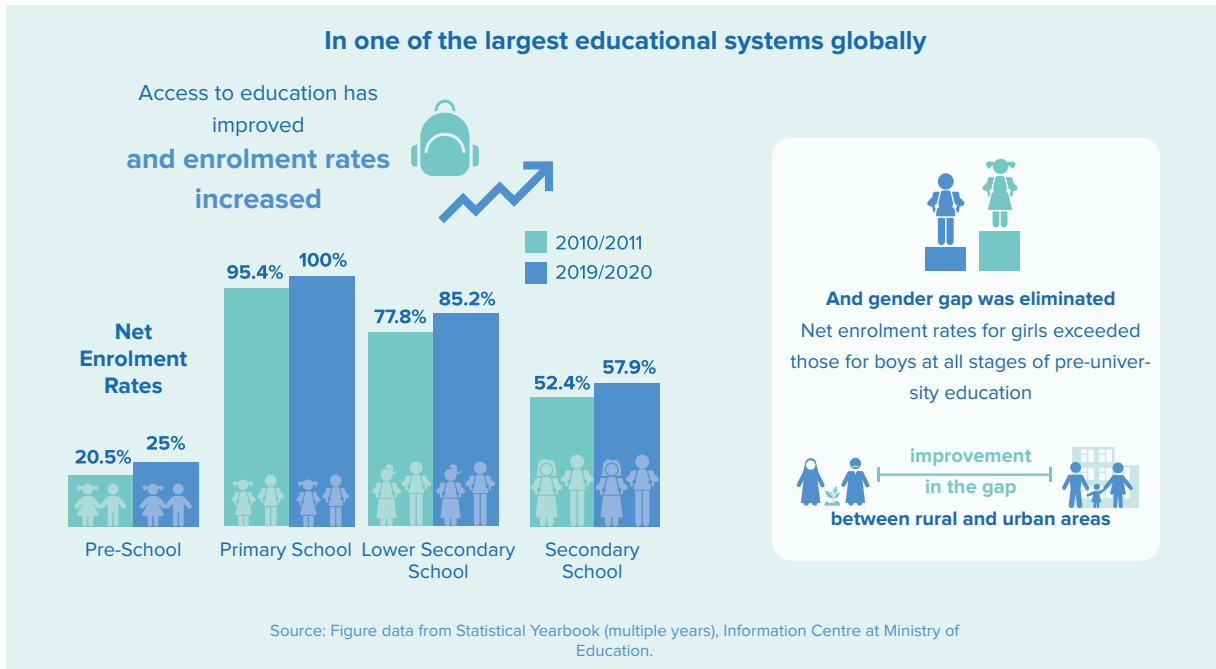


Figure 1 | Human Development Indicators in Egypt 2020



Source: Human Development Report (2020)

Figure 2 | Human capital | Education in Egypt 2011-2020



But education quality indicators have not kept pace with this progress

Average class size in pre-university per educational stage (public)

Average students to teacher ratio in pre-university per educational stage (public)

2010/2011

2019/2020

2010/2011

2019/2020

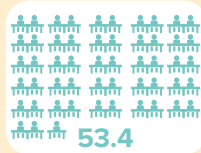
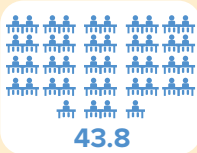
Pre-School



Pre-School



Primary School



Primary School



Lower secondary School



Lower secondary School



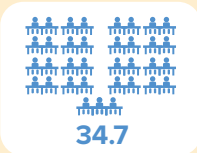
General secondary School



General secondary School



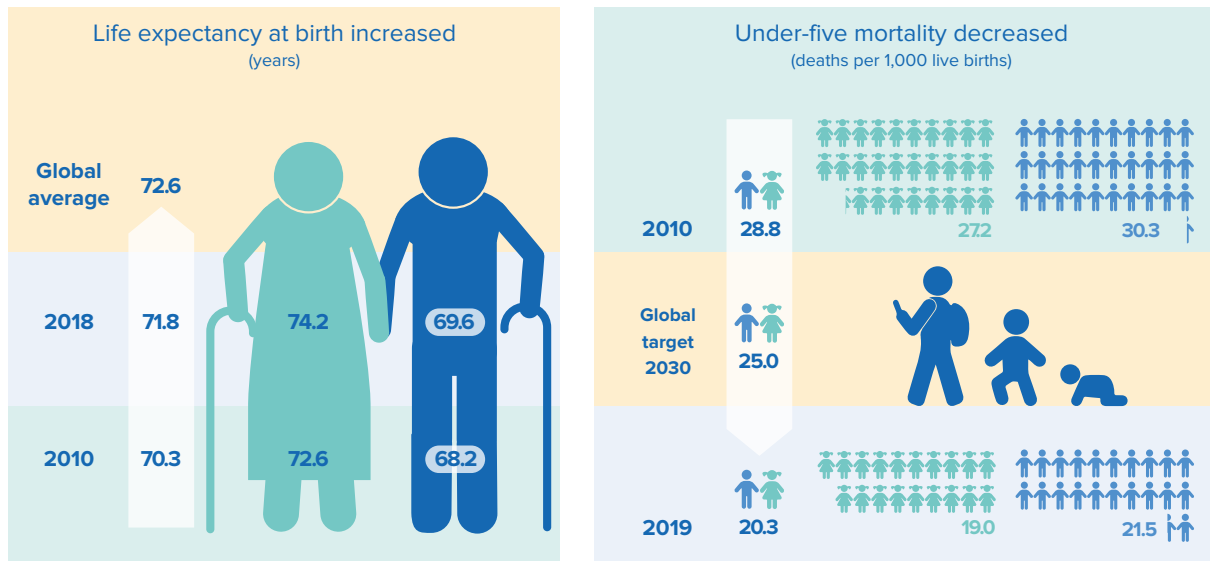
Technical secondary School



Technical secondary School



Figure 3 | Human capital | Health in Egypt 2011 - 2020



Source: World Bank database

Innovative health initiatives

Disease treatment and control programmes

Improving access to health services

Development of the Pharmaceutical Industry

The 100 Million Healthy Lives Initiative for Early Detection of Non-Communicable Diseases | Launched in **2018**

Covers all governorates with an estimated cost of **7 billion EGP**

Targets the reduction of deaths caused by non-communicable diseases, **through early detection**

Between October 2018 and April 2019, **47 million Egyptians** nationwide were examined, out of 50 million over 18 years old, and around **628,000** received treatment.

The 100 Million Healthy Lives Initiative for Supporting Egyptian Women's Health | Launched in **2019**

Targeting **30 million women** aged over 18

Early detection for breast cancer and non-communicable diseases and provide **family planning services**

From July 2019-March 2021, **13 million women** benefited from this initiative



National Campaign to Eradicate Hepatitis C in Egypt

Launched in 2014

A real breakthrough occurred in the control of the disease through the development of a new treatment system based on the production of **affordable, locally manufactured medicine**.

Spread of disease in Egypt year 2008

9.8%

Shorten treatment duration into

3 months

instead of 12 months

Increase in recovery rates from

50%

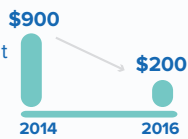


to more than

98%

Savings in treatment costs estimated at **8 billion EGP**

decrease in patient treatment costs



Presidential Initiative to Eradicate Waiting Lists

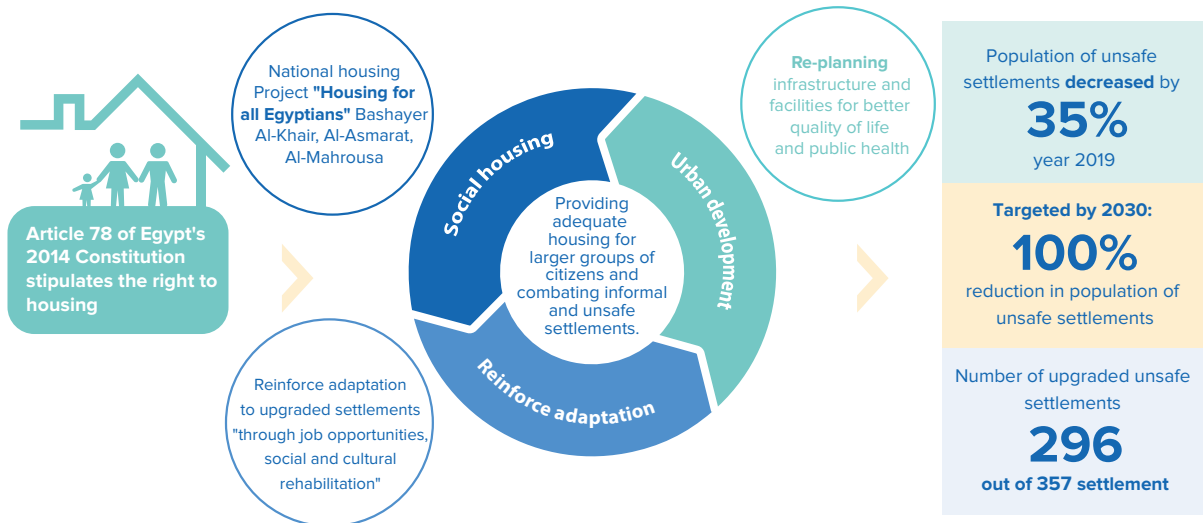
Launched in 2018



The initiative aimed **to put an end to waiting lists for critical interventions** and operations; second phase of initiative to last for **3 years**

Source: Website for Egypt's Projects Map, CAPMAS (2019), MOHP (2021), State Information Service (2020)

Figure 4 | Human capital | Adequate housing in Egypt 2011-2020



Social housing programme



Source: Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities (2019), Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (2021)

Expanding the coverage of water and sanitation facilities

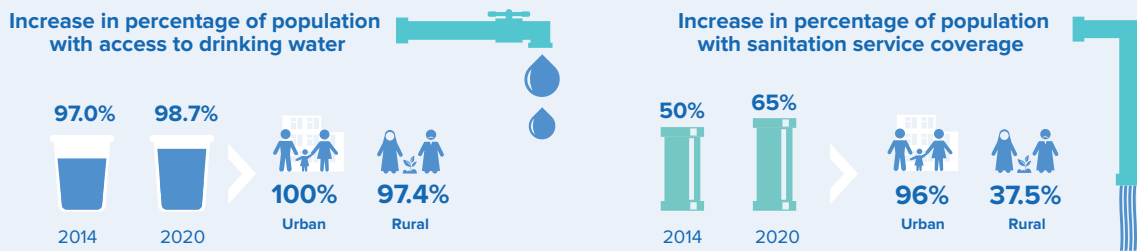
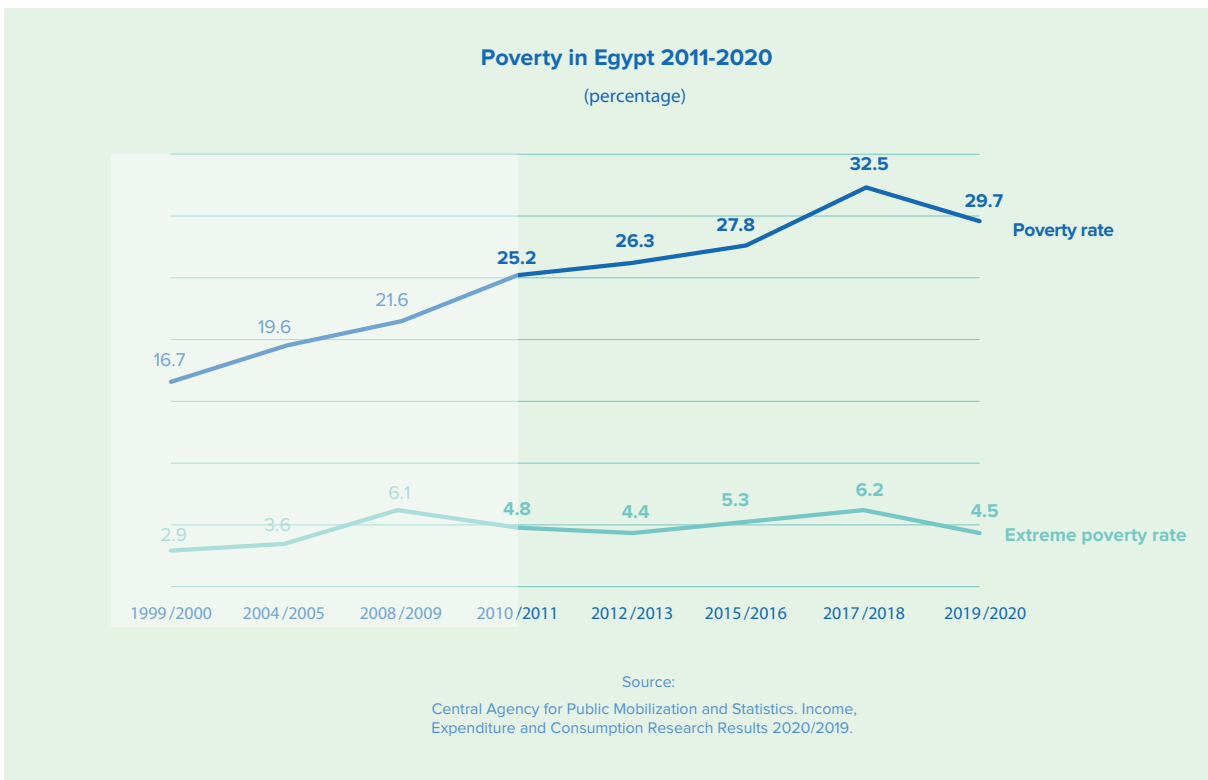
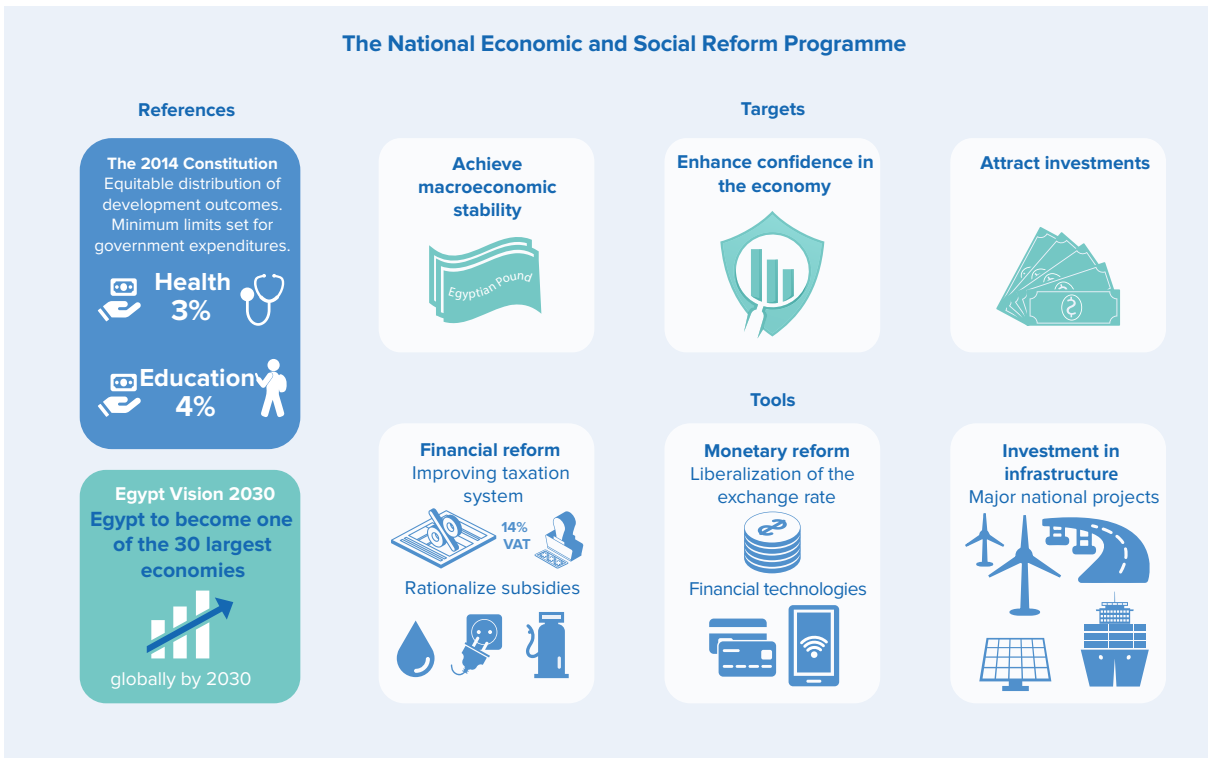
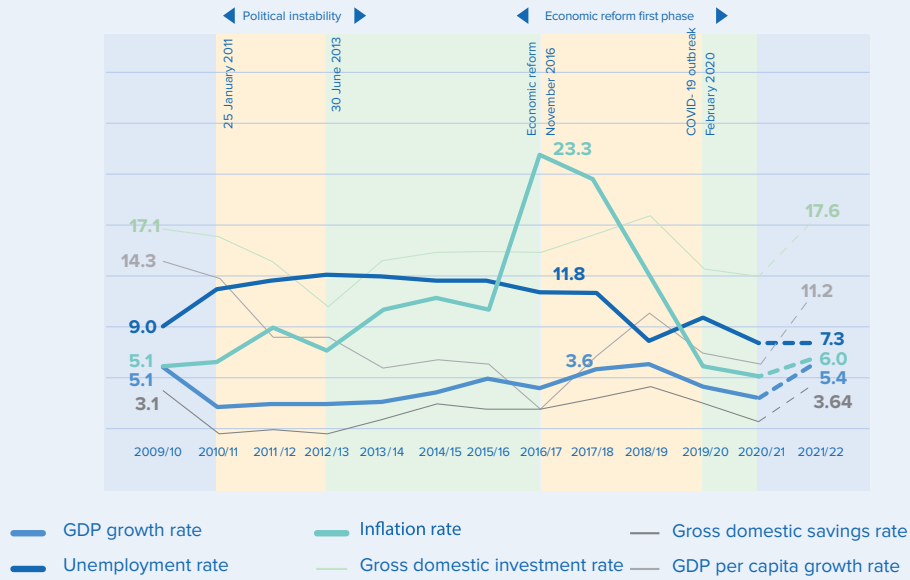


Figure 5 | Paving the way for a development shift | Economic reform in Egypt 2011-2020



Progress on Economic Performance Indicators

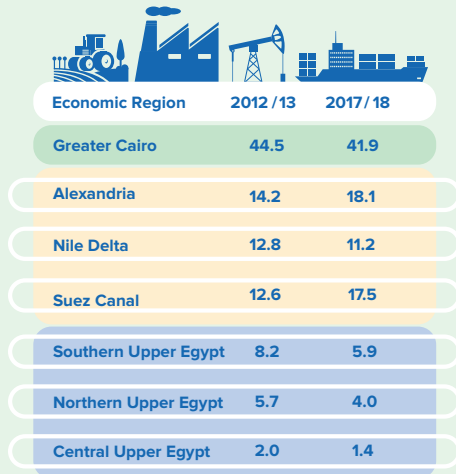
Selected indicators



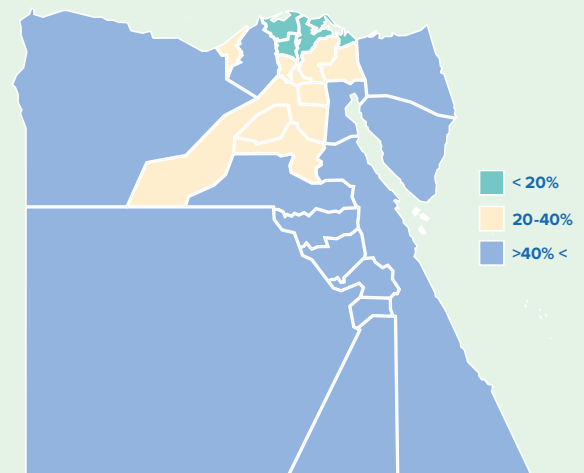
Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (2021)

Disparities between economic regions

Economic regions contributions to value added GDP (percentage)

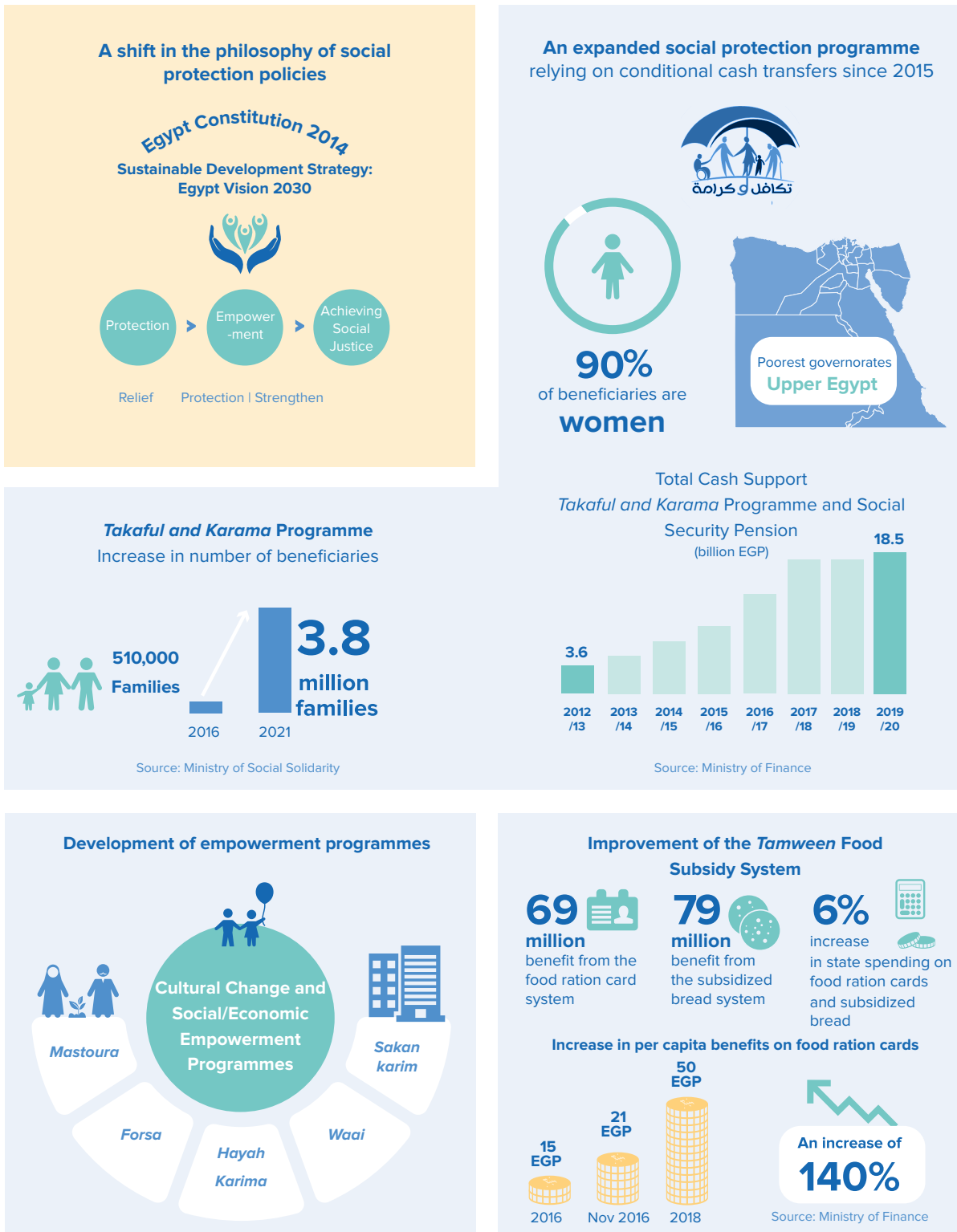


Proportion of the population below the poverty line in Egypt Governorates 2017/2018 (percentage)



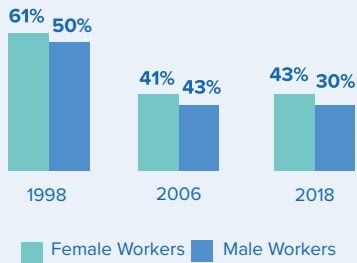
Source: Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics. Economic census results 2017/2018

Figure 6 | A shift towards an inclusive and empowering system | Social protection in Egypt 2011-2020



Renewing the Social Security System

Percentage of coverage



Source: Institute of Developing Economies

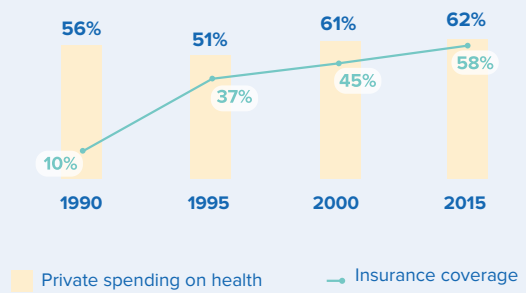
Developing the Health Insurance System

The database of those insured has expanded, since 1990

Number of people with health insurance coverage in 2018



Increased private spending on health indicates poor quality of services provided by insurance



Source: Egyptian Center for Economic Studies

Social Protection Expenditure

Within 5 Years

Total allocations for subsidies in state's general budget have increased substantially since 2014/2015



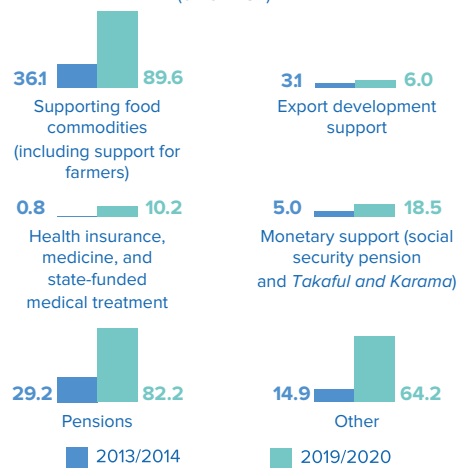
Growth Rate
65%



As part of restructuring support to reach beneficiaries, allocations for social protection in general State budget has increased from



Spending on social protection programmes (billion EGP)



Source: Ministry of Finance, Citizens Copy 2019-2020, Semi-Annual Report on Financial and Economic Performance

Figure 7 | Leadership role and societal contribution | The renaissance of Egyptian women 2011-2020

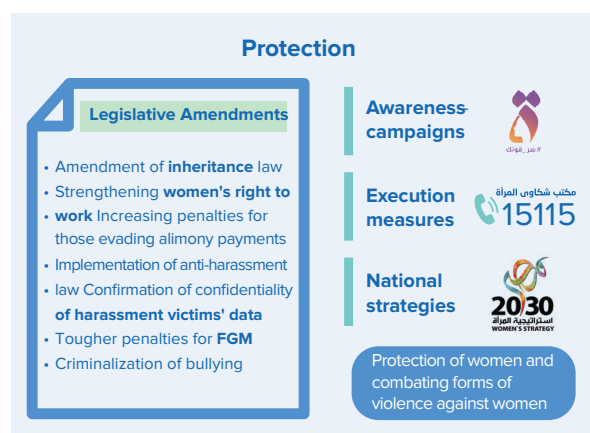
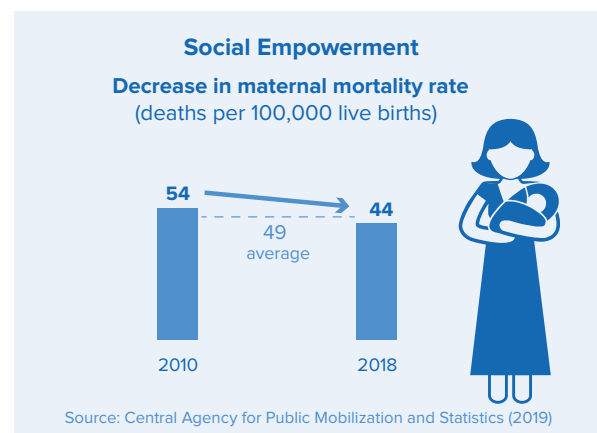
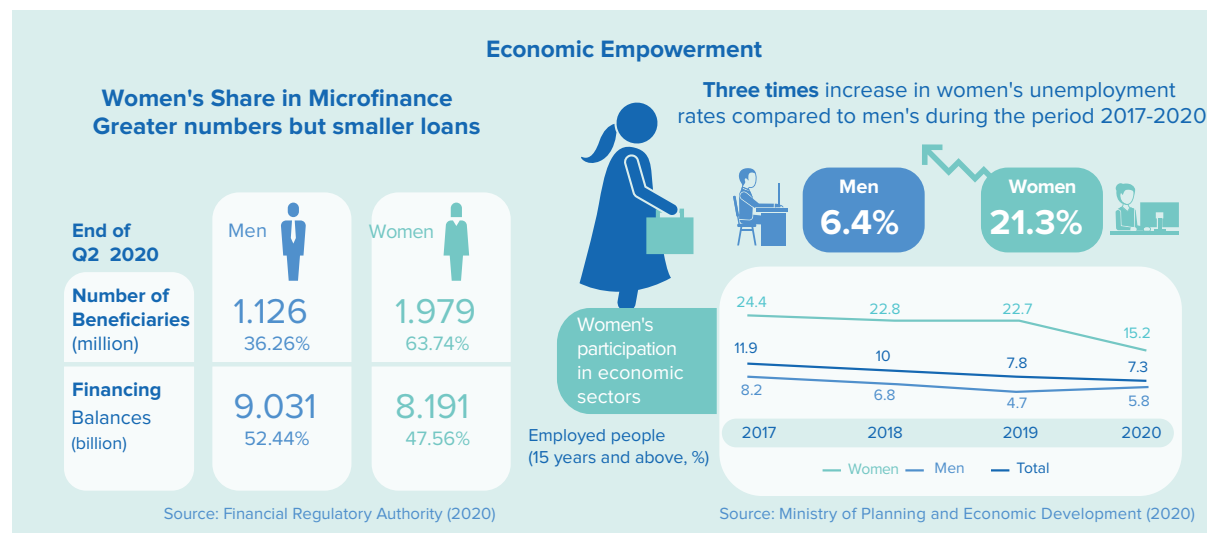
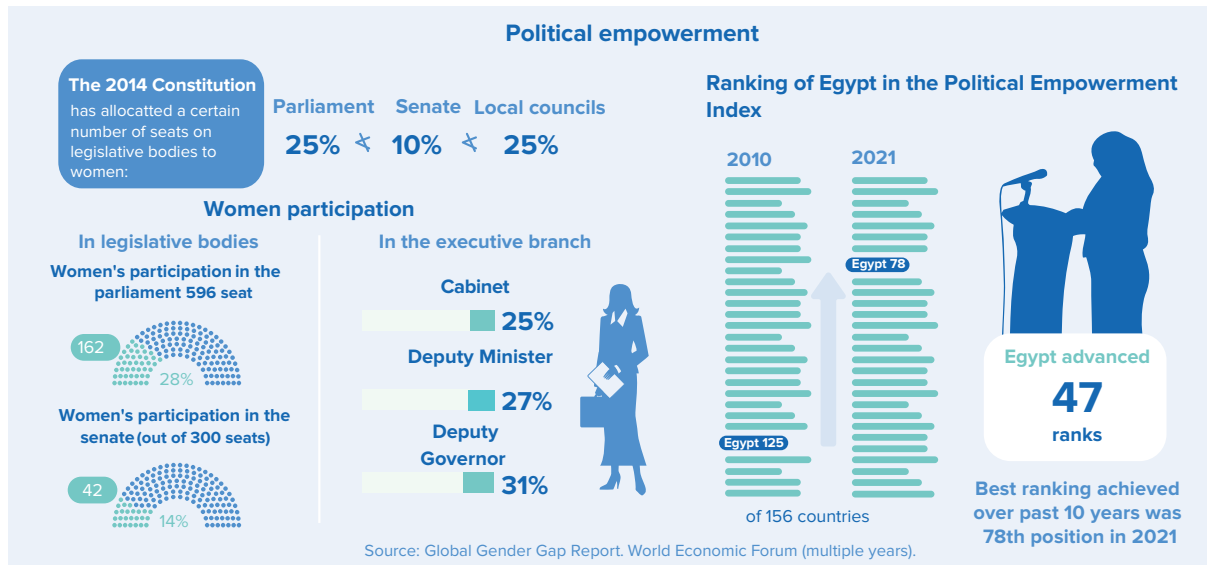


Figure 8 | Towards a sustainable environment | Managing environmental protection systems 2011-2020

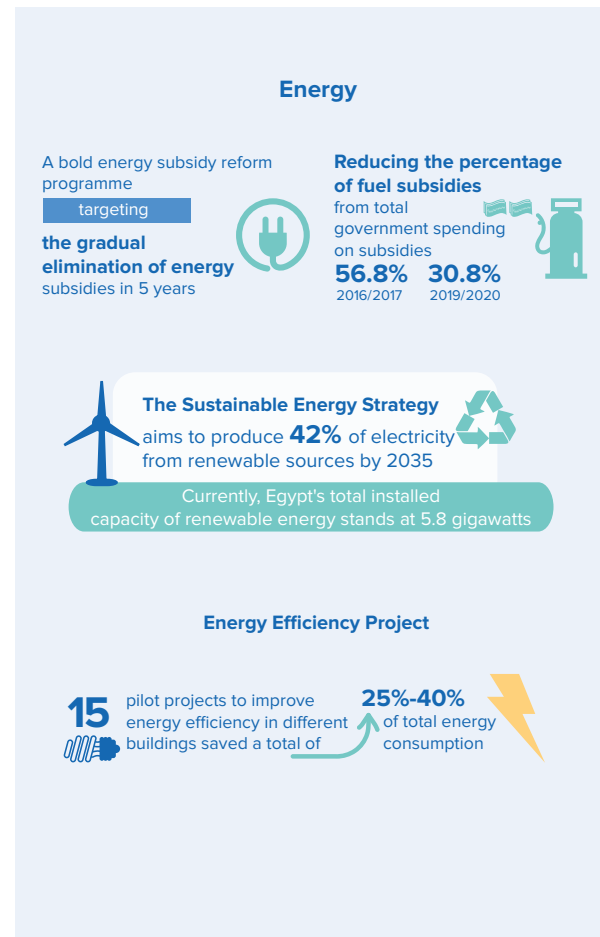
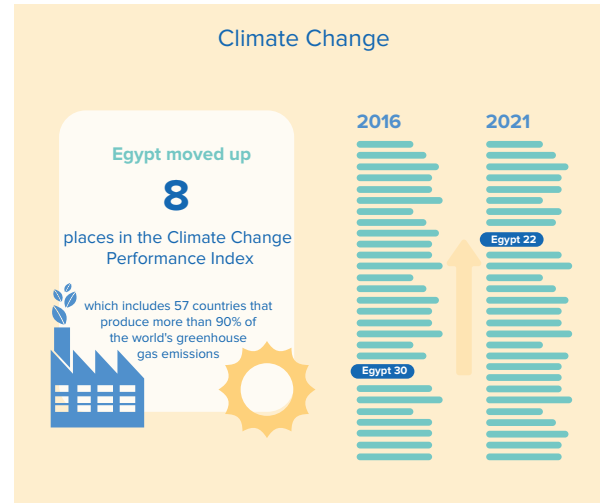
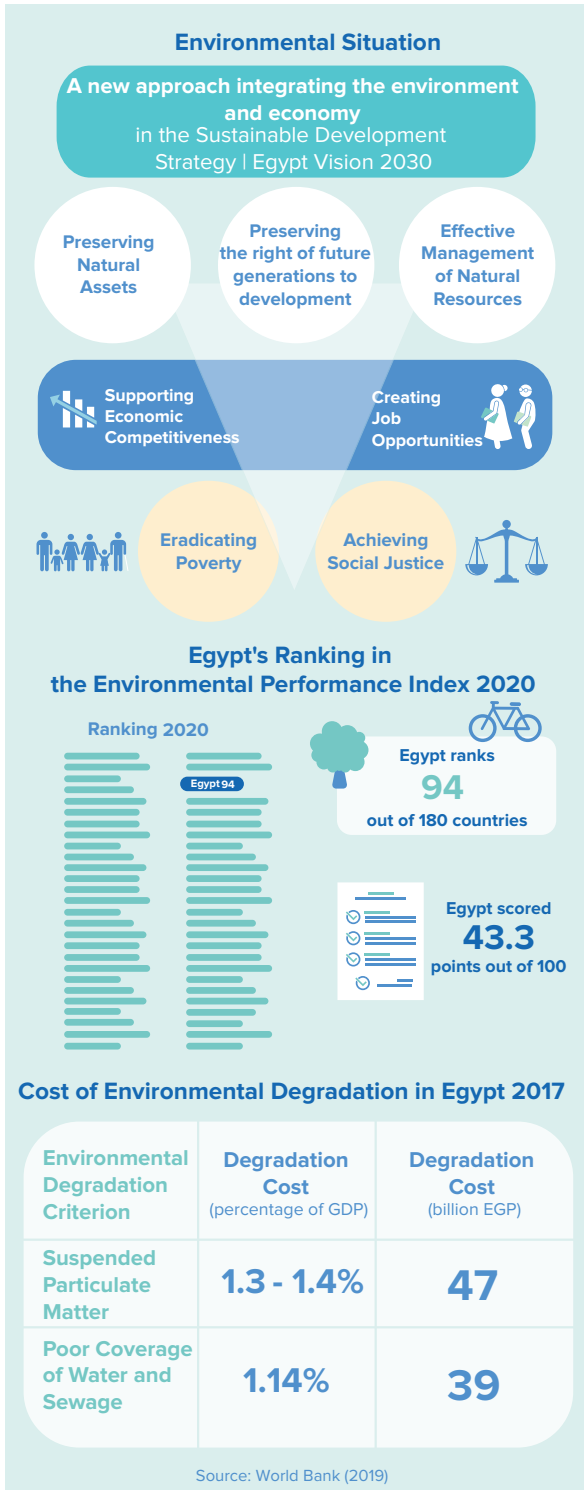
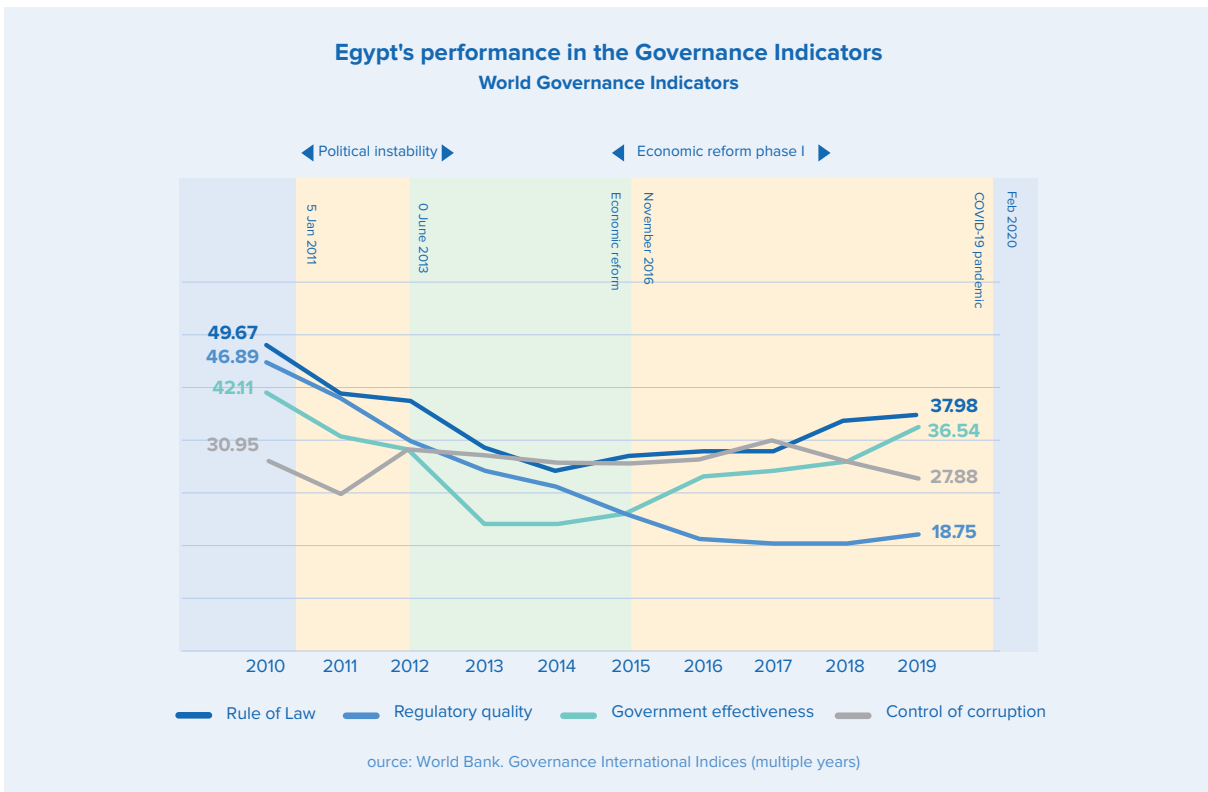


Figure 9 | Towards an effective ecosystem for managing the affairs of state and society | Governance in Egypt 2011-2020



Administrative reform

Enhance the efficiency of administrative apparatus

financial administrative reform

Expansion of decentralization

Monitoring and evaluation systems

Combating corruption, and enhancing transparency

Training of administrative cadres and developing research

National anti-corruption strategy

Citizen Budget

Citizen Plan



Youth participation

New mechanisms for qualification and participation

NATIONAL TRAINING ACADEMY
الأكاديمية الوطنية للتدريب

البرنامج الرئاسي لتأهيل الشباب للقيادة
PLP | Presidential Leadership Program

المؤتمر الوطني للشباب
NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

Digital transformation and financial inclusion

Egypt's ranking out of 9 Arab countries:

1

outlets for electronic payment services

130,000

1

electronic wallets

15,300,000

3

financial technology solutions

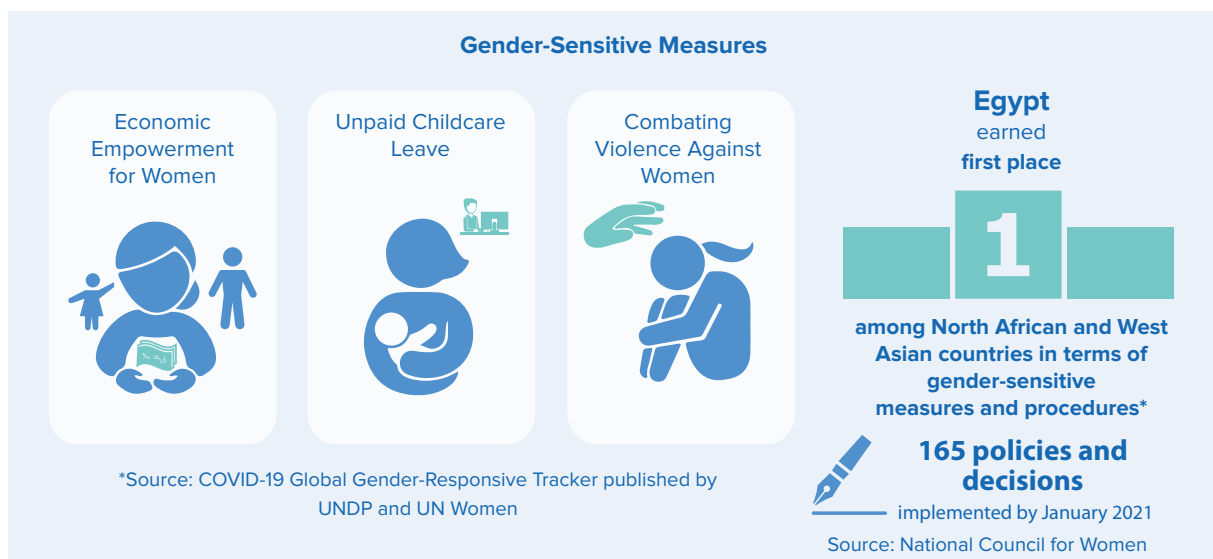
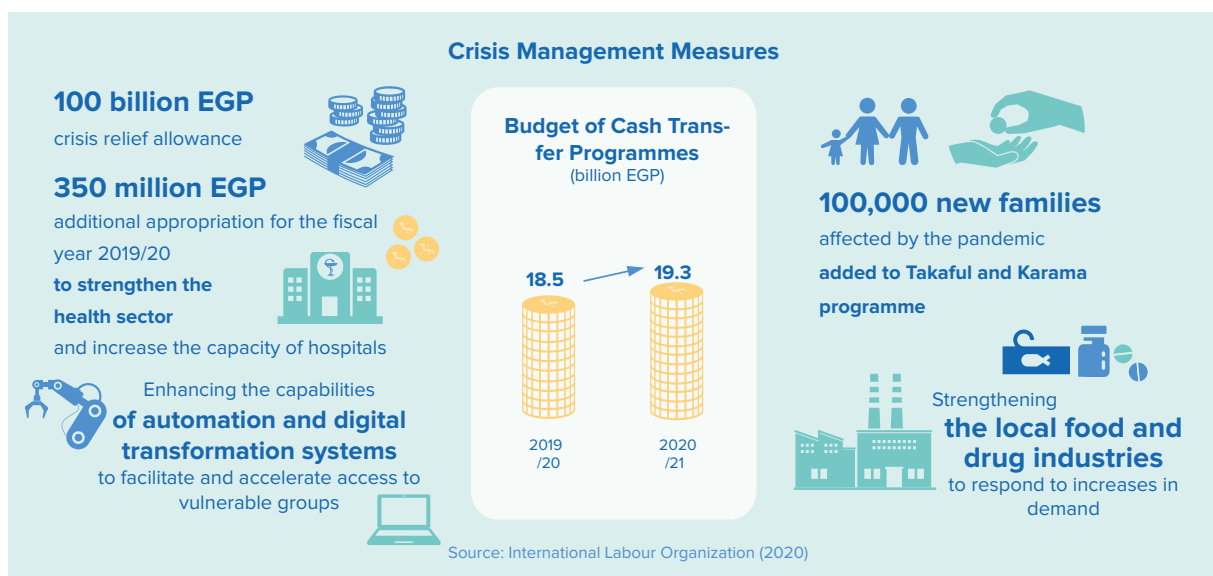
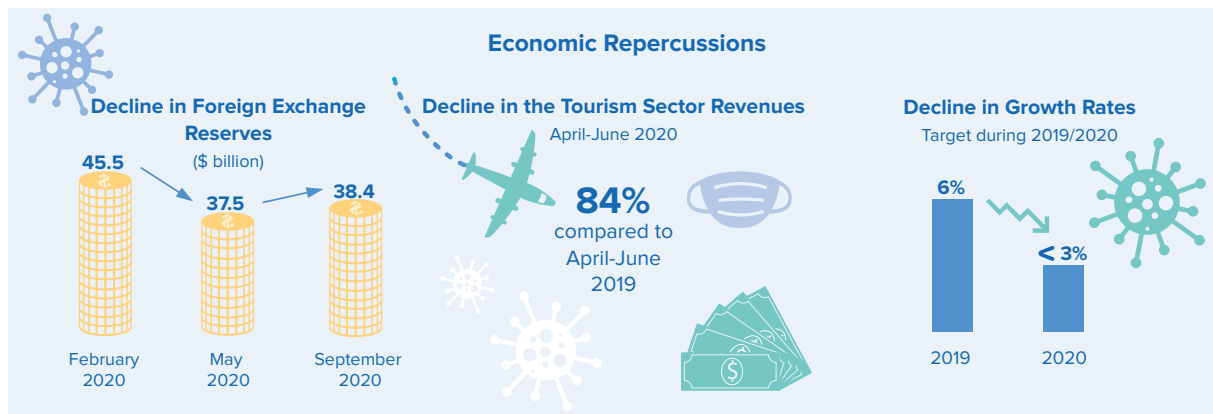
11%

Digital Egypt Portal

Facilitate government services

مصر الرقمية

Figure 10 | COVID-19 | Dealing with the crisis and the available opportunities



Endnotes





Endnotes

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