

On the sidelines of Maat's participation in the voluntary review of Egypt's report before the UN High–Level Political Forum

The Situation of Sustainable Development and the Limits of Its Development in the Egyptian Context

"An Assessment Vision"

July 2021



Study on
The Situation of Sustainable Development and the Limits of Its
Development in the Egyptian Context.. An Assessment Vision

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Egypt's report before the UN High-Level Political Forum

Prepared By

Sayed Gharib

Researcher at African Affairs and SDGs
Unit - Maat Association

Edited by:

Abdelrahman Basha

Deputy Director at African Affairs
& SDGs Unit - Maat Association

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Introduction:

Egypt has always been committed to supporting sustainable development, especially in the second decade of the 21st century. Egypt has launched its first sustainable development strategy (2016: 2030) as one of its mechanisms for managing its resources and comprehensive capabilities,¹ and for particularly achieving SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 of the United Nations development agenda.

To this end, Egypt has launched many social, economic and development mechanisms and programs, including the Takaful and Karama (Solidarity and Dignity) Program, and the Hayat Karima (Decent Life) initiative in order to eradicate poverty, which contributed to serving approximately (12 & 7.5) million citizens, respectively. For the first time since 1999, Egypt's poverty rate declined to 29.7 per cent in FY 2019/2020, down from 32.5 per cent two years earlier.² Moreover, the Agricultural Development Strategy (2017: 2022), School feeding programs (SFPs), and Egyptian Food Bank have all contributed to achieving 100% self-sufficiency in vegetables, milk, and eggs, and 95%, 85%, 95%, 50% in broiler poultry, red meat, fish and wheat, respectively, throughout the years from 2012 to 2018. This means that Egypt has succeeded in achieving food self-sufficiency by about (40%) compared to (60%) of food import dependence.

In line with SDG 3, which aspires to ensure health and well-being for all, there was a 100% budget increase for the Ministry of Health and Population in the FY 2020/ 2021. Besides, during the period (2018:2023), President Abdel Fattah El Sisi approved the establishment of the Egyptian Authority for Unified Procurement, Medical Supply and Technology Management (AUPP), and the new comprehensive health insurance program. Elsis also launched several presidential initiatives for health, topped by the "100 Million Healthy Lives" initiative, which reduced Hepatitis C virus (HCV) for 50% of cases, and led to the examination of about 60 million citizens; the Women's Health Initiative in July 2019 for the early detection of breast cancer and reproductive health issues, which served 30 million women; the Waiting Lists initiative (July 2018), which aims to get rid of waiting lists for patients who have been long seeking to go under surgery and critical medical interventions; and

¹ Scientific Research, Sustainable development importance in higher education for occupational health and safety using Egypt vision 2030 under covid 19 pandemic, access date.4 April 2021, <https://bit.ly/3AGqOvC>

² AL a-hram- online Egypt poverty rate declines to 29.7% CAPMAS, 3 December 2020, <https://bit.ly/3xlxZr6>

the free medical convoys that are estimated at 2379³. All these efforts have contributed to the development of the health organization and reduced the mortality rate of children under the age of 5 and newborns to 19.0, 7.5 for every 1000 live births respectively, eliminated malaria, and increased medical insurance coverage from 51.1 million people in 2015 to 56.9 million people in 2019.⁴

As to education, Egypt intensified its efforts and launched a new education reform program known as Education 2.0 (EDU 2.0). The initiative, announced in 2018, is set to dramatically restructure K-12 schooling throughout the country, and it came after the declaration of 2019 as the year of education. Expenditure on education in FY 2018/19 rose by 8%, to be the largest educational system in the Middle East and North Africa with (22.4) million students for pre-university education in more than (57.7) thousand schools. According to the latest data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS), the net enrolment rates for the same year sat at approximately 24.4% for pre-primary, 97% at the primary level and 82.5% at secondary. Besides, the literacy rate among citizens 15 years and older sat at 71.2% in 2017. Dropping out rates declined to 2% for those under 18; thereby, Egypt ranked the 93rd according to the World Economic Forum (2019).⁵

In the context of achieving gender equality, Egypt has developed a national strategy for the empowerment of women (2030) and was able to close the gender gap by about 69.9%. Women's representation in the parliament, ministerial formation and government jobs were estimated at 27.4%, 24.2%, and 45, respectively.⁶ While her participation in work and university education was estimated at 26% & 48.9%.⁷ The number of beneficiaries from the Takaful and Karama Program, the new Social Insurance and Pensions Law, the bread subsidies system, the Tamween Food Subsidy System, the women's health initiative reached

³ Al-ahram online 2020 yearender: Egypt universal health care insurance affordable health care, 30 December 2021, <https://bit.ly/3yG2kAY>

⁴ المرصد المصري، حصاد (10) أعوام من تطوير القطاع الصحي في مصر، 17 يناير 2021، <https://bit.ly/36GMOUR>

⁵ Oxford business group, how will Egypt reform its education system?, access date.7 July 2021

<https://bit.ly/3ysgbuH>

⁶ الأهرام، التخطيط للمرأة تمثل (28) من مقاعد البرلمان، 12 يونيو، 2021، <https://bit.ly/2aVA6QTz>

⁷ Al ahram online, woman empowerment and gender equality of Egypt Startling policies, 26 may 2021, <https://bit.ly/3hvXiYk>

(2.5, 6, 35.2, 31.3, 12) million women, respectively. Unemployment and illiteracy rates decreased by about (16.8%, 22.6) in 2020, respectively.

Finally, in the context of clean water and public health, Egypt was able to upgrade service levels of drinking water to (98.7%) with (100%, 97.4 %) in favor of urban and rural areas, and (65%) in favor of wastewater, distributed by about (96%, 37.5%) in urban and rural areas during the period from (2014: 2020).⁸

However, there are several challenges to sustainable development topped by the population growth estimated at 102 million people, the lack of financing, and the water scarcity, given that Egypt's water needs are estimated at about (100) m3, and the average per capita share thereof is lowered to about (600) m3, not to mention the threats of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) to Egyptian water security.

To tackle these challenges, first: expenditure on education and health sectors must be increased in order to reform the educational and health system, meet its requirements and maximize its efficiency; second: technical, educational and financial support must be increased to raise awareness of population growth and mitigate the impacts of economic reform programs; third: civil society and private sector must be empowered and allowed to contribute to sustainable development; and finally, the informal economy must be integrated.

In light of the foregoing, Maat for Peace recommends the following:

- 1- The Egyptian government should adopt more preventive measures and policies to reduce the impact and social repercussions of economic reform programs, such as the Takaful and Karama Program, promote social support, price control, and support small, medium and micro-enterprises.
- 2- The Egyptian government should increase expenditure on the educational system in order to speed up the pace of development, reform the infrastructure, meet the requirements of population pressure, reducing the number of students in a class, increase the number of teachers, improve curricula, keep pace with market outputs, raise teachers' salaries to reduce the phenomenon of private

⁸ وزارة الإسكان والمرافق والمجمعات العمرانية، خلال كلمته بالافتتاحات الرئاسية اليوم: وزير الإسكان يستعرض جهود الدولة المصرية في قطاع خدمات الشرب، أغسطس، 2020، <https://bit.ly/3hvbdtHQ>

lessons, and improve vocational education to help to eradicate poverty and contribute to building the economy and achieving sustainable development.

3- The Egyptian government should strike a balance between the population and economic growth; so that the population increase does not consume the growth of the Gross domestic product (GDP), which achieves the so-called inclusive growth, and increases the efficiency and quality of basic services.

4- The Egyptian government should strive to facilitate the contribution of the private sector to the GDP by reducing interest rates and taxes, and facilitating procedures and laws; given the importance of this sector in providing job opportunities for young people, increasing employment rates, and consequently increasing aggregate demand rates, and then increasing industrialization and production rates, which in turn is reflected in achieving sustainable development.

5- The Egyptian government should seek to develop its capabilities to integrate the informal economy into the formal sector, as this will increase tax revenues and thus increase the state's resources and reduce the budget deficit, by collecting sufficient information on all economic activities within society.

6- The Egyptian government should allocate sources of financing for the sustainable development process, because the financing problem is the first and most important challenge in any country that wants to achieve sustainable economic development so that the financing is given on easy terms and with a low interest rate and the payment is over long periods.

7- The Egyptian government should promote the scientific and professional capabilities of women, train them, and support them technically in preparation for increasing their participation in the labor force and their contributions, thus raising the GDP by about 34%.

8- The Egyptian government should encourage the participation of the civil society, stakeholders and development partners in the sustainable development process, given their key role in providing financial, technical, material and awareness support, and their contributions in presenting solutions to solve challenges and obstacles to development.