



Report on National Efforts to Promote the Right to Housing On the Occasion of the Celebration of World Habitat Day on the 4th of October 2021

Every year, the international community celebrates World Habitat Day on the first Monday of October, since the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of a resolution in this regard. Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stipulates the right to adequate housing as one of the components of the right to adequate standard of living, as home is the basis of stability and security for the individual and the family and should be a place to live in peace, security and dignity.

On this occasion, the SSCHR Technical Secretariat prepared this report on national efforts to promote the right to housing, as the State has placed the housing issue at the forefront of the national priorities since 2014 to provide adequate housing and a decent life for citizens. This report addresses the constitutional and legal framework that guarantees the implementation of the right to adequate, safe and healthy housing, strategic planning for its promotion, programs and initiatives to provide adequate housing, and the concept of social justice within the framework of the implementation of the right to housing. The relevant Egyptian efforts have been appreciated and praised by the international community, as the New Urban Communities Authority recently won the "United Nations Human Settlements 2021" Award in the field of Sustainable Urban Development, among more than 170 nominations that included many countries, for its role in achieving sustainable urbanization; through the provision of safe and affordable social housing projects, and encouraging social cohesion of the population, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and Egypt's Vision 2030.



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First: The Constitutional and Legislative Framework for the Right to Adequate, Safe and Healthy Housing

- Under the Constitution, the State guarantees the right to adequate, safe and healthy housing in a manner that preserves human dignity and achieves social justice. The State

is committed to developing a comprehensive national plan to address the problem of slums, including re-planning, providing infrastructure and facilities, improving the quality of life and public health, and providing the necessary resources for implementation within a specified period of time. According to the Constitution, the State guarantees the development and implementation of a comprehensive urban and economic development plan for border, and disadvantaged areas, including Upper Egypt, Sinai, Matrouh and Nubia, with the participation of its people in development projects and the priority of benefiting from these projects, taking into account the cultural and environmental patterns of the local community.

- In accordance with the provisions of the Construction Law No. 119 of 2008 that regulates construction in Egypt, the State is committed to the controls and procedures that ensure the provision of adequate, safe and healthy housing for citizens through the following:
 - Procedures that ensure the establishment of adequate, safe and healthy housing for citizens, by issuing a construction permit if it conforms to the approved planning and constructing requirements, design principles and implementation conditions stipulated in Egyptian codes, and in accordance with technical principles, general specifications, safety and security requirements, health rules, provisions for lighting, ventilation and courtyards, and requirements for securing the building and its occupants from fire hazards.
 - Preserving the right of people with disabilities to adequate housing by obligating the designing engineer or engineering office with the general requirements for the use of disabled in accordance with the provisions of the Egyptian Code for the Design of Exterior Spaces and Buildings for the Use of the Disabled.
 - Providing adequate housing for the residents of unsafe slum areas by defining the procedures followed for re-planning areas and unplanned areas to preserve the rights of the residents of the area with regard to negotiating with real estate owners within those areas and the commitment of the administrative authority to provide them with housing or a temporary activity until the alternative unit is prepared or the rental value is paid until the completion of the transfer to the new residence or activity.
- Egypt has a legislative and institutional structure that protects and regulates property rights and real estate tenure, rents for housing and urban planning, real estate financing, and provides social housing for middle-income and low-income people.

Second: Strategic Planning for the Promotion of the Right to Housing

- The “Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt’s Vision 2030” stipulated the State’s commitment to providing adequate housing for all citizens, eliminating slums, taking

into account the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, emphasizing equal opportunities, prevention of discrimination or marginalization, and the role of housing policies and programs in achieving social integration.

- In continuation of the efforts of the State's to provide adequate and healthy housing, the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and New Urban Communities launched in 2014 Strategic National Plan for Urban Development, which took more than three years to prepare, and aims to double the habitable area from 7% to 14% through the provision of a suitable environment to provide adequate housing.
- The State launched the "Housing Strategy in Egypt" in 2020 to provide adequate housing for all citizens, giving due consideration to the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, and emphasizing the principles of social justice, equal opportunities, and prevention of discrimination or marginalization.
- The National Strategy for Human Rights has set a number of targeted results with regard to the right to adequate housing, including: increasing the number of housing units for all social strata, especially those with low incomes, as well as increasing the construction of new cities and adequate housing units in the desert hinterland; and providing and developing basic services and amenities in residential communities and new cities, such as health and education services, roads and transportation network. In addition, the Strategy stipulates the activation and enforcement of stricter penalties for the violation of the terms for social housing units, the upgrading of unsafe slum areas, in addition to areas that were not subject to urban planning.
- Egypt issued in March 2021 the national report on follow up the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations Human Settlement Program. The report includes the achievements at the level of the two main areas of the New Urban Agenda (commitments leading to transformation in order to achieve sustainable urban development and the effective implementation of the new urban plan). The report also reviews the most significant challenges that the country has faced during the past years in terms of urban development and the efforts exerted to contribute to addressing those challenges.

Third: Programs and Initiatives to Provide Adequate Housing

- The Government believes in the need to create an integrated urban system and not only the provision of housing units and thus the housing projects are characterized by their integrated infrastructure and enjoyment of the requisites of sustainable urbanization. These projects include all services such as educational, health, religious, sports and other services, in addition to providing a healthy and safe environment for citizens.

- Regarding the level of availability of adequate housing units, housing projects have significantly increased in the last seven years. During the 29 years of (1976-2005), the State established 1.25 million housing units, at a rate of about 42 thousand units annually, and within 9 years, from (2005-2014), 383,000 housing units were built, at a rate of



48 thousand units annually. **In only seven years, from (2014-2021), 1.5 million housing units have been implemented, at a rate of 225 thousand units annually, which is equivalent to 5 times the rate of previous years. In addition, the State also provided 230 thousand plots of land equivalent to (1.7 million units), as well as partnership projects with the private sector, which avail (120 - 150 thousand units). Thus, what has been accomplished since 2014 through 2021 is 10 fold as compared to the achievements of the State in previous periods.**

- The State’s plan aims to build 2.24 million housing units by the end of 2024.
- The following are the most prominent projects and initiatives in the field of promoting the right to adequate housing namely the social housing project, the development of unplanned and unsafe slums, the development of existing urban cities, the project to develop provincial capitals, and fourth-generation cities.

a. The Social Housing Project

- The housing policy since 2014 has been based on three elements (assistance - support - availability), where assistance is directed to low-income groups, through the establishment of affordable housing units, the elimination of High risk areas and the upgrading of slums. While support is directed to middle-income groups to provide units with a variety of spaces at a small profit margin, as well as making them available

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to high-income groups. In addition, the sale of housing units in fourth-generation cities is for all segments of society, which provides funding sources for projects for the lowest-income social groups.

- The State has been keen to provide facilities and financial support in the field of housing through three pillars: the first is to provide cash and in-kind support according to the level of income in addition to cash support , along with 5 forms of non-cash support including (land cost, cost of utilities, contractors' compensation, price differences, and mortgage interest rate support), so that low-income people bear only 40 to 50 percent of the total cost of the housing unit.
- Secondly, the mechanisms and terms of real estate financing have been set through Law No. 93 of 2018 regarding social housing and real estate financing support, where decisive and firm mechanisms and controls have been established to encourage real estate financing. Thirdly, a number of Presidential initiatives have been launched to support the interest (subsidized) on real estate financing. The President launched recently a new initiative for real estate financing with a 3% interest rate, and a repayment period of up to 30 years; the Central Bank allocated EGP 100 billion for this initiative.
- The State places low-income people at the forefront of its construction and allocation of housing units, as the plan includes the construction of 1.5 million housing units by the end of 2021, of which 775,000 units are allocated for social housing at 52%, and 375,000 units at 25% for housing alternative to slums, next to 150 thousand units at 10% for housing, and 200 thousand units at 13% for premium housing.
- The "Decent Housing" Program, which began in 2017, provides basic services, focusing on the infrastructure such as drinking water, sanitation, home repair and other services aimed at improving the health and environmental conditions of poor families and the the most in need. The program also provides the services for families receiving conditional and unconditional cash assistance within the "Solidarity and Dignity" Program. The total number of families that benefited from the initiative until March 2020 reached 58 thousand families in more than 200 villages nationwide.
- "Decent Life" Initiative: Based on the importance of improving the quality of life by providing a suitable environment for housing as well as all the services that citizens need, the initiative was launched in January 2019 with the aim of upgrading the



poorest villages. The Government and civil society began targeting 143 villages where poverty rate exceeds 70%. The villages are distributed over 11 governorates and are home to 1.8 million citizens, with investments approaching four billion pounds. This phase ended at the end of December 2020. The aspects of development targeted by the Initiative varied between raising the efficiency of homes, developing infrastructure, extending water, sewage and electricity networks and doubling production, in addition to providing health and education services to the targeted villages, and finally providing job opportunities for the residents of these villages.

- At the end of 2020, and to complement the success of the Decent Life Initiative, the President directed the adoption of an integrated and unprecedented program to develop the Egyptian countryside through a comprehensive approach that includes the provision of all infrastructure services, social and economic development; as well as extending the umbrella of care and social protection to the most needy groups within each village, with a budget estimated at about 700 billion EGP over three years. The Initiative aims to target all Egyptian villages, 4,600 villages distributed over 20 governorates. The project is being implemented in three phases where the first phase includes about 1,413 villages, distributed over 52 centers in 20 governorates, with investments amounting to 250 billion pounds.

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- Egypt attached great importance to people with special needs Under the Constitution, citizens with special needs have the right to adequate housing through the allocation of 5% of the total housing units presented in each advertisement to people with special needs, according to the type and classification of disability. That is along with the allocation of ground floor units for those with mobility disability. The applications are opened the first week for people with special needs.
- Women have equal opportunities to apply and qualify for the social housing units. The percentage of women receiving social housing fund services has increased from 21%

of the total beneficiaries in 1999 to 27% by the end of 2020, with a focus on women headed households , divorced women, widows and women with special needs.

b. Upgrading of Informal and Unsafe Areas

- The largest program witnessed by Egypt thus far was implemented for the urban, economic and social upgrading of informal and unsafe areas to respond to the constitutional commitment to develop a comprehensive national plan to address the problem of informal settlements which largely contributed to a decrease in the number of residents in the se areas.
- The number of citizens living in unsafe areas is about one million, as of 2015, living in 357 areas, distributed over 25 governorates, and the number of families is 246,000. The Government has implemented a program for alternative housing at a cost of 63 billion pounds during the period from 2015 until 2021. The number of unsafe areas that have been upgraded from 2014 to 2020 is about 296 out of a total of 357 areas, and the program includes re-planning, providing infrastructure and facilities, and improving the quality of life and public health.
- The State has allowed many patterns of choices as people are given the choice of moving to alternative neighborhoods, or compensate them financially, or give them temporary alternative housing or a sum of money to provide on their own until the development of the area is completed, provided that a housing unit is allocated to them in the area after its development. Among the alternative housing models are (Asmarat - Bashayer Al Khayr - Al Mahrousa, which are areas with integrated services and facilities, in addition to the availability of training programs with the Ministry of Solidarity to provide training opportunities in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry to the youth). Citizens receive fully finished and furnished housing units within the framework of alternative housing.
- The State has implemented a project to upgrade slums, and has allocated more than 425 billion pounds to develop these areas. The project aims to develop all aspects of life for citizens, and provide various social, cultural, economic, and health services,



in addition to others. A total of 135 areas have been selected at the national level with a total area of 152,000 acres, inhabited by about 7 million people. Fifty six of these areas have been upgraded, and the rest are in progress and where the State is committed to consult with the residents of the areas being upgraded.

c. Development of Existing Urban Cities

- In regards to the development of existing urban cities, the State directed investments estimated at 57 billion pounds to develop 21 existing urban cities by developing road networks, electricity, water, sewage, and service buildings.

d. Provincial Capitals Development Project

- The project aims to redeploy unutilized State-owned lands inside these cities with activities that are not aligned with the development efforts in the respective cities through the implementation of many housing and development projects for the residents of these areas. The goal of this program is to provide half a million housing units, and the implementation of about 25% of this project is under way.

e. Fourth Generation Cities

- With the aim of expanding the inhabited area vis-à-vis uninhabited desert areas, 21 new fourth-generation cities are being implemented, and the locations of these cities have been chosen because of their proximity to promising new development areas, as the future of urban development in the medium and long term is focused on the inevitability of leaving the valley, to preserve the current natural resources. That is in a way that ensures a reduction in the average current and future population density, and an increase in the citizen's share of land, services and open areas.
- The State directed investments estimated at 90 billion pounds to develop the infrastructure of eight fourth generation cities to implement electricity, water and sewage networks, which are the New Alamein, the New Administrative Capital, the New Mansoura, 6th of October, October Gardens, New Obour, West Qena, and East Port Said.
- The State provides adequate housing for workers moving to the New Administrative Capital by surveying the opinion of the moving workers to develop a vision on the actual needs and work to be met through the various levels of housing.