



## **Report on National Efforts to Achieve Social Justice from a Human Rights Perspective On The Occasion of The International Day of Social Justice 20<sup>th</sup> of February**

The international community celebrates the International Day of Social Justice on February 20 of each year, based on a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in this regard in 2007. This reflects the international community's conviction that national and international economic systems should be based on the principles of justice, equity and inclusion, and that the achievement and maintenance of peace and security within and between states cannot be realized without social justice. The



concept of social justice is of paramount importance in ensuring the human dignity of all people, as it plays an important role in ensuring that individuals obtain their basic rights, in securing an adequate standard of living for them, and thus in reducing poverty and mitigating its effects, preventing social exclusion and promoting social inclusion. It should be noted that the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stipulates the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance, which is the right that lies in the essence of the concept of social justice.

The Egyptian State places the issue of social justice at the top of its priorities. Recent years have witnessed - specifically since 2016 after the adoption of the economic reform program - a fundamental shift in the State's approach to social protection; a shift from the relief approach, which was limited to merely assisting the most vulnerable groups in society, to the human rights approach that seeks to enhance the economic and social rights of citizens through empowering them, expanding their choices, and enhancing their capabilities through various legislations, policies and programs.

On the occasion of the International Day of Social Justice, the Technical Secretariat (TS) of the Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights (SSCHR) prepared this report that sheds light on the constitutional and legislative frameworks for social justice, the strategic vision of the State through 2030 in this regard, the national policies and programs already in place, the spending on social protection programs, and finally the efforts to mitigate the repercussions of the Coronavirus pandemic on the most neediest groups.

## First: The Constitutional and Legislative Frameworks for Social Justice

1. The Constitution affirms in its preamble that social justice is a right to every citizen, and that the society is based on social solidarity (Article 8). In accordance with the Constitution, the State is obligated to ensure social justice, provide means of social solidarity in a way that guarantees a decent life for all citizens (Article 8), and to provide social insurance services. All citizens who have no access to the Social Security System have the right to social security to ensure a decent life, if they are unable to support themselves and their families in the event of incapacity to work, old age or unemployment (Article 17).
2. The Constitution obliges the State to provide adequate pensions to small farmers, agricultural workers and fishermen, and informal labor (Article 17). The Constitution also states that the economic system aims to achieve prosperity in the country through sustainable development and social justice. The Constitution affirms the necessity to ensure equal opportunities and a fair distribution of development returns, reduction of the gaps between incomes, and commitment to a minimum wage and pension that guarantees a decent life (Article 27). The Constitution also stipulates that the tax system aims, among other matters, to achieve social justice (Article 38). The Constitution emphasizes that the State's guarantee of the right to decent, safe and healthy housing is necessary to achieve social justice (Article 78)
3. A number of national legislations guarantee social justice. Furthermore, a number of fundamental legislative reforms have been introduced to some components of the Social Protection System based on the principles of inclusiveness, coverage, equity and governance. Examples include:
  - Comprehensive Health Insurance System Law No. 2 of 2018, which is based on the principles of comprehensive coverage for all citizens in all health services, and the guarantee of governance through the establishment of three independent bodies to manage the Comprehensive Health Insurance System.
  - Social Insurance Law No. 148 of 2019, where its philosophy is based on building a social protection umbrella that guarantees the provision of insurance coverage for all sectors of society, including irregular workers, and links the minimum pension with the minimum wage to ensure that the pensioner gets an amount that suits the standard of living. For this purpose, the law established a mechanism to increase pensions by a percentage of the country's inflation rate to be covered by the Social Insurance System. The law also guarantees that the insurance system includes several types of insurance: old age, disability, death, work injuries, sickness, and unemployment.
  - Law No. 26 of 2020 amended some provisions of the Income Tax Law with the aim of laying the foundations for progressive tax justice, improving tax brackets, and achieving tax

savings for the lower, middle and upper-middle classes. All of these laws aim to fulfill the economic and social rights of those addressed by their provisions, and guarantee equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and equality in bearing the public costs and burdens on the basis of social solidarity.

- Social Housing and Real Estate Financing Support Law No. 93 of 2018, and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law No. 10 of 2018.

## Second: The Strategic Vision for Social Justice through 2030

1. The “Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030” seeks to achieve comprehensive development by building a just and fair society characterized by equality and fair distribution of development benefits. Furthermore, the strategy aims for a society that effectively addresses societal gaps in all their forms in a manner that establishes the foundations of social justice. “Egypt Vision 2030” devotes its fifth pillar to Social Justice where the strategic vision for social justice has been articulated into three strategic objectives, namely: (1) Promoting community integration, (2) Achieving equality in rights and opportunities, (3) Achieving protection for the neediest groups.



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2. The “Egypt Vision 2030” includes 17 indicators measuring social justice performance through 2030, and maps the related basic challenges. It identifies a number of programs for the promotion of social justice, which aim to strike a balance between achieving economic growth on the one hand and ensuring fair distribution of its benefits on the other hand. These programs relate to reviewing and developing legislations, as well as raising the efficiency of the social protection and subsidy systems and expanding their coverage. These programs also aim at enhancing the level of institutionalization in the partnership between the State and civil society, providing an information infrastructure that allows a higher level of efficiency and transparency in managing the Social Justice System; reducing societal, gender and generational gaps, and achieving balance in the geographical distribution of services; financing and supporting development programs and initiatives concerned with empowering women, youth and the neediest groups.

## Third: Policies and Programs on Achieving Social Justice

1. The government has been keen to implement social protection measures when it implemented the economic reform program, especially in light of the political will seeking to reform and

modernize the Social Welfare System. It has been keen to mitigate the impact of the economic reform program on the neediest and low-income groups, in a manner that ensures protection and promotion of the economic and social rights of these groups. The development of all subsystems of social protection, whether social insurance, health insurance, subsidies system, or social safety networks, has led to comprehensive coverage for all groups of society, and established the principle of protection for all, which has made the system as a whole based on a human rights approach and in line with international standards and sustainable development goals. It should be noted that the “Social Justice Committee”, headed by the Prime Minister, is responsible for proposing policies and programs on social justice programs, the integration of the poor and neediest groups, the social safety networks, the reviewing of existing subsidies programs, and the adoption of new social protection programs.

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2. The scope of social protection has been expanded by integrating within public policies, whether in health, education, housing, employment, the needs of the neediest groups. Policies and programs aimed at achieving social justice vary, and this part of the report sheds light on: social safety networks, social security services, the social insurance and pensions system, the Presidential initiative “A Decent Life” and the “Decent Housing” Program”, the food support system, the social housing system, programs aimed at providing job opportunities and qualifying the neediest groups to Join the labor market, in addition to social care for persons with disabilities, the elderly, and the homeless.

#### A. **Social Safety Networks**

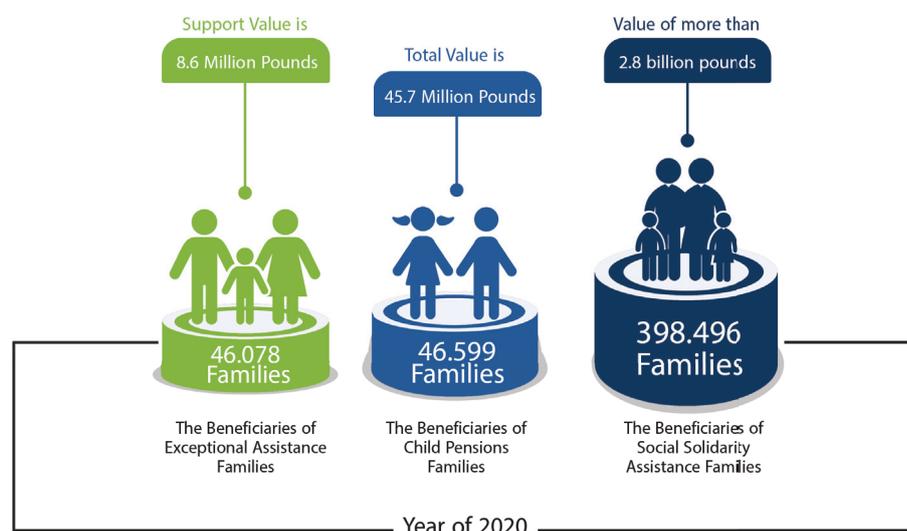
- The government has revisited the philosophy guiding the operation of the social safety networks, by taking into account the accuracy of targeting so that cash and in-kind transfers do not go to those who are not eligible, seeking to link cash transfers with programs for economic and social empowerment, including all social groups that are most in need and by focusing on the poorest geographical areas, as well as the most marginalized with a view to contribute to the achievement of equity and fairness.
- Since 2015, the government has started implementing an expanded program for social protection, which is the “Solidarity and Dignity” “Takaful and Karama” program, targeting poor families. The “Takaful” program is a conditional cash transfer program that provides income to support poor families with children under the age of 18 years. The “Takaful” program requires the attendance of children in school and the use of health care facilities. Meanwhile, the “Karama” program provides unconditional cash transfers to poor elderly

people and persons with disabilities. The governorates of Upper Egypt receive 70% of the total support cost, which reduced poverty rates by 5 degrees. 2.26 million children (6-18 years old) from “Takaful” families are registered in schools; 2.15 million children (from birth till 6 years old) are covered with health care; 76% of holders of “Takaful” and “Dignity” cards are women with a total of 2.7 million women; 28% of the exchange cards are directed to families of persons with disabilities; 10% of the beneficiaries are elderly persons(65 years old and above); and 77% of beneficiary families of “Takaful” and “Karama” have commodity support.

- It has been approved to establish a fund to finance “Takaful and Karama” to ensure the sustainability of the funding of the program, and to expand the number of beneficiaries when needed. Indeed, the number of beneficiaries of the “Takaful and Karama” program has reached 3.8 million families, of whom 63.7% are in the “Takaful” program and 36.3% are in the “Karama” program, including 15 million individuals.
- Many social safety network services have been centrally and locally automated, which has led to higher efficiency of these systems. The capacities of 68,000 government workers on social protection have been developed, and the transparency and accountability mechanisms through multi-level verification and an automated grievance system have been applied.

## B. Social Security Services

- Social security services represent an umbrella with a number of services ranging from periodic to emergency, and include monthly solidarity assistance for poor families (starting from 323 pounds per person up to 450 pounds per month for four family members), exceptional assistance, child pension, monthly educational grant, and compensation.



- The number of beneficiaries of social solidarity assistance in 2020 reached 398,496 families with a value of more than 2.8 billion pounds. The number of beneficiaries of child pensions reached (46599) families with a total value of 45.7 million pounds, while the number of beneficiaries of exceptional assistance reached 4,6078 families with a support value of 8.6 million pounds.

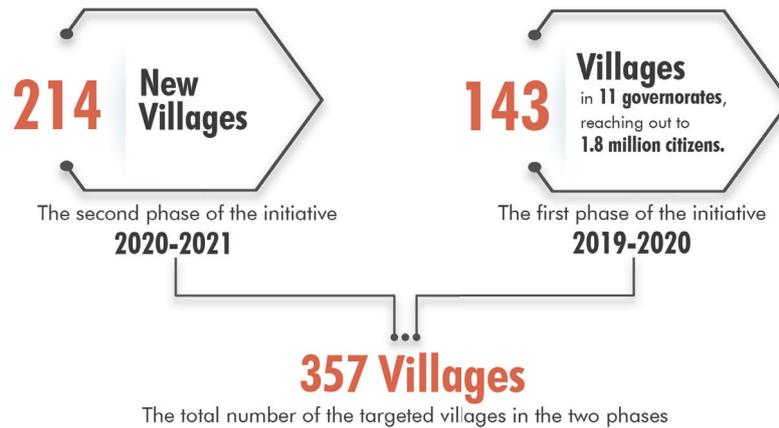
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### C. Social Security and Pensions System

- The minimum pension was increased from 450 pounds in 2014 to 900 pounds in July 2019, and pensions also witnessed an annual increase of 15%. Pensioners were also granted a special allowance of 14% at a cost of approximately 31 billion pounds in 1/7/2020. The value of disbursed pensions has been increased by 50% from 2018 to 2021 for 10.4 million beneficiaries, at a cost of about 77.5 billion pounds in 2020. Due pensions were increased by 14% of the total pension with a maximum increase of 980 pounds at an annual cost of about 25.1 billion pounds, and the five bonuses were added to the basic wage with the promulgation of Law No. 25 of 2020; accordingly, the variable wage pension was increased to about 2.4 million pensioners and beneficiaries. On the other hand, a monthly pension was paid to the families of the victims and those injured as a result of terrorist attacks for about 1,491 martyrs and wounded, at a total cost of 18.4 million pounds for the period from 2018 to 2020.
- The State seeks to provide a package of incentives in order to integrate informal employment into the formal work system through the insurance for irregular workers whose annual share of income is less than the minimum category for subscription, along with providing incentives for insurance on irregular employment such as the public treasury bearing the employer’s share for them.

### D. The “Decent Life” Presidential Initiative and The “Decent Housing” Program

- The general goal of the Presidential Initiative “A Decent Life” that was launched in 2019 is to expand the umbrella of comprehensive social protection by focusing on meeting the needs of citizens in the poorest villages. The initiative aims to achieve the goal of spatial justice, which deals with the geographical development gap in favor of some regions, with the aim of improving the standard of living of the neediest citizens. The first phase of the initiative, 2019-2020, covered 143 villages in 11 governorates, reaching out to 1.8 million citizens. The second phase, 2020 - 2021, includes 214 new villages, bringing the total number of the targeted villages in the two phases to 357 villages, covering 34% of the total population of the 1,000 poorest villages. It is also planned that, by the end of 2024, the total targeted villages in all stages of the initiative will reach 1,000 villages, with a total population of 12.4 million persons.



- As for the “Decent Housing” Program, it provides basic services, namely infrastructure for clean drinking water, sanitation, home renovation and other services aimed at sustainable improvement of the health and environmental conditions of poor families in the poorest villages in the targeted governorates, in order to enhance the right to adequate housing. The program aims to improve health indicators for beneficiary families in poor and under-served areas, reduce pollution, reduce mortality rates for children under five, and improve infrastructure.
- The program also contributes to the creation of job opportunities for the unemployed to implement the program components in the targeted areas. The total number of families for which the targeted services have been or are being implemented from the program’s financing in the poorest villages located in the five targeted governorates during the first phase of the program until March 2020 is about 58,000 families in more than 200 villages.

#### E. Food Subsidy System

- The government has been keen on improving food subsidy system in order to enhance the right to adequate food. The mechanization of bread subsidy cards and food subsidy cards has contributed to achieving a higher degree of governance and efficiency. The new system redistributes subsidies to those citizens who deserve the assistance, in an efficient and fair manner. It gives them the freedom to choose the types and quantities of goods (there are more than 20 commodity items) within the limits of their entitlements to the subsidies and which are registered on the citizen’s electronic smart subsidy card.
- The per capita monthly cash support on subsidy cards reached 50 pounds (it was 18 pounds in July 2016). About

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- The National School Feeding Program is one of the social protection networks, as it contributes to enhancing the ability of poor children to survive and continue their education, as well as raising their educational achievement capabilities.
- The cost of the program in the fiscal year 2018/2019 was about 972 million pounds, covering approximately 11 million and 200 thousand students.

#### F. **Social Housing**

- Social housing has received special attention from the state, in fulfillment of the right of low and middle income earners to adequate housing. In 2014, the government announced that one million housing units will be built to support low and middle-income people. In the same year, the President of the Republic issued a decree on social housing, which stipulated that social housing projects should be launched with the aim of providing adequate housing for low-income citizens and small family plots of land for middle-income citizens, as part of the social housing program. A Social Housing and Mortgage Finance Fund was established with the aim of financing, managing and establishing housing units for the social housing program, as well as commercial and professional services for these units. The number of beneficiaries of the social housing program in 2019 reached about 276 thousand, with cash support amounting to 4.3 billion pounds.

#### G. **Programs aimed at providing Job Opportunities and qualifying the Neediest Groups to Join the Labor Market**

- There are a number of programs that fall within the framework of the active labor market programs, which are an essential component of the social protection package, such as the "Forsa" (opportunity) and "Mastoura" (sufficient) Programs. Both programs aim at realizing the right to work, especially for neediest families. The "Forsa" Program seeks to support the neediest families by helping them find suitable job opportunities that contribute to generating income, particularly those who are able to work in the age group (15-55) who are beneficiaries of the "Takaful," "Karama" and social security pension programs. The first phase of the program, which runs from 1 January 2020 to December 2022, targets 50,000 beneficiaries. As for the "Mastoura" Program, it is a microfinance program for women.

- It should be noted that a fund to support irregular employment against various risks aims to disburse a grant for them during the period of income disconnection, "Income Compensation Assistance", as a result of emergency economic conditions or epidemics; and to address insufficient coverage of irregular labor and small business owners with unemployment insurance. In addition, a committee has been established to enhance protection for informal workers, as well as to prepare a national strategy in this regard.

#### H. **Social Care for People with Disabilities, the Elderly and Homeless People**

- The number of persons with disabilities benefiting from cash support has reached about one million people, at a total cost of 5 billion pounds annually. An integrated database is being developed and a network connection is being made between the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the authorities concerned with the services of persons with disabilities. A Presidential initiative was also launched to integrate and empower people with disabilities by providing educational and health services to them using communication and information technology, and enabling them to enter the labor market. This is in addition to expanding the establishment of speech rehabilitation centers, and physical therapy, in addition to working on the provision of prosthetic devices.
- The State grants a security pension to elderly people who do not receive an insurance pension and have no income. Social safety networks were developed with the "Karama" program, by granting a pension to the elderly (starting from the age of sixty-five), or to those suffering from a disability or chronic diseases. There has been an expansion in establishing retirement homes for the elderly as well as day care clubs for them. A written document on rights of the elderly was launched in cooperation with civil society. In 2020, the elderly over the age of 70 years were also exempted from public transportation expenses on railways and subways, and those who reached 65 years of age were exempted by 50%.
- Social care efforts for homeless children and adults have been intensified, as various services have been provided to homeless people, including health and educational services, meals, blankets, and psychological and social support through 17 mobile units and 19 institutions that have been developed during the past three years.

#### **Fourth: Expenditure on Social Protection Programs**

- In recent years, especially after the beginning of the economic reform program, there has been a significant growth in expenditure for social protection programs. The increase in Government's spending on subsidies for ration items between the fiscal years 2013-2014 and 2019-2020 reached 148%, and increased by 270% for cash subsidies. In addition,

the financial allocations for subsidies in the State budget have increased over the past five years from 198.5 billion pounds in the 2014-2015 budget to about 327.7 billion pounds in the 2019-2020 budget, with a growth rate of 65%. The budget allocated to the “Takaful” and “Karama” Program increased from 147 million pounds at the first launch of the program in the 2014-2015 budget to 18.5 billion pounds in the fiscal year 2019-2020. The social security budget is about 6.5 billion pounds for the fiscal year 2020/2021. As a result of restructuring the subsidy system to better reach its beneficiaries, 82.6% of the financial allocations for subsidies were allocated for social protection programs in the budget for the fiscal year 2019-2020, whereas that percentage was only 50% in the budget for the fiscal year 2014-2015.

### **Fifth: Efforts to Limit The Repercussions of the Coronavirus Pandemic on The Neediest Groups**

- Since the beginning of the crisis, the government announced the allocation of 100 billion pounds to confront the pandemic. With regards to social protection in particular, the government has taken a number of measures, including:
  1. Adding 100,000 new families from those affected by the pandemic to the Solidarity and Dignity program, “Takaful and Karama”
  2. Increasing the value of the cash transfer programs budget from 18.5 billion pounds to 19.3 billion pounds.
  3. With regard to employment in the informal sector, a monthly compensation of 500 pounds has been granted to irregular workers registered in the Ministry of Manpower’s database. 1.5 million workers benefited from this grant which has been extended more than once, with a total cost of 6.3 billion pounds. That is in addition to the Workers’ Emergency Benefits Fund’s disbursement of wages for the workers whose wages have ceased to be paid due to the pandemic, as well as developing a database of irregular labor affected by the Coronavirus pandemic.
  4. The total of relief services, food and medical aid, and sterilization and disinfection services provided by the Ministry of Social Solidarity and its Non-governmental (NGO) partners during the Coronavirus crisis amounted to about 20 million services, with a total cost exceeding 1.7 billion pounds, for a total number of 64 million beneficiaries.
  5. A grant of 500 pounds was paid to 12,000 people from the neediest families affected by the pandemic in the villages of the poorest governorates in Upper Egypt, in addition to providing basic foods items and some medical protection equipment to eight governorates in Upper Egypt, as well as some border governorates.