

Report on National Efforts to Enhance the Right to Education

On the Occasion of the International Day of Education at the 24th of January, 2023

The international community celebrates the International Day of Education every 24th of January, based on the United Nations General Assembly's resolution. The right to education is a human right, and is an indispensable means for the realization of other human rights. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stipulate, in Articles 13 and 14, that state parties recognize the right of everyone to education. In that sense, the Egyptian Constitution establishes a comprehensive framework for education as a right for every citizen in seven articles that cover all dimensions of education. In addition, the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt's Vision 2030 and the National Human Rights Strategy (2021-2026) include a specific section on the right to education, aiming to ensure access, efficiency, sustainability, dynamism, and improving competitiveness and educational outcomes. On this occasion, the Technical Secretariat of the Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights prepared a report on national efforts to promote the right to education in Egypt.

First: Public Expenditure on Education

The steady growth of financial allocations for the education sector in the State's budget reflects the State's commitment to fulfilling constitutional entitlements. Financial allocations for the education sector in the budget of the fiscal year 2022/2023 amounted to EGP 475.7 billion for higher education and pre-university education, in addition to allocating EGP 79.3 billion for scientific research.

The investment plan of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development for pre-university education for the fiscal year 2022/2023 covers several aspects of the right to education. The plan aims to reduce classroom density and expand access to education without discrimination, and direct investments worth EGP 15.4 billion to establish 25 thousand classrooms for all educational stages, at a growth rate of 40%. In addition, the plan aims to allocate EGP 2.5 billion to establish Japanese schools, Nile schools, and schools for outstanding students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), which currently reached 19 schools. The investment plan of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development also aims to establish 20,000 applied technology schools to make education more responsive to the needs of the labor market, and expand the provision of smart screens and classrooms at a value of EGP 324 million. The plan aims to begin the implementation of the "Education 2" program to improve teacher performance, with funds of EGP 700 million, in addition to directing EGP 700 million to the Knowledge Bank.

The plan also aims to expand the digitalization of exams in public universities, targeting 154 test centers with allocations of EGP 1 billion, and to establish and operate six technological

universities in six governorates in various regions, with a capacity of 22.5 thousand students, bringing the total number of technological universities in Egypt to 9 universities. In addition, the plan aims to establish and operate 15 private universities with a capacity of 150,000 students, with funds amounting to EGP 7.4 billion. Four universities that include 40 colleges that offer modern sciences in four new cities began operating.

Second: National Efforts To Uphold the Right to Pre-university Education

Availability and Accessibility

- The number of students enrolled in the educational system in the academic year 2020/2021 reached more than 24.4 million in more than 57.7 thousand schools across Egypt, making it the largest educational system in the Middle East and North Africa region. Despite the huge number of school children, successful steps have been taken to ensure accommodation of all children in pre-university education. The primary school completion rate in Egypt already reached international rates since 2019, reaching 100%. As for the completion rate of the preparatory stage, it was 82.5%, and the secondary education completion rate was 57.2%. The illiteracy rate also decreased significantly, reaching 24.2%, making the zero percent closer than before, as defined by the Egyptian State plan.

Enrollment

- The State is exerting efforts to narrow the educational gap between children in urban and rural areas. In accordance, the State's plan for economic and social development during the fiscal year (2022/2023) aims to direct about EGP 5.1 billion to complete the first phase of the national project for the development of the Egyptian countryside "Decent Life", by establishing and developing 13,772 classrooms. The first phase of the project also aims to carry out maintenance services for 1,430 schools, as well as the construction and development of 5,410 literacy classes, and direct investments exceeding EGP 4.2 billion to create, develop and expand 8,400 classrooms in all educational stages, in 75 urban communities, located within the geographical scope of the first phase of the "Decent Life" project; contributing to narrowing the educational gap between rural and urban children.

- The State is exerting efforts to address the phenomenon of school dropout, including the "Combating School Dropout" program, establishing committees to reduce dropout in many primary schools in various governorates. The State also announced the national plan to address school dropout, and exerted efforts towards the capacity building of teachers, social and psychological workers, and school principals in the targeted governorates, in addition to educating parents of students at risk of dropping out in these governorates.

- The State is committed to upholding the right of children with disabilities. In accordance, the Ministry of Education and Technical Education integrated 101,691 students with disabilities in public schools. The Ministry also includes 44,373 students with special needs, and 11 classes for people with multiple disabilities. Students with special needs vary between mental, visual and auditory disabilities. In addition, the number of special education teachers is 9,762.

- The State allocated EGP 500 million to support students who cannot afford tuition fees, students with disabilities, and technical and vocational training students. In addition, 4.5 million students at various educational levels were exempted from tuition fees; as well as half a million school students, who cannot afford tuition fees and did not receive cash support, were exempted from payment; amounting to a total of 5 million students. The efficiency of 1,000 community schools was also enhanced to accommodate 34,000 students who have dropped out of education or who exceeded the official enrollment age, in addition to providing nutrition and cash support to the families of these children, to encourage them to enroll their children in education and to preserve the health of the children.

- The State started hiring 150,000 teachers, with 30,000 teachers annually to meet the needs of developing the education sector. The plan for the upper grades of the primary stage aims to train 180,000 teachers in four subjects: science, mathematics, Arabic language and social studies.

Admissibility

- The State developed a comprehensive transformation plan for the educational system. Since 2018, it has embarked on a program of complete reform and transformation of education, which is internationally called "Education 2.0". The program is scheduled to be completed by 2030 and aims to restructure pre-university education to ensure: continuing professional development; raising the capacities of teachers and introducing new teaching techniques; changing the method of examinations and assessments; reforming the curricula to be more skill-based; developing the digital infrastructure of schools to support the use of technology in the classroom; and expanding access to quality pre-primary education and special education for children with different abilities.

- The State encouraged schools to obtain accreditation and quality assurance certificates. As a result, the percentage of schools that obtained certificates reached 12% of the total number of schools in 2022/21, compared to 3% in 2014/13. Egypt also advanced 45 places in the technical education and vocational training index in 2021, as it ranked 68th, compared to 113th in 2017.

- The State launched the National Strategy to Reform and Develop Technical Education and its annual implementation plans (2022-2026). The Ministry of Education also enhanced procedures for developing the Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Unit in the Ministry to enable the Unit to lead human rights units in educational directorates, departments and schools to lead the process of implementing the focus areas of the National Strategy for Human Rights; spread and promote a culture of respect for human rights and citizenship in the Ministry, directorates,

educational departments and schools; and prepare an institutional achievement guide for units in educational directorates to monitor and evaluate their activities.

Adaptability

- The State supported the use of technology in the educational process, by adopting a policy of diversifying learning resources to include the digital education platform “Knowledge Bank”. Free tablets were provided to students of first secondary school, in addition to having network infrastructure, including servers and high-speed Internet, installed in secondary schools. The remote access of these networks was also enabled at no cost through youth centers. These efforts continue by channeling: EGP 3.75 billion to provide tablets for secondary school students; EGP 874 million to expand the provision of screens and smart classrooms; and about EGP 1 billion for applying “Gadarat” (Merits) in technical education schools and applied schools. Efforts also include the beginning of implementing the EDU 2.0 education program with allocation of EGP 700 million to improve teachers’ performance and developing students’ skills, in addition to directing an additional EGP 700 million to the Knowledge Bank.

- The Government provided a number of educational television platforms and channels (Our School 1, 2, 3) for various stages of education, and a mobile application for watching and viewing educational channels and material for all stages of education, which effectively contributes to providing students with sufficient time to practice activities of all kinds, and to contribute to discovering and nurturing the talented.

- The Government implemented about 20,000 projects for the development and maintenance of various existing schools to raise their efficiency and maintain the stability of their infrastructure.

Third: National Efforts to Uphold the Right to Higher Education

Availability and Accessibility

- The number of public universities increased with the achievement of continuous diversification in educational programs, and an increase in geographical coverage to reach 100%. According to 2022 statistics, the number of public universities reached 27, of which 4 were established in the last four years, comprising 516 colleges, compared to 392 colleges in 2014, with a growth rate of about 32%.

- 124 new colleges and institutes for postgraduate studies were established in public universities, and 271 new programs were introduced in public universities that serve the needs of the labor market, bringing the number of programs to 389, which contributed to an increase in the capacity of universities and institutes by 36%.

- Efforts include: establishing (12) new colleges and institutes in public universities, amending the name of (10) public universities in favor of the educational and research process; beginning the establishment of the Egypt University for Informatics (EUI) in the New Administrative Capital in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology; establishing a private university, Al-Madina University in Cairo; the beginning of establishing Egypt's Space City; and the beginning of establishing an academy for the gifted and talented.

- The State is establishing and operating fifteen non-profit universities, in various governorates, with a capacity of 150,000 students, with allocations of EGP 7.4 billion, as four universities began operating, comprising 40 faculties, bringing the coverage rate to 33%.

Admissibility

- The State's efforts to improve the quality of higher education in line with international standards resulted in Egypt's climb in international rankings of education quality. According to US News global ranking of education quality, Egypt's ranking rose 9 spots globally, jumping from the 51st place in 2019 to the 42nd in 2020, among the top 80 countries in the world, and ranked third in the Arab World. In addition, the US News ranking for the year 2020 witnessed the inclusion of 14 Egyptian universities, compared to 11 universities in the previous year (2019), with an increase of three public universities, which are: Beni Suef, Banha and Minya; in addition to the increase in the percentage of publications from 0.49% to 0.70% in 4 years (2014-2018).

- 23 Egyptian higher education institutions were included in the British Times Higher Education ranking in 2022. In addition, Egypt ranked 26th globally in the field of international publishing for the year 2021 in the Spanish "Scimago" Journal and Country Rank for international publishing, compared to 28th place in 2020. While Egypt ranked first in Africa in the Global Knowledge Index in 2021, ranking 53 out of 154 countries, and advanced 11 places in the international indicators of scientific research and innovation.

- The number of accredited colleges and university programs increased by 565%, from being 46 in 2014 to 306 (221 colleges and 85 programs) in 2022.

Adaptability

- Higher education is witnessing an expansion in the digitalization of exams in public universities, and the Government aims to provide funds amounting to EGP 1 billion to automate 154 test centers, with a growth rate of 125% compared to the fiscal year plan (2021/2022). The State also directed EGP 442 million to establish and operate 6 technological universities with a capacity of 22.5 thousand students, bringing the total number of technological universities to about 9 universities; in addition to directing EGP 4.4 billion to establish and operate 10 private universities with a capacity of 150 thousand students.
