



National Efforts to Promote and Protect the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Egypt on the Occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3)

Since 1992, the international community has celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on the third of December of every year with the aim of promoting and raising awareness of the rights of these persons. On this occasion, the Technical Secretariat of the Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights prepared this report on the national efforts to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities in Egypt. The report covers the constitutional and legal basis for those rights and the various operational policies and programs to promote them.

First: The Constitutional and Legal Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

1. The Constitution guarantees equality before the law and in terms of rights, freedoms, and public duties, without any discrimination based on a disability (Article 53). The Constitution also obliges the state to guarantee the economic, social, cultural, recreational, educational, health-related and sports-related rights of persons with disabilities and persons with dwarfism; to provide them with work opportunities while allocating a proportion of these opportunities to them; to prepare public facilities and the surrounding environment to accommodate them; to enable their exercise of all their political rights; and to integrate them with other citizens as part of the implementation of the principles of equality, justice, and equal opportunities (Article 81). The Constitution also stipulates the provision of the necessary assistance to persons with disabilities who are presented to investigative authorities (Article 54) and that the state must provide adequate means of access to persons with disabilities who get detained (Article 55). Additionally, the Constitution guarantees the right to social security for every citizen who does not fall under the social security system because of their inability to work and support themselves and their dependents in a way that guarantees a decent life (Article 17). The state must guarantee the rights of children with disabilities, their rehabilitation, and their integration into society (Article 80). Finally, the Constitution also guarantees adequate representation for persons with disabilities in local councils (Article 180) and in the House of Representatives (Article 244).
2. The Constitution stipulates the technical, financial, and administrative independence of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities in addition to the impartiality of its members, and its right to inform public authorities of violations related to its field of work; the Council's opinion is to also be taken on draft laws and regulations related to its field of work (Article 214).

“ Law No. 10 of 2018 was issued regarding the rights of persons with disabilities, constituting the general legal framework for those rights, whether they are political, educational, cultural, social, health-related, or sports-related. ”

3. In 2008, Egypt joined the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was drafted in 2006.
4. Egypt signed the African Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with the constitutional procedures for its ratification being currently finalized.



5. Law No. 10 of 2018 was issued regarding the rights of persons with disabilities, constituting the general legal framework for those rights, whether they are political, educational, cultural, social, health-related, or sports-related. The law stipulates many privileges and forms of care and protection for persons with disabilities, particularly the principle of “accessibility,” which comprises the preparations and procedures necessary to institute an inclusive and compatible environment physically, socially, informationally, and financially for persons with disabilities, in addition to the provision of the necessary equipment, tools, and assistive means to ensure they exercise their rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others. The law also stipulates the principle of “comprehensive integration,” or the usage by persons with disabilities of all services, activities, public facilities, and means of education on an equal basis with others in society without discrimination due to their disabilities in various aspects of life; this is achieved through different policies, plans, measures, programs, awareness-raising activities, and active participation. The provisions of the aforementioned law, which are consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, apply to persons with disabilities and persons with dwarfism.
6. The Law on the House of Representatives (Law No. 46 of 2014 and its amendments) guarantees the allocation of eight seats for persons with disabilities within the list system, in accordance with the provisions of Article (244) of the Constitution.

Second: National Institutions and Plans to Promote and Protect the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

1. Entities Concerned with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- The National Council for Disability Affairs was established by the Prime Ministerial Decree No. 410 of 2012. However, in implementation of Article (244) of the Constitution, Law No. 11 of 2019 was issued regarding the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, which replaced the former council and which was tasked with the overall promotion, development, and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with the Constitution and in light of international conventions ratified by Egypt. The new National Council for Persons with Disabilities also works towards consolidating the rights of persons with disabilities, raising awareness thereof, and contributing to the exercise of these rights.
- Law No. 200 of 2020 regarding the establishment of the Support Fund for Persons with Disabilities was issued. Headed by the Prime Minister, the Fund aims to provide protection, care, and social development for persons with disabilities and to also support

them in all economic, health, educational, and training fields. The Fund also disburses financial assistance, in particular scholarships to schools, institutes, and universities inside and outside of the country. In addition, the Fund contributes to covering the costs of prosthetic devices and surgeries related to disabilities as well as contributing to covering the costs of accessibility by improving public facilities via the implementation of the “accessibility code.”

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1. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities in a Number of National Strategies and Plans

- Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, the strategic goals of social justice include achieving protection for marginalized and vulnerable groups, including unemployed persons with disabilities, through positive discrimination as well as other means.
- A number of ministries and agencies are undertaking the implementation of the National Plan for Persons with Disabilities. For example, the Ministry of Health and Population undertakes the early detection of disability, provides health and treatment services to persons with disabilities as well as medical examinations, and sets standards for treatment and rehabilitation based on their needs and type of disability. The Ministry of Education also plays a role in implementing inclusive education for persons with disabilities and providing them with educational opportunities through different technologies. As for the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, it facilitates the educational process and works on improving learning and services provided to persons with disabilities by allocating them a quota in scientific and educational missions, instituting disability sciences as one of the scientific disciplines taught in universities, and incorporating the basic concepts of disability in all educational curricula.
- The Strategic Framework and National Plan for Childhood and Motherhood (2018–2030) includes goals related to raising the quality of educational and health services to children with disabilities by promoting inclusion and early diagnosis. It works towards raising the enrollment rates of children with disabilities in educational institutions and schools by building schools that are properly equipped for children with disabilities according to their type of disability, developing suitable curricula, and training teachers on these curricula. The Framework also includes expanding the implementation of the early disability detection program in primary healthcare units, training medical personnel to deal with children with disabilities, and increasing the hearing screening for all newborn babies by one month of age for early detection of hearing impairment.

Third: Public Policies and Executive Measures to Enhance the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The government takes several measures and executive policies to enhance the rights of persons with disabilities who represent 10.64% of the total population, according to the official census issued by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics for the year 2017.

1. Measures to Guarantee the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Political Participation

- A person with a mobility impairment represented the National Council for Disability Affairs in the committee concerned with drafting the 2014 Constitution.
- The House of Representatives and its facilities have been prepared to accommodate representatives with disabilities. In addition, the Solidarity, Family and Persons with Disabilities Committee have been created in the House of Representatives.
- The use of Braille to facilitate the visually impaired in expressing their views on the constitutional amendments of 2019.

2. The Integration, Empowerment, and Participation Initiative

- In 2016, President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi launched an initiative to support and empower persons with disabilities, including those from poor and marginalized backgrounds. The initiative aims to adapt the communications and information technology sector to work on easily providing educational and health services to persons with disabilities and contribute to increasing their ability to enter the labor market and obtain a suitable job by providing them with appropriate training and qualifications. The initiative also works towards facilitating the lives of persons with disabilities by preparing government buildings to be able to receive them and provide services to them. In addition, and through the Tamkeen Competition, Egypt is on its way to become a regional center for the communications and information technology industry in the Arabic language that caters to and empowers persons with disabilities. In particular, this competition aims to motivate innovators and startups to develop software, mobile phone applications, and technology in Arabic for persons with disabilities.
- The Integration, Empowerment, and Participation Initiative includes several programs, the most important of which are the Technology Access Program to support 3,000 schools for special education and inclusion (support for 600 schools has already been completed) and a program for training 30,000 school teachers on the use of assistive technology in education (training of 28,000 teachers has already been completed). In addition, the programs include the preparation of 200 integrated community centers (56 of them have been completed), the transformation of 300 government establishments into highly accessible establishments using assistive technologies, and the development of 300 new software and applications to facilitate the lives of persons with disabilities (85 of them have been developed through the Tamkeen Competition). The programs also include providing and qualifying 100 tele-medical units to serve persons with disabilities and others in poor and marginalized areas.



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3. Labor and Employment Policies for Persons with Disabilities

- The Persons with Disabilities Law requires governmental and non-governmental agencies, the business sector, and every employer who employs twenty or more workers to appoint at least 5% of the workers from persons with disabilities (Article 22). The Civil Service Law No. 81 of 2016 also stipulates the transfer of an employee from persons with disabilities, upon his/her request, to the place of work closest to their place of residence in consideration of the health conditions of workers with disabilities (Article 13).
- The Ministry of Manpower and the Central Agency for Organization and Administration continue to implement the rights and benefits related to the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector (under the framework of the Unified Labor Law) and in the administrative apparatus (under the framework of the Civil Service Law) by reducing working hours in all governmental and non-governmental agencies by one paid hour per day for workers with disabilities while also upholding the ability to combine that hour with the hours given to a pregnant or breastfeeding mother.
- The right of persons with disabilities to receive two pensions to which they are entitled if the conditions for entitlement to more than one pension are met in accordance with the provisions of the Social Insurance and Pensions Law.
- The Ministry of Communications is working to develop applications to help persons with disabilities get employed. Egypt was chosen, among the ten most innovative countries in the field of employment policies for persons with disabilities, to win the “Zero Project” International Prize on February 24, 2017, which is awarded to projects that remove barriers between persons with disabilities and society through innovative solutions.



4. Educational Policies

- EGP 1 billion has been allocated to educational programs for persons with disabilities. The allocation includes programs to upgrade the educational skills of teachers with disabilities and programs to integrate persons with minor disabilities into pre-university education schools in the budget of the fiscal year 2019/2020.
- The Ministry of Education implemented the Digitization Project Curriculum with the aim of converting curricula for persons with disabilities into highly accessible curricula, in order to serve 18,000 students with hearing and visual impairments.

- The Ministry of Education integrates students with minor disabilities and hearing impairments into public education and technical education schools after passing the basic education stage as well as enrolling people with intellectual disabilities in intellectual education schools and classes.
- The Ministry of Communications provided electronic tablets for students with hearing, visual, and intellectual disabilities to facilitate the means of education for them, in addition to training teachers on their use.
- The training of 5,400 teachers of persons with disabilities on the uses and technologies of computers to facilitate communication with students with disabilities and provide them with assistance has been undertaken. In addition, all schools for the blind were equipped with auditory access devices while most schools for the deaf were supplied with group hearing aid devices. An interactive classroom system was introduced in grades 10 and 11 in Al-Amal Schools for the Deaf in all governorates, which included providing a tablet for each student and interactive whiteboards. Finally, the training of 60 teachers for the deaf was undertaken to accredit them as certified trainers for sign languages so that they themselves may train 1,500 teachers on the Unified Sign Dictionary.
- The Supreme Council of Universities issued Decision No. 651 of 2016, admitting people with hearing disabilities to Egyptian universities.
- The legal sign language dictionary and the unified academic sign language dictionary were issued to eliminate any differences or variance in sign languages used among students with hearing impairments. In addition, several electronic books were made available as audio-books through the Egyptian General Authority for Books.
- Supporting 24 centers for persons with disabilities in public universities.
- The disability code was provided to all schools.
- The Government Action Program (2018/2019 – 2021/2022) includes working on providing 1,600 classrooms suitable for persons with visual and hearing impairments.

5. Economic and Social Exemptions and Benefits

- Tax and customs exemptions for cars for persons with disabilities, which are the right of every person with a disability regardless of the type of disability.



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- The application of a 50% discount in transportation for persons with disabilities.
- Allocating 5% of social housing units for persons with disabilities.

6. Facilitating Social Inclusion and Access

- The Egyptian Code for the Design and Construction of Buildings includes guidelines that are necessary for providing and facilitating the accommodation and usage by persons with disabilities.
- In 2018, the Ministry of Transport signed a cooperation protocol with the Engineers Syndicate to implement the Accessibility Code, which works to allow and facilitate the ease of movement for persons with disabilities and their integration into society. This is through facilitating accessible pathways in roads and streets, creating slopes to facilitate the movement of wheelchairs, particularly next to stairs, and equipping elevators to accommodate wheelchairs for persons with disabilities.
- The provision of wheelchairs for persons with disabilities in most railway stations.
- The implementation of the necessary measures to prepare courts to be more accessible to persons with disabilities in addition to facilitating any dealings with persons with hearing impairments by training employees on sign languages.
- The Prisons Authority of the Ministry of Interior provided accessibility means to some prisons that include prisoners with mobility disabilities so that prisons become humanely fit for the conditions of their disabilities. The measures taken include providing wheelchairs and prosthetic limbs for prisoners, allocating or specifying wards in some prisons for persons with disabilities, and providing a number of prisoner transport vehicles equipped to transport persons with disabilities. That is in addition to the provision of means of accessibility to some police stations.
- Providing information accessibility on official websites by making these sites readable for the visually impaired via auditory assistance.
- The inclusion of sign language interpretation in the Radio and Television Union channels in news bulletins and some daily programs to facilitate the access of information to persons with hearing impairment.
- The Ministry of Youth and Sports supported sports for persons with disabilities.
- Establishing centers to discover and provide care for talented athletes from among persons with dwarfism and persons with disabilities.
- Strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations working in the field of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

7. Direct Cash and Service Support for Persons with Disabilities

- The Ministry of Social Solidarity provides monthly cash assistance to families that have one or more children with intellectual disability. The percentage of social assistance disbursement cards for the Takaful and Karama program for persons with disabilities is 28% of the total Takaful and Karama program cards.
- Within the framework of A Decent Housing program, attention is being paid to raising the efficiency of a number of houses for persons with disabilities. The number of persons with disabilities who meet the conditions reached 3,281 citizens; as such, 1,952 housing units have already been allocated with further allocation measures being taken for the rest of persons who meet the conditions.

8. Healthcare Services

- The Ministry of Social Solidarity, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, issued a card for every person with disability to prove their disability and entitlement to the integrated services, along with preparing a health file for the person based on a certified medical diagnosis while providing treatment and nutritional supplements to avoid further complications. The number of cards issued by the Ministry of Social Solidarity in 2019 is estimated at half a million cards. The cards provided many advantages including services in the field of healthcare, rehabilitation, and education, as there is a right for holders to be integrated in schools, universities, and educational institutions, provided that quality and safety standards are met.
- An increase in the number of physiotherapy centers for treating persons with disabilities, which reached 71 in 2018, and the establishment of comprehensive rehabilitation centers, which reached 25 centers in 2018 in various governorates.
- The Ministry of Health approved a screening program for newborns to detect thyroid hormone deficiency that leads to intellectual disability; a hearing screening program for newborns; an early detection program for low vision; and the provision of specialized milk for children with various types of metabolic diseases.
- The limit of health insurance contributions to cochlear implants has been raised to EGP 90,000 per patient since the beginning of 2013. As such, 1,158 cases of cochlear implants were performed at a cost of EGP 104,220,000.
- Departments for surgical intervention to repair the mobility impairments of persons with disabilities were established in health insurance hospitals. That is in addition to the introduction of radiological examination, laboratory tests, and surgical procedures, especially bone lengthening and the repair of deformities and birth defects for persons with disabilities.
- The First Autism Spectrum Disorder Center was established in cooperation with the National Foundation for Families and Community Development.

9. Social Welfare Programs

- The Ministry of Social Solidarity established nurseries for children with disabilities to provide rehabilitative services for their care, free of charge; in 2018, their number reached 109 nurseries in various governorates.
- The Ministry of Social Solidarity also established institutions for the care and rehabilitation of the blind to provide them with free care and rehabilitation programs, which reached 202 offices in 2018, in addition to establishing many educational institutions to provide care and rehabilitation programs for cases with intellectual disabilities.
- Establishing the General Administration for Cultural Empowerment for Persons with Disabilities in the General Authority for Cultural Palaces to empower them culturally and artistically as well as establishing an archaeological awareness school for students with visual impairments at the Supreme Council of Antiquities.
- It is worth noting that the current government action program aims to apply performance evaluation standards to 100% of social care and persons with disabilities institutions. The program includes the development of 650 institutions for the care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

10. Education and Training in the Field of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- In 2017, the National Council for Disability Affairs signed a cooperation protocol with the Ministry of Interior with the aim of continuous training, education, and raising awareness among police officers on the rights of persons with disabilities. This also included distributing pamphlets, publications, and manuals to raise awareness of the problems persons with disabilities face when dealing with the Ministry of Interior and ways to solve them.
- In 2018, the Ministry of Social Solidarity trained 14 workers in the field of audiovisual and print media in cooperation with the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services on the correct concepts of disability. The ministry established a communication center to support persons with disabilities to educate them about the services provided to them and facilitate their access to them.
- In 2018, the National Council for Disability Affairs signed a cooperation protocol with the Ministry of Endowments with the aim of raising awareness and disseminating religious culture for persons with disabilities, developing their capabilities and empowering them, providing ways to raise awareness for people with hearing disabilities, and introducing and defining disability concepts and issues. That is in addition to joint media coverage to enhance the positive image of persons with disabilities.
- The Radio and Television Union channels included sign language interpretation in news bulletins and some daily programs. Most of the channels also included special programs concerned with the different aspects of life for persons with disabilities. The channels also work to spread the rights of persons with disabilities, including translating and interpreting all presidential speeches and important events in the country into sign language.