



Report on National Efforts to Promote Children's Rights on the Occasion of the International Day of the Rights of the Child November 20, 2020

Through the United Nations, the international community has celebrated World Children's Day on the 20th of November every year since 1954. This commemoration aims to raise awareness of children's rights all around the world. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child on November 20th 1959. Then again on the same date in 1989, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Egypt not only joined the Convention on the Rights of the Child early on in 1990, but also joined the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Egypt has paid special attention to children and their basic needs in fulfillment of the first and second sustainable development goals outlined in "Egypt Vision 2030". The first goal of this strategy is to improve the quality of life and the standard of living of Egyptian citizens, including children. The second goal emphasizes the need to include vulnerable groups including children in all efforts to achieve justice, social inclusion, and participation. In light of this, the Egyptian government, represented by a number of concerned ministries and agencies, has taken measures to improve the conditions of children as they are considered among the vulnerable groups.

On this occasion, the Technical Secretariat of the Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights prepared this report to document national efforts to protect and promote children's rights.

First: The Constitutional and Legislative Framework for the Rights of the Egyptian Child

1. The Egyptian constitution promulgated in 2014 deals with the rights of the child in an integrated and unprecedented manner. Indeed, it affirms the state's commitment to the care and protection of motherhood and childhood. Furthermore, the 2014 constitution establishes the right of every child below the age of six to early education and stipulates that free education is compulsory until the end of secondary school. The constitution defines a "child" as any citizen below the age of 18 in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

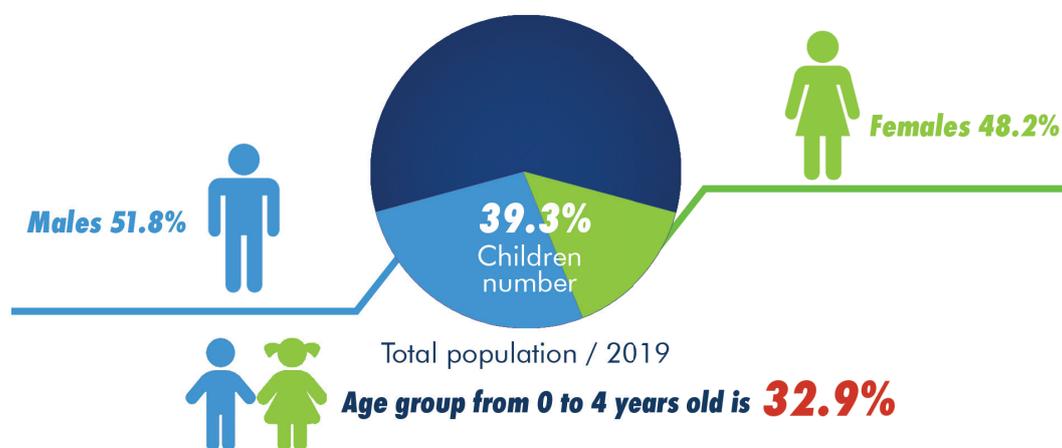
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It also includes many provisions that guarantee children's rights to education, health care, free vaccination, nutrition, legal identity, family care, shelter, and religious, emotional and cognitive education.

2. The constitution is committed to the protection of children from violence, abuse, and sexual or commercial exploitation. Furthermore, it obligates the state to establish a special judicial system for victimized children. It also obliges the state to work towards achieving the best interests of children in all measures taken concerning them. The constitution also requires the state to sponsor young adults (adolescents) and work with them to discover their talents, develop their cultural, scientific, artistic, creative and physical capabilities, encourage them to engage in collective and voluntary work, and enable them to participate in public life.
3. In addition, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, which was established in 1988, was granted technical, financial and administrative independence by the constitution. This ensures the independence and impartiality of the council members, and grants them the right to inform public authorities of any violation related to its operations.
4. An examination of Egypt's legislation, particularly Child Law No. 12 of 1996 and its successive amendments, shows an emphasis on affirming the best interest of the child and making it a priority in all matters affecting the child's life. As it stands, the age of criminal liability is 12 years old. It is also prohibited to impose death sentences, life imprisonment, or temporary hard labor on the accused if they are under the age of 18. Egypt's legislation also criminalizes female circumcision, exploitation or trafficking in children, and the transfer of organs.
5. The law guarantees the protection of children from all forms of violence, harm, physical or moral abuse, sexual abuse, and negligence. Other laws also prohibit the worst forms of child labour. In addition, the law holds the state responsible for providing alternative care for every child deprived of his family and for providing social security pension for non-working children. The law also addresses cases in which the child becomes at risk, by stating that general and sub-committees shall be established in various governorates for the protection of children. In addition, many of the legislations related to personal status laws guarantee family and childhood protection, regulation of marriage, divorce, custody and a vision for what guarantees the best interests of children.
6. It is also worth noting that in this context, Egypt has withdrawn its reservation on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child regarding the prohibition of marriage for those under the age of 18 years.



Second: National Institutions and Policies for the Promotion and Protection of Child Rights



1. According to the data of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the number of children in Egypt is 38.18 million, which makes up 39.3% of the total population for the year 2019. An examination of the total number of children reveals that 51.8% of these children are males and 48.2% are females, while the percentage of children in the age group from 0 to 4 years old is 32.9% .
2. Since 1988, Egypt has set up the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. The Council has been responsible for developing policies regarding children's rights. In addition, the council is in charge of planning, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating activities related to the areas of protection and development of children and mothers in Egypt. This is done through coordination and cooperation with the relevant ministries and authorities, as well as the various relevant civil society organizations.
3. The Council's policies, programs and activities represent an integrated human rights package to guarantee the rights of the child without discrimination to protection, care and human dignity. The Council aims to focus on children who are disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized, live in poverty, and who are not affiliated with schools, underage workers, in addition to street children, people with disabilities and other children who live in difficult conditions.

Third: Policies, Programs and Initiatives in the Field of Children's Education

1. The total financial allocations for children's education in the state budget for the fiscal year 2019/2020 amounts to 93.5 billion pounds. 71% of the education budget has been allocated for children, of which 4.2 billion Egyptian pounds are for the kindergarten stage, and 62.8 billion pounds for the primary and preparatory stages.
2. The Girls' Education Initiative aims at contributing to the provision of comprehensive, equitable and quality education for all-girls friendly schools by the end of 2019, and the National Education Quality Program aims to raise international competitiveness.

3. The “drop-out reduction” program aims at reducing child drop-outs in the primary education stage and is pursued through multiple routes. The program performs capacity building for professionals dealing with children exposed to dropout; it also increases the awareness of families most in need about the importance of education. In addition, the program challenges the negative perception associated with rural girls receiving an education, and combats harmful practices against girls. It also aims to prepare a guide for professionals who deal with a child at risk of dropping-out like the school principal, teacher, social and psychological specialists to reduce the phenomenon of dropout and make the school attractive to children.

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4. A program is being implemented to enable children to obtain appropriate education for the first five years in nurseries, in cooperation between the Ministry of Social Solidarity and “UNICEF” and “Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).” Also there is a program to develop a unified curriculum for children inside nurseries that suits the needs of children at that age based on a scientific approach.
5. National efforts in the field of children’s education have resulted in the disappearance of the gender gap in enrollment rates between the years 2010/2011 and 2019/2020. Indeed, the net enrollment rates for girls exceeded those of boys at all levels of pre-university education, which made the gender gap index negative. The national efforts also resulted in a decrease in the dropout rates, especially in the intermediate education stage, between the years 2010/2011 and 2018/2019, and an increase in the rates of transition from the primary stage to the preparatory stage from 88.1% in 2012/2013 to 99.7% in the year 2019/2020.
6. In addition, a new educational system was introduced in September 2018 for Kindergarten, first grade and primary education. The aim of this system was to modernize teaching methods, enhance the student’s ability to learn, and develop assessment methods and examinations. The new educational system was also meant to support the use of technology in the educational process and reduce classroom density. Finally, the new system was meant to make educational services available to deprived areas by creating 74,000 new classrooms, in addition to 165 projects in Al-Azhar education, including the establishment of new Azhar institutes, during the period from July 2014 until June 30, 2020.
7. The Egyptian state, within the framework of the Pre-University Education Improvement Project, adopts a policy of diversifying learning sources through the digital education platform, linked to the Knowledge Bank. In this context, 1,358,000 tablets were provided free of charge to

first-year secondary students from 2018 until June 2020. In addition , secondary schools were connected to internal networks with an information server. High-speed internet for was also installed in 2,530 secondary schools. Access to these networks was extended outside the schools through youth centers at no additional cost.

8. Technical schools of all kinds were established and developed. The number of technical schools reached 1,109 schools, in addition to the establishment of a number of new applied technology schools. Likewise, the Government Action Program (2012/2018-2019-2020) has adopted the opening of 1,600 classes for people with visual and hearing disabilities.

Fourth: Policies and Programs in the Field of Health Care

1. The total financial allocations for children's health in the state budget for the fiscal year 2019/2020 amounts to 4.3 billion Egyptian pounds, or the equivalent to 8% of the total budget of the health sector.
2. Child health-care programs include early detection of obesity, stunting, and anemia among school students, early detection of vision, and other childhood diseases, as part of the presidential initiative "100 million health." The initiative, which was launched in 2019, includes referring the child to health insurance for free treatment. It aimed to examine 11.5 million students in more than 22,000 schools.
3. A total of 9,231,323 children were surveyed as part of the initiative to treat malnutrition for children in schools, representing 70% of the total target. A total of 1,429,239 newborns were surveyed as part of the early detection and treatment of newborn hearing impairment and hearing loss initiative.
4. The Government's adoption of the Nutritional Program for School Aged Students, an inter-ministerial program (Social Solidarity - supply and Internal Trade - Education - Health and Population - Local Development) which aims at strengthening the capacity of poor children to continue education and to raise their ability to achieve higher education. The cost of this program in 2018/2019 was about 972 million pounds, and it covers 11,200,000 students, 10 million of whom are in the basic education stage.

Fifth: Programs and Initiatives to Protect Children and Adolescents

1. The "Protection of Young People from Smoking and Drugs" program which aims to make adolescents averse to smoking and support the family as the frontline for confronting this problem during early detection of addictions.
2. Establishing a "National Observatory for the Rights of the Child" with the aim of setting up a national mechanism to monitor all services, indicators and violations related to children's rights, and to support the process of planning and coordination aiming at improving the conditions of childhood in Egypt.



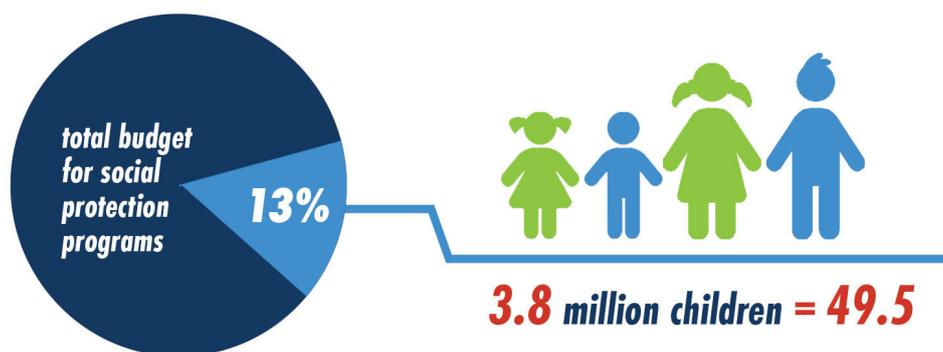
3. Activating the child rescue hotline to receive complaints of violations against children has created a free, accessible and always available means for every child, without discrimination, to express their views on issues related to them. This method has covered all governorates 24 hours a day and has successfully guaranteed an umbrella for child protection that aligns with the law and international conventions. That is in addition to providing free legal aid to children, and helping children return to education after interruption.
4. The “Adolescent Health” program which aims to raise students’ and parents’ awareness of issues related to adolescence through awareness seminars, dialogues and activities to shed light on issues and problems related to reproductive health and adolescence.
5. The “Reducing the Problem of Illegal Migration of Unaccompanied Children” program which aims to combat illegal migration of children by raising awareness of the seriousness of the problem and seeking positive alternatives to it.
6. The activation of the child protection committees as a national community mechanism within a legal framework for the protection of children. This committee undertakes a number of measures including: coordinating of communication with relevant government agencies, documentation of referral mechanisms between the child rescue hotline and the provincial local coordinator with protection committees, and the formation of follow-up committees and technical support from the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood for the work of protection committees, as well as community and media promotion of the work of these committees.
7. The “Protection and Rehabilitation of Street Children” program aims to protect, rehabilitate, and enable street children to integrate into society in a proper manner that allows them to obtain their economic, social and cultural rights.
8. Developing the foster and adoptive care system for children deprived of family care, and removing all obstacles that hinder the increase in the number of foster families wishing to sponsor children. The number of alternative families reached 9,794 families caring for 9,910 children.
9. Updating and extending the initiative “supporting and developing human rights and civil society in Egypt”, in partnership with the European Commission, with the aim of promoting and raising awareness of human rights culture, including support and promotion of children’s rights.
10. Launching the National Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Support the Egyptian Family (2018-2025), which is a joint plan between a number of concerned ministries and in cooperation with the International Labor Organization (ILO). The National plan aims to combat and eliminate the worst violations against children working in different occupations. The plan also aims at providing the necessary support for these children and their families to

prevent them from dropping out of education, and to ensure their protection from violations in the workplace.

11. A program to develop cultural awareness among children of the age group from 6 to 15 years through the activities of children's clubs and libraries during the mid and end-year vacation periods. Budgets estimated at more than 3.5 million pounds were allocated as a first stage in the fiscal year 2017/2018 to support the program.
12. "Laiba Baladna" or the "National Play" initiative to attract homeless children to sports activities as a way to integrate them into the society in partnership with 89 NGOs.
13. Developing a system of "residential institutions" to accommodate children of the age group from 6 to 18 years who have been deprived of family care due to orphanhood, the breakdown of the family, or the inability of the family to provide proper care for the child. Currently, there are 345 caring for 9,082 children. That is in addition to the system of "residential nurseries" to accommodate children from two years old until the age of six years, as the number of residential nurseries reached 145, benefiting 3584 children.
14. The "Children's Villages" system, which belongs to the Egyptian Authority for Children's Villages S-O-S, takes care of orphans and children of unknown parentage of both sexes from infancy until the stage of self-reliance through children's villages and youth homes.
15. The "Social Care Institutions for Children at Risk of Delinquency" takes care of children aged 6 to 18 whenever they are in a state of danger or delinquency. Children of this age stay in these institutions until the age of 21 years, While the total number of institutions is 37, 11 institutions are designated for females and the remaining 26 institutions are designated for males. These institutions are distributed over the governorates.
16. The observation homes system, which is concerned with the detainment of children under the age of 15 years. This system allows the Public Prosecution or the judiciary to temporarily place children in custody to be observed until the matter is decided. This prevents placing the child in a police station or a prison. These homes provide all integrated and comprehensive care for the child.
17. The "Social Monitoring Offices" system studies cases transferred from the Public Prosecution, the police or the observation houses from the social, psychological and medical point of view, in order to find out the source of the problem and draw up the appropriate treatment plan for each case. In addition, the Social Monitoring Offices provide financial support for the child within his family. There are 256 social monitoring offices in all governorates.
18. Implementing the strategy of "developing quality standards for orphan care homes" with the aim of reviewing and updating the regulations and implementing regulations for institutions and social homes for orphan care, and preparing and formulating quality standards within shelter institutions.

Sixth: “Solidarity and Dignity” Program

1. The percentage of financial allocations for children and young people is 13% of the total budget for social protection programs, according to the state budget for the fiscal year 2019/2020. The number of children benefiting from the “Solidarity and Dignity” programs is estimated at 3.8 million children, equivalent to 49.5% of the total beneficiaries.



2. The “Child’s Pension” project was launched in 2016 in cooperation between the Ministries of Social Solidarity and Education, with the aim of helping families who have children under the age of 18 years in various educational stages. The value of the monthly allowance is determined according to the total number of children in each family. In addition there is a monthly grant for each child benefiting from the pension on the condition of continuing his or her education.
3. The number of children under the “Solidarity and Dignity” program who are enrolled in schools has reached 2.26 million children (6-18 years).