



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

**Combined eighth to tenth periodic reports submitted by
Egypt under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2014***

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Introduction

1. The Egyptian Government has a long tradition of promoting and protecting human rights. Those rights, which have been established thanks to international efforts and recognized in international and regional conventions, have a special place in Egypt. Accordingly, our country assigns great importance to women's issues and has adopted a rights-based approach to addressing them, in order to lay a foundation for the future and pave the way for development that is based on the constitutional and legal commitment of the State to the principles of non-discrimination, equality, equality of opportunity for all and women's rights, in particular.

2. The current report covers the progress that Egypt has made to enhance the status of women in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The report follows the general guidelines on the form and content of periodic reports that States parties are required to submit, and addresses, as directed by the Committee, the extent to which the State has implemented the Convention and the changes that it has made and the measures it has taken to implement the recommendations set out in the Committee's previous concluding observations.

Drafting methodology

3. This report was prepared using the following methodology:

(a) An action plan was adopted according to which information, data and statistics collection methods were set out and a time frame established;

(b) Stakeholders held regular consultations;

(c) The necessary studies were conducted, and Government agencies and civil society institutions used official correspondence and direct communications to coordinate their work;

(d) Working groups analysed and classified information, data and statistics for the report, which was prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the relevant United Nations committee.

4. This report, which was prepared through an inclusive, participatory approach, is the product of extensive consultations among various national stakeholders, national human rights institutions, civil society and a number of public figures, and of the coordinated efforts of the relevant ministries, the specialized national councils (the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, the National Council for Human Rights, National Council for Women and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities), information and research centres (the Information and Decision-Making Support Centre of the Cabinet secretariat, the State Information Service, Central Authority for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAMPAS), the National Population Council and the Supreme Council of Universities) and civil society organizations.

5. This report was prepared in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations of the Committee and the related Beijing decisions, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. The report is divided into two sections. In section I, we respond to the concluding observations of the Committee, and in section II we comment on the articles of the Convention, including the current status of implementation and the efforts made and practical measures taken to that end.

Foreword

7. Starting in 2011, Egypt experienced internal unrest and tensions that led to two revolutions, one in January 2011 and the other in June 2013. In the aftermath of those revolutions, a plan to rebuild State institutions was drawn up and the current constitution was promulgated in 2014. The adoption of the Constitution marked the ultimate triumph of the goals and principles of the revolution and represents a transformative event in the quest to improve the situation of human rights in Egypt.

8. The Constitution of Egypt, which is the supreme basic law of the land, establishes the rules and principles of the system of government, and enshrines and guarantees public freedoms and rights. The rulings of the Supreme Constitutional Court have established the supremacy of human rights and freedoms and reaffirmed that they are non-derogable and inalienable, and that safeguarding every aspect of those rights is essential for States to develop their societies.

9. The current constitution incorporates all the principles set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent human rights documents and international conventions. Article 1 of the Constitution provides that all persons enjoy equal rights and have the same duties without discrimination, and that they are guaranteed the same liberties. In accordance with the principles of Egyptian law, the explicit inclusion of human rights principles in certain provisions of the Constitution means that the legislature is bound by them. It cannot deviate from, violate or suspend those provisions unless it follows the rules and procedures stipulated in the Constitution, and does so under the supervision of the Supreme Constitutional Court. Moreover, since 1980, those provisions must be enforced immediately pursuant to a Court of Appeals judgement.¹

10. The Constitution contains significant stipulations that guarantee human rights:

- Universities must teach human rights and professional values and ethics in all academic disciplines, with a view to disseminating more broadly a culture of human rights (article 124).
- Citizens' core rights and freedoms cannot be suspended or derogated, and no law that regulates the exercise of rights and freedoms may restrict them in such a way as to undermine their essence (article 92). This provision constitutes a specific guarantee and a commitment to international controls in relation to the regulation of the exercise of rights and freedoms.
- The State is bound by the international human rights agreements, covenants and conventions that it has ratified, and such instruments have the force of law once they have been published in accordance with established procedures (article 93).
- The statute of limitations does not apply with respect to the institution of criminal and civil proceedings in relation to any attack against citizens' personal liberty, private life and other public rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution and the law. The victim may initiate criminal proceedings directly, and the State guarantees that victims shall receive just compensation.
- The National Council for Human Rights is authorized to report any violation to the Office of the Public Prosecutor and may intercede in civil proceedings at the request of the injured party.
- A two-thirds majority of parliamentarians is required in order to adopt laws that govern presidential, parliamentary and local elections, political parties and judicial authorities and bodies, or those that govern rights and freedoms

¹ Civil rescission, appeal No. 1630, forty-eight year, session of 13 March 1980.

enshrined in the Constitution, as well as any other laws that are complementary to the Constitution.

- The Constitution provides that independent and specialized national human rights institutions must be established, in accordance with the 1990 Paris Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. Those institutions include the National Council for Human Rights, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, the National Council for Women and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities. The law must guarantee the independence and neutrality of their members and it must give those bodies the right to report to the public authorities any violations that are relevant to their fields of work. Those councils are legal persons and enjoy technical, financial and administrative independence. They are to be consulted with regard to draft laws and regulations that are relevant to them. The foregoing demonstrates the desire of the Egyptian Government to develop independent monitoring and oversight bodies that can further efforts aimed at strengthening the tools available to protect human rights (article 214).

11. Egypt, in keeping with its national identity and its religious and cultural heritage, has been striving to accede to the majority of the core international conventions, covenants and conventions concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms. In the period covered by the present report, Egypt acceded to the following international and regional instruments:

- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, pursuant to Presidential Decision No. 400 (2007);
- The Arab Charter on Human Rights, pursuant to Presidential Decision No. 429 (2018) promulgated on 15 September 2018.

12. **Changes in demographic, economic and social indicators**

- The population of Egypt is 94,798,827 (94.8 million) persons, according to the latest official estimates issued in 2017.
- The annual population growth rate is 2.56 per cent.
- 51.6 per cent of the population are males and 48.4 per cent are females.
- Persons with disabilities make up 10.64 per cent of the total population (data on females under review).
- Persons less than 15 years old make up 34.2 per cent of the population.
- Persons older than 65 make up 3.9 per cent of the population.
- 61.9 per cent of the total population of Egypt is working-age.
- The birth rate is 26.8 live births per 1,000 inhabitants.
- The mortality rate is 5.7 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants.
- The infant mortality rate is 15.1 deaths per 1,000 live births.

13. *Economic indicators:* According to 2016 estimates, the average number of workers in Egypt is about 26 million, of whom 51 per cent are employed in the service sector, 32 per cent in the agricultural sector and 17 per cent in the industrial sector. The economy depends mainly on agriculture, tourism and revenues from the Suez Canal and oil exports.

14. Indicators for Egyptian women in the period covered by the report

- Women's representation in the 2015 parliamentary elections grew to 15 per cent, compared to 1.8 per cent in the 2005 and 2010 elections.
- In 2016/17, the proportion of senior management positions in the government sector held by women grew to 24.1 per cent of all leadership positions.
- In January 2018, women made up 18.1 per cent of Government ministers, compared to just 1 per cent in the period 1999–2004.
- In 2017, the illiteracy rate for females was 30.8 per cent.
- Women made up 23.8 per cent of the total workforce in 2017, compared to 22 per cent in 2000.
- The proportion of girls enrolled in primary education increased from 94.3 per cent in 2007/08 to 98.6 per cent in 2017/18.
- The unemployment rate for women decreased from 24 per cent in 2014 to 21.4 per cent in 2018.
- The average life expectancy at birth for females increased to 73.9 years in 2018, compared to 69.1 years in 2006.

15. Positive developments in the political climate that are conducive to the rights of Egyptian women

- Women won 90 seats in the 2015 parliamentary elections, and that figure represents the greatest proportion of seats that women have held since the inception of the Egyptian parliament.
- 2017 was designated as the Year of Egyptian Women and there is special day on the calendar for Egyptian women. In addition, Egyptian women have been to participate effectively in all areas of development at all levels.
- The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women for 2016–2030 was adopted. It serves as a working document on empowering women for the relevant ministries and the National Council for Women.
- Egypt appointed its first female governor and deputy governor, its first female national security adviser to the President, its first female Deputy Governor of the Central Bank, its first female assistant to the Minister of Justice for women's and children's affairs, its female mayor and its first female official authorized to perform civil marriages.
- Cooperation has been enhanced between the National Council for Women and governmental and non-governmental agencies, on the one hand, and civil society organizations, on the other, and between national academic and research institutes, on the one hand, and the specialized agencies of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ECSWA), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union.

Section I

Response to the concluding observations of the Committee on the combined sixth and seventh report

16. In this section, we set out our response to the recommendations included in paragraphs 11 to 38 of the concluding observations of the Committee, with the exception of the recommendations included in paragraphs 13, 14 and 25–28. We respond to the latter set of recommendations in the second section of this report, in which we comment on the articles of the Convention.

17. The recommendations contained in paragraphs 11 and 12, in which the Committee stresses the need to focus on specific areas when implementing the Convention and calls for its recommendations to be submitted to the relevant ministries, the National Assembly and the judiciary

- The Egyptian Government is committed to implementing the Convention and to taking special measures aimed at achieving equality between men and women with regard to all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and it has taken measures to ensure that women are represented in parliament, hold public office and senior management positions, and are appointed to judicial bodies and agencies. It undertakes to protect women from all forms of violence and ensure that they are able to reconcile family duties with work requirements, and furthermore undertakes to care for and protect mothers, children and elderly women, women breadwinners and women who are in greatest need (articles 11 and 93 of the Constitution).
- The recommendations of the Committee were sent to all stakeholders, and regular consultation were held to review, discuss and monitor their implementation. Members of Parliament, the National Council for Women and other national councils, several civil society organizations and representatives of the equality of opportunity units and departments of various ministries and of the National Information Authority participated in those consultations. The participants reviewed the recommendations, shared their experiences and views regarding them, and adopted a plan to implement them within their respective mandates

18. The recommendations contained in paragraphs 15 and 16, in which the Committee calls for priority to be given to the legislative reform process and the efforts to amend discriminatory legislation, including discriminatory provisions in the Penal Code and the personal status law, in collaboration with religious and community leaders, lawyers, judges, unions and civil society organizations

- The Egyptian Government has prioritized the legislative reform process. To that end, the Supreme Committee for Legislative Reform was established pursuant to Presidential Decision No. 187 (2014), and the Egyptian Constitution now includes several provisions concerning women's rights. The Constitution was amended in 2019, and pursuant to its article 102, paragraph 1, a minimum of one fourth of all seats in the House of Representatives must be set aside for women. Under article 180, a quarter of all seats in elected local legislative bodies are reserved for women. As a result, women will fill approximately 13,500 seats following the conclusion of the first local elections to be held.
- The following laws have been adopted thanks to community efforts and the endeavours of the relevant governmental agencies and the National Council for Women:

- Act No. 126 (2008) amending the Children’s Act, under which authority over education rests with the custodial parent and the age of registered marriage for females was raised to 18.
- Act No. 11 (2011), amending certain provisions of the Penal Code, under which the penalty for rape, abduction, indecent assault and sexual harassment in the streets is heightened.
- Act No. 2 (2018), amending certain provisions of Act No. 17 (1943), which makes it a crime to deprive someone of their inheritance.
- Act No. 30 (2018) on the organization of the National Council for Women.
- The Government, together with all governmental agencies and civil society organizations, is drafting a unified family act that is comprehensive and coherent, includes a solid mechanism for implementing judicial rulings on family issues and addresses the question of judgements relating to women’s rights.
- In 2017, the Azhar al-Sharif issued a document setting out women’s rights as stated in the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah, in order to clarify the rights that women have in Islam and refute socially entrenched beliefs and misinterpretations about women.
- As part of the effort to promote consultation and community engagement, the National Council for Women, acting through the Committee for Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), established the Civil Society Forum in 2016. The Forum, which is made up of more than 48 NGOs that are concerned with women affairs, addresses women’s empowerment issues by promoting research and studies, and through sharing experiences and plans for the future. Among the issue that have been discussed are combating violence against women, economic empowerment, financial opportunities and population. The Forum participated in the development of the strategy for empowering women (2016–2030) and contributed to the drafting of several relevant laws.

19. The recommendations contained in paragraphs 17 and 18, in which the Committee calls for appropriate measures to be taken to ensure that all organs of government, including the judiciary, are made aware of and apply the Convention, and that the relevant domestic legislation makes it an integral part of the legal education and training of judges, lawyers and prosecutors, and to raise the awareness of women, especially in rural and remote areas of the rights established under the Convention

- The Convention became part of national law upon the accession of Egypt to it. Once published in the *Official Gazette*, it is considered to have been publicized and can be enforced and invoked. In addition, the Convention is considered part of the educational curriculum pursuant to article 24 of the 2014 Constitution. Brochures are being prepared to raise various stakeholders’ awareness of the Convention. The brochures are being written in a style that is suited to the target audience, in order to ensure that their message reaches all social groups, and several artists have been commissioned to draw cartoons that communicate the provisions of the Convention.
- The National Council for Women launched a campaign in various media, including social media, entitled “*Ta’ al-marbutah* [Womanhood]: the secret of your strength”. The aim of the campaign, which was developed in cooperation with UN-Women and the World and with the support of the Swedish Development Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UNFPA and UNDP, was to promote the empowerment

of Egyptian women in all areas. More than 72 million people followed the campaign on social media.

- Training courses were held for judges and prosecutors, including one for 518 prosecutors organized in collaboration with UNFPA and UN-Women. The purpose of the courses was to introduce the Convention, provide training on enforcing its provisions and set out best practices for dealing with women in criminal justice, women victims and cases of violence against women.
- The human rights division of the Ministry of Justice has added women's rights and the rights of the child to its responsibilities. For the first time, that unit is being led by a woman, who holds the rank of Deputy Minister of Justice.
- Pursuant to decision 2285 (2013), a department for combating violence against women was established within the human rights division of the Ministry of Interior. The department is headed by woman who holds the rank of police brigadier, and its establishment was announced to all security directorates at the provincial level.
- The National Council for Women launched a door-to-door campaign under the slogan "Together in the service of the nation", and the Ministry of Awqaf hired 500 women preachers to work with and educate the women. A total of 823,921 women in villages and hamlets in all governorates were reached by this campaign, which was executed by the Ministry's women preachers, the nuns and novices of the three Egyptian churches, female rural leaders, popular female leaders at the provincial level and the members of the provincial branches of the National Council for Women. In addition to stressing tolerance and peaceful coexistence, and the importance of work and production, the campaign was aimed at explaining the services offered and measures taken by the State to alleviate the suffering, in particular of low-income persons, caused by recent economic decisions, raising awareness of a woman's right to live in safety and without threat of violence, and explaining the importance of obtaining and renewing a national identification card in order to benefit from Government services. In that connection, a training programme for 668 women was organized.

20. The recommendations contained in paragraphs 19 and 20, in which the Committee expresses its concern that the Office of the Ombudsperson for women's complaints does not have the mandate to investigate the complaints it receives and strengthen its legal complaints system to ensure that women have effective access to justice

- The Office of the Ombudsperson for women's complaints receives complaints and communications concerning discriminatory practices against women and provides legal aid through the legal aid and counselling programme. The Office is not an executive body and therefore does not have the authority to conduct judicial investigations. The Office forwards complaints to the competent authorities and monitors the processing of complaints. It provides legal support and judicial assistance in personal status cases, offers psychological support to female victims of violence through the relevant authorities, identifies and follows up on issues that hinder women from participating actively in society and classifies and analyses recurrent complaints that are indicative of a trend, with a view studying them and submitting them to the National Council for Women's proposals to the relevant authorities. In addition, the Office monitors coordination with the equal opportunity units of ministries and the women's committees of trade unions, the mission of which is to reaffirm the constitutional principle of equality and address any discriminatory procedures or practices in the workplace.

- In the period 2008–2019, the Office received 50,841 complaints, including personal status, violence, social and economic assistance, social security and judicial cases. Of that number, 23,705 complaints are pending, 3,296 were closed with a positive outcome and 749 were closed with a negative outcome. As for the 15,806 other cases, some of the complainants were deemed ineligible, others reached a reconciliation or abandoned their complaints, and some cases were set aside.

21. The recommendations contained in paragraphs 21 and 22, in which the Committee calls for the development of a comprehensive strategy, including the review and formulation of legislation and the establishment of goals and timetables, to modify or eliminate traditional practices and stereotypes that discriminate against women

- In 2017, the Government adopted the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women for 2016–2030 to serve as the basis on which the relevant ministries and the National Council for Women will strive to empower women. The Strategy, which includes 34 indicators associated with the Sustainable Development Goals, is based on four pillars: political empowerment and leadership, economic empowerment, social empowerment and protection. Those pillars are buttressed by our laws and culture.
- In addition, the Government launched the implementing framework and the five-year plan for the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women 2015, and developed a road map for each governorate that addresses each governorate’s specific needs. Together, those elements form a complete and integrated referral system that addresses the needs of female victims of violence and helps to combat violence against women.
- The National Council for Women has launched five nationwide door-to-door campaigns in 13 phases, with the aim of reaching out to women and making them aware of their various rights. The first phase began in 2015 and was aimed at educating women about their political rights, the right to choose and make decisions, and accountability. The second to fifth phases were aimed at raising women’s awareness of various rights, including equality, non-discrimination and education, and the importance of freedom, empowerment, participation in political life and elections, women’s mental and physical health, and the right to participate in cultural life. A total of 9,734,478 women have benefitted in the phases that have been completed thus far thanks to the efforts of 3,731 rural women leaders and health-care workers.
- “Nur”, a song for young people, was released in collaboration with UN-Women, with the aim of changing the social stereotypes of women. The song received more than 38 million views on social media and reached fifth place on SoundCloud chart of new songs worldwide.
- The Council, in collaboration with UN-Women, launched the “Because I am a man” campaign to highlight how men can support women and stress the importance of achieving gender equality. More than 7 million people followed the campaign on social and media networks.
- We will address the measures that have been taken pursuant to article 2 and 5 (a) of the Convention later in the report.

22. The recommendations contained in paragraphs 23 and 24, in which the Committee stresses that priority attention must be given to combating violence against women and girls and to taking comprehensive measures to address such violence

- Article 11 of the Egyptian Constitution reaffirms that the State has a duty to protect women from all forms of violence.
- The framework of a national strategy to combat violence against women for the period 2015–2020 was developed with the participation of relevant government agencies, the Azhar al-Sharif, the Egyptian Church and a number of civil society organizations. In addition, the National Council for Women conducted an in-depth and comprehensive study of the root causes of violence that was used to update the strategic framework. The Council is currently working in cooperation with government institutions and agencies to follow up on the implementation of that strategy.
- Protection is one of the special themes of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030. The aim is to eliminate threats to women’s lives, safety and dignity, remove the obstacles that prevent them from actively participating in all areas, including in the effort to combat all forms of violence against women, and protect them from environmental threats that may have an adverse effect on them socially and economically. That theme is reflected in the following:
 - National Strategy to Reduce Early Marriage (2015–2020);
 - National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women and Girls (2015–2020);
 - National Population Strategy (2015–2030);
 - National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women (2016–2030);
 - National Strategy to Counter Female Genital Mutilation (2016–2020);
 - Industrial development strategy to improve the status of women adopted by the Ministry of Industry (2016);
 - The Egypt Vision 2030 sustainable development strategy.
- The National Council of Women, in collaboration with CAMPAS and with the support of UNFPA, conducted a survey on the economic cost of gender-based violence in 2015–2016. The survey sample comprised 20,157 women from different social groups and from all governorates.
- With regard to article 17 of the Penal Code, the law gives judges the discretion to adapt the penalty to the offender’s personal and objective circumstances, and the circumstances of the crime. The Supreme Constitutional Court has ruled that it is unconstitutional to restrict a judge’s right to apply article 17, and that restricting that right infringes on a judge’s authority to adapt penalties, which is an essential part of a judge’s job.²
- Although article 60 of the Penal Code condones acts committed in exercise of a right established by the sharia, that does not diminish the fact that any bodily assault is considered a crime under the Code, and any act, regardless of who commits it, that has been designated a crime under the Code cannot be considered as having been committed in exercise of a right. Indeed, the Code provides that such an act is a crime and that the legally established penalty for that crime shall be imposed on the perpetrator. The Court of Appeals has ruled that so long as the act that was committed is considered a crime under the law,

² Case No. 196, thirty-fifth year, Supreme Constitutional Court, session of 11 November 2013.

the accused cannot invoke the defence that the act is sanctioned under the Islamic sharia.³

- The penalties for sexual harassment and rape have been increased in the Penal Code, and the penalty for female genital mutilation has been heightened.
- Marriage of females under the age of 18 is criminalized pursuant to article 227 of the Penal Code, article 31 bis of Act No. 143 (1994) on civil status, as amended by Act No. 126 (2008), and Minister of Justice Decision No. 6927 (2008).
- Presidential Decision No. 75 (2015) was issued on 11 February 2015 approving the withdrawal of the reservation of Egypt to article 21 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of 1990, which prohibits marriage of persons under the age of 18.
- The Office of the Public Prosecutor and the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the National Council for Women, have issued a guide for prosecutors on combating violent crimes against women, and the Ministry and the Office of the Public Prosecutor, in cooperation with the relevant authorities, are training prosecutors on the application of that guide.
- The Azhar University has issued a guide on the position of Islam concerning violence against women. This guide, which is used as a reference in training courses for preachers, addresses various forms of violence against women from a scientific, social, psychological and medical perspective, and set out the position of Islamic law against such violence and provides guidance on how to respond to, prevent and address such violence from a human perspective.
- The Ministry of Health has issued a medical guide for treating victims of gender-based violence. The guide has been circulated to all hospitals in the country and doctors and practitioners have been familiarized with it. The guide gives health-care service providers all the information and guidance required to treat victims of violence, including information on counselling, psychiatric and medical first aid and the need to quickly collect and preserve forensic medical evidence in sexual assault and rape cases, with a view to safeguarding the victim's legal rights.
- A special department to combat violence against women was established in the human rights division of the Ministry of the Interior, and the number of women police officers has been increased nationwide thanks to the efforts of the Unit to Combat Violence against Women.
- Units to combat violence against women, in particular sexual harassment, have been established in 14 Egyptian universities. The outcomes of the experiment are being shared with other public and private universities.
- The Ministry of Social Solidarity has established 14 shelters, which are operated by civil society organizations, to protect female victims of violence and provide them, regardless of their age, and their children with shelter and social, health-care, psychological and legal services.
- There are service centres that raise abused women's awareness of their legal rights and provide them with economic growth programmes and family counselling.
- A guide has been issued on where abused women can turn to for help and the services that are available to them, and shelter staff have been familiarized with

³ Criminal Appeals, appeal No. 18555, seventy-third year, session of 27 November 2008.

it. In addition, 162 staff members of those centres, both at the local and national levels, have received training on women's legal and financial rights, identifying and addressing cases of violence, and community outreach.

- The National Council for Women, in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, held a series of training programmes to raise the capacity of 650 judges and prosecutors on combating violence against women in accordance with Egyptian judicial standards.

23. The recommendations contained in paragraphs 29 and 30, in which the Committee expresses its concern that the quota does not include the Shura Assembly and only covers two consecutive parliamentary terms, and that the participation of women in political and public life continues to be limited

- Under the Constitution, at least one fourth of the seats in the House of Representatives is to be set aside for women. That quota became a standing requirement pursuant to a constitutional amendment adopted in 2019. Under article 180, a quarter of all seats in elected local legislative bodies are reserved for women. As a result, women will hold approximately 13,500 seats following the conclusion of the first local elections to be held within five years of the adoption of the 2014 constitutional amendments. Laws governing elections for the House of Representatives and local elections are being drafted.

24. The recommendations contained in paragraphs 31 and 32, in which the Committee expresses its concern regarding the decline in the average number of females enrolled in primary education in many villages and rural areas and the rate at which girls drop out of secondary school and university, and calls for girls and women to be given equal access to all levels and fields of education

- Thanks to Government and community efforts to make education available to girls and encourage girls' education in the period covered by this report, there has been a tangible increase in the proportion of girls enrolled at various levels of education:
- The proportion of girls enrolled in preschool education increased from 22.7 per cent in 2008/09 to 27 per cent in 2017/18.
- The proportion of girls enrolled in primary education increased from 96.1 per cent in 2008/09 to 98.6 per cent in 2017/18.
- The proportion of girls enrolled in secondary education increased from 5.24 per cent in 2008/09 to 35.1 per cent in 2017/18.
- The proportion of women enrolled in higher education increased from 24.1 per cent in 2011/12 to 38.4 per cent in 2015/16.
- In 2014/15, women made up 58.5 per cent of those graduating from faculties of arts, compared to 54.5 per cent in 2005/06.
- In 2014/15, women made up 48.2 per cent of those graduating from faculties of science, compared to 44.1 per cent in 2005/06.
- The illiteracy rate among females decreased from 37.3 per cent in 2006 to 30.7 per cent in 2017.
- The same standards and requirements apply to females and males with respect to enrolment in continuing education, adult education and functional literacy programmes, and efforts have been redoubled to encourage females to enrol in literacy programmes.
- Dropout rates have decreased significantly thanks to measures that are tailored to each community.

- The number of single-classroom schools increased from 3,237 in 2007/08 to 5,018 in 2014/15, and the number of female students enrolled in single-classroom schools increased from 66,700 in 2007/08 to 82,070 in 2014/15.
- Girl-friendly schools and community schools have been established in Egyptian villages in order to provide a genuine opportunity for girls between the ages of 6 and 14 from poor families or who have dropped out to receive an education. There were 5,018 community schools in 2014–2015 with a total enrolment 106,781 students, of whom 76.9 per cent were females and 23.1 per cent males.
- The Government and community actors, in cooperation with the National Council for Women, have launched several initiatives and taken various measures. Working together, they have:
 - Launched the Girls' Education Initiative, in collaboration with UNICEF. The aims of the initiative are to empower girls, give them equal access to high-quality and free education, and remove barriers that prevent them from completing their education, such as school fees and education costs.
 - Directed the Centre for the Development of Curriculums and Educational Materials of the Ministry to update curriculums on a regular basis, so that they do not discriminate between females and males.
 - Launched the "Reading aloud" programme in collaboration with USAID, in order to improve reading and writing skills at the primary education stage. The programme utilizes the active learning concept in order to curb low educational attainment and improve poor reading and writing skills.
 - Launched the "Village without illiteracy" project for women in Buhayrah governorate. The project has been executed in 10 stages and 1,277 sessions in which 32,836 women students have participated.
 - Launched a literacy programme for women the village of Dandarah, Qina Governorate, in cooperation with the General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education. Ten teams of volunteers made up of women farm leaders and supervisors and female public service officials visited more than 200 families at their homes in order to identify illiterate women and encourage them to enrol in literacy classes. In addition, the Council convinced some administrative authorities, big factories and companies, and investors throughout the Governorate to offer symbolic and material incentives for dedicated students. Seventeen classes were started, and 50 women became literate.
 - Launched the "Knowledge is strength" initiative by signing a cooperation protocol with the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services. Working in cooperation with rural and urban women leaders, the parties conducted an awareness campaigns for illiterate women with a view to motivating them to attend literacy classes. The initiative targeted 20,000 illiterate people of both sexes in the Cairo, Giza, Qalyubiah, Bani Suwayf and Minya in 2013–2014. During that period, 78 classes were started, and 955 pupils became literate.
 - Signed a cooperation protocol with the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology to hold training courses to improve women's skills and professionalism on a scientific and technological basis.

25. The recommendations contained in paragraphs 33 and 34, in which the Committee calls for efforts to be made to close the wage gap between men and women, and to address the concentration of women in the informal sector, with no social security or other benefits, and sexual harassment in the workplace

- The Labour Code prohibits wage discrimination and imposes a criminal penalty on employers who engage in this type of discrimination (articles 35, 88 and 247 of the Labour Code, law No. 12 of 2003).

All laws governing labour provide that men and women are equal with regard to employment opportunities and selection criteria, and they prohibit wage discrimination on the basis of gender.

- The Government has taken the following measures as part of its efforts to regulate the informal sector and ensure that women are not exploited:
- The proportion of small and medium enterprises run by women increased from 23 per cent in 2015 to 46 per cent in 2018.
- The proportion of microfinance loans that went to women increased from 45 per cent in 2015 to 69 per cent in 2018.
- A total of 883 rural women received training on financial inclusion in 27 governorates.
- The “Solidarity and dignity” conditional cash transfer programme was launched, reaching 2 million women, who make up 80 per cent of the programme’s beneficiaries, in 563 villages across 345 districts in 27 governorates. The aim of the programme is to increase household consumption, develop human capital, give women a greater say in family decision-making, integrate women into economic production and increase women’s financial inclusion.
- The Penal Code now prescribes an increased penalty when the offender has supervisory authority over the victim or put any pressure on the victim by virtue of his position.

26. The recommendations contained in paragraphs 35 and 36, in which the Committee addresses the issue of domestic workers, including migrants

- Articles 27–30 of the Labour Code (law No. 12 of 2003) regulate the employment of foreigners and article 28 addresses domestic service.
- A legal working group established by the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking has drafted an optional employment contract for Egyptian domestic workers. That draft has been endorsed, in keeping with the objectives of the Human Trafficking Act (law No. 64 of 2010) and the human rights principles set out in international conventions. The contract provides guidelines for regulating the relationship between domestic workers and the homeowner. It is a temporary measure aimed at ensuring better conditions for domestic workers and safeguarding their rights until such time as the Labour Code includes provisions on protection of domestic workers, or a separate law concerning them has been enacted.
- In response to complaints received by the National Council for Women, a committee was formed to address the question of domestic workers as part of the effort to combat human trafficking. A special committee made up of representatives from the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Manpower and the Ministry of Social Solidarity was formed to address certain issues related to the rights of domestic workers, including: (a) the addition of domestic worker as a job designation on the national identification card, (b) expanding social security to include this occupational group and (c) licensing domestic workers, in order to prevent them from falling prey to human traffickers.
- The National Council for Women has prepared a publication on the work done by the ministries that are involved in the aforementioned committee and circulated it to the Council’s branches in 27 governorates. That publication

includes information on the measures that must be taken to ensure that stakeholders are aware of the committee and enable them to take advantage of the assurances that have been made regarding the possibility of having female domestic workers' occupation added to the national identification card and the opportunity to enrol in the State social insurance system.

- The Ministry of Manpower has established a committee to draft a law on domestic workers, but it has not yet completed its work.

27. The recommendations contained in paragraphs 37 and 38, in which the Committee requests that the nationality law be amended so as to bring it into conformity with article 9 of the Convention, and expresses its concern that Egyptian women cannot pass their nationality on to their foreign husbands, unlike Egyptian men, and that the children of Egyptian women married to foreigners from certain countries are encountering obstacles

- Pursuant to Act No. 154 (2004), women and men are equal in respect of the ability to acquire, retain or change nationality and to pass on their nationality to their children should either parent marry a non-Egyptian. The children of Egyptian women married to foreigners now have the right to acquire Egyptian citizenship should they request it. In addition, Egypt has submitted a document withdrawing its reservation to article 9 of the Convention.
- The right of a non-Egyptian man to acquire the nationality of his Egyptian wife is subject to the general rules governing naturalization that are set out in article 4 quinquies of Act No. 26 of 1975. Under that article, any foreigner who has resided habitually in Egypt for at least 10 consecutive years prior to submitting his or her naturalization application may apply for citizenship if he or she has reached the age of majority age and meets the conditions set out in the article.
- The right to nationality of a person born to an Egyptian father or mother is guaranteed in the Constitution (article 6). In addition, the law sets out the conditions for acquiring, retaining or changing nationality. A woman's nationality does not change automatically if she marries a foreigner or if her husband changes his nationality, unless she officially declares her desire to do that. The nationality of the husband is not imposed on a woman, nor may she be rendered stateless.
- From 2008 to 2018, some 37,835 children acquired Egyptian nationality through their mothers (children born on 1 January 2008 and later).

Judicial rulings

- The Supreme Constitutional Court ruled that article 6 of the Nationality Act (law No. 26 of 1975) was unconstitutional, because it gave minor children the right to acquire Egyptian citizenship when their foreign father acquired Egyptian citizenship, but not when their mother acquired that citizenship.⁴ The court based its ruling, inter alia, on article 9 of the Convention.
- The Supreme Administrative Court ruled that an Egyptian mother married to a foreigner could transfer her nationality upon taking the measures prescribed in Act No. 154 (2004), even if the father is not an Egyptian citizen.⁵

⁴ Judgement No. 131, thirty-ninth year, Supreme Constitutional Court, session of 6 April 2019.

⁵ Judgement No. 4469, forty-sixth year, session of 26 February 2005 and Judgement No. 12483, sixty-first year, session of 28 September 2009.

Section II

Comments on the articles of the Convention

Article 1: Definition of the term “discrimination against women”

28. Citizens are equal before the law and have the same public rights and duties. There can be no discrimination between citizens on the basis of religion, belief, gender, origin, race, colour, language, disability, social class, political or geographical affiliation, or for any other reason, and discrimination and incitement to hatred are crimes punishable by law. The State undertakes to do all that is required to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

29. The current Constitution contains a special provision for women which provides that all citizens must be given equal opportunities without discrimination and that women and men must enjoy all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights on an equal basis. The State takes measures to ensure that women are adequately represented in parliamentary bodies, are able to exercise their right to hold public office and senior State management positions and be appointed to judicial positions without discrimination. It undertakes to protect women from all forms of violence and ensure that they are able to reconcile family duties with work requirements, and furthermore undertakes to care for and protect mothers, children and women (articles 4, 9 and 11 of the Constitution).

30. The Government launched a broad participatory process aimed at executing the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women for 2016–2030 in accordance with the Constitution and the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, 2017 was declared the Year of Egyptian Women. During that year, efforts to promote the political, social and economic empowerment of women were redoubled.

Article 2: Political measures

31. The Egyptian State has promoted policies to combat discrimination against women and ensure that they are able to enjoy their political, social, economic and civil rights.

32. The Government also strives to eliminate any form of discrimination against women resulting from procedures, laws, rules and regulations. Following are some of the measure that have been taken:

- The Egyptian Women’s Charter was promulgated in June 2011. It was discussed in 27 governorates by 3,000 women and men from all over Egypt, and 500,000 persons signed it.
- Article 1 of the Civil Service Act (law No. 81 of 2016) provides that it is the right of citizens to hold civil service jobs and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in the application of laws.
- Under Act No. 82 (2016), on illegal migration and smuggling of migrants, it is a crime to smuggle, attempt to smuggle or facilitate the smuggling of migrants. The penalty imposed is more severe if women are among the migrants being smuggled.
- A legal framework has been put in place to identify those who are eligible for the social security pension established by Act No. 137 (2010), and successive ministerial decisions have been issued to cover additional groups, including widows, female breadwinners and divorced and elderly women.
- Women are recognized as breadwinners in the Unified Tax Code (law No. 91 of 2005), amended by Act No. 11 (2013).

33. The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2016–2030 comprises four themes: political empowerment, economic empowerment, social empowerment, and protection. The Strategy, which includes cultural and legislative initiatives, is aimed at responding to the actual needs of Egyptian women, in particular those living in rural tribal areas, poor women, female breadwinners, and elderly and disabled women, as they are the groups most in need of care.

Article 3: Human rights and fundamental freedoms

The constitutional and legal protections established in the Egyptian legal system for fundamental rights and freedoms are covered in the foreword to the present report. Egyptian law reaffirms the right of women to establish and run businesses on an equal footing with men, own real estate and have financial independence, as well as the right of disposition of property.

34. Under the Prisons Act, as amended by Act No. 6 (2009), pregnant inmates receive special care from the date pregnancy is established by a medical report until 40 days after delivery. A nursery has been established in every women’s prison to house the children of female prisoners, where they remain until the age of four. The mother must remain with the child until he or she becomes two years old.

35. A women’s and children’s department, which incorporates the General Directorate for Combating Violence against Women, was created in the human rights division of the Ministry of Justice to provide legal protection to women victims of violence and prosecute perpetrators, as mentioned earlier. In addition, a general directorate was established to follow up on the work done by women’s support offices in the courts of first instance.

36. In 2017, a general directorate for human rights was established in the Office of the Public Prosecutor. One of its mandates is to monitor practices that undermine women’s rights.

37. Spending programmes aimed at achieving gender parity are part of the plans and general budget of the State. In that connection, an equal opportunity programme was implemented in order to help women improve their economic and social situations.

38. The State has developed a just social protection network and offers programmes for impoverished women and families that are unable to meet their basic needs. In addition, the State guarantees the rights of those women’s children to health care and education through the following programmes and measures:

- The Takaful programme is available to families with children up to 18 years old provided that they adhere to the primary health-care programmes for children and mothers offered by government health centres and units, and that the children are enrolled in school and are present at least 80 per cent of school days.
- The Karamah programme is for persons who cannot work or be productive, such as the elderly (65 years and older), persons with disabilities that prevent them from working and orphans who have lost both parents or whose father died and the mother has remarried.
- Women’s literacy programmes, such as “No Illiteracy Through Solidarity”, family planning programmes, such as “2 Are Enough”, and programmes to improve living conditions, such as the “Decent Housing” initiative. Families are given help to obtain ration cards and girls, female leaders and female public service officials are encouraged to participate in women’s empowerment programmes.

- The Social Security Programme provides monthly cash assistance to poor individuals and families, for which the amount is determined by the number of individuals, and an educational grant is given to families whose children are enrolled in primary or intermediate education for eight months (October to May) each school year.
- The Productive Families Programme comprises 430 projects to train low-income women in heritage, environmental and household occupations and crafts, as well as 32 permanent galleries where they can sell their products during the seasonal exhibitions that the Ministry organizes. In addition, the Ministry is training approximately 11,000 women and giving loans to approximately 10,000 families every year.
- Projects to support rural women, such as in-kind projects ranging in value from 1,000 to 5,000 Egyptian pounds with low administrative expenses (7 per cent). These projects help to reduce poverty and unemployment among women, and the amounts are paid in instalments.
- Shelters and guidance centres operated by the Ministry of Social Solidarity provide family counselling through one-on-one or groups sessions, or over the phone. They hold counselling and family reconciliation sessions, provide psychological and legal services to women and refer them for health care if necessary, provide housing for women victims of any kind of violence and let them bring their children (up to 10 years old for boys), provide training for residents and offer them opportunities to work, and raise community awareness on how to combat all forms of violence and discrimination against women.
- Working women's service centres are occupational and service centres that provide practical solutions for working women who are striving to reconcile their responsibilities towards their work and their families. They also help to ease the burdens of women and enable them to perform their role in the service of society.
- A programme has been launched to develop a corps of community and women leaders. The aim of the programme is to identify local female leaders and develop their ability to play an active role in the advancement of their communities. The Ministry has 2,390 female community leaders across the country who work for a symbolic sum paid monthly, rather than a regular salary. Those community leaders foster communication between residents and service institutions that have a presence in the local community, raise community awareness and identify and prepare women leaders to be community leaders, with a view to promoting the role of women in development.
- Elderly women and women with disabilities are provided with various services and forms of support. Elderly women receive support from agencies for elderly persons and in-home care givers, are provided with insurance and collect retirement payments. On the other hand, women with disabilities receive support from agencies for persons with disabilities, are provided with rehabilitation, physical therapy and early intervention services for girls and women with disabilities, and receive financial support and economic development services.
- The Family Insurance Fund, which was established by Act No. 11 (2004), amended by Act No. 113 (2015), provides families with financial support and helps them secure the resources they need to live with dignity, protect family members' rights and meet expenses and other obligations.

- A rapid intervention team was established to assist homeless women and transfer them to shelters. From 2008 to 2018, some 326 women were placed in those shelters, so that they could receive social, psychological and medical care.

39. Cooperation with civil society organizations: The National Council for Women, acting through the Committee for Non-governmental Organizations, established the Civil Society Forum, which acts as a link between the Council and civil society organizations concerned with women's issues. The Forum is made up of more than 48 NGOs. Following are some of the topics that have been discussed by the Forum: the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2016–2030, the report of Egypt on its implementation of the Convention, the Council's proposal for a law on violence, the draft law on equal treatment for men and women in relation to the crime of adultery, developing a mechanism to follow up on the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women, future representation of Egyptian women in parliament and the role of civil society in promoting women's participation in local council elections.

40. The "Egyptian female inspirations" campaign was launched on the website and social media pages of the National Council for Women. The aim of the campaign is to disseminate the stories of inspiring female leaders throughout history who succeeded in various social, economic, cultural, sporting and artistic endeavours. The stories of 220 women have been published thus far and they have been viewed more than 300,000 times since they first became available in July 2017.

41. The Egyptian Women's Observatory was established, and its mandate is to actively monitor, in the period 2017–2030, the indicators that have been established to measure the progress made towards achieving the objectives of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030. To that end, the Observatory collects information, updates the indicators and presents them on an interactive website; reports periodically on the status of Egyptian women, the gender gap and the progress made towards achieving the goals of the National Strategy; and collects and presents studies, laws and survey concerning women.

42. Equal opportunity units have been established in the ministries to monitor and prevent employment discrimination against women. The National Council for Women periodically receives statistics and data on the number of women who hold leadership positions in the ministries. For example, women in the Ministry of Education hold 30 per cent of leadership positions, and in the Ministry is striving to increase the proportion to 50 per cent.

43. Nearly 4 million women in 3,000 villages nationwide were contacted in the various stages of the door-to-door campaigns that have been conducted.

Article 4: Special measures

44. We have addressed the question of special measure in our previous reports. Nonetheless, we should like to add that, in accordance article 11 of the Constitution, the Government has an obligation to take certain measures to protect women against all forms of violence and to ensure that they are able to reconcile family duties with work requirements. The Government also has an obligation to care for and protect mothers, children and elderly women, female breadwinners and women who are in greatest need.

45. Some Egyptian laws include permanent privileges and measures designed to meet women's needs and address their working conditions and need to reconcile family duties and social expectation. In accordance with the aforementioned article of the Constitution, such measures are a permanent part of the law.

Article 5: Social patterns

46. Under the Constitution, the Government has an obligation to establish social justice and ensure social solidarity, in order to enable all citizens, without discrimination, to live with dignity. In addition, the Constitution provides that there must equality of opportunity and reaffirms that the family is the foundation of society.

47. The Egyptian Government has taken a series of measures and adopted policies aimed at changing the stereotype of women and correcting cultural misconceptions about them, including the following:

- Educational and awareness-raising programmes have been developed for students and the curriculums for various stages of education are being updated regularly and purged of discriminatory concepts against women. The Government has been striving to address harmful customs and practices, and it is working with civil society institutions to hold awareness-raising seminars for students in schools and universities aimed at changing stereotyped ideas about girls and women. In addition, the Azhar al-Sharif continues to call for women to be empowered and for them to be able to exercise their legitimate rights as the key partner of men in building the family and revitalizing society.
- The Government has staged theatrical plays and held targeted artistic workshops and cultural and artistic seminars that address women's issues, and cultural centres throughout the country have organized activities aimed at changing stereotyped views of women.
- Programmes about women's and family affairs have been presented in various media and all activities related to women have been covered by the media, with a view to changing social and cultural stereotypes of women, and programming about successful women has been aired at peak viewing hours.
- "Enlightenment caravans" have been organized on a regular basis. In these events, direct persuasion is used to strengthen positive social values and customs and to counter the harmful ones.
- Workshops and panel discussions have been held at athletic clubs and youth centres throughout the country to raise awareness of the role played by women in society and how important women are as partners in the effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

48. The National Council for Women has taken measures to raise awareness of the provisions of the Convention in various governorates of the country. Those measures include the following:

- The Council printed seven brochures in Arabic and English: Complying with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Protection Afforded to Women Under Labour and Public Service Laws; The Rights of Women under the Nationality Act; How Egyptian Law Combats Violence and Discrimination against Women (one brochure on the current situation and one on what we would like to see); Women's Rights and Personal Status: Marital Problems from a Legal Perspective; and Women's Rights and Personal Status: The Rules of Marriage from a Legal Perspective. One thousand copies of those brochures were printed in each language.
- The brochures were distributed at various seminars, conferences and events organized by the Council and its branches in the governorates, deposited in major public libraries throughout the country in order to spread the culture of

women's rights and deposited in the Council's library for women's and gender affairs. They have also been published electronically on the Council's website.⁶

- The Council designed and printed postage with cartoon drawings in order to raise awareness of violence against women and the harm caused by early marriage.
- The Council launched the “*Ta' al-marbutah* [Womanhood]: the secret of your strength” campaign. The principle aims of this campaign are: (a) create public awareness with a view to supporting women in all economic, social and political activities, (b) combat violence against women, with a focus on the crime of sexual harassment, and (c) raise awareness throughout society by disseminating messages addressed to various groups in a simple manner that can be understood by people who have different cultural customs and come from different cultural backgrounds. All media that can help bring about the aims of this campaign have been used. The campaign has been viewed 118.5 million times on social media pages and on television.
- “Let's stay together” is an information programme for those thinking of marriage and newlyweds that is aimed at engaging men and getting them to support women's empowerment.
- An intensive three-stage programme is available to those thinking of marriage and newlyweds. The first stage (I and I) focuses on knowing the self, while the second stage (he and she) addresses the concept of marriage and the needs of men and women, and the third stage (he, she and them) takes up issues related to children and the family and how to address them. The first stage of the programme was piloted in December 2017 with 100 persons, among whom were 30 married couples and 60 unmarried young men and girls. The programme is being completed in several governorates.
- In 2018, the Council, in partnership with UN-Women, executed the “Men and women together” project.
- Female preachers, female church teachers and nuns were enrolled in a training programme that prepared them to take part in the door-to-door campaigns that take place in the villages and hamlets of the country. In addition, the Council launched its first ever training program in cooperation with the Ministry of Awqaf and the three Egyptian churches. The “Together in the service of the nation” programme reached 657 persons, including 284 female preachers, 207 female teachers from the Coptic Orthodox Social Services Diocese, 81 female teachers from the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services, 21 monks and 64 female lay servants from the Coptic Catholic Patriarchate.
- An awareness-raising programme to eliminate violence against women was launched in collaboration with UN-Women. The message of the “Overcome the shame: you have the right to live in safety” programme, which is aimed at establishing a social and cultural climate that prevents violence against women, is conveyed through positive and sensible media messaging, and clear and decisive religious discourse that rejects all forms of violence.
- The Council contributes to the improvement of irregular settlements by studying the needs of their inhabitants and organizing a range of cultural, sporting and

⁶ Those brochures are available on the website of the National Council for Women at <http://ncw.gov.eg/ar/per centd9%85%d8%b7%d8%a8%d9%88%d8%b9%d8%a7%d8%aa-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85%d8%ac%d9%84%d8%b3-2/>.

social activities that are designed to counter negative conduct and promote positive behaviour.

- In the period covered by this report, the Council has provided training on women's issues to media professionals. Several training sessions and workshops were held to familiarize media professionals with various women's issues and convey the importance of women's political, social and economic empowerment to promoting the development of Egypt.
- The Council launched the "There's something good about her" initiative on its official Facebook page in order to highlight positive and successful models of girls and women in Egyptian society, rekindle optimism, overcome frustration and encourage everyone to adopt positive conduct and come up with new initiatives.
- The "They are capable" initiative was launched in Wadi al-Jadid Governorate to serve women's needs on the ground. To that end, a range of health-care, educational and service activities were carried out.
- Cultural caravans and travelling cultural roundtables aimed at women and young people tour the country's various governorates in order to hold discussions on women's issues and the most pressing issues in each governorate. At those events, women who are capable of communicating with the public are selected and women's speech competitions are held. In addition, the Council, in cooperation with public libraries, has organized a series of cultural roundtables and seminars in which experts and specialists have participated that are aimed educating a broad range of citizens and raising their awareness of women's issues.
- The Council monitors and analyses everything that is published in the various media about women, both negative and positive, with a view to developing comprehensive and lasting solutions to undesirable cultural traditions.
- The Council use the social media on its official website to raise awareness of the Council's role in changing the stereotypes of women. The Council's social media sites were viewed a total of 73.4 million times. The Council's Facebook page has 670,000 followers, the "*Ta' al-marbutah* [Womanhood]: the secret of your strength" campaign has 72 million followers, 37.4 million people have viewed the song "Nur", which is part of the "*Ta' al-marbutah* [Womanhood]: the secret of your strength" campaign, the "Egyptian female inspirations" campaign has 400,00 followers, 3 million people have viewed the film "Maryam and the sun", the "Because I am a man" campaign has been viewed 6.8 times, 10.5 million people have viewed the 29 videos about women entrepreneurs that have been released, 1.3 million persons have viewed the 11 video messages directed at rural women, and the film *Risalah Misriyah* has been viewed 370,000 times.
- The Council, in cooperation with Egypt Radio and Television and in partnership with civil society organizations, has produced several radio and television programmes to raise public awareness of the role that women play in society. In addition, it has released several short thematic films, including *The Power of Women*, *The Voice of Women is a Revolution*, *No to Early Marriage* and *No to Violence*.
- A code of conduct for the media was developed that includes professional and ethical guidelines that pertain to women's issues. The aim is to:
- Establish a media policy that is balanced and fair, and present and highlight positive images of women and their achievements.

- Change the negative image of women in the media and have them portrayed as more than just sex objects, a commodity for sale or an advertising tool.
- Focus on the positive role played by women, consolidate their status in the family and the community and promote their contributions to development.
- Counter discriminatory speech against women, in particular in the media and advertising. For example, the marketing campaign “You are an old maid” was discontinued because the Council took action against the company behind that campaign.

Article 6: Trafficking in women

49. Egypt has ratified all instruments on the elimination of slavery and all forms of human trafficking. The Constitution prohibits all forms of slavery, oppression and forced exploitation of human beings, as well as the sex trade and other forms of human trafficking (article 89).

50. Act No. 64 (2010) on combating human trafficking, which criminalizes all forms of human trafficking, was adopted. Special criminal chambers have been established within State appellate courts to handle human trafficking cases.

51. A social welfare element was added to the Children’s Act with the addition of a section entitled “Prohibiting child marriage”, and a new article (227.2) was added to the Penal Code criminalizing marriage of persons under the age of 18. Moreover, the statute of limitations does not apply to this offence.

52. Given that Egypt is a transit country, strict controls have been put in place at entry/exit points as part of the effort to curb trafficking. Those efforts are led by the Department for Monitoring Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking of the Ministry of the Interior, which works in cooperation with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). In addition, the Egyptian authorities cooperate with foreign tourism companies and several countries in relation to exchange of information.

53. A Red Crescent Society shelter for women and child victims of human trafficking is being established in Qalyubiah Governorate in cooperation with the relevant national authorities (the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the Egyptian Red Crescent Society). The shelter is being prepared to receive victims and will be staffed by technical and medical personnel and social workers who are qualified to assist victims, and training programmes will be held for relevant staff members.

54. A map was prepared that shows the incidence of human trafficking in the various governorates. The map was based on data provided by the Office of the Public Prosecutor on human trafficking cases and by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood on the number of complaints related to human trafficking that it received on the 16000 hotline.

55. The National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Human Trafficking was reconstituted pursuant to Prime Minister’s Decision No. 2353 (2010) with the addition of a seat for the National Council for Women. Pursuant Prime Minister’s Decision 192 (2017), that Committee was merged with the Committee for Combating Illegal Migration to form the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking, which is responsible for both issues. The new committee reports to the Office of the Prime Minister and its membership comprises 26 ministries, bodies and national councils.

56. The Government collects statistics as part of its efforts to combat prostitution. In the period 2008–2018, the total number of cases of prostitution and exploitation of

women in prostitution stood at 19,022, of which 1,774 were reported in 2018, compared with 2,690 in 2017. With regard to human trafficking and marriage of underage girls, 58 cases were reported in 2017, compared to 23 in 2018.

57. The Ministry of Interior is striving to address all forms of prostitution through a strategy that includes the following elements:

- *Field work*: Periodic campaigns to control prostitution are conducted throughout the country. In addition, the authorities monitor pornographic websites and pages on social networking sites and the Internet.
- *Training*: Police officers engaged in combating prostitution are familiarized with the relevant legal framework and given training on the latest strategies for countering prostitution.
- *Developing and modernizing working methods in the field of security*: The State develops technically and professionally qualified officers to monitor and address prostitution, and it has established new departments responsible for geographical areas in the various governorates.
- The Ministry seeks to strengthen international security cooperation mechanisms in respect of transnational organized crime by encouraging the conclusion of bilateral and regional agreements and by enforcing the provisions of multilateral international conventions.
- The Ministry, in cooperation with the relevant agencies and the Ministry of Information, has adopted a media policy that is aimed at raising awareness of the threat posed by human trafficking and the many faces of this crime.
- Victims of human trafficking are encouraged to share their stories. Victims and witnesses are given protection and the information they need, and they are apprised of their legal situation. Interpreters are made available to foreign victims.
- The Ministry, in cooperation with the relevant agencies, the House of Representatives, the National Council for Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and religious leaders, convenes meetings, conferences and seminars to identify the best means of combating prostitution, sexual exploitation and trafficking of women.

58. The Ministry of Manpower protects Egyptian women who work abroad and ensures that their work is governed by cooperation protocols with the relevant countries, in order to protect the rights of those women, in particular those who are married to foreigners.

59. The Ministry of Social Solidarity provides services for unmarried mothers through specialized institutions for the protection of women. There are three such institutions located in three governorates. The Ministry provides women accused of prostitution who have been released from prison follow-up care at specialized institutions. In addition, the Ministry has:

- Conducted training courses for social workers and psychologists in social welfare institutions.
- Organized awareness-raising seminars on human trafficking in 11 governorates. Those seminars were attended by 208,653 persons who work in the field of women's affairs, as well as by 7,500 young men and women at cultural and social clubs.
- Met with women social leaders in all governorates every three months to raise their awareness.

- Sent brochures on a regular basis to all governorates that are used in seminars to raise awareness of human trafficking.
- Executed a project in cooperation with UNDP to familiarize prosecutors, judges, military officers and police with the laws on combating human trafficking.
- Organized training courses and workshops, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), for judges and prosecutors, with a view to building the capacity of law enforcement officials who deal directly with human trafficking cases.

60. The Ministry of Justice, in coordination with the Ministry of the Interior and in cooperation with IOM, has developed a training manual for law enforcement officials and established special offices to handle human trafficking cases. In addition, the Ministry, in conjunction with UNODC and the National Centre for Judicial Studies, has developed a guide for judges on how to consider cases involving violence against women.

61. Pursuant to Minister of Justice Decision No. 9200 (2015), a foreign man who wishes to enter into marriage must provide investment certificates with a periodic return of 50,000 pounds payable to the woman that he wishes to marry if the age difference between the prospective spouses is greater than 25 years. The marriage must be concluded within the officially established framework and satisfy legal requirements.

62. Teachers have been enrolled in training courses so that they can acquire the professional skills they need to instruct their pupils about the importance of combating human trafficking and how they can protect themselves against becoming victims of human trafficking. Teachers have been provided with teaching materials on human trafficking that are suitable for each educational level, and internal and external specialists have given them lectures in order to ensure that they comprehend the scope of this crime.

63. The Child Trafficking Prevention Unit of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood organized a campaign to prevent brokered marriages and so-called seasonal or summer marriages. Comparative studies on the problem of child marriage in the poorest villages have been prepared, including, inter alia, a study on the extent of that problem in Asyut Governorate and another study looking into the reasons why Egyptians in Aswan, Luxor, Ghardaqa and Sharm al-Shaykh marry elderly foreigners. In addition, pamphlets and media materials to raise awareness of child trafficking and promote rehabilitation services have been issued in collaboration with IOM.

64. Activities carried out by the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking and by the ministries responsible for addressing this crime:

- The relevant authorities funded and directed a study conducted by the National Centre for Social and Criminal Research. The study showed that the most common forms of human trafficking in Egypt are the trade in human organs, brokered marriages, forced labour, sexual exploitation and exploitation of homeless children.
- The first comprehensive national strategy to combat and prevent human trafficking (2016–2021) was launched. The strategy, which is aimed implementing effectively Act No. 64 (2010) on combating human trafficking, has four pillars: (a) prevent and combat human trafficking; (b) protect and assist victims and witnesses; (c) prosecute and punish the perpetrators; and (d) promote partnership at the national, regional and international levels to address human

trafficking. The strategy identifies the stakeholders responsible for implementing the programmes set out in the strategy and provides indicators for measuring the success of each stakeholder in carrying out its tasks.

- Pursuant to article 27 of Act No. 64 (2010) on combating human trafficking, a draft decision has been prepared on the establishment of a fund to assist victims of human trafficking, to be controlled by the Prime Minister.
- A documentation unit has been established to collect relevant Egyptian and foreign laws and regulations, as well as information, data, conventions, charters, international instruments, protocols, studies and research. The unit will serve as a database for all the work done by the National Coordinating Committee and will be its institutional memory.
- Booklets on human trafficking have been issued and circulated to the relevant authorities, including, inter alia, the following: a guide on protecting Egyptian workers abroad from human trafficking, which was distributed to all Egyptian embassies and consulates and to the Ministry of Manpower; a brief guide for prosecutors on investigating human trafficking crimes, which was circulated to public prosecutors; a guide on the Human Trafficking Act (No. 10 of 2010), which the National Coordinating Committee is distributing to the heads of departments for criminal law and international law of the faculties of law at all universities; an updated guide on evidence-gathering, investigation and prosecution in relation to human trafficking crimes and protecting victims when enforcing the law; and a brief guide for media professionals on human trafficking, including of women, and the forms of human trafficking that are prevalent in Egypt and how they occur, with a view to improving media coverage of this crime through the use of sound terminology and raising public awareness of this crime and how to address and prevent it.
- In 2017 and 2018, the National Coordinating Committee, in cooperation with UNDP, conducted 16 training courses, in which 203 persons participated, to build the capacity of judges and military officers to combat human trafficking as part of a project to increase knowledge of anti-trafficking laws. Nine such courses were organized for prosecutors (159 participants) and another six were organized for police (79 participants).
- Efforts are being made to improve the performance of the hotlines of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, the National Council for Human Rights and the National Council for Women. To that end, a programme has been launched to train hotline workers on how to respond to reports of human trafficking in particular. In addition, a feasibility study is being conducted on whether the three lines can be combined, in order to increase effectiveness.
- The general framework of the national referral mechanism for victims of human trafficking has been put in place. This mechanism will facilitate and accelerate communications at the national level among the actors responsible for combating human trafficking and enforcing the relevant laws, with a view to improving the process of referring victims to the shelter for victims of human trafficking. The relevant operational arrangements are being finalized.
- Training courses have been organized for the protection committees of various governorates, in particular those of governorates in which the incidence of human trafficking crimes has been high in recent years.
- The National Coordinating Committee has developed a plan on how the media can combat human trafficking that is based on a comprehensive strategic vision of the role that the media plays in supporting and promoting human rights and

addressing any violation of those rights. The plan includes an integrated programme to combat all forms of human trafficking and the approaches that the media can employ to address all the problems that give rise to human trafficking. With respect to implementation, the plan calls for the production of documentaries on human trafficking and the efforts being made to address it at the national, regional and international levels; various types of talk shows; various types of awareness-raising announcements; and comprehensive coverage of this issue in news bulletins, programmes, commentaries and news analysis. The National Coordinating Committee has also trained media professionals on the subject matter.

- The Government is developing an integrated national database to collect, analyse and share accurate information on the magnitude and seriousness of human trafficking, reduce the high dropout rate of girls from education, in particular in rural areas, and increase societal awareness of human trafficking, its various forms and its seriousness.
- In addition, the Government is striving to ensure that its institutions, civil society organizations concerned with women's affairs, the National Coordinating Committee, the National Council for Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the National Council for Human Rights are actively involved in the execution of campaigns to raise awareness of the consequences of human trafficking for women and children. It is also striving to raise girls' and women's awareness of the seriousness of this crime with the help educational institutions, women's and cultural clubs, religious institutions and provincial media.

Article 7: Political and public life

65. We have addressed the laws that concern the representation of women in the legislature in our response to the recommendations contained in paragraph 29 and 30.

66. Women make up nearly half of all voters in Egypt. In the 2015 parliamentary elections, 48.98 per cent of the persons registered in the voter database were women, and in some areas the proportion of women is greater than that of men. Women ran for office in all districts of Egypt, including in Upper Egypt, the Bedouin-dominated border districts and the predominantly rural Delta districts. Some 279 women were nominated as individuals, 19 of whom were victorious, while another 207 were nominated on lists, 56 of whom were victorious.

67. After the balloting was concluded, 75 women had been elected. Of that number, 56 were elected as part of an electoral list and 20 as independents. Another 14 women were appointed to their seats. In total, 90 women hold seats in parliament and make up 15 per cent of its membership, an unprecedented proportion in the history of parliamentary representation of Egyptian women. Indeed, the global rank of Egypt with respect to representation of women in parliament rose from 125th to 99th.

68. In the 2015 House of Representatives elections, 1,613 women members of judicial bodies served as judicial supervisors. There were 25,981 women working on subcommittees and 205 women working on general committees.

69. Through the National Council for Women, Egyptian women took part in drafting the State's five-year social and economic development plans for the 2007–2012 and 2012–2017 periods. They helped to integrate gender into various areas of development covered by the State's national plan. The Council embraced the concept of participatory gender-responsive planning from the neighbourhood and village level through the district and city level and on up to the governorate level. As a result, both the national plan and the State budget have become responsive to gender concerns.

Financial allocations for women's programmes in the State budget are double what they were in previous plans.

70. The reporting period saw a surge in women in leadership positions, including some that had previously been the exclusive preserve of men. That included the first woman National Security Advisor (one of 12 worldwide), the first woman governor, the first woman deputy governor of the Central Bank, the first woman judge to serve as deputy minister of justice and head of the main human rights committee, the first woman deputy head of the Central Auditing Organization, six women deputy heads of the State Lawsuits Authority serving as branch heads, the highest percentage of women ministers (20 per cent), and the highest percentage of women in Parliament (15 per cent).

71. There were 67 women judges across the various criminal, civil, commercial and family courts. That included a woman judge on the secretariat of the Supreme Judicial Council, nine women judges in the technical office of the Court of Cassation, and a presiding judge on one of the economic courts. More than 48 per cent of administrative prosecutor corps were women. That included deputy prosecutors and chief prosecutors, many of them in leadership positions. Five women have been head of Administrative Prosecution, including two in a row.

72. Women take part in drafting State policies as members of Parliament and Government ministers (of which eight are women). Women occupy a significant proportion of leadership positions. Some 20 per cent of deputy ministers were women in 2013/2014 compared to 0 per cent in 2011/2012. The proportion of women in senior management positions in the government sector grew between 2011/12 and 2016/2017.

73. Women have served as members of the People's Assembly and as members and chairs of parliamentary committees. Women have served on all the parliamentary committees of the Shura Assembly. In 2012, the Supreme Presidential Election Committee included a woman judge. In 2014, it included five women judges. Women are also pursuing non-traditional occupations such as ship's captain and airline pilot.

74. Women participate in popular organizations and associations concerned with the country's public and political life, including civil society associations and political parties. A woman headed a political party for the first time. Women are also members of professional associations and labour unions. According to 2016 statistics, women accounted for 60.7 per cent of social professionals, 45.3 per cent of the membership of the education professionals' union and 55.1 per cent of the pharmacists' union.

Egyptian universities contribute to women's political empowerment in a number of ways.

- Several Egyptian universities have conducted awareness initiatives for girls and women who have been unable to obtain national identification cards and in particular those who have been unable to participate in elections. Universities also offer educational courses for women in political development, promote women's participation in student elections and encourage women to become involved in party politics.
- An advisory team of university professors has created a knowledge base and development map to help women parliamentarians debate issues and develop programmes. Training, education and workshops are provided to prepare women to assume leadership positions.
- Training courses and workshops have been organized to prepare training programmes for female parliamentarians. There are programmes to prepare eligible women for leadership positions. Women candidates are provided with

information and women parliamentarians are immersed in parliamentary legal culture.

- At Minya University, 50 per cent of the faculty are women.

75. The High Electoral Commission has undertaken a number of major initiatives in cooperation with various media outlets, the Ministry of Culture and civil society institutions that have helped to educate women about their rights to vote and stand for election.

- The “Your voice makes a difference” voter education campaign was a nationwide national campaign targeting various groups of voters. It included a women’s component and disseminated motivational and informational messages such as “Your voice makes a difference”, as well as information about election dates, through audio, visual and print media.
- The “Egypt is in your hands” voter education campaign had a women’s component that included a television advertisement and a poster encouraging women to take part in the 2011 elections. A song was recorded to encourage women to vote.
- Voter registration campaigns have included women’s components. As part of the voter registration update campaign for the 2013 parliamentary elections, a television advertisement showed a woman explaining that she had been unable to take part in the previous election because her name was not on the voting rolls.

76. Since it was established in 2000, the National Council for Women has made supporting women’s participation in political life a priority. Projects and programmes that promote women’s political empowerment have included the following:

- *The Egyptian citizenship initiative: Your card is your rights.* This goal of this initiative was to have national identity cards issued to women who had otherwise been unable to obtain them. Nearly 3 million cards have been issued to women nationwide.
- *The post-revolutionary women’s political participation project.* A number of community dialogue sessions and hearings were held with members of the 50-person committee formed to draft constitutional amendments. Training programmes and media campaigns were conducted to support women candidates for the House of Representatives. Women voters were educated about the importance of casting their votes every time they are entitled to.
- *The Women’s Political Support Unit.* The Council established this Unit to design political awareness and training plans and programmes to strengthen the legislative and oversight roles of women parliamentarians, enable women to participate actively in local people’s councils, and educate women voters about the importance of the current stage.
- *A door-to-door campaign to raise awareness of the importance of political participation.* The campaign was able to carry out 54,000 field visits to inform women in a straightforward and simple manner about the electoral process, the role of the Parliament and local councils, the importance of women taking part in voting, and how to choose competent representatives for various bodies.
- *A project on inclusive and open governments.* The project’s goal was to promote women’s participation in Parliament and access to decision-making and policy positions. It was implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

- *A project to enhance the role of Egyptian women parliamentarians.* The project's goal was to strengthen the capacities of female members of Parliament to perform their oversight and legislative functions.
- *Support for women parliamentarians.* The Council communicates periodically with women parliamentarians during each new parliamentary session with extensive meetings intended to promote constructive dialogue on various development issues and strengthen the role of women in society through gender-sensitive legislation.
- *Support for women candidates in local elections.* The Women's Political Support Unit coordinates and cooperates with men and women members of Parliament, professional unions, civil society organizations and the National Council for Women branches in the governorates to create a large database of women who wish to become involved in politics. Women wishing to stand as candidates fill out a form. The team then enters all the data into a database that is crucial for future planning, further skills enhancement, and building a political cohort of women who are active in local communities.
- *Conferences and workshops.* The Council holds conferences and seminars aimed at highlighting women's issues of the day. That included the "She and the President" conference, the "Women and the Constitution: a future vision" conference, and a series of seminars on "implementing the Constitution and paths to progress for women".
- *Awareness meetings under the title "Assert your strength: you have the right to a quarter of the seats on your council".* In collaboration with UN-Women, awareness meetings were held to support women candidates for local councils in district centres and villages in all governorates to help them acquire the skills to run for office and reform the social system. Some 12,389 women took part.

77. The Political Qualification Centre has promoted women's participation in political life through a number of training programmes.

- Training sessions to develop the political capacities of women members of local councils have been held in all the governorates.
- A training programme was held on "electoral process skills and mechanisms" for women members of the Journalists Syndicate.
- A training course for trainers was held on women's political empowerment.
- Training courses were held in all the governorates for women who want to run for local councils, the People's Assembly, the Shura Assembly and trade unions.
- The Centre has been renovated and modernized to become a "national studies centre" to promote the involvement of women in politics and public service.
- Training courses have been held for women party members and to develop the skills women need to take part in political and public life.
- In 2009, some 25 training sessions were held in cooperation with the women's skills development centre of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).
- The World Bank's "One Business Community, Equal Opportunities" (Gender Equity Model Egypt) project aims to disseminate a culture of equal opportunity among private companies and factories. Sessions are held for workers in a variety of senior and specialized management positions at private companies, banks and factories.

- Awareness raising and education for women voters was provided to 3,378,500 women in 1,979 villages, districts and their countrysides through the “Your vote for the Egypt of tomorrow” campaign launched by the Council during the March 2018 presidential election. The goal was to enhance the role of women voters, encourage them to vote and make them aware of the importance of their electoral voice.
- A specialized training guide was prepared on “strengthening women’s capacities to take part in local elections”.
- Training sessions for trainers were held for 588 women party branch rapporteurs and members, Council secretariat staff, representatives of civil society organizations and party representatives on how to build capacities for the electoral process and educate women in local communities about how to support their local women candidates.
- A database was compiled of 10,818 women wishing to run for local councils.
- Women’s participation in decision-making and opportunities for leadership positions in the judiciary and the executive agencies of the State have been promoted through the following:
 - *Support for Egyptian women judges.* A national programme to train Egyptian women judges was implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice. Four courses were held for 66 women judges to empower them to reach leadership positions in various branches of the Egyptian judiciary.
 - *Capacity-building for workers and leadership training for young staff.* (a) The Council held 78 training courses for 105 employees as part of its commitment to building staff capacities at the leadership levels and in specialized positions. It enrolled staff in training courses and local and international workshops designed to improve women’s leadership skills, human development and self-management, as well as specialized courses in work-related and women’s issues. (b) Leadership training was provided to 67 young staff through study grants and specialized programmes.

78. Enhancing the legislative and supervisory role of women parliamentarians

- Ongoing contact was maintained with women parliamentarians in 2016 by appointing some of them honorary members of Council’s standing committee. They thus formed a liaison to expedite women’s rights legislation in Parliament.
- Dialogue was initiated with women parliamentarians on various development issues and how to strengthen the role of women in society through gender-sensitive legislation.
- More than 120 former and current deputies participated in a specialized training course entitled “Towards outstanding parliamentary performance”. The course covered issues related to gender-responsive budgeting. The training programme included a dialogue session with a group of young people from various organizations and the governorates to discuss their problems and learn about the programmes being promoted by women deputies to secure them a better future.
- A documentary programme on 61 women deputies performing their legislative functions in Parliament was produced and disseminated through the media and social media sites.

Article 8: Opportunity to represent at the international level

79. The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs offers equal opportunities to men and women to engage in diplomatic work. It uses performance assessment standards for appointment and promotion that are based on competence and applied equally to women and men.

80. According to 2017 statistics for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic missions, women diplomats made up 24 per cent of the diplomatic corps. Women accounted for 14 per cent of first-class ambassadors, 13 per cent of all ambassadors and 43.4 per cent of diplomatic attachés. Female diplomats account for between 26 and 44 per cent of the middle and lower grades, numbers that will be reflected in the future percentages of women in leadership and supervisory positions in the diplomatic corps.

81. All diplomats have equal opportunities to ascend to supervisory leadership positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the latest 2017 statistics, the numbers are as follows:

- Women accounted for 20.8 per cent of assistant ministers for foreign affairs, 3.18 per cent of deputy assistant ministers, 14.28 per cent of directors of affairs, 33 per cent of unit directors at the Ministry and 25 per cent of office managers. The total percentage of women in leadership positions at the ministry is 17.1 per cent.
- Women diplomats preside over 10.5 per cent of all diplomatic missions abroad, either as ambassador or consul general. According to 2016 statistics, women accounted for 25 per cent of acting consuls general heading missions. Some 42.8 per cent of commercial attachés were women in 2015.

82. Egyptian women diplomats have also served as the President's First National Security Adviser, Co-Chair of the Gender Advisory Board of the United Nations Science and Technology Committee for Development (UNCSTD), member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Director-General of the Arab Women's Organization. They have served as legal adviser to the African Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, the African Parliament, the Arab Parliament and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. They have been members of the Network of Local Elected Women of Africa (REFELA) of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA) and, for a time, in the World Bank's Parliamentary Network. They have held leadership positions in media, commercial, cultural and tourism offices abroad. Women head 25 per cent of all media offices abroad.

83. Women have taken part in multilateral inter-State discussions on various political issues and serve as members of international committees, expert committees such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Women's Advisory Council of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

Article 9: Nationality

This has already been covered in detail in the section on paragraphs 37 and 38 of the concluding observations.

Article 10: Education

84. Education is the right of every citizen. It is compulsory through the secondary stage. The State is committed to encouraging technical education and vocational

training. It guarantees the provision of independent university education free of charge that meets global standards, including the teaching of human rights. It guarantees the development of teachers' capacities, freedom of academic research and the development of academic institutions. Arabic language, religious education and national history are basic components of curricula. Universities make sure to teach a human rights curriculum. The State is committed to eradicating illiteracy, including digital illiteracy, among citizens (the Constitution, articles 19–25).

85. The proportion of females enrolled in higher education in 2013/14 was 43 per cent, compared to 39.7 per cent in 2000/01. Women's share of study abroad missions and grants was 40 per cent in 2016/17 compared to 13 per cent in 2013/2014. Their participation in foreign exchange was 35.2 per cent in 2016/17 compared to 23.8 per cent in 2013/14. Illiteracy among females decreased from 37.3 per cent in 2006 to 30.7 per cent in 2017.

86. Schools provide equal opportunities for males and females to participate in activities, sports and physical education. Al-Azhar University has 39 faculties for girls in various disciplines. Female Azhar students are also provided opportunities to go on foreign educational missions and have been appointed to leadership positions at the university and its affiliated colleges.

87. Training courses and educational caravans have been conducted to raise girls' skills and wipe out girls' illiteracy in rural areas. Girls are given sports grants to support and encourage them to take part in sports activities and games. Girls have already won many gold, silver and bronze medals at the global, regional and local levels.

88. The National Commission for Women in Science and Technology was established in the Ministry of Scientific Research as a national entity charged with mainstreaming gender into the State's scientific research and technology plan. The Commission created a programme to encourage girls to enrol in scientific and technological disciplines in pre-university and university education, and a network and website for Arab Women in science and technology, which posts data on Egyptian women in that field.

89. The National Council for Women is preparing a proposal for a draft illiteracy eradication act. It includes a number of institutional amendments to create a new framework for illiteracy eradication efforts. The project is being implemented through a committee chaired by the Council President and including the Ministers of Local Development, Education and Solidarity, and the President of the General Authority for Literacy.

Article 11: Work

90. Egyptian women have the same right to work as men. The State is committed under the Constitution to equal opportunities for all citizens. The State is also obliged to provide social insurance services (the Constitution, articles 9, 12, 14 and 17).

91. Employment conditions in the private sector are regulated by the Labour Code (Act No. 12 of 2003), which contains an entire chapter women's employment, and covers aspects not covered by Act No. 203 of 1991 concerning public sector companies, and the Civil Service Code (Act No. 81 of 2016). None of these acts contain anything which discriminates against women. On the contrary, they guarantee women's rights such as taking maternity leave and childcare leave while preserving their financial rights, eligibility for promotion and seniority at work.

92. The Civil Service Code guarantees women the right to four months of maternity leave up to a maximum of three times over the course of their careers. Such leave may begin up to one month before delivery. The Code also reduces working hours for

female employees who breastfeed their child up to the age of two. That is in addition to childcare leave for a maximum of two years at a time, up to a maximum of six years over the course of employment. The Government pays whatever social insurance the mother is due or one-quarter pay, whichever she chooses, while she retains her job, seniority, scheduled raises, social allowances and right to promotion while she is on leave.

93. In 2016/17, 24.1 per cent of senior posts in the government sector were held by women. As of January 2018, 18.1 per cent of Government ministers were women.

94. Social insurance systems offered insurance benefits for retirement, disability and death, with 2017 statistics showing that women's participation in social insurance was 60.6 per cent, while health insurance participation was 57 per cent.

95. Efforts by the Government and the National Council for Women to promote employment opportunities for women

- Grants are provided for productive development projects. Rural women are given small enterprises with financial returns commensurate with social conditions and the surrounding environment. That provides them and their families with a minimum living standard and helps to reduce poverty and unemployment. The cost of the project is paid in instalments. During the 2008–2017 period, the total amount spent was 386,553,287 pounds, benefiting 247,759 women.
- In cooperation with the Women's Skills Development Centre and the Women's Development Fund, the National Research Centre held 25 training courses to help disseminate a culture of equal opportunities at private companies and factories. The courses were for workers in various senior management positions at certain private companies, banks and factories.
- Some 27 equal opportunity units have been created in governorate seats. The Minister of Manpower has issued a decision to form employment gender equality units and create a training manual on gender and sustainable development.
- In 2018, there were 289,505 females employed in private sector manufacturing and education, compared to 1,377,471 males. There were 66,363 females hired, including 1,606 with special needs. There were 196,128 females registered, of whom 3,753 were special needs.
- Working women's service centres have been established to provide services to alleviate the burdens of women and help them juggle family and work responsibilities. Centres offer a package of services needed by working women, including ready-to-eat meals, ready-to-wear clothing, machine washing and pressing of clothes and linens, trained cleaning ladies and child and elder care at reasonable rates. The centres are spread over 22 governorates throughout the country. There are 39 centres with 41 units that served 1,855,235 clients from 2008 through 31 December 2017.
- The Productive Families Programme fights poverty and works to raise family living standards. It maximizes the benefit from artisanal and handicraft skills that certain areas of Egypt are known for. There are 34,000 training centres in Egypt's governorates. The Ministry holds exhibitions to market products.
- A number of microeconomic projects to empower women economically were funded through the Ministry's Local Development Fund. Some 58 per cent of beneficiaries are women. The Ministry's "Your enterprise" programme provided 29,500 opportunities to young people to set up micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, at a cost of 1.152 billion pounds financed by Egyptian banks. Some 50 per cent of the enterprises were allocated to women.

- Entrepreneurship training was provided to 4,383 girls through the Ministry's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency.
- In 2017, national agencies were encouraged to make women's issues a priority. The proportion of financing for women's small business, through the Ministry's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency, was 49 per cent in 2017 compared to 20 per cent in 2016. The proportion of financing for women's enterprises in Wadi al-Jadid and Asyut Governorates ranged from 58 to 68 per cent of total funding.
- Training centres have been established in partnership with the private sector, at a cost of 66 million pounds, to train young graduates of both sexes in hotel work. They are granted suitable wages and an official certificate.
- The "Glad tidings" Small and Micro Enterprises programme provides loans to women breadwinners with microenterprises that employ 1 to 5 female workers.
- A "Training for employment" agreement was concluded among all stakeholders aimed at training and employing young people of both sexes in all governorates of Egypt in factories and companies.
- A project was implemented on "developing craft skills and improving the economic situations of women and their families" in Upper Egypt.
- The "Computer for every house" initiative supported a number of small and medium-sized companies seven governorates (Aswan, Asyut, Daqahliyah, Gharbiyah, Damietta, Port Said and Alexandria). The initiative contributed to employment training and capacity-building for a number of girls in those governorates.
- The "Egypt Green Product" project supports the productive and marketing capacities of women in the Egyptian governorates, in particular those known for date palm cultivation and associated products.
- The "Development of craft skills for women in Upper Egypt" project was a collaboration among the National Council for Women, the executive branch of the National Integrated Rural Development Programme, and the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute (CIHEAM IAMB) of Italy. Some 9,000 women benefited from training courses in literacy, basic education, specialized skills and project management in poultry and sheep farming, handicrafts and manufacturing. As part of the project, 2 million pounds was disbursed as revolving loans to 200 women.
- The "Building the resilience of food security systems in Upper Egypt" project for rural women aims to provide mechanisms to address climate change, and grants loans in kind.
- The "Daughters of Egypt" programme aims to provide loans to women breadwinners for poultry farming, the fruit and vegetable trade, and sewing and selling clothes.
- The Women's Skills Development Centre has been established. It administers several programmes to build the leadership and management skills of working women and State employees. Over 160 training courses have been attended by 3,600 women.
- The Women's Economic Empowerment Programme for Small Enterprises programme has been launched. It has held 110 training courses that have benefited 2,300 men and women.

- A training programme for new graduates financed in partnership with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Microsoft, the Ministry of Communications and the Ministry of Military Production has offered 140 training courses for 2,720 beneficiaries.
- Consultations and feasibility studies have been provided for more than 7,000 men and women beneficiaries.
- Exhibitions have been held inside and outside Egypt, benefiting 2,400 men and women.
- The “Information technology entrepreneurship” programme is a collaboration between the National Council for Women and Microsoft Corporate Social Responsibility. Some 17,000 young people of both sexes have benefited from the programme. The goal is to train them and build their capacities to use information technology to solve social problems. The programme held a celebration for the 20 women trainees who came up with the best smart electronic applications. A prize was awarded for an application that assists the families of missing persons and street children. Microsoft, the Egyptian Post Office and Aramex also teamed up to launch the “Aspire Khan” website, which helps market women’s products electronically.
- A cooperation protocol was signed with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment (Industrial Training Council) to develop a programme to reduce women’s unemployment and empower women through a national “training for employment programme” to develop technical, professional and behavioural skills for 50,000 female job seekers and qualify them for productive positions in the industrial and economic sectors or self-employment.
- A cooperation protocol was signed with the Industrial Council for Technology and Innovation of the Ministry of Industry to raise social and economic living standards for Egyptian women through workshops and training courses in environmental and craft skills.
- The “Role of Egyptian women: Egyptian cotton from planting to harvest” project was implemented in cooperation with private sector high-quality thread manufacturers, the Cotton Research and Development Centre and other relevant institutions including the Ministry of Agriculture and Industry and the Faculty of Agriculture at Cairo University. The project’s goal is to bring about an agricultural renaissance of long-staple Egyptian cotton. Training courses and technical consultations are offered to rural women leaders in governorates known for cotton cultivation (Sharqiyah, Daqahliyah, Kafr al-Shaykh, Gharbiyah and Buhayrah). They are trained to raise the awareness of women farmers about proper ways to cultivate and harvest the cotton crop, how to take care of seeds and how to prevent blights.
- Economic projects have been implemented for women breadwinners through cooperation protocols signed with six provinces (Qina, Suhaj, Luxor, Al-Wadi al-Jadid, Gharbiyah and North Sinai) to grant soft loans to women breadwinners in the poorest villages for small enterprises and microenterprises, including for poultry cultivation, livestock cultivation, sewing machines, the produce trade and other small income-generating projects.
- As part of a programme to help displaced Syrian women, some 1,085 Syrian women were trained in how to start small projects in their homes. The second phase of the programme targeted 1,000 women refugees from neighbouring countries, as well as Egyptian women, at proportions of 40 per cent and 60 per cent. (Counsellor Sana Khalil, Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this matter).

- The “Egyptian women: future leaders” was launched by the Sawiris Foundation in partnership with the French Embassy in Cairo and the Council. Its goal is to create jobs for 450 marginalized women and girls from poor neighbourhoods in Cairo.
- The “One village, one product” project was a partnership between the Social Fund for Development and UN-Women. The project’s goal is to increase the productivity and income of self-employed women, encourage successful new projects, improve the working environment in these communities and form clusters that in turn increase the value of different industries. Four projects have been implemented in four villages and rural areas to promote development of products for which those areas are known.
- A door-to-door campaign under the slogan “Support your country for a better tomorrow” was conducted to educate women and communities about the decisions taken by the State to correct the economic course of Egypt. The campaign reached 71,527 women and girls in 393 villages.
- An entrepreneurship training programme was conducted to prepare women to enter the labour market. There were 52 training courses in governorate subdistricts that provided training to 1,836 women in how to start small enterprises and equipped them with professional skills in some environmental and handicraft industries.
- The “Social justice through women’s economic empowerment” project was launched with the signing of a cooperation protocol with the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China. The goal was to improve the economic status of Egyptian women and ensure their participation in the development of their communities by creating income-generating opportunities for women breadwinners and poor women and providing them with skills in the sewing, date palm product and textile trades.
- A project to train women and prepare them for the job market was launched through cooperation between the Ministry of Social Solidarity and civil society associations. In its pilot stage it aimed to provide 450 girls with skills required for the labour market.

Article 12: Health

96. The Egyptian Constitution affirms the right of women to health care; a healthy environment; food; healthy housing; protection of the countryside, an improved standard of living for rural inhabitants and protection from environmental risks; decent housing; and health security (the Constitution, articles 8–14, 17, 18, 27–29, 41, 46, 59, 78 and 79).

97. The State is trying to increase Government spending allocations for the health sector and strengthen popular associations and civil society organizations that educate women about their own and their children’s health, in addition to increasing the number of health units and specialist doctors of both sexes in remote and poorer areas.

98. Measures and policies have been introduced to improve health care for women and children.

- The decade 2000–2010 was declared the second decade for the protection of Egyptian children.
- In 2018, a national strategy for the protection of childhood and motherhood was established. The implementation plan is being coordinated among stakeholders.

- A Supreme Technical Advisory Committee on Maternal Mortality was formed, headed by the Minister of Health and Population.
- Medical exams are offered to persons wishing to marry to verify that they are free of diseases that might affect their lives or those of their potential spouses or children as a condition for concluding a marriage contract.
- The Egyptian Government's commitment to health care and reproductive health programmes has translated into a significant reduction in maternal mortality to 43.6 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2017, compared with 63 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2005.
- According to the Demographic and Health Survey, coverage of pregnancy care services rose from 70 per cent in 2005 to 90.3 per cent in 2014. In 2014, 91.5 per cent of births are attended by a trained service provider.
- The rate of use of family planning methods remained at 59 per cent in 2005 and 2014. The Egyptian Government is currently working hard to improve, develop and increase rates of use of family planning services.

99. The Government, the National Council for Women and non-governmental organizations are making efforts to educate women about health services and disease prevention.

- Maternal care services during pregnancy are provided through the following government measures:
 - Medical exams and laboratory tests are provided at least five times during pregnancy.
 - Anaemia is treated, and therapeutic and preventive doses of iron and folic acid are provided.
 - Dangerous pregnancies are identified, and appropriate care is provided on a case-by-case basis.
 - Consultations are provided on nutrition and preparation for safe delivery.
 - Consultations are provided on the importance of family planning and how to obtain relevant services after birth.
 - Mother and childcare services are provided to deprived areas and slums through mobile clinics.
 - Safe obstetric services are provided by establishing standardized protocols:
 - ◆ A protocol has been established for hospital births. Obstetricians and department representatives are trained in emergency obstetric services using standardized treatment protocols.
 - ◆ A protocol has been established for natural childbirth. Nurses are trained and supplied with natural birthing equipment (birth kits), instruments and the necessary supplies.
- Gynaecology and obstetrics departments in general and district hospitals have been improved and provided with the necessary equipment.
- Training for nurse midwives has been expanded to five months for natural childbirth. They are granted licences to practice midwifery after completing the practical training programme. The goal is to replace traditional midwives with trained nurses.

- The Ministry of Health, the Social Fund for Development and civil society have cooperated to recruit 6,000 rural women leaders trained by the Ministry of Health and Population to raise community awareness about maternal and child health services. They have formed federations at the governorate level to enhance their status.
- Educational seminars have been held in collaboration with civil society leaders (people's councils and local councils) to correct misconceptions and raise awareness about women's health.
- A reproductive health advice hotline (0808880800) has been set up with women family planning doctors to respond to inquiries or complaints about the provision of service or the use of family planning methods.
- The role of rural women leaders has been enhanced by updating the rural leadership curriculum to include training in family health messages. Some 1.5 million home visits are conducted per month for women of reproductive age, and 40,000 educational seminars are held per month for users of services in health units.
- Committees have been set up to monitor maternal mortality in hospitals, review causes of death and determine the safety of procedures used in those cases. They conduct the following activities:
 - Safe maternity committees have been formed at the district level to follow up the maternal mortality monitoring system and the results of its work. The committees include university professors, gynaecologists and obstetricians at the Ministry of Health, and members from sectors relevant to strategies for reducing maternal mortality.
 - Reports are filed on cases of maternal mortality during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period.
 - Field investigations are done of all maternal mortality cases to determine the direct and indirect causes of death. The results of investigations are presented to safe maternity committees in the governorates, which follow up the causes of death and take measures to prevent their recurrence (such as making blood supplies available, training health teams, providing medicines and supplies, monitoring private clinics, and so on).
 - Maternal care services are provided during the postnatal period. Mother and newborn are monitored and necessary tests are done. The mother is given nutritional supplements and the infant is given the zero dose polio vaccine. A blood sample is taken to test for thyroid hormone.
 - The mother is encouraged to breastfeed exclusively for six months. Supplementary foods are introduced after six months. Breastfeeding continues to the age of two.
 - Advice and assistance are provided for birth-spacing (3–5 years).
 - Care is provided to mothers through home visits by women nurses, rural women leaders and health professionals, and referral of the mother to family planning services.
- The Government is making intensive efforts to make women aware of demographic and development services through a number of ministries, Government agencies and non-governmental organizations, including the following:

- The National Population Strategy 2015–2030 was designed to improve the quality of life of Egyptian citizens by reducing population growth rates to bring them into balance with economic growth rates.
- In 2015, hotline services for addiction served more than 3,706 female users.
- The State has enacted a universal health insurance act (Act No. 2 of 2018), which guarantees women health services and access to free health care if they are unable to afford treatment.
- The Council’s Office of the Ombudsperson for women’s complaints conducts interviews between clients and women social workers on the basis of specialized scientific and psychological methods.
- Awareness-raising campaigns have been launched for early detection of breast cancer.
- Awareness-raising campaigns have been launched to protect women from harmful health habits and practices.
- The awareness of the female public is being raised about diseases they might contract as a result of the surrounding environmental and community conditions.
- Awareness-raising campaigns have been launched to support women’s health, good nutrition and reproductive rights through youth centres and women’s clubs in the governorates.
- Contact is maintained with the Ministry of Health regarding the provisions of reproductive health services.
- The “Medical file for every woman” initiative aims to create a medical file for every woman corresponding to her national identity card. It records the types of health services she has received so that her health condition can be tracked throughout her life.
- The “Virus C-free Egypt programme” was launched in collaboration with the Misr El Kheir Foundation to achieve the national goal of reducing the spread of hepatitis C to 1 per cent of the population as set forth in the 2030 strategy.
- Medical convoys and health awareness meetings have been conducted at the governorate level in all specialties.
- The Population and Family Planning Division of the Ministry of Health launched family planning and reproductive health refresher campaigns throughout 2018 in a number of governorates. They included family planning and reproductive health services and medicines dispensed free of charge through fixed and mobile clinics, urban clinics, general and district hospitals, and maternity and childcare centres.
- Institutional capacities have been increased for health, science and biology teachers in schools to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining family health.

Article 13: Economic and social life

100. Under the Constitution, the State is committed to equal opportunities for all citizens, the provision of social insurance services and the right of all to engage in sports. State institutions work to discover and sponsor gifted athletes and take

necessary measures to encourage the practice of sport (the Constitution, articles 9, 12, 14, 17 and 84).

101. Under the Tax Code (No. 91 of 2005), women are entitled to family tax credits on an equal basis with men, eliminating the discrimination that obtained under the previous tax code.

102. The Government, the National Council for Women and civil society have promoted employment opportunities for women by doing the following:

- The political leadership launched the “Prisons without men or women debtors” campaign. The Council held campaigns in the governorates to raise awareness about the importance of reducing expenses in marriage. Seminars were held to raise awareness of the risks involved in the use of checks and credit. Women debtors are offered public service as an alternative to prison. Meetings have been held with members of the legislature and the judiciary to come up with alternative penalties.
- Awareness-raising seminars were held by the Office of the Ombudsperson for women’s complaints and its branch offices in the governorates to increase women’s legal awareness. They were attended by 245,329 women. Seminars were held by Council branches in the governorates to raise the awareness of women in local communities about the importance of educating girls, obtaining official documents, and other social issues. They were attended by 689,212 women.
- The small enterprises agency of the Ministry of Trade and Industry finances small enterprises, provides loans on concessional terms, and supports marketing and export capabilities by holding exhibitions and mass marketing campaigns for enterprises without any discrimination between women and men.
- A culture of financial awareness is being spread among women, schoolgirls and women university students to help raise savings rates, encourage entrepreneurship and increase financial inclusion as a national standard in light of the 2030 women’s strategy. Women’s access to financial services, especially banking, is being increased through official financial channels. They are provided with quality services, reasonable rates and preferential conditions. Efforts are being made to increase women’s use of financial services by establishing a mechanism to employ modern technology to market financial services and facilitate access by signing a memorandum of understanding between the National Council for Women and the Central Bank.
- The savings and loan project aims to expand lending and savings in the poorest and most underserved villages by using the savings of women’s groups in local communities for basic revolving loans. The project tries to build the capacities of those groups to strengthen the revolving loan and savings process. Links have been set up with official financial institutions in cooperation with Care International. The project was implemented in Bani Suwayf, Minya and Asyut governorates.
- The Egyptian Government launched the “Insurance document” life insurance programme during the Year of Egyptian Women. It gave free life insurance policies to 50,000 women breadwinners in need.
- National identity cards have been issued to women who were unable to obtain them in towns and villages so they can obtain bank loans, and any form of financial credit. Some 3 million cards were issued during the reporting period.
- Through cooperation with research centres, studies, research and field surveys have been conducted on empowering women economically. A framework has

been set up for policies and plans to support and women and empower them economically.

103. Egyptian universities also help to promote women's economic empowerment.

- A culture of basic legal awareness of rights and duties under the Egyptian Constitution and laws is being disseminated through campaigns organized by the University's Centre for Human Rights Studies and Research. They include the following: a campaign to issue identity documents for unregistered women; a campaign to raise awareness about the Personal Status Code; a campaign to help needy women patients and their families through the Friends of the Cancer Institute initiative; a campaign to raise awareness of the health problems associated with menopause and prevention of osteoporosis; a campaign to raise awareness of early detection of cancer of the reproductive system; and a campaign to raise awareness among women factory workers of the importance of breast self-examination.
- The Civil Society Forum has established a partnership between the National Council for Women and civil society to build shared visions and cooperate effectively to empower women in public life, improve their situations in all fields, and strengthen their role in civil society.

104. Egyptian women take part in social, recreational, sports and cultural activities without discrimination between them and men. Not only do they participate in all kinds of sports, social and cultural clubs, but in some cases they are also active on the boards of those clubs. Women's clubs, spas and sports centres have proliferated in villages. They are called "women's clubs" or "rural women's development centres" to encourage women in rural areas to join.

105. Egyptian women take part in sports tournaments at the national, regional and international levels. They have won international championships in swimming, taekwondo, cycling, weightlifting, table tennis, squash, kickboxing and volleyball. A department of women's sports has been established with a gender-responsive budget to support women's sports activities in federations and athletic clubs scattered throughout the governorates.

106. In 2015, women accounted for 42.3 per cent of all loan recipients. That figure included 16.4 per cent of small businesses loans and 6.3 percent of microenterprise loans (a total of 22.7 per cent). The proportion of women holding bank accounts increased from 9 per cent in 2015 to 27 per cent in 2017.

107. The proportion of small and medium enterprises run by women increased from 23 per cent in 2015 to 46 per cent in 2018. The proportion of microfinance loans for women increased from 45 per cent in 2015 to 69 per cent in 2018. The proportion of women investors in the stock exchange was 30 per cent. Of the 3 million small and medium enterprise beneficiaries, 70 per cent were women as of 2018.

108. Women account for 89 per cent of social protection programme beneficiaries (2.25 million families/10 million individuals). Cash transfers under the Takaful and Karamah (Solidarity and Dignity) programme increased by 235 per cent. Some 38 million women received food support, bread and flour.

Article 14: Rural women

109. The Constitution affirms the right of all citizens to an improved quality of life, access to social justice and social solidarity mechanisms. A quarter of seats on local councils (25 per cent) are allocated to women. The Government also allows rural women to join local executive councils by appointment. The Constitution supports

the participation of rural women in drafting development plans at the local level (the Constitution, articles 8, 78 and 180).

110. The category “rural women” covers women living in rural or desert settings. That includes 4,625 Egyptian villages and their environs. According to the 2017 census, such populations accounted for 27.8 per cent of the national total.

111. Rural women are active in certain economic sectors. However, a majority of rural women’s employment is concentrated in agriculture and fishing, which accounted for 53.8 per cent of total rural women’s employment in 2017. Agriculture in Egypt is in fact notable for women’s participation in most agricultural tasks. Women take part in all the various stages of agricultural production. In 2017, unemployment among rural women was around 18.8 per cent, compared to 7.1 per cent for men.

112. The Government supports rural women through a national development programme that includes the provision of concessional loans through the Local Development Fund. Training and technical assistance is provided for small enterprises, microenterprises and craft enterprises. New marketing opportunities are provided to help women market their products through exhibitions and local and foreign markets. A special programme has been implemented for rural women’s development.

113. A craft skills development project has been launched to help improve the economic status of women in Upper Egypt. Access is provided to concessional loans for craft enterprises involving spinning, weaving, pottery, ceramics and palm frond products, and for food businesses involving agricultural products and livestock.

114. Women’s committees have been established within the Regional Federation of Popular Associations and Institutions at the governorate level to make sure that women’s issues are taken into account in local development planning. That initiative has been followed up by federations of women’s associations in each governorate.

115. The Ministry of Health has mobilized 14,000 rural women leaders to make home visits to women. Educational seminars have been held in health units and elsewhere to raise awareness of family planning issues and the importance of birth spacing and its impact on maternal and child health and potential to reduce maternal and child mortality. Awareness is also being raised about pregnancy, high-risk pregnancy, and the importance of giving birth in health institutions under the supervision of a trained medical team. Likewise, efforts are being made to raise awareness about gender issues, social roles, the difference between sex and gender, discrimination and violence against women (including female genital mutilation, early marriage, and physical, psychological and economic violence). Rural women leaders have carried out some 1.5 million home visits annually and there have been about 500,000 educational seminars at health units.

116. The Government has done the following:

- Health awareness campaigns on family planning methods and reproductive health have been held in towns and villages.
- There are more than 520 mobile clinics equipped to deliver family planning and reproductive health services free of charge to informal, remote and underserved communities with special attention to the poorest and most in need of care, with the goal of achieving universal health coverage.
- In 2018–2019, there were 138,643 mobile clinic users compared to 860,036 in 2015. There were 789 medical convoys in 2018–2019 compared to 589 in 2014–2015.

- Free family planning and reproductive health services are provided by 5,350 permanent clinics nationwide in primary health care units and in general and district hospitals.
- The political leadership has implemented a women's health initiative that provides the following services: health awareness under the 100 Million Healthy Lives initiative, non-communicable disease screening (high blood pressure, diabetes), weight measurement, and breast examinations for women over 35 and high-risk individuals. Some 8,597,528 individuals have benefited.

117. The National Council for Women collaborated with stakeholders to launch a 17-day campaign to empower rural women.

- Rural women were involved in planning programmes for the 2007–2012 five-year plan through a project implemented by the Council in collaboration with UNFPA. Together, the 27 plans for the 27 governorates amount to a national plan for the advancement of women incorporated into the national five-year plan. The local plans reflected the actual needs of rural women. The experience pointed to the importance of planning with input from the ground level on up to the central level, employing the principle of decentralization, and letting local leadership take part in decision-making.
- A number of exhibitions of handicrafts of Egyptian women were held at Council Secretariat headquarters and branches in the governorates under the slogan “Promote the products of the daughters of your country” to support national industry and revive heritage crafts.
- The “Women's economic empowerment to support national industry” project was implemented to improve the skills of rural women leaders and teach women and men farmers modern methods of collecting and harvesting long-staple cotton. It allows rural women leaders to work as agricultural consultants and prepares others to work as agricultural consultants in the future under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture.
- The Council implemented a project to develop the neediest villages as part of the national “Geographic targeting of poverty” project. It coordinates with the ministries and entities that will implement development projects in these villages. In accordance with the directives of the Council President, a committee was formed to select target villages. The villages of Bani Ruh in the Mallawi district of Minya governorate and Hasamidah in the Tima district in Suhaj governorate were selected to be models for the Council's project. Coordinated efforts are being implemented to raise the standard of living in those villages. As a first stage, the Council carried out a comprehensive survey of the first village to determine needs on the ground.
- The Council's Women's Skills Development Centre helps to develop women's craft products by improving quality and providing access to internal and external markets for women owners of small enterprises and microenterprises. It studies and evaluates the quality of their products and the marketing problems they face as a first step to laying out a framework for improving quality.
- The Government conducts training courses to raise the legal awareness of rural women leaders about personal status issues and violence against women. Some 20 courses were held in the governorates for 500 rural women leaders.
- The Council has established a centre in every governorate to train rural women and develop their skills for starting and managing small enterprises in accordance with prevailing local conditions, taking into account environmental

and material possibilities and emphasizing the use of techniques appropriate for the local community.

- Women's clubs are promoted and developed all over rural Egypt in all the governorates. There are 2551 such clubs, which engage in the following activities:
 - They try to increase the use of family planning methods through development interventions and linking population increase with projects to support women and increase family income.
 - They hold awareness-raising seminars.
 - They coordinate with ministries and entities operating in the field of human development with the aim of improving demographic indicators through illiteracy eradication, adult education and women's economic, cultural and political development to create suitable employment opportunities.
 - They coordinate with civil society organizations and the Social Fund for Development to provide loans for small enterprises.
 - They hold exhibits to showcase and market products of the women's clubs.
 - They raise awareness of the importance of women acquiring life skills and addressing all forms of violence.
 - Women's club supervisors and media officials have been trained in non-traditional ways of delivering health messages.
 - Media forums are held to raise social awareness of the population problem. Information is disseminated about family planning services and methods, the importance of birth spacing and the advantages of small families.

118. Care International cooperates with the Council to help increase rural women's savings, enterprises, and the number of beneficiaries.

- Care International has been working on this project since 2009, when Egypt took steps to implement the savings and loan model. That agency facilitates the creation and implementation on the ground of savings groups in villages and districts.
- The Council is working on a proposal to generalize and expand this model by signing a memorandum of understanding with the Central Bank of Egypt to increase women's financial inclusion.
- Under the terms of the Protocol, the second objective is to "adopt a project aimed at raising savings rates and encouraging entrepreneurship". The fourth objective is to "increase women's access to financial services", particularly banking, through the development of a mechanism that uses modern technology to market and facilitate access to financial services and overcome obstacles to their use.
- The Board and the Central Bank of Egypt are currently working with Care International, the Bank of Alexandria and Vodafone to develop a new model for the savings and loan project, and to study ways to implement and develop a pilot phase that would include digitization and electronic portfolios for groups of women in order to make it easier for them to save.

Article 15: The law

We refer you to the previous report of Egypt, and add that the current Constitution and amendments thereto affirm the equality of rights and duties without discrimination. That includes civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights (articles 11 and 53).

119. The Government's Legislative Reform Committee and the relevant national governmental and independent mechanisms, including the National Council for Women, are working to counter negative and discriminatory social phenomena and practices. Legal studies, social research and economic and statistical surveys are being done in advance of implementing the programmes, policies and plans necessary to achieve the above-mentioned national strategic objectives, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. Negative phenomena are being countered as follows:

- Legislation is being reviewed and stripped of any provisions that constitute or promote discriminatory practices against women. That is done through new constitutional provisions and draft acts for constitutional amendments, such as the House of Representatives Act, the Local Administration Act and the Senate Act.
- Negative and discriminatory social phenomena and practices are being challenged, and in particular all forms of human trafficking, including contractual marriage, minor marriage and tourism marriage. Female illiteracy has been reduced to its lowest levels. Women's awareness of their rights and duties has been raised, and they are supported in obtaining identity and family status documents. The aforementioned strategies and programmes are being carried in accordance with objective plans and set timetables.

Article 16: Marriage and family life

120. Laws governing family relations in marriage, divorce, custody and inheritance are based on Islamic law for Muslims. Christian and Jewish Egyptians use their own laws to regulate their personal status and religious affairs (the Constitution, articles 2 and 3).

121. The marriage contract is a consensual contract concluded on the basis of offer and acceptance.⁷ Marriage can only be contracted with the consent of the wife. Otherwise, the contract is null and void. Marriage contracts may not be registered for anyone of either sex under 18 (Gregorian calendar) years old at the time the contract is concluded.

122. In accordance with the provisions of Islamic law and Egyptian law, a man is obliged to provide dowry and gifts to the wife at the time of the conclusion of the marriage contract. He must also provide a well-equipped and furnished house, and pay upkeep on it throughout the marriage, even if she is working or has an income. Upon divorce, he is obliged to pay any deferred dowry and continue to pay for her upkeep during the post-marital waiting period.

123. A woman may have recourse to the courts to seek a divorce on any grounds provided for by law. That is without prejudice to her full financial rights, which include the deferred dowry and upkeep during the waiting period, as well as alimony, which must be the equivalent of at least two years of marital upkeep, and can be more depending on the ex-husband's financial and social situation, the length of the marriage and whether the divorce was amicable or litigated.

⁷ Appeal No. 194, sixty-fourth year, personal status, session of 19 October 1998.

124. In a case where the woman finds the marriage intolerable, she has the right to request a divorce in exchange for waiving her sharia financial rights and returning the dowry to compensate the man for financial burdens incurred during the marriage. A ruling granting a divorce sought by a woman is issued by a court of first instance and not subject to any avenue of appeal.

125. A mother has the right to custody of children up through the age of 15. After that, children may choose. Children may stay with the mother by choice until a girl is married or a boy finishes his education, taking the best interests of the child into account. The man is required to provide suitable housing for a nursing mother and infants, and to pay full upkeep for the children (housing, food and clothing) until a girl is married or a boy finishes his education. He must pay for the children's upbringing, including the wages of a domestic servant if conditions so require.

126. The Inheritance Act (No. 77 of 1943) was amended by Act No. 219 of 2019 to guarantee women their financial rights to inheritance based on the provisions of the sharia. It takes a fair and balanced approach that considers women's duties and men's obligation to bear financial burdens. It specifies the woman's share of inheritance according to degree of kinship with the deceased. In some cases, women's shares are equal to those of men, and there are 20 situations in which a woman's share is greater than that of a man. Sometimes a female can even inherit where a male does not. The Islamic sharia and Egyptian law therefore guarantee rights to women that the Convention does not.

Violence against women

127. For the first time, the Egyptian Constitution requires the State to protect women from all forms of violence. It ensures a balance between family duties and work requirements and provides for care and protection for women who are breadwinners, elderly or needy (article 11). Several laws and judicial rulings were issued during the reporting period in implementation of the provisions of that article. We have cited some of them in our responses to paragraphs 15, 16, 23 and 24 of the concluding observations and the section of this report that deals with article 12.

128. A 2015 survey by the National Council for Women revealed that 206,000 women were exposed to pregnancy risks during the prior year due to spousal violence. Abortion and stillbirth rates were higher among battered women compared to women who did not experience violence (40.1 per cent versus 36.6 per cent). Low birth weight was also higher for battered women than women who did not experience violence (7.3 per cent versus 5.3 per cent). Lastly, studies estimated the total cost of gender-based violence at 6,015 million Egyptian pounds per year, assuming that violent incidents perpetrated by husbands and fiancés continued at the same rate throughout the past year.⁸

129. The National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women emerged from the consensus among stakeholders on the importance of developing and implementing a national strategy to eliminate all forms of violence against women. The National Strategy for Combating Violence Against Women 2015–2020 was developed through an integrated participatory approach in cooperation with 11 ministries, Al-Azhar, the Church and civil society representatives. Protocols and memorandums of understanding were signed between the National Council for Women and stakeholders to implement agreed-upon annual action plans through 2020 to combat all forms of violence against women and girls.

⁸ Study on the economic cost of gender-based violence, National Council for Women and the Central Authority for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAMPAS), 2015.

130. The national strategy against violence rests on four pillars:

- *Prevention.* Public awareness is increased through training and awareness-raising programmes, media, communication and social networking.
- *Protection.* This pillar involved strengthening law enforcement by developing coordination mechanisms and referral systems and creating an environment that encourages battered women to report violent incidents and make use of services and protection and assistance programmes.
- *Intervention.* This pillar involved providing services to battered women and girls.
- *Prosecution.* This pillar involved leveraging international experiences in providing care and protection services to victims of violence by conducting field visits to countries and learning from best practices and success stories.

Government efforts

131. **The Ministry of the Interior**

- Ministry of the Interior Decision No. 2285 of 2013 established a department within the Ministry's human rights division to follow up violence against women and make sure that all legal measures are taken and that psychological and community support are provided to victims.
- The Ministry took part in drafting the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women 2015–2020 spearheaded by the National Council for Women. Along with the Ministry of Health and Population and in cooperation with UNFPA, it created a manual and a medical protocol for handling victims of gender-based violence, including sexual violence.
- The Ministry signed a cooperation protocol with the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood to provide support to battered women and children. It held a training and awareness-raising programme to help empower women to exercise their rights and protect their freedoms, and to have identity cards issued to women from all over the country who were previously unable to obtain them.
- Minister of the Interior Decision No. 2180 of 2014 created sections in all security directorates devoted to combating crimes of violence against women to augment the Ministry's system for confronting and dealing decisively with crimes against women.
- Each security directorate has a plan to combat crimes of violence against women in all their forms within its geographical jurisdiction, especially incidents of group violence. Perpetrators are arrested and legal measures are taken against them.
- Security has been stepped up in crowded places, public transport and other places where women are exposed to increased risk, particularly at festivals and fairs.
- A mechanism has been established for receiving complaints relating to women via telephone, fax or the human rights division website. The necessary investigations are conducted, direct communication is maintained between officers and victims of violent sexual assault, and psychological and community support is provided.
- The heads of human rights divisions, departments and units nationwide are charged with following up reports of violence against women and receiving victims in their offices confidentially and privately.

- Personnel working in the area of combating violence against women have been sent to a number of States that have already had successes (the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Sweden) to exchange experiences.

132. The Ministry of Justice

- A women and children's department has been established in the human rights division of the Ministry of Justice. It includes a special department to combat violence against women that provides legal protection for women victims of violence and prosecutes offenders.
- The Ministry has signed a cooperation protocol with the National Council for Women to expedite legislative amendments to protect women.
- Programmes have been implemented to train judges, prosecutors, medical examiners and police officers in the skills needed to combat violence against women, human trafficking and contractual marriage.
- The Ministry is studying a proposal from the National Council for Women on a comprehensive law to combat violence against women.
- The Ministry has established a department to oversee women's support offices in courts of first instance.
- The Ministry has established 170 family dispute settlement offices in the governorates. They offer counselling and assistance for the amicable dispute settlement of family disputes, and disseminate family awareness.
- Capacity-building for the family dispute resolution offices was part of a development project funded by UNDP. The goals included to support access for women and the neediest classes to justice facilities, raise legal awareness of family issues, equip family court facilities with information technology, and prepare a procedural manual for handling cases of violence against women in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
- In 2008, legal assistance offices were set up in family courts in cooperation with UNDP. They provide legal advice and assistance in family courts free of charge and help to support and develop the capacities of the family dispute settlement offices. There have been 34 offices established in seven governorates. They offer legal advice to litigants in the family courts and provide assistance with the paperwork and procedures required to file a case in order to facilitate litigation and ensure that cases are not thrown out for lack of compliance with legal formalities.⁹ As of 2015, such offices had provided legal assistance in 49,597 family disputes, of which 36,948 were filed by women.¹⁰
- A special department was established within the Specialized Courts Division at Ministry headquarters to oversee these offices, and to develop plans make their presence universal in all family courts so they can provide free services to members of the public who are unable to pay.

133. The Ministry of Solidarity

- The Ministry has established women's shelters and guidance centres. They provide family counselling through one-on-one or group sessions, or over the phone. They also hold family counselling and reconciliation sessions. They provide psychological and legal services to women and refer them for health

⁹ Fatima Khafagy, Thanaa El-Shami, "Evaluation report of access to justice project", January 2014, p. 3.

¹⁰ <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/ourstories/access-to-justice-for-the-vulnerable-in-egypt-.html>.

services if necessary. They provide housing for women victims of any kind of violence, and let them bring their children. They provide training for residents and offer them opportunities to work. They raise community awareness to combat all forms of violence and discrimination against women. There are nine such centres in the country, benefiting 386 women and 271 children.

- Residential institutions have been established for children deprived of family care to ensure their proper upbringing.
- Specialized institutions are dedicated to treating women victims of violence and preparing them to re-enter society.
- The Ministry has distributed a guide to dealing with violence. It trains doctors and provides a complete tool kit for dealing with violence. It has provided medical support and training for more than 1,000 doctors.
- The Ministry has launched “enlightenment” caravans to reinforce positive social values, customs and norms and combat negative ones.

134. **The Ministry of Health:** The Ministry has made efforts to raise awareness on issues relating to violence against women through the following:

- The Ministry holds session for the public in target communities and within health units.
- The Ministry uses social media sites to reach its target audience, and has created a Facebook page to raise awareness, promote family planning services and methods, and dispel false rumours
- The Ministry has created a family planning media group, and a family planning information site to disseminate health messages.

135. On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Al-Azhar Global Centre for Electronic Fatwas issued a statement calling for the rejection of all forms of violence against women as contrary to Islamic law. Al-Azhar has also categorically and unconditionally criminalized harassment via gesture, word or deed. It has declared that the perpetrator a sinner and ruled that the act cannot be justified by the behaviour or dress of the girl.

136. **Efforts by the National Council for Women to combat images of violence against women**

- The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 was issued by the National Council for Women at the beginning of 2017, which was declared the Year of Egyptian Women by the President of the Republic. The Strategy will serve as a working document for years to come. It rests on four pillars: political empowerment, economic empowerment, social empowerment and protection.
- One of the objectives of the protection pillar is to eliminate female genital mutilation in accordance with the following timetable:

<i>Impact indicators</i>	<i>Value recorded for 2014</i>	<i>Target for 2020</i>	<i>Target for 2025</i>	<i>Target for 2030</i>
Percentage of women already married who had undergone female genital mutilation	92	78	67	55
Percentage of girls under the age of 16 expected to undergo female genital mutilation	56	40	25	10

137. Information and awareness-raising campaigns to disseminate knowledge and information about female genital mutilation have been launched in all governorates of Egypt. Door-to-door campaigns have made field visits to 1,155,706 women and girls in 1,384 villages over the past three years. The campaigns spread awareness messages on the seriousness of this practice and its medical, psychological and social ill effects. The campaigns also address other topics such as violence against women, personal status law, legal rights, women's political participation and other women's issues.

138. The National Committee for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation was established in May 2019. It is co-chaired by the National Council for Women and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and works to consolidate efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation in Egypt through the development of a national plan that follows a multisectoral participatory approach with a set timetable and budget based on sustainability, evaluation and follow-up. The plan draws on initiatives and efforts employed to implement the National Strategy for Childhood and Motherhood 2018–2030, the Strategic Framework for the Elimination of Violence against Children, the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 and the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women.

139. In preparing the plan and drafting public policies, the Council made a detailed study of the current situation. That included statistical and field studies, indicator surveys and reviews of advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, programmes, policies and strategic trends related to the fight against female genital mutilation in Egypt since 2003.

140. The Committee has launched an awareness-raising campaign in all governorates with the hashtag "Protect them against female genital mutilation". Its geographic scope included 26 of the governorates. From 13 June to 7 August 2019, the campaign implemented 284 activities targeting 3,364,222 individuals. In drafting the plan, the Council divided it into two main parts: a centralized component, and a local governorate-level component, as follows:

I: The centralized activities of the National Council for Women and its branches and the child protection committees of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood in the governorates

Activities of the National Council for Women targeted 1,084,782 individuals as follows:

- The campaign kicked off with a press conference attended by 200 people.
- Three medical convoys in the Asmarat neighbourhood served 9,000 people (7,500 women and 1,500 children).
- A two-day regional conference on the elimination of child marriage and female genital mutilation was attended by 1,200 individuals. It was held in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the African Union, the European Union partnership, the United Nations and Plan International Egypt. It issued the Cairo Call for Action to eliminate child marriage and female genital mutilation in Africa.
- A training workshop was held for 65 women preachers from the Ministry of Awqaf, as well as nuns and lay women church servants, to help them acquire skills for moderating dialogues and discussions to educate women about the harms of female genital mutilation and raise awareness through home visits and door-to-door campaigns.

- A medical convoy conducted by the Health and Population Committee of the National Council for Women in Gharbiyah Governorate served 160 individuals (120 women, 10 men and 30 children).
- A number of seminars were held as part of the cultural and intellectual activities of the Egyptian Opera House, attended by 230 individuals.
- Four two-day training sessions were held at the headquarters of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, attended by 130 individuals (81 women and 49 men). They included lawyers, social workers from the Office of the Ombudsperson for women's complaints, staff from the children's helpline and members of Council branches in Cairo, Giza and Qalyubiyah Governorates. The sessions raised awareness about the legal and legislative aspects of female genital mutilation, and procedures for filing a complaint.
- A training course was held for 350 judges on violence against women and female genital mutilation. It covered the legislative framework for violent crimes against women, practical problems relating to those issues, and the psychological, health and social impact of early marriage and female genital mutilation.
- There were 726,000 views of articles and news items on the "Protect her from female genital mutilation" campaign on the National Council for Women Facebook page, and 347,349 views of articles and news items on the "Protect her from female genital mutilation" campaign on the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood Facebook page.
- There were 53 awareness-raising caravans in 26 governorates attended by 15,482 individuals (11,813 women, 1,618 men and 2,051 children). They included contests, gifts and cultural activities for children of both sexes.
- There were 93 seminars in 26 governorates attended by 14,697 individuals (11,284 women, 2,255 men and 1,158 children) to raise awareness of the medical and legislative aspects and health, psychological and social impacts of female genital mutilation.
- Four seminars were held in cooperation with the General Authority for Cultural Palaces of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture in Cairo, attended by 153 individuals (141 women and 12 children).
- Three training sessions were held for rural women leaders in Fayyum Governorate as part of the Children's Rights and Family Empowerment Programme in collaboration with the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, attended by 135 individuals (119 women and 16 men).
- Three training sessions were held in Fayyum Governorate as part of the Children's Rights and Family Empowerment Programme in collaboration with the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, attended by 136 individuals (120 women and 16 men).
- There were 26 training courses in 26 governorates in preparation for "Protect her from female genital mutilation" door-to-door campaigns, attended by 1,663 individuals (1,625 women and 38 men), including rural women leaders, members of protection committees and members of Council branches in the governorates. The courses provide training in knowledge, skills and attitudes about the practice of female genital mutilation and its ill effects. They then transmitted accurate information to women and other target groups through home visits as a step towards changing behaviours with respect to female genital mutilation. They acquire skills for moderating dialogues and discussions to

educate women about the harms of female genital mutilation through home visits and door-to-door campaigns.

- There were 78 door-to-door campaigns in 26 provinces. They included 39 seminars, 4 medical caravans and an exhibition. Five complaints were processed. Some 2,245,522 people were reached (1,033,934 women, 422,046 men and 789,542 children) in 835 villages across the country.
- The National Council for Women has issued publications to disseminate awareness and accurate information on female genital mutilation. Topics include “the Islamic perspective on fighting female genital mutilation,” “the World Day against Female Genital Mutilation”, “Islamic law and certain community issues” and “reproductive health”.
- Efforts are being made to reduce rates of violence against women, create a safe and supportive environment for victims, and criminalize such violence through reform of laws and legislation. That is being done in coordination with State agencies and institutions, including the National Council for Women, which has taken practical steps and developed policies to stop such violence, including the following:
 - In 2016–2017, as part of the celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign was implemented. It involved a series of activities aimed at raising awareness among communities of the seriousness of violence against women. The campaign was conducted in cooperation with various State institutions, civil society organizations and international organizations.
 - The “One million signatures against violence” campaign was sponsored by the Council to support Egyptian women against sexual harassment and move towards safe communities for Egyptian women.
 - The Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls project was implemented in collaboration with UN-Women and a number of civil society organizations. The project was implemented in three slum areas (Munsha’at al-Nasir, Imbabah and Izbat al-Hajjanah). The goal was to combat violence against women in public streets and alleys. Community groups of young volunteers were created in the target areas to raise the awareness of the surrounding community about the importance of confronting violence against women. The project used new and innovative methods that made use of sports, interactive theatre and development through art. The project aims to improve the lives of Egyptians by creating safe neighbourhoods and communities free from violence against women and girls.
 - A Medical Guide for Treating Victims of Gender-Based Violence, including sexual violence was created through cooperation among the Ministries of Health and Population, Justice, the Interior and Social Solidarity. The project received support from UNFPA in Egypt.
 - The Council’s Office of the Ombudsperson for women’s complaints functions as a link between the National Council for Women and Egyptian women who have experienced problems relating to any form of discrimination or treatment contrary to the principle of equality and equal opportunity as guaranteed by the Egyptian Constitution and laws and the obligations of Egypt under international conventions.

II: The role of universities: Egyptian public and private universities are working to put an end to negative phenomena that threaten women's lives, safety and dignity through the following measures:

- There are 14 units to combat violence and harassment against women units at private and Government universities. They help to ensure protection for girls within the academic community and provide an educational environment in which female students are valued, respected and equal. There are workshops and meetings to help raise awareness against harassment of students, faculty members and staff, and spread a culture of respect for women.
 - Media awareness is raised through seminars, posters and youth volunteers. Female police supervision has been tightened on public transportation.
 - Seminars are held on women's issues and the clash between old traditions and new practices, the conflict over women's role in the workplace, the psychological problems of divorce caused by the tension between values and needs, the problem of divorce by decree and its impact on women, the criminalization of domestic violence and the development of educational and counselling services for women.
 - Universities contribute to the committee to follow up the national strategy to combat violence against women. Awareness seminars are held for young doctors on the forms of violence against women and on domestic violence and abuse.
 - Academic curricula have been incorporated on the topic of accepting women as equal members of society.
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