

National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030

Vision and Pillars



2017

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Title

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The national duty and responsibility to history necessitate us to accelerate the pace of women's empowerment, preserve their rights, and place them in a position that is worthy of their values, capabilities and sacrifices throughout history. In accordance with the Egyptian Constitution, which expresses the will of the Egyptian people and established the values of justice and equality, embracing the constitutional values of equal opportunities and the rights of women that it has set forth;

In line with Egypt's Vision 2030 and its Sustainable Development Strategy that seeks to build a just society, which guarantees the rights and equal opportunities the nation's sons and daughters to the highest degree of social integration of all groups, and the belief that the Egyptian state's stability and progress will only be achieved by ensuring the active participation of women in all aspects of national work, and;

In the framework of the declaration of the Year of Women 2017, I decided to assign the government, all organs of the State, and the National Council for Women to regard the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 as the working document for the next years to activate the plans, programs and projects included in this strategy.

President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi

Speech at the Celebration of the Egyptian Women's Day 2017

21 March 2017

Preface

Egypt is leading a serious battle to rebuild the State on the basis of new foundations— following two revolutions— which revealed the legitimate aspirations of the nation's sons and daughters toward a better life for all Egyptians; a future that is worthy of Egypt's cultural heritage and hence its rightful position among developed countries. This requires bringing together all Egyptians, men and women, to unleash their potential, with the aim of achieving comprehensive development on all social, economic, and political levels.

Without the true empowerment of women, in a manner that allows for their self-fulfillment, freeing and supporting their abilities, their smooth and safe participation, no development efforts will be successful nor will intended objectives be achieved.

In this context, the National Council for Women (NCW) initiated a wide community dialogue to develop the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women. The Strategy has been endorsed by all national actors and concerned State bodies, under the auspices of a political leadership that is committed to supporting Egyptian women, and is determined to take all possible measures to empower and capacitate women in order to play their righteous role in enhancing and developing the nation.

The Strategy is a real-life translation of the Constitution, which was endorsed by all Egyptians, enshrining equal rights and opportunities as the cornerstone of sustainable nation building, holding the State accountable for the elimination of all forms of discrimination, guaranteeing fundamental rights, and ensuring the protection of all women and girls.

The Strategy fully complies with the spirit and direction of Egypt's Vision 2030 and its Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS). It complements its pillars and aims at building a cohesive society, which is recognized for guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities for all men and women alike. The Strategy is also in line with the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted globally as a comprehensive approach to development.

The Strategy is issued early in 2017, which is the Year of Egyptian Women as announced by H.E. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, and its implementation extends to 2030. The strategy is comprised of four comprehensive pillars: women's political empowerment and leadership; women's economic empowerment; women's social empowerment; and women's protection. An emphasis is made on the need for serious efforts to change the social culture and norms that limit women's full participation, in addition to strengthening women's access to their legal rights. The strategy outlines a set of strategic interventions, that if are successfully implemented would lead to the required shift that Egyptians aspire to.

We sincerely hope that in these critical years of building the future of the nation, the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women will garner the required support of all society and State institutions to achieve its intended objectives for Egyptian women, achieving prosperity for all and leaving no one behind.

Maya Morsy

President of the National Council for Women

List of Accronyms

BPFA	The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	The Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECES	Egyptian Center for Economic Studies
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGI	Gender Gap Index
GII	Gender Inequality Index
ICPD	The International Conference on Population and Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NCSCR	National Center for Social and Criminological Research
NCW	The National Council for Women
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations

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1. Introduction

Based on the recent transformations witnessed by the Egyptian society since 2011, Egypt is progressing confidently towards building a new future for all the nation's sons and daughters. Serious efforts to truly empower the broader base of Egyptian women, ensure their full participation, and support the fulfillment of their full potential, contributes to the nation-building process and the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development entails a process of societal change that offers real and undiminished opportunities for all women to build their human capacities that would, in turn, widen their choices and enable their self-fulfillment and service of the nation.

Egypt has achieved significant progress on the women's empowerment agenda in recent years, the most important of which is the adoption of the Egyptian Constitution (Box 1). The Constitution includes several provisions that guarantee equal opportunities for women, prevents any discrimination against them, and ensures their protection. The said provisions are in line with the enlightening role that Egypt has long assumed throughout the ages. As a result of the enactment of the Constitution, women reached the highest percentage of representation in the history of the Egyptian Parliament since its establishment. Moreover, a quarter of the Local Councils seats are reserved for women and the first ever woman Governor was appointed. On the social level, the gender gap in education was narrowed and maternal mortality rates have decreased. Furthermore, a number of amendments have been introduced to personal status laws, in addition to imposing stricter legal penalties on the crimes of female genital mutilation (FGM) and sexual harassment.

In spite of this progress, the Egyptian society still faces major challenges in empowering a wide base of women. This suggests the dire need for a comprehensive and ambitious strategy that is owned and activated by all social strata and institutions.

Box 1: The Egyptian Constitution 2014**The main reference for the achievement of equality, justice, and protection**

Egypt's Constitution – which was approved by 98% of voters in a popular referendum – expresses the aspirations of Egyptians, men and women, to achieve social justice. The Constitution's preamble emphasizes that Egyptian people, both men and women, are “sovereigns in a sovereign homeland”, and that the Constitution is theirs and expresses their will. The Constitution includes several articles which refer to justice and equality. Article 8 stipulates that the State commits to achieving social justice, providing the means to achieve social solidarity to ensure a decent life for all citizens, in the manner specified by law. In addition, Article 53 stipulates that: “citizens are equal before the law, possess equal rights and public duties, and may not be discriminated against on the basis of religion, belief, sex, origin, race, color, language, disability, social class, political or geographical affiliation.” The Constitution also considers discrimination and incitement to hatred as crimes punishable by law. It also commits the State to take necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination, and stipulates the establishment of an independent commission for the elimination of discrimination.

The Constitution establishes a strong base for combating discrimination against women in Article 11, which sets forth four obligations towards women, including: “the State shall ensure the achievement of equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.” “The State shall take the necessary measures to ensure the appropriate representation of women in the houses of representatives, in the manner specified by Law. It grants women the right to hold public posts and high management posts in the state, and to appointment in judicial bodies and entities without discrimination. The State shall protect women against all forms of violence and ensure enabling women to strike a balance between family duties and work requirements. The State shall provide care to and protection of motherhood and childhood, female heads of families, and elderly and neediest women.” This Article will bring about a paradigm shift in the status of Egyptian women's status when reflected in legislation that is enforced.

Article 214 of the Constitution stipulates that the National Council for Women exists among other Councils, for which “the Law sets out their structures and mandates.” “These Councils have legal personalities and enjoy technical, financial and administrative independence. They are to be consulted with regards to draft laws and regulations pertaining to their mandate and fields of work.” The same Article grants the Council the right to “report to the public authorities any violations pertaining to its field of work.”

The provisions of the Constitution constitute a firm base for a long-term strategy for the protection of women from all forms of violence and discrimination that could be exercised against them. State institutions are committed to its institutionalization in a manner that is not dependent on the change of officials. The houses of representatives, being the unanimous choice of Egyptians, are also committed to the said provisions. The private sector is committed to guarantee the achievement of inclusive, participatory, and sustainable growth, and civil society is committed being a reflection of the aspirations of society at large.

In addition to legislative reform that is in line with the Constitution, State interventions to eliminate discrimination against women are highly effective when complemented by local interventions implemented by civil society organizations and the private sector. Consolidating the efforts of the State and other non-government actors leads to a change in the social structures and norms that perpetuate injustice between men and women in Egypt, and therefore helps bridge the gap between women's aspirations and their reality.

It is worth noting that the status of women in any society is the outcome of the interaction between cultural, social and economic factors, all of which intersect in a complex manner. Cultural accumulations often have a decisive impact on the incitement of discrimination against women. Moreover, community structures affect education, upbringing, family relations and social dynamics. There are also many legal obstacles that prevent women from enjoying their full rights.

A set of global indicators are published periodically to review progress on the status of women and their conditions over time in comparison to other countries. These indicators are useful in determining Egypt's relative position, in addition to evaluating the outcomes of the exerted efforts to promote women's empowerment, eliminate discrimination, and increase their protection.

Based on the most significant women's empowerment and gender equality indicators (Box 2), Egypt's global ranking has regressed when compared to several developing countries. The available indicators reflect the need to consolidate efforts to empower women, while ensuring timely coordination on all levels, due to the interlinkages between the needs and the outcomes of women's political, economic, and social empowerment. Although women's empowerment is necessary at all levels, an analysis of Egypt's relative position in light of the relevant global indicators, the low percentages of women's employment and economic participation— as confirmed by national surveys conducted in recent years— suggest the need to prioritize their economic empowerment in the coming years.

Stemming from the belief that the nation's progress and stability can only be achieved through women's active participation in the public sphere, the National Council for Women— being the national machinery mandated to advance the status of women— led a wide participatory process to develop the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030. The Strategy responds to the principles of the Egyptian Constitution 2014, and is aligned to the overall direction of "Egypt's Vision 2030," as well as Egypt's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were adopted by the United Nations as the basis for development until the year 2030.

Box 2: Status of Egyptian Women in Global Indices

Gender Inequality Index (GII) – United Nations Development Programme

This index measures gender disparities in five aspects related to reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor force; the lower the index, the narrower the gender gap. Egypt ranked 131 among the 156 countries that were included in the 2014 index, with a value of 0.573. Based on the analysis of the stated index value, Egypt's rank regressed when compared to the average of all geographic regions, except South Sub Saharan Africa. Europe and Central Asia scored 0.30, East Asia scored 0.33, Latin America scored 0.42, South Asia and the Arab States scored 0.54, and an equal average score of 0.575 for Egypt and South Sub Saharan Africa.

Gender Gap Index (GGI) – The World Economic Forum

In 2016, Egypt ranked 132 out of 144 countries included in the GGI, with a score of 61%. The index is comprised of four sub-indices: health, education, economic and political participation. Egypt ranked 95th on the health sub-index, with a score of 97%, indicating a relative improvement. This was followed by the education sub-index, on which Egypt ranked 112th, with a score of 95%. With regard to women's political participation, Egypt ranked 115th, with a score of 9%, while women's economic participation and opportunities came last on the list, placing Egypt in the 132nd rank, among 144 countries, with a score of 44%.

The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 defines women's empowerment based on the following five elements:

1. Women have self-appreciation and confidence in their capabilities;
2. Women have the right to choose among options that are availed to them;
3. Women have the right to access to resources and opportunities;
4. Women have the right and ability to control their lives;
5. Women are able to influence and direct towards positive social change.

The Strategy is further based on the conviction that women's empowerment advances the nation's competitiveness at both regional and international levels. The objective of the Strategy is to strengthen the status of women through a comprehensive approach that takes into consideration the different roles that women play at the different phases of their life. This, in turn, puts varied social and economic burdens on women, which require societal support for them to be able to contribute to the development of the nation, without compromising their family duties.

The Strategy should not be seen as a course of action for those concerned with women's empowerment, gender equality and gender-based discrimination issues, but rather as a road map for the Egyptian society at large. Its success depends on the active participation of all social groups, especially men and boys, besides all State institutions and its executive bodies.

WOMEN'S STRATEGY

2. Grounds for Launching the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Women 2030

Since the Constitution, which was adopted by an overwhelming majority of Egyptians, lays down a strong social foundation that guarantees the rights of women with no discrimination, promotes their cultural, social, economic, and political empowerment, protects them from all forms of violence and harmful practices; and since, the Constitution's preamble emphasizes that Egyptians have the right to build their future, are the source of all authorities, and that freedom, dignity and social justice is a right for all Egyptians, and;

Since Egypt's Vision 2030 (Box 3) focuses on building a fair society that is characterized by being one that guarantees rights, equal opportunities and gender equality, with the objective of achieving the highest degree of social inclusion and protection of groups that require special care, and;

Since Goal 5 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 (Box 4) focuses on achieving gender equality, eliminating all forms of discrimination, harmful practices and violence against women and girls; in addition to promoting equal opportunities and women's active engagement in all spheres— without exclusion— through women's access to economic, financial and non-financial resources, as well as property rights, in the manner organized by law, and;

Since the remaining SDGs are built on the premise that all men and women enjoy equal rights and access to financial, human and social capital, which require adopting, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating new policies that integrate women's empowerment and gender equality into all development aspects, and;

Since the Egyptian society witnessed transformations that propagate negative values, fostering an inferior view of women in society over the past few decades, adding to the challenges of women's empowerment, which are reflected in the increased waves of violence against women—compromising their dignity—besides the misinterpretation of religious texts that downplay women's ability to contribute to the public sphere, limiting their roles to only family formation and reproduction;

A new Strategy for the empowerment of Egyptian women has been developed to reflect the aspirations of the Egyptian society with all its segments, based on the participation of all stakeholders, being responsible for the achievement, monitoring and evaluation of all its goals and programs.

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3. Foundations of the Strategy

1. The Egyptian Constitution 2014, the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt's Vision 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, and endorsed by Egypt, are the references of the Strategy;
2. Responding to the needs of Egyptian women and fulfilling those of the most vulnerable, taking into consideration the social, economic, age and geographic disparities;
3. Adopting a rights based approach as the main foundation of the Strategy;
4. Adopting a participatory approach—inclusive of a wider circle of all partners—in the development and implementation of the Strategy;
5. Establishing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism based on a scientific approach, updated data and information as a cornerstone for the achievement of the Strategy's goals and objectives.

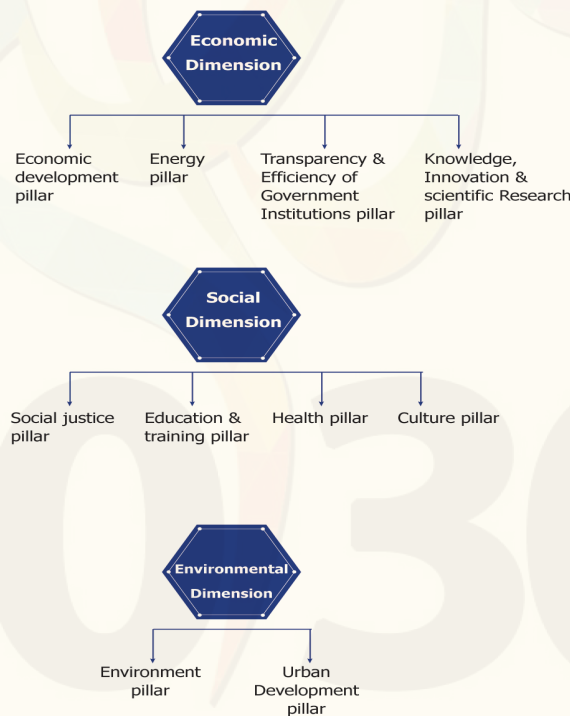
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Box 3: Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt's Vision 2030

Mainstreaming Women's Issues in the pillars to achieve Sustainable Development

By 2030, Egypt will possess a competitive, balanced and diversified economy, dependent on innovation and knowledge, based on justice, social integrity and participation, characterized by a balanced and diversified ecological collaboration system, investing the ingenuity of place and humans to achieve sustainable development and to improve the quality of life of all Egyptians.

The Strategy is comprised of pillars that are based on three different dimensions of sustainable development:



A general goal, a set of strategic objectives, as well as indicators that intend to measure goals, programs, and projects were designed for each of the pillars. Egypt's Vision 2030 does not include an independent pillar for women's issues, but makes reference to them across the board, without thorough detail; hence the need to launch the Women's Strategy to complement and reflect the situation of women in Egypt's Vision 2030, on the basis of its pillars.

Egypt's Vision 2030 includes a social justice pillar, which by 2030 aims to achieve: "a fair society that is characterized by equal economic, social and political rights and opportunities, achieves the highest level of social inclusion, guarantees citizen's rights to participation based on merit, efficiency, and in accordance with to the rule of law, encourages social mobility based on capacities, provides protection mechanisms from life dangers, supports the marginalized, and protects groups that require special care, including the protection of women's rights and the prevention of all forms of discrimination against them."

Box 4: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

“Global consensus on women’s empowerment and equality as a cornerstone for sustainable development”

The United Nations announced in September 2015 the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 goals. Egypt is one of the 193 countries that have adopted the agenda, which includes an independent goal for achieving gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls, Goal 5. It includes the following targets:

1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere;
2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation;
3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;
4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate;
5. Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life;
6. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women;
7. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels;
8. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences;
9. Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

In addition to Goal 5, reference is made to the status of women within several of the other goals, such as Goal 1 on poverty, which aims by 2030 to ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance. Furthermore, Goal 4 on education stipulates ensuring that all girls have access to quality primary education, bridging the gap between boys and girls at all educational stages and supporting women’s access to technical education and training.

4. Methodology of Strategy Preparation

The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 was developed on the basis of an evidence-based, scientific approach, in consultation with the key stakeholders, expanding the base of participation to include target groups, in the following manner:

- A review of a number of country and international organizations' strategies to identify the basis of their formulations; in addition to a review of a number of available studies on the status of Egyptian women, while also relying on surveys and studies carried out specifically to complement data and information gaps related to the condition of Egyptian women;
- Consultations were held specifically for the purpose of Strategy development, with the participation of several experts and executive officials;
- The Strategy was developed in a participatory manner; a large number of both, group and individual meetings, were held with the participation of a broad spectrum of various citizen groups, particularly women, to review the overall goals of the Strategy and solicit feedback on best practices to improve the status of Egyptian women.

Phase 1: Reference Studies and Surveys

1. Review of International Strategies

The Strategy was informed by international best practices in the development of gender equality and women's empowerment strategies, with a special emphasis on countries with a similar development context to Egypt's. Various methodologies were used in drafting those strategies, and hence the differences in their scope, goals, outline, main pillars, and priority areas, also considering their varying degrees in the pursuit of gender equality and the empowerment of women; besides the follow-up, institutional arrangements, and partnerships to activate it. Based on the review the following was noted:

- There is no unified format for the strategies;
- The strategies are formulated around objectives, or impact areas/outcomes; pillars and/or areas of interventions, followed by practical courses of action;

- The strategies reviewed are formulated based on a consultative process with stakeholders from the government, civil society, and the private sector;
- The strategies are based on studies and reports prepared by experts during the preparation phase, or other existent studies and reports;
- The strategies confirm that despite progress achieved, there are gaps which still need to be addressed to bridge the gender gap and empower women;
- All strategies regard achieving gender equality as one of the drivers of development, and a goal in itself. Strategies with an economic orientation confirmed that women's economic participation leads to better development outcomes, including social ones;
- All strategies have a main pillar on combating violence against women;
- The strategies were highly similar in terms of content and were founded on the basis of similar references, among which are international human rights instruments that pertain to gender equality, the UN Millennium Development Goals (third goal; MDG3), the Sustainable Development Goals (fifth goal; SGD5), while making reference to regional and national commitments in some of the strategies.

2. Review of International Commitments

A review was conducted to ensure the Strategy's compliance to the international conventions and declarations to which Egypt is committed, taking into consideration Egypt's reservations over certain provisions. The review included the following:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which Egypt participated in the drafting of as a founding member of the United Nations;
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966);
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1980);⁽¹⁾
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1990);
- The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993);
- The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (1994);
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) (1995).

⁽¹⁾ Egypt had reservations upon ratification in respect to Articles 16 and 29 for being contrary to Islamic Sharia or to national sovereignty.

Furthermore, Egypt is among the countries that incorporated the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2016-2030 and the MDGs 2000-2015— which included a dedicated goal for women’s empowerment and their protection — in its national development plans. Moreover, Egypt is committed to the SDGs, where gender equality is also mainstreamed in the majority of its goals. Egypt’s Sustainable Development Strategy: “Egypt’s Vision 2030,” reflects this direction, which is complemented by the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030.

3. Study of Egyptian Women’s Needs

The Strategy is based on a field study carried out by the National Center for Social and Criminological Research (NCSCR) in 2016, with the purpose of identifying a vision and a set of mechanisms to shape and inform policies that would enhance the status of Egyptian women. Moreover, the study aimed at assessing the needs, challenges, and obstacles that hinder Egyptian women from accessing their rights and services. In addition, data was collected from a national representative sample of 3,000 women aged 18 years and above, from the main geographical regions, including Upper Egypt, Lower Egypt, urban and boarder governorates.

4. Study of Women’s Legal Empowerment

A study on the legal empowerment of Egyptian women, in particular rural women, was carried out by the NCSCR in 2016. It analyzed the impact of existing legislations on women and their ability to access legal redress and compensation. The study also examined the procedures and resources that would allow women to access informal economic justice, besides proposing ideas, programs, policies and tools to overcome the difficulties that women face, including exercising control over their inheritance and property rights. Furthermore, the study was based on a number of in-depth individual and group interviews, with 15 individual interviews conducted with experts on women’s empowerment issues, 12 group interviews with men and women who were exposed to the issues of women’s legal empowerment; in addition to 15 case studies with women who face problems of access to justice in the economic field. The total number of participants in this study was around 160 people.

Phase 2: Consultative Meetings

1. Roundtable Discussions on Economic Empowerment

As part of the Egyptian Women's Economic Empowerment Study carried out by the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES) in 2016, a number of round table discussions were organized in 13 governorates representing Egypt's various regions, including Cairo, Alexandria, Suez, Port Said, Gharbiya, Qalubiya, Damietta, Beheira, Fayoum, Assiut, Qena, Luxor and South Sinai. The characteristics of female participants varied with respect to location of residence, age, educational level, and employment. The discussions were focused on the personal experiences of women and girls, the obstacles that they encounter when accessing the labor market, the impact of the surrounding environment (customs and traditions, access to information, location of residence, and availability of funding), as well as to how they did or did not overcome these difficulties.

2. Consultative Meetings with Decision-makers and Partners

Individual and group meetings were held with central and local policy and decision makers, including a number of ministers, deputy ministers, governors and members of parliament. The purpose of these consultations was to integrate their perspective into the formulation of the Strategy and identify the aspects that contribute to drafting a vision that represents all of the society's constituent groups. In addition, intensive consultations were held with civil society representatives, including women and development civil society organizations, syndicates, as well as NCW local branches. The consultative meetings included the following:

- Three group meetings with 18 members of parliament;
- Meetings with eight ministers: the Minister of Education, the Minister of Manpower, the Minister of Social Solidarity, the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Immigration and Expatriate Affairs, the Minister of Youth, the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Justice; in addition to interviews with Assistant and or Deputy Ministers;
- Individual interviews with 13 Governors: Cairo, Alexandria, Qalubiya, Giza, Ismailiya, Suez, Gharbiya, Beheira, Fayoum, Minya, Aswan, Marsa Matrouh, and South Sinai;

- 10 group interviews with representatives of NGOs and syndicates, held in the presence of over 180 persons;
- Meetings with NGOs participating in the Civil Society Organizations Forum, with the presence of about 30 NGO representatives;
- Meetings with members of the NCW local branches, with the presence of over 500 members.

The specialized committees of the Council included 255 female and male experts, who studied the initial draft Strategy and provided feedback, which was incorporated in the final draft. The Strategy was then discussed with the Civil Society Organizations Forum.

Phase 3: Community Participation and Public Outreach

1. Door-to-door campaign

The door-to-door campaign was implemented by the NCW in 2016, with the objective of directly reaching out the widest base of women to learn about their most important needs. The campaign reached out to more than 72,000 women of various age groups in 393 villages, districts, and marginalized areas across the 27 governorates of Egypt.

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2. Public Outreach Campaigns to Raise Awareness

The awareness-raising campaigns launched by the NCW through public communications outreach, television, social media, and symposiums provided the opportunity to a large number of target groups to express and voice their needs. The “Secret of Your Power,” widely known as “Taa Marbouta” Campaign reached more than 40 million views on social media, with about half a million people sharing their opinions through direct outreach channels. In addition, the “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” campaign, which depended on direct communication through symposiums, reached 19,000 women at the national level.

3. Outreach through Educational Institutions

The NCW carried out a number of activities to reach out to young men and women in universities and schools, and managed to reach significant numbers in different governorates, to seek their opinions about the pillars of the Strategy. These activities included kiosks offering ongoing outreach at five universities (which reached around 10,000 male and female students), awareness-raising seminars, sports and arts activities at universities and secondary schools in three governorates in Upper Egypt, with the participation of 2,300 female students.

4. Public Outreach by NCW Local Branches and Committees

The various activities and programs implemented by the NCW branches in all governorates, provided opportunities for ongoing outreach to over 56,000 women and girls. These activities and programs also enabled a dialogue on the priority areas of concern and ways to address them.

In addition the NCW Women with Disabilities Committee, along with the representatives of women with disabilities at the NCW local branches, organized a specialized workshop, which was supported by a detailed survey to identify the needs of women with disabilities and the existing obstacles to their full integration into society.

5. Vision and Goals of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030

Vision

By 2030, Egyptian women will become active contributors to the achievement of sustainable development in a nation that guarantees their constitutional rights, ensures their full protection, and provides- without discrimination- political, social, and economic opportunities that enable them to develop their capacities and achieve their full potential.

Goals

The Strategy seeks to emphasize and fulfill Egypt's commitment to women's rights as set forth in the Egyptian Constitution 2014, as well as in binding international conventions, covenants and declarations to which Egypt is a party. Moreover, the Strategy aims to respond to the real needs of Egyptian women—particularly those living in rural areas in Upper Egypt, the poor, female-headed households, the elderly and disabled women. These groups are entitled to care—when the State develops development plans, in order to ensure their full protection, utilize their human and financial resources and potential in order to fulfill the principle of equal opportunities as set forth in the Constitution.

In order to do so, the Strategy focuses on achieving the following:

- 1. Women's political empowerment and promoting their leadership roles** through encouraging all forms of political participation, including parliamentary representation and representation in local councils; eliminating discrimination against women holding senior positions in executive and judicial institutions; and enabling them to succeed in these posts;
- 2. Women's economic empowerment** through capacity development, entrepreneurship, and equal opportunities for the women's employment in all sectors, including the private sector and besides holding key positions in public institutions and companies;

3. Women's social empowerment through enabling opportunities for the wider social participation of women, increasing women's capabilities in order to make informed choices, and eliminating all harmful and discriminatory practices against women in both the public sphere or within the family;

Social empowerment of women through supporting women to gain their rights in different fields, provision of education and health services, and supporting women who live in harsh conditions, including elderly and disabled women, and empowering young women and increasing their social participation;

4. Women's protection by eliminating the negative practices that threaten women's lives, safety and dignity, and prevents their effective contribution to social development. This includes eliminating all forms of violence against women, and protecting them from environmental risks that would have adverse social or economic effects on their livelihoods.

Achieving these goals requires serious efforts to:

- Change the culture of society and challenging the stereotypes of women propagated by the media;
- Regard women's empowerment as a collective responsibility that men and boys must also assume;
- Support women to realize their full legal rights, with special attention to the rights of marginalized, poor and disabled women, and amending existing personal status laws to guarantee the rights of women, enhancing the chances of family cohesion;
- Renew the religious discourse concerning women's roles in the public domain and their right to hold public posts.

6. Pillars of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030

Realizing the vision and goals of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 requires working on the following four pillars:

- Political empowerment and leadership;
- Economic empowerment;
- Social empowerment;
- Protection.

The main detailed objectives of the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt's Vision 2030 that pertain to gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as the UN SDGs are reflected in the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030. The Strategy took into consideration all the SDGs, whether Goal 5 on gender equality, or other goals with targets related to the empowerment of women.

For each of the four pillars, the Strategy addresses:

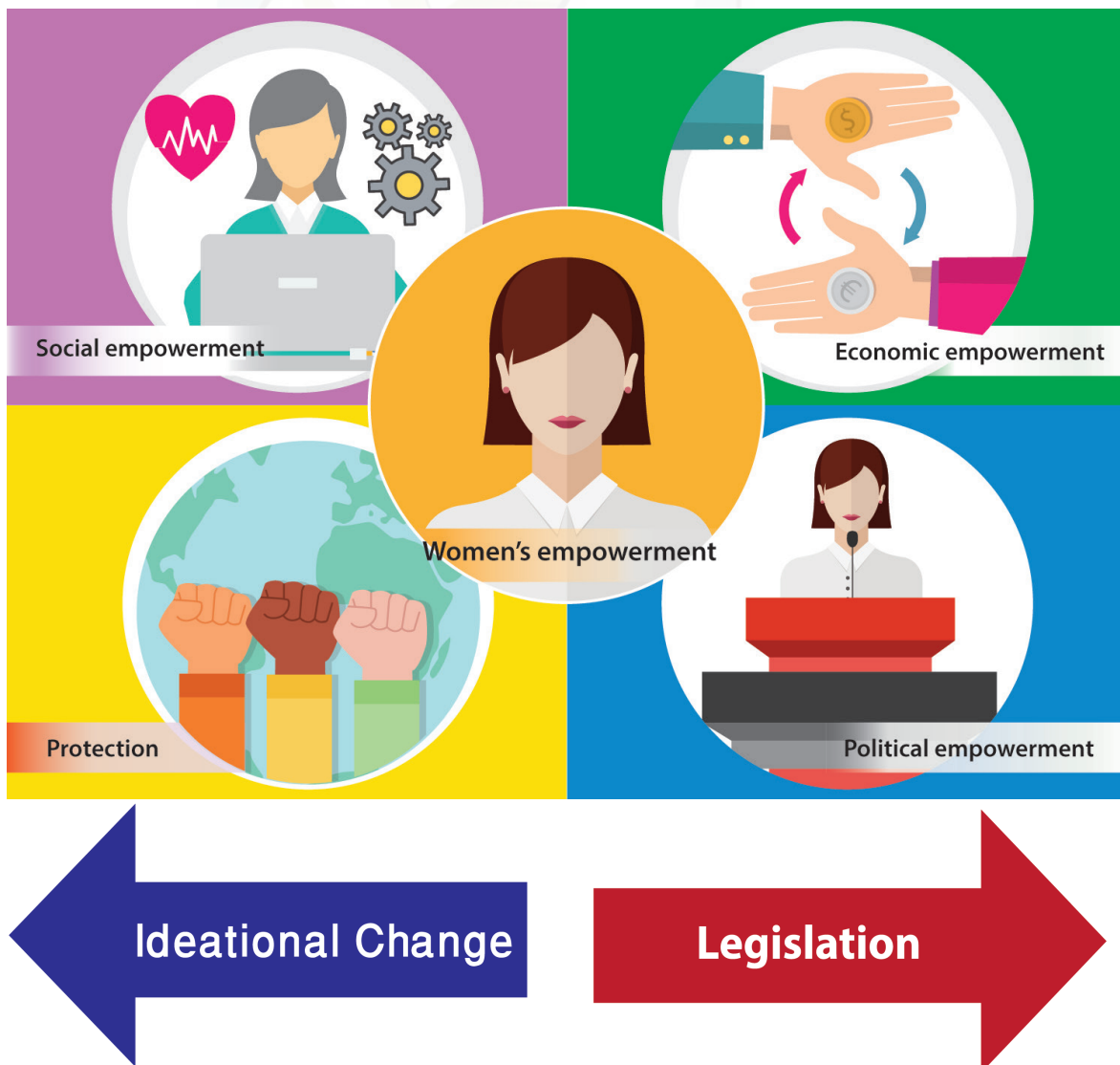
- The current situation;
- The general goal and detailed objectives;
- Interventions and programs that will support the achievement of the goal and detailed objectives;
- Indices for measuring progress towards achieving the desired results in 2030, according to the existing index values.

Given the important role of legislation, culture (values, customs, and traditions), and information in shaping and improving the status of women in Egypt, they are integrated in a cross-cutting manner into each of the four pillars.

The second phase of Strategy preparation includes developing action plans for each pillar, to translate the policies and programs into activities and procedures with a specific timeframe. The required financial and human resources

will be identified. The action planning exercise will also identify critical partnerships (individuals and organizations) who will contribute to the successful implementation of the Strategy. Networking and coordination mechanisms among partners will be specified to ensure the efficient implementation of the Strategy. Procedures for monitoring and evaluation, as well the means for data collection will be put in place.

Fig. 1: Pillars for the National Strategy of Women Empowerment

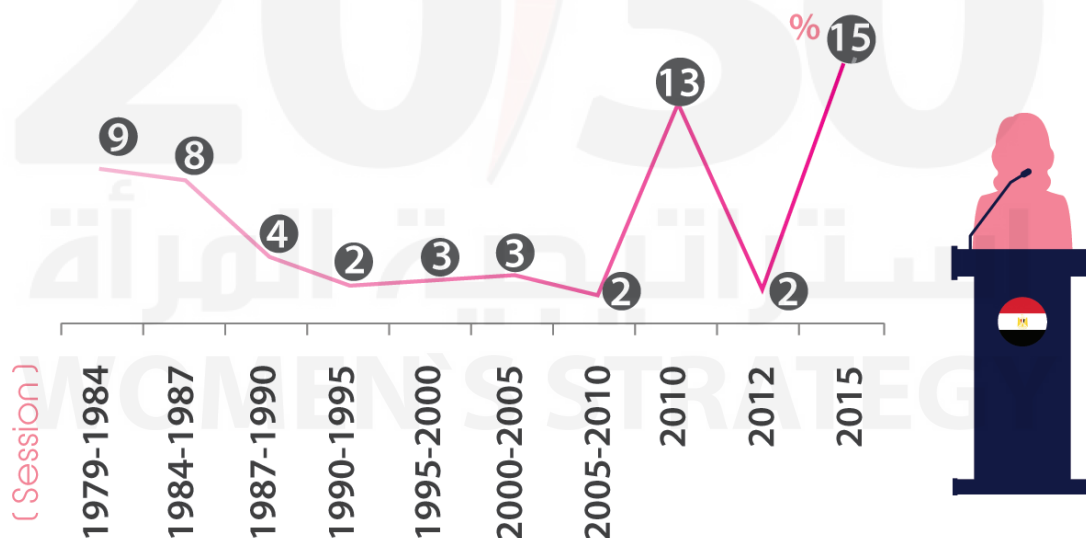


Pillar 1: Political empowerment and leadership

Current situation

Egyptian women obtained suffrage rights for the first time under the 1956 Constitution, making them to be the first in the Arab region to obtain such rights. Despite being an early pioneer of women's political participation, relevant indices place Egypt at the lower ranks compared to other countries worldwide. With regard to women's representation at the national level (i.e. in parliament), a quota system was introduced in 1979 and was later canceled, leading to a sharp decline in women's representation. A modified quota system was adopted prior to 2011, then became later abolished under the 2012 Constitution, resulting in another sharp decline in women's representation in parliament.

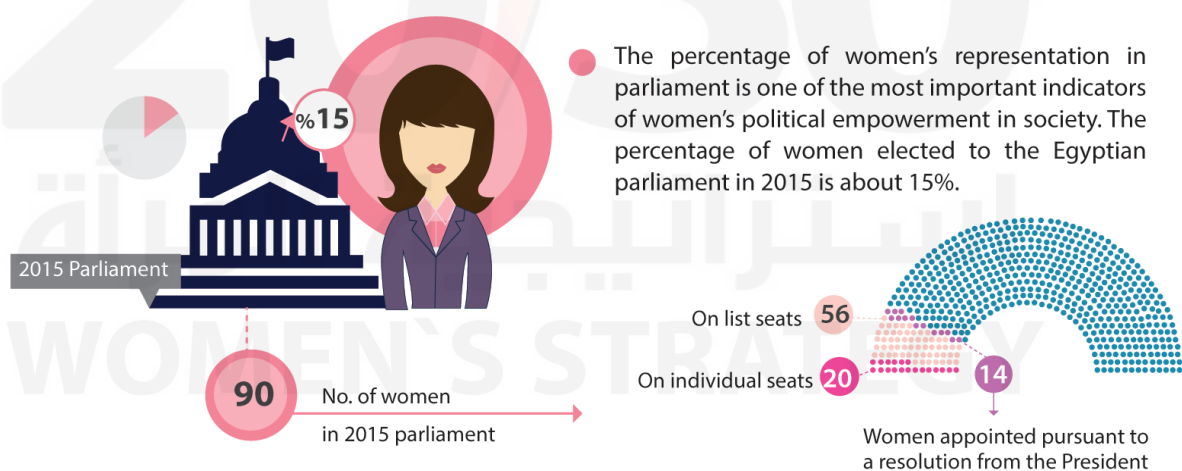
Fig. 2: The development of women's representation in parliament, 1979-2015 (%)



Article 11 of the 2014 Constitution stipulates that “the State commits to taking the necessary measures to ensure appropriate representation of women in the houses of parliament.” In addition, the Law of Parliamentary Elections enacted in 2014 identified the number of women on each electoral list, with an allocation of 14 seats per list to ensure their appropriate representation. During the 2015 parliamentary elections, 76 women were elected, 56 of which were elected by lists and 20 via the single-seat system. The President of Egypt appointed 14 additional women, bringing the total number of women parliamentarians to 90, or 15% of the total seats (currently comprised of 596 seats). Consequently, Egypt’s global ranking with regard to the percentage of women parliamentarians has improved from 125 to 99⁽²⁾.

On the level of local councils, Article 180 of the Constitution allocated a quarter of the seats for women in each elected local unit at all levels of local government (governorate, district, town, and even village). The total number of women candidates for the last local councils elections held in 2008 was 6,000 candidates, out of which 2,495 won actual seats, comprising 4.7% of the total 53,010 local councils seats.

Fig. 3: Women’s representation in parliament in 2015



(2) The Global Gender Gap Report 2012, 2016.

The Constitution's (2014) allocation of a quarter of the local councils seats for women deepens their participation in political and public life. It fosters women's political participation in legislative institutions, allowing a significant number of women cadres to gain experience in public service, providing them with the opportunity to play more effective roles in the near future. It is worth noting that the Constitution stipulates that local councils are responsible for implementing the development plan, monitoring the activity's different aspects, exercising the tools of monitoring the executive authority such as proposals, and submitting questions, briefing motions, interpellations and others, and withdrawing confidence from the heads of local units, in the manner organized by law. This requires presenting women who are capable of: a) successfully occupying the largest number of local councils seats (a quarter); b) defending the interests of citizens and gaining their trust— even in the absence of temporary special measures that have been of recognized importance globally to promote women's political empowerment in an equitable manner.

The decision-making arena continues to be male-dominant in Egypt. The first ever Egyptian woman occupied a ministerial post in 1962, with only one or two women holding ministerial posts in successive cabinets, and a recent increase to four ministers in the current one. Women's presence in leadership positions in local entities, which are supervised by the Ministry of Local Development at the various levels (governorate, district, town and village), is extremely limited. The first ever female governor in Egyptian modern history was appointed in February 2017. In addition, a limited number of women occupy the positions of heads of districts and mayors. The results of one survey conducted on Egyptian women's aspirations indicate that 43% of Egyptian women aspire to see women occupy the position of prime minister and 42% aspire to see women occupy the position of governor⁽³⁾, which confirms the gap between their aspirations and reality.

Despite the fact that there are no laws or bylaws that prohibit women from holding judicial positions, women's representation in the judiciary remains limited. They practiced law since the 1930s, and yet were never appointed to any

⁽³⁾ Survey of Egyptian Women's Aspirations conducted after January Revolution, the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research (Baseera), Egypt 2012.

judicial positions until 2003 when the first female judge was appointed to the Constitutional Court. Subsequently, 31 female judges were appointed in 2007, followed by further appointments in 2008, and an appointment of 26 judges to courts of first degree in 2015, bringing the total number of female judges to 66, comprising less than 1% of Egypt's 12,000 judges. On the contrary, women's representation is absent in the State Council and in Public Prosecution. Field surveys indicate that 31% of women aspire to see women in judicial posts.

Progress has been made with regard to women's voter participation, reaching 44% of the total voter turnout in the most recent presidential elections⁽⁴⁾, making women a powerful critical mass for voting in elections. Among the remaining challenges is the fact that a very high number of women do not have national identification cards (national ID cards); thus excluding them from the voter database. As a result of not having issued a national ID, deprivation goes beyond the exercise of political rights to also denied opportunities, economic and social rights, employment in the formal sector, receipt of loans, access to financial services, or any formal engagement

(4) Exit poll for the 2014 Presidential Elections, the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research (Baseera) Egypt 2014.

Fig. 4: Goal and targets of the political empowerment and leadership promotion pillar

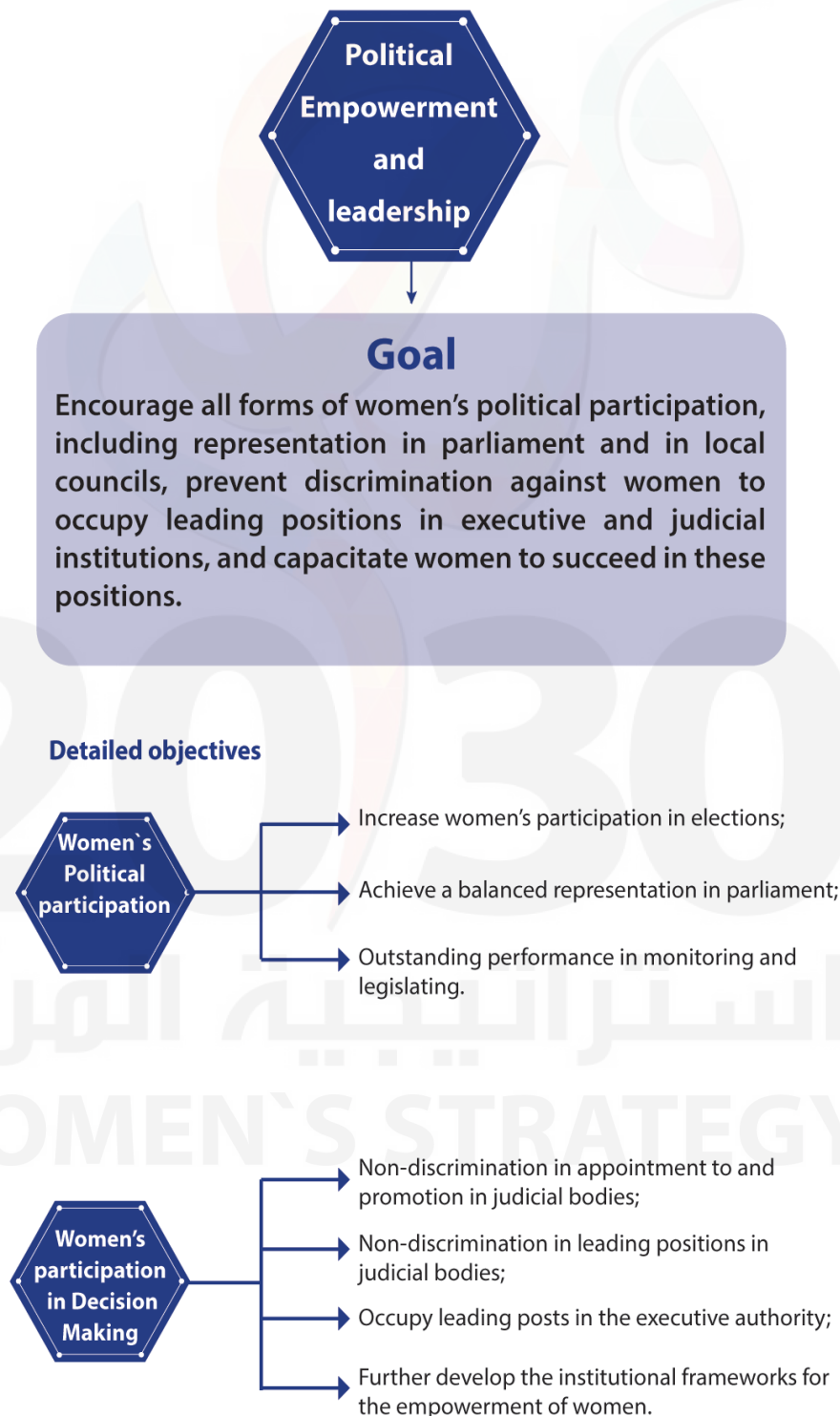


Table 1: Impact indicators of political empowerment and leadership promotion pillar

Impact indicators	Year	Current Value	Target value by 2030
Parentage of female voters	2014	44% ^(a)	50%
Percentage of women parliamentarians	2016	15% ^(c)	35%
Percentage of women on local councils	2014	25% ^(f)	35%
Percentage of women in judicial bodies	2015	0.5% ^(m)	25%
Percentage of women in public posts ⁽⁵⁾	2016	5% ^(c)	17%
Percentage of women in senior management posts	2016	19% ^(c)	27%

Interventions for strengthening the leadership roles of Egyptian women and their political empowerment

Promote the role of women as voters

- Expand the issuance of national identification cards for all women in all governorates.

Increase women's representation in parliament and strengthen their performance

- Identify women natural leaders to be trained on parliamentary and local representation;
- Develop programs to support women parliamentary candidates in order to win voters' confidence;
- Provide women parliamentarians with information and exposure to best practices to support their effective contribution to legislation and oversight. This will help them win voters' confidence and open up broader opportunities for the representation of women in future parliamentary elections.

⁽⁵⁾ Not including non-distributed posts of the special cadre.

Increase women's opportunities to hold senior positions in judicial bodies and strengthen their performance

- Encourage and enhance women's opportunities to hold senior positions in all judicial bodies;
- Set criteria for selecting candidates to hold judicial positions based on non-discrimination against women, giving priority to qualifications;
- Intensive training of female judges to support them in attaining senior judicial positions

Increase women's senior positions in the state executive bodies and strengthen their performance

- Increase the number of women appointed as governors and deputy governors by developing integrated programs for young women leaders to prepare them for holding such positions and provide relevant training;
- Develop work systems to ensure the representation of women in state executive bodies and their participation in the processes of planning, formulating policies, and budgets, at the national, local and sectoral level;
- Complete the establishment and capacitation of Equal Opportunities Units in ministries, public bodies, business sectors and Local Councils, and encouraging judicial bodies and the private sector to establish such units.

Challenge the governing community culture and ideas opposed to women's appointment to senior positions

- Review existing legislations to ensure that equal opportunities in holding senior public positions are guaranteed;
- Develop educational curriculums that establish the concept of citizenship and non-discrimination, and encourage political participation, to be taught in at different educational stages, starting from primary education;
- Produce TV programs, songs, books, plays employing the tools of social media and electronic games to support the concept of gender equality and women empowerment and to establish the culture of non-discrimination;

- Disseminate informed religious opinions and correct interpretations of Sharia (Islamic jurisprudence) regarding the issue of women's work in order to combat interpretations that have resulted in society being deprived of the benefits of women's work and decision making capabilities;
- Encourage government and private media institutions to avoid negative stereotyping of women, and instead to spread ideas that support non-discrimination by spreading success stories of Egyptian women and highlighting their accomplishments as role models.

2030
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WOMEN'S STRATEGY

Pillar 2: Economic Empowerment

Current situation

Egyptian women have made a remarkable progress in bridging the gender gap in education. Most enrollment indices are in favor of women, with the number of female students exceeding that of male students in general secondary education, at 54%. In addition, the number of female students at Egyptian universities (excluding Al-Azhar University) exceeded that of male students, reaching 51% in the academic year 2012/2013. The percentage of females among university graduates stands at 53%, while females comprise 47% of graduates of medicine faculties and 61% of pharmacy faculties. Gender-disaggregated data for post-graduate studies also show considerable achievement, with females constituting 51% of master's degree holders and 44% of Ph.D. holders. Nevertheless, eradicating illiteracy among women remains one of the significant challenges facing Egypt, with the rate of illiteracy among girls at the age of 10 and above standing at 27%.

Contrary to the distinct achievement of women in the field of educational attainment, official data confirms that considerable inequality between men and women persists in terms of participation in economic activity, with women's participation not exceeding a quarter of the total workforce. Moreover, the rates of unemployment among women are high compared to that of men, reaching almost 24%. Most women work in unpaid and informal jobs, with around 25% working in agriculture. Despite efforts made to expand the umbrella of social insurance for women, rural women – particularly those working in seasonal agriculture and temporary paid jobs or unpaid household works – still face obstacles in securing adequate income and social insurance.

There is evidence that a considerable number of women are left with no choice but to refrain from work due to the difficulties they face in securing a job or the absence of mechanisms and services that support working women (pursuant to Article 11 of the Constitution). Women and girls bear care responsibilities for children and the elderly, besides daily domestic chores in an unequitable manner as confirmed by the time-use survey conducted by the Central Authority for Public

Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). This compromises women's opportunities to secure decent jobs; it is thus necessary to invest in time- and effort-saving infrastructure to help family members share household needs.⁽⁶⁾

The labor law guarantees equal pay for equal work, yet there is evidence of an existing gap in the average wages earned by women compared to men as a result of gender-based discriminatory work practices. A high percentage of working women are concentrated in jobs that are placed at the bottom of the career ladder, which, in turn, leads to less earned income compared to men who work in the same jobs by almost EGP 168 per month.⁽⁷⁾

The gap between Egyptian women's accumulated attainment and their relative absence from economic activity poses questions about the reasons behind their exclusion, comprising a huge lost potential of quite a successfully educated group. This cannot be only explained by economic stagnation, but also through investigating the governing values that impede women's economic empowerment.

Surveys conducted in the past decade confirm that Egyptians highly value girls' education, which is in line with the strong presence of women in university education and in post-graduate studies. Despite the high emphasis on the importance of education for women and girls, 82% of Egyptians believe that, in the event of having less job opportunities, men should be prioritized.⁽⁸⁾ without any due considerations of merit and competence that should be determining factors in job selection--- while 55% believe that women are not capable of holding some positions. It is striking that the proportion of men and women who hold these views is almost the same. It is, therefore, implied that factors that contribute to maintaining a gender balance across the board and the actual realization of women's rights include not only education, but also social, political, and economic factors. Cultural traditions, particularly in the context of male-dominated societies, where men exercise dominance and control are among the barriers to women's participation in the economy.

⁽⁶⁾ Study of Egyptian Women's Economic Empowerment: The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, Egypt.

⁽⁷⁾ Study of the Egyptian Labor Market - CAPMAS (2016).

⁽⁸⁾ Survey of Social and Political Transformations in the Arab World. Baseera, 2014.

Women's economic empowerment should be seen as beneficial for society as a whole. Increasing women's engagement in the workforce can effectively contribute to realizing Egypt's Vision 2030, which depends on achieving a significant increase in GDP. International studies indicate that the gap between the participation of men and women results in a potential loss to Egypt's GDP of 29%⁽⁹⁾. It is also clear that increasing the extent of women's engagement in the workforce to equal that of men would increase the GDP by percentages that differ from one country to another, with an impact of 34% for Egypt⁽¹⁰⁾.

The media, information and communication technology are growing industries that provide effective tools that contribute to advancing social justice, development, and gender equality. Experiences of other countries show that encouraging women's presence in these sectors can be regarded as strategies for empowerment. Furthermore, international experiences show that women could have a significant role in sustainable energy management by reducing energy consumption and producing environmentally friendly patterns of renewable energy, which in turn contribute to improving the pace of macroeconomic growth. Nevertheless, women's representation in renewable energy production and other relevant emerging industries is still below par.

The small enterprise sector is recognized as an engine for economic growth, where the percentage of small enterprises managed by women is only 23%, and while 45% of microcredit in Egypt target women, the average size of loans received by women is less than that received by men⁽¹¹⁾.

Multiple international studies⁽¹²⁾ list the factors that significantly affect women's entrepreneurship opportunities, including the following:

- Disparities in education, training and practical experience, and therefore unequal access to financial services;

⁽⁹⁾ International Monetary Fund, based on estimates by Cuberes & Teignier (2014).

⁽¹⁰⁾ Aguirre, DeAnne, Leila Hoteit, Christine Rupp, and Karim Sabbagh, 2012, "Empowering the Third Billion. Women and the World of Work in 2012," Booz and Company.

⁽¹¹⁾ The Egyptian Financial Supervisory Authority (EFSA), Egypt 2016.

⁽¹²⁾ International Finance Corporation (October 2011) - Report on Access to Finance for Women-owned SMEs in Developing Countries.

- Limited credit information and the absence information sharing among the different financial institutions;
- Gaps in knowledge about the law and property rights and the high cost of the doing business.

The veracity of these factors is supported by a study that was carried out as part of the preparations for this strategy⁽¹³⁾. The study revealed a number factors that play a critical role in enabling or hindering women's economic empowerment, yet very little attention is given to these factors

- Exposure to different experiences and cultures;
- Availability of information and the ability to deal with communication technology;
- An enabling environment, whether it relates to its culture or infrastructure as elements that are associated to the geographical location and increasingly impact women

The study also revealed weaknesses in Lower Egypt governorates compared to urban governorates, followed by Upper Egypt, and then boarder governorates. The absence of all these factors combined contribute to women's inability to deal with the market. Moreover, women entrepreneurs face different challenges, depending on the phase of the project, where it was evident that the lack of information about markets is the most significant one and represents a serious barrier during the start-up phase. In addition, macroeconomic policies are fundamental to women's economic empowerment as they affect job creation, and the range of available care services and resources that are critical to the realization of gender equality.

Egypt's Human Development Report 2010 reveals that women do not usually find decent opportunities in the private sector, which therefore limits their engagement in economic activity, especially in light of the decline in public sector employment. Economic factors are not the only cause, other causes are

(13) Study of Egyptian Women's Economic Empowerment, the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, Egypt 2016, including roundtable discussions in 13 governorates attended by 170 women and girls.

related to the work environment, sexual harassment, a predominant culture that rejects women's travel to other governorates to seek employment, traditions that unwelcomes mingling between women and men, in addition to early marriage, which contributes to women's low economic participation.⁽¹⁴⁾

The National Women's Strategy aims at supporting the most marginalized women by addressing the factors that affect their economic empowerment. Such support includes the effective implementation of policies, introduction of legislative reforms that aim at removing the structural barriers that affect women's economic participation, addressing traditions that discriminate against women, providing social protection and expanding and improving the infrastructure.

When addressing the issue of women's economic empowerment, it is important to take into consideration other dimensions for empowerment, including geographical disparities and age differences, in a manner that ensures that none of the groups are advantaged over the other, while also focusing on removing the barriers that the poorest of the poor are faced with, requiring immediate interventions due to the inability of the existing market mechanisms to integrate them.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Human Development Report 2010, Ministry of Planning, Egypt 2010

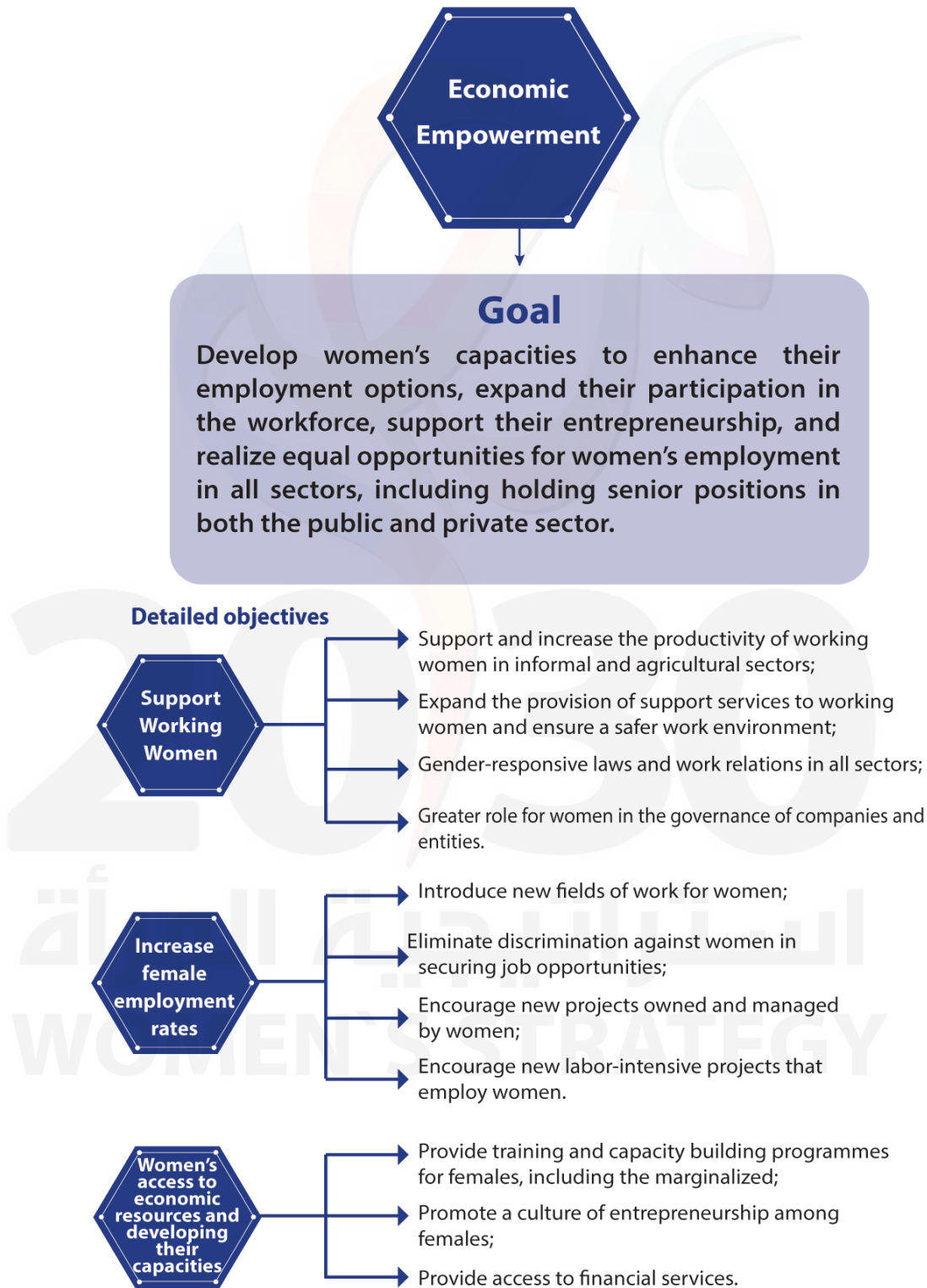
Fig. 5: Goals and targets of economic empowerment pillar

Table 2: Impact indicators of economic empowerment pillar

Impact indicators	Year	Current Value	Target value by 2030
Percentage of breadwinning women below poverty line	2015	26.3% ^(k)	9%
Percentage of female participation in the workforce	2016	24.2% ^(c)	35%
Unemployment rate among women	2015	24% ^(l)	16%
Percentage of women in administrative jobs	2016	6% ^(c)	12%
Percentage of women in professional jobs	2016	38% ^(c)	48%
Ratio of female estimated earned income to males estimated earned income	2016	29% ^(c)	58%
Percentage of small enterprises managed/owned by women	2015	22.5% ^(g)	50%
Percentage of microfinance targeting women	2015	45% ^(g)	53%
Percentage of women with bank accounts	2015	9% ^(b)	18%

Interventions for Egyptian women's economic empowerment

Developing investment policies, management systems and financing

- Develop policies to ensure that the private sector is committed to the proper representation of women on their boards of directors;
- Pay attention to the diversity of economic sectors established in different governorates, and attract industries that can create direct and indirect job opportunities for women's employment within their value chains;
- Activate policies and procedures that encourage women to set up their own private businesses;

- Expand business development services targeting women and establishing gender responsive one-stop shops;
- Scale up the implementation of establishing economic activity cooperatives that target women, and provide financial services for initiatives encouraging group savings and loans that serve women;
- Develop banking and non-banking financial services targeting women, including loans to small and medium-sized enterprises, and increasing women's knowledge of and facilitating their access to these services, particularly through simple electronic channels;
- Develop public purchasing and procurement policies to ensure a larger share of products from female-owned small enterprises and cooperatives.

Protect the rights of working women and providing support services

- Enforce the laws that protect working women and guarantee their rights with regard to working hours, maternity leave and equal wages, particularly in the private sector;
- Take measures to ensure compliance with human resources policies and incorporate gender equality aspects in work related processes, including hiring, training, promotion, wages, access to benefits and service termination. These policies should also take into consideration maternity entitlements, grievance mechanisms and procedures to combat harassment in workplaces;
- Provide support services for working women, pursuant to Article 11 of the Constitution, like childcare services (time for breastfeeding and daycare) and providing protection both in the work environment and beyond.

Women's work in the household and informal sector

- Issue laws and policies that safeguard the rights of working women in the informal sector;
- Conduct studies on the economic contribution of women's unpaid household work as the basis for promoting a culture of respect for this type of work;

- Apply flextime and work-from-home systems to give women the option of combining and balancing their careers and family roles;
- Protect the rights of domestic workers and regularize their situation.

Training and skills enhancement programmes in various sectors

- Expand digital technology programs for women and integrate it into vocational training and capacity-building programs;
- Provide different types of technical education that reflect the needs of Egyptian society and the market;
- Expand programs targeting female headed households that help them find work and earn a sustainable income;
- Provide training opportunities and developing the skills of women with lower levels of education to qualify them for work;
- Ensure women's access to information and communication technology
- Develop mechanisms to expand financial inclusion and women's access to various financial services;
- Develop training programs for women who work in the agricultural sector in order to improve their productivity and provide them with new market opportunities.

Promote women's engagement in the agricultural sector

- Expand projects that facilitate women's employment in the various value chains of agricultural production, including agricultural manufacturing;
- Provide sources of funding for working women in the agricultural sector, to strengthen their presence.

Pillar 3: Social empowerment

Current situation

There are several issues that pertain to women's social empowerment, which may affect the quality of their life. On top of these issues are the following:

Access to justice: Although many legal instruments— the constitution being on top— guarantee the fundamental rights of women and girls and provide them with considerable protection within the family and in the public sphere, the lack of knowledge about such instruments and their provisions greatly limits women's abilities to realize their guaranteed rights and benefit from the available protection schemes. The prevalent male dominant cultural attitudes and gender discrimination, particularly in marginalized urban areas, and in rural areas— mainly in Upper Egypt— restricts the possibilities of women and girls to obtain any social and economic opportunities, making them more vulnerable to poverty and marginalization. Additionally, the lack of resources, capacities, and mechanisms in law enforcement entities, other state institutions, and civil society organizations that are expected to provide legal assistance, protect, and fulfill the rights of women— in the face of a prevailing societal culture that discriminates against them— exacerbates their lack of access to justice.

Women's reproductive health: Data reveals a significant progress in women's access to healthcare services during pregnancy, delivery and the postnatal period. In 2014, 83% of women received regular pregnancy care and 92% of deliveries were carried out with medical assistance. Nevertheless, this development was not accompanied by any increase in contraception usage. On the contrary, there has been a decrease in the use of family planning methods in recent years, from 60.3% in 2008 to 58.5% in 2014, while the percentage of unmet needs for contraception increased from 11.6% in 2008 to 12.6% in 2014. This was accompanied by an increase in the total fertility rate from 3 children per woman in 2008 to 3.5 children per woman in 2014.⁽¹⁵⁾

⁽¹⁵⁾ Demographic and Health Survey 2014, El-Zanaty and associates, Egypt 2014.

An increase in birth rates is associated with a significant rise in the population size and, in turn, affects the coverage and quality of services provided to the target population, including women. Moreover, women's abilities to participate in the economy becomes limited, particularly in the case of early marriage or early birth. In addition, frequent pregnancies affect women's health, exposing them to multiple risks and more family burdens. It is worth noting that the Ministry of Health and Population launched the National Strategy for Population and Development 2030, which aims at reducing the total fertility rate by 2030 to 2.4 children per woman.

Care for elderly women: Women aged 65 years and above constitute 2.2% of Egyptian women. With the increasing rate of old age diseases, elderly women face challenges, in specific: poor healthcare services, lack of trained medical staff, and insufficient income to cover their basic needs. Elderly women also suffer from inadequate infrastructure that accounts for their needs and conditions.

Supporting women with disabilities: Data reveals that 11 out of every 1,000 women aged between 13-35 years have disabilities⁽¹⁶⁾. Women with disabilities in Egypt suffer from several forms of discrimination in basic rights, like access to decent education that accommodates their conditions, access to health services offered by trained and specialized medical staff, and access to appropriate job opportunities that also guarantee equal advancement across the career ladder. Studies reveal that, in 2014, 6 out of every 1,000 women aged between 15-29 years were unwilling to work because of their disability.

Accessing information about their basic rights to support making informed and independent decisions, essential information that suits the type of their disability, and information about public services— particularly reproductive health services— are all challenges that women with disabilities are faced with, limiting their access to services and programs that are beneficial to women in general. In addition, women with disabilities suffer from the absence of responsive services that guarantee their independence and are specific to their needs. This includes services that enhance their mobility and respect their privacy, such as appropriate banking services that enable blind women to carry out their own transactions without having to rely on someone.

(16) Survey of Young People, Population Council, 2014.

National efforts to develop poverty reduction strategies, women's empowerment programs, including policies for people with disabilities, have often neglected women with disabilities. Discriminatory practices against women with disabilities are higher in rural and remote areas, where they are mostly denied their rights and have restricted safe mobility. This is not only due to the structural impediments, such as inadequate infrastructure, but also due to the negative perception the society holds towards women with disabilities in general, as well as the limited awareness and lack of exerted efforts to educate the public about their rights.

Supporting young women: Women aged 15-39 represent approximately a fifth of Egypt's population, which requires developing interventions that aim at utilizing their capacities in development processes.

Women's access to healthcare: The cost of health services, especially at times of economic reform, may prevent women from accessing adequate healthcare services. Approximately 5%⁽¹⁷⁾ of Egyptian women, most of which regard its services as poor in quality, are covered by health insurance. In order to enhance the health condition of women in general, and that of marginalized women in particular, it is necessary to expand the umbrella of health insurance provision and improve its services.

Illiteracy among women: Education is the main driver for empowerment. Indicators reveal that Egyptian women have made tangible progress in bridging the gender gap at all educational stages of enrollment. Nevertheless, female illiteracy rates remain high (32% for women compared with 16% for men). The gap increases at the lower socio-economic levels, which confirms the importance of not limiting the analysis to only aggregate indicators. Moreover, there is a need to further study the indicators between marginalized social segments, where there is an increased gender gap.⁽¹⁸⁾ Indicators also reveal that the percentage of male graduates in various science disciplines exceed that of female graduates, besides

⁽¹⁷⁾ Egyptian Women's Needs Survey, National Center for Social and Criminological Research, Egypt, 2016.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Demographic and Health Survey 2014, El-Zanaty and associates, Egypt 2014.

the majority of on the job training opportunities are given to male workers.

Fig. 6: Goal and targets of social empowerment pillar

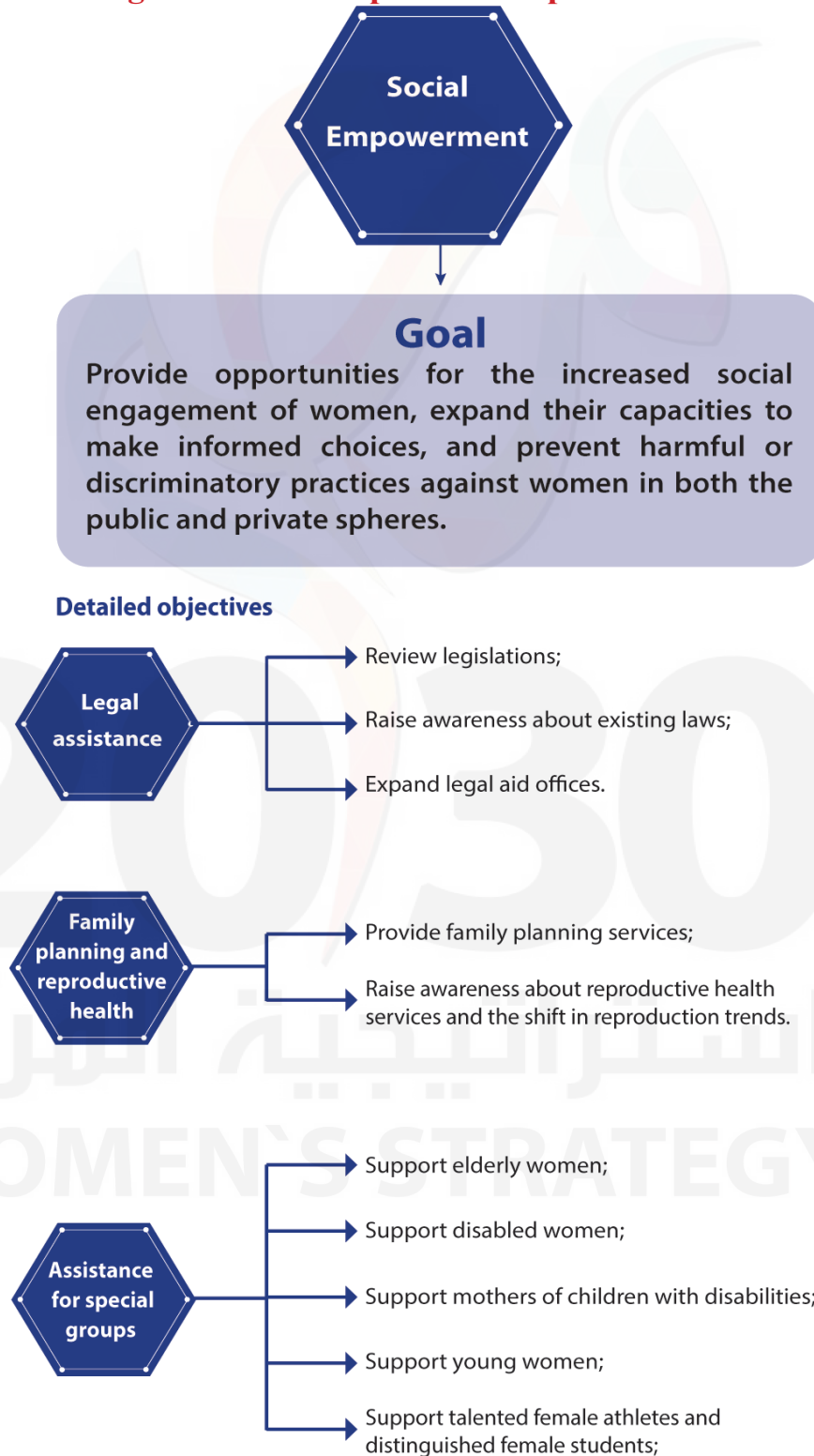


Table 3: Impact indicators of social empowerment pillar

Impact indicators	Year	Value	Target value by 2030
Female illiteracy rate (above 10 years old)	2014	27% ^(h)	12%
Female illiteracy rate (2029- years old)	2014	12% ^(h)	0
Percentage of married women who use contraceptive methods	2014	59% ^(h)	72%
Total fertility rate (child/woman)	2014	3.5 children ^(h)	2.4 children
Percentage of pregnant women who received prenatal care	2014	83% ^(h)	92%
Percentage of pregnant women who delivered via caesarian section	2014	52% ^(d)	34%
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 living babies)	2014	52 ^(d)	26
Life expectancy at birth	2013	71.3 years ^(d)	76 years
Average number of years women live in good health	2016	63 years ^(c)	71.4 (94%)
Percentage of disabled women employed in the government sector	2015	<1% ^(e)	3%
Number of retirement homes	2014	171 ^(d)	1400

Interventions for the social empowerment of Egyptian women

Enhance women's access to justice services, especially the most needy

- Establish a network of legal aid offices to support women's access to justice, particularly the poorest of the poor, through raising their awareness and supporting them to gain their rights by virtue of law;
- Activate the role of the complaints office of the National Council for Women (NCW) to become women's first resort to solving their problems.

Enhance women's reproductive health

- Expand the provision of reproductive health services and family planning methods across Egypt, particularly in poor and disadvantaged areas;
- Educate families about the risks of frequent pregnancies on women, their families, and the country, besides increasing demand on family planning services;
- Develop social incentive systems to encourage women to resort to spacing between pregnancies for the safety of the mother and the child;
- Emphasize the necessity of undertaking pre-marital tests, as studies indicate that marriage certificates are acquired without the conduction of such tests;
- Build the capacities of health sector workers to offer quality care services for the mother and child.

Enhance services for elderly women

- Expand awareness programs to educate family members about dealing with elderly women, which will, in turn, contribute to enhancing the quality of their life;
- Develop health services for the elderly that account for their needs;
- Create a suitable environment for elderly women, including availing appropriate infrastructure and facilities.

Enhance services for women with disabilities

- Provide training and rehabilitation services for women with disabilities, and ensure equal opportunities from the early childhood and education phases, through employment, societal integration and participation, to the marriage and family-formation phase;
- Develop the public space and create a suitable enabling environment for women with disabilities, and ensure the strict compliance of government institutions with the appropriate infrastructures that account for their needs and conditions;
- Establish and avail a cadre of qualified medical and psychiatric staff to deal with the problems of women with disabilities.

Enhance services for mothers of children with disabilities

- Offer care services for children with disabilities, including preventive healthcare services and treatment, as well as day care services for the children of working mothers;
- Expand rehabilitation and physiotherapy centers in all areas in order to facilitate access for mothers of children with disabilities;
- Raise the awareness of mothers, through various media channels and health centers, about the early detection of disabilities and dealing with its different forms.

Enhance services for young women

- Equip young women with knowledge about reproductive health issues, especially those that are not openly discussed during the adolescence phase due to preventive customs and traditions;
- Channel the energies of young women to development work with civil society organizations and youth centers. Reinstitute the practice of specifying days for young women to serve at youth centers, which proved to be extremely effective, especially in Upper Egypt.
- Enable young women to access and use modern technology, especially communication technology, which enhances their capacities, talent, political and economic participation opportunities.

Support talented and distinguished young women

- Transform selected youth centers across Egypt into specialized girl-friendly centers that have ongoing programs to identify and nurture the talents of outstanding girls and athletes.
- Expand extra-curricular activities in schools and universities— including allowing time for such activities during the school day and in summer vacations— and remove barriers that hinder students' participation.

Enhance services for female prisoners

- Provide the necessary healthcare for female prisoners, particularly the elderly;
- Simplify and facilitate the visitation process for female prisoners to see their children, especially those with children under the age of 15 years;
- Develop public awareness campaigns that aim at changing society's perception about female prisoners, encouraging and accepting their re-integration.

Address the challenge of women in debt

- Implement a preventive approach to limit women from falling into debt, as a result of unplanned borrowing, through raising their awareness about their legal rights and responsibilities.

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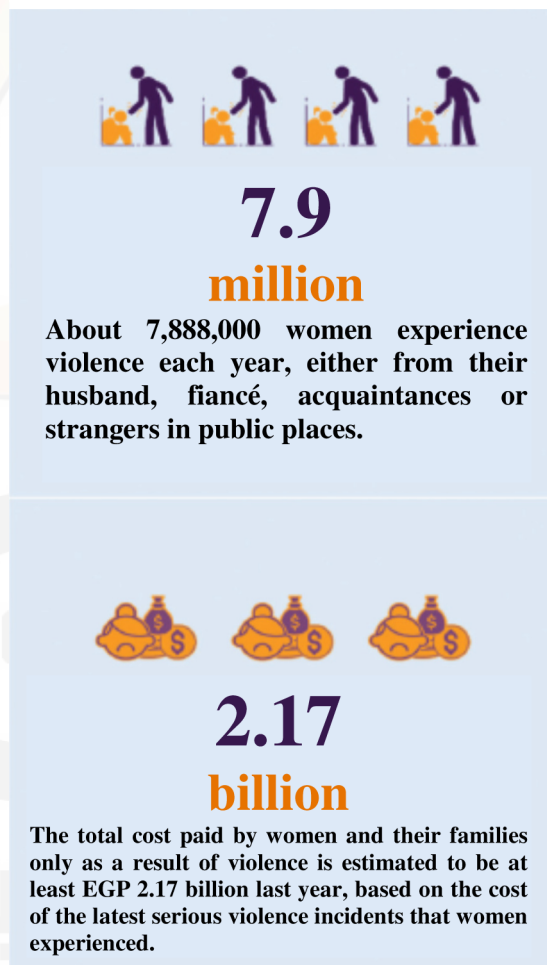
Pillar 4: Protection

Current situation

Article 11 of the Egyptian Constitution commits the State to “protect women against all forms of violence, ensure their empowerment to balance between family and work duties,” protect and “care for motherhood and childhood, female heads of households, elderly women, and women most in need.” Women’s protection from all forms of violence is regarded as the cornerstone of all efforts that aim at their empowerment. Violence against women is not only demeaning to the dignity of women and girls, but also hinders their participation in the public sphere in general, and their political participation in particular, as a result of having previously experienced violence or fear from it.

Despite the need to expand programs that support women who experience various forms of violence, the relatively low demand on such services is often due to the lack of women’s awareness about their existence; hence, more awareness is needed. Recent studies conducted in Egypt indicate that 7.9 million women are violated by their husband, fiancé, acquaintances in their circles, or strangers in public places each year. In 2014, the economic cost of violence against women was approximately EGP 2.2 billion.

Fig. 7: Economic cost of violence against women



Harassment: Sexual harassment is among the new phenomena witnessed by the Egyptian society in recent years. Data suggests that 2.5 million women were subjected to harassment in the year preceding the Egypt Economic Cost of Gender Based Violence Survey 2015, reaching an economic cost of EGP 571 million annually for harassment in public places. The survey revealed that 6.6% of women were subjected to harassment in public transportation, 9.6% in the streets, 1.3% in educational institutions and 3.7% in workplaces. Harsher sexual harassment punishments are required to limit and reduce such acts.

Domestic violence: Contrary to expected, the Survey of the Economic Cost of Gender-Based Violence found that most violence does not occur in the public sphere; in fact, the highest rates of violence encountered by women occur in homes, the place where they are supposed to feel secure. Women who suffered any form of violence during the year preceding the Survey of the Economic Cost of Violence reported that they were subjected to violence by their husbands or fiancés (23.8%), or within the family or surrounding environment (23.4%), while only 13% encountered violence in public places.⁽¹⁹⁾

Data indicates that 25% of women who have ever been married were subjected to physical violence by their husbands, 19% were subjected to psychological violence by their husbands, and 4% encountered sexual violence by their husbands.⁽²⁰⁾ Moreover, most of the violated women by

Fig. 8: Economic cost of violence against women



⁽¹⁹⁾ CAPMAS, 2015, Egypt Economic Cost of Gender Based Violence Survey.

⁽²⁰⁾ Demographic and Health Survey 2014, El-Zanaty and associates, Egypt 2014.

their family members or anyone within their surrounding environment did not seek the help of the authorities for protection, or any services, with the exception of only 5% who received health services

Early marriage: Early marriage is among the forms of violence that girls are faced with, depriving them from their right to education and adversely affecting their economic participation. In addition, early marriage is associated with serious psychological and health problems that may endanger girls' lives as a consequence of early pregnancy and childbearing. Data concerned with the registration of marriage and divorce suggests that early marriage is also associated with high divorce rates within the first five years of marriage. The results of the Egypt Economic Cost of Gender Based Violence Survey 2015 reveal that 21% of women aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18. It is worth noting that Article 80 of the Egyptian Constitution commits the State to protect the best interest of the child, defined as anyone who is under the age of 18 years, which implicitly prohibits marriage of the girl child. In 2015, Egypt endorsed the National Strategy for the Prevention of Early Marriage 2015-2020, which aims at reducing early marriage rates in 2020 by half of those in 2015.

Female genital mutilation: Despite its criminalization by law since 2008, female genital mutilation (FGM) continues to be practiced. The results of the Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2014 indicate that about 92% of the married women aged 15-49 have undergone FGM, while 56% of girls under 19 are expected to undergo FGM before they reach the age of 19 years. FGM is one of the forms of violence against women that has detrimental physical and psychological impacts on women throughout their lives. More than half of the Egyptians support the practice and believe that is a religious requirement. The challenge is further reflected in the fact that three-quarters of these procedures are performed by physicians, who are supposed to be responsible for combating the practice and raising the public's awareness about its dangers.

The House of Representatives has recently endorsed legal amendments that increased the penalty for FGM. According to these amendments, such mutilation was reclassified from a misdemeanor to a criminal offense and the penalty for

performing it has been increased from the previous three months to two years, to become a two to three-year imprisonment. The fine for those convicted of performing/facilitating FGM was also increased from EGP 1,000-5,000 to EGP 10,000-50,000. If the operation leads to a permanent deformity, the penalty may be even steeper, with elongated prison terms, and if a death is caused, the penalty is life imprisonment.

Personal status: Personal status laws which regulate marriage, divorce, alimony, and child custody are of great importance to women for the protection of their rights, dignity, family stability, and psychological wellbeing. Law No. 100 of 1985 outlined the most important conditions of a marriage contract to ensure mutual consent and parity, in addition to the conditions of marriage documentation, in order to protect the rights of both parties. Regarding marriage dissolution, the total number of divorce cases in 2015 was approximately 200,000, with an increase of 20,000 divorces compared to 2014. The highest divorce rate occurs among those aged 30-35, comprising 20% of those seeking divorces.⁽²¹⁾ Claims related to child support payments constituted 82% of the total claims submitted to the Dispute Settlement Office of the family courts throughout 2007-2011.⁽²²⁾

Despite the establishment of family courts in Egypt— pursuant to Law No. 10 of 2004— as the first specialized courts to resolve disputes that arise among family members, settle legal disputes over divorce, child custody, and alimony payments, divorced women face vast difficulties in obtaining knowledge about relevant legal texts and provisions due to the existence of multiple laws that regulate family affairs. Moreover, many Egyptian families continue to suffer from elongated litigation processes and the slow enforcement of court rulings in family cases. And due to the lack of sufficient guarantees, women do not often receive child support payments in a regular and timely manner, besides the relatively low value of child support payments ordered by courts, which are usually inadequate and insufficient to cover the child's expenses.

⁽²¹⁾ CAPMAS Bulletin.

⁽²²⁾ Study of the Personal Status Law in Egypt and the proposed amendments - National Center for Social and Criminological Research.

Female-headed-households: The definition of female heads of households differs from one survey to another, which leads to different percentages. The Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2014 indicates that females head 13% of households, compared to 87% headed by males. Female-headed households were more common in urban than in rural areas, where 16% of households in urban areas were headed by females compared to about 11% of households in rural areas. According to data from the Income, Spending and Consumption Research 2012/2013 [Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)], female-headed households constitute 17.8% of the total sample households, with an average household size of three persons.

Furthermore, studies show that most of female heads of households work in the informal sector and lack insurance, benefits and medical care. According to Article 17 of the Constitution, “the State shall ensure that social insurance services are provided, and all citizens who do not benefit from the social insurance system have the right to social security, in a manner that ensures a decent life in the event of being incapable to provide for themselves and their families, as well as in cases of incapacity to work, old age or unemployment.” This includes female-headed-households for whom the Constitution obliges the State to provide care for pursuant to Article 11. Egypt has recently implemented the conditional cash transfer program— Takaful and Karama — which aims at supporting poor families, and in particular female headed households. The total number of households covered by this program reached 1.5 million by the end of 2016.⁽²³⁾

⁽²³⁾ Ministry of Social Solidarity, 2016.

Fig. 9: Goal and targets of protection pillar

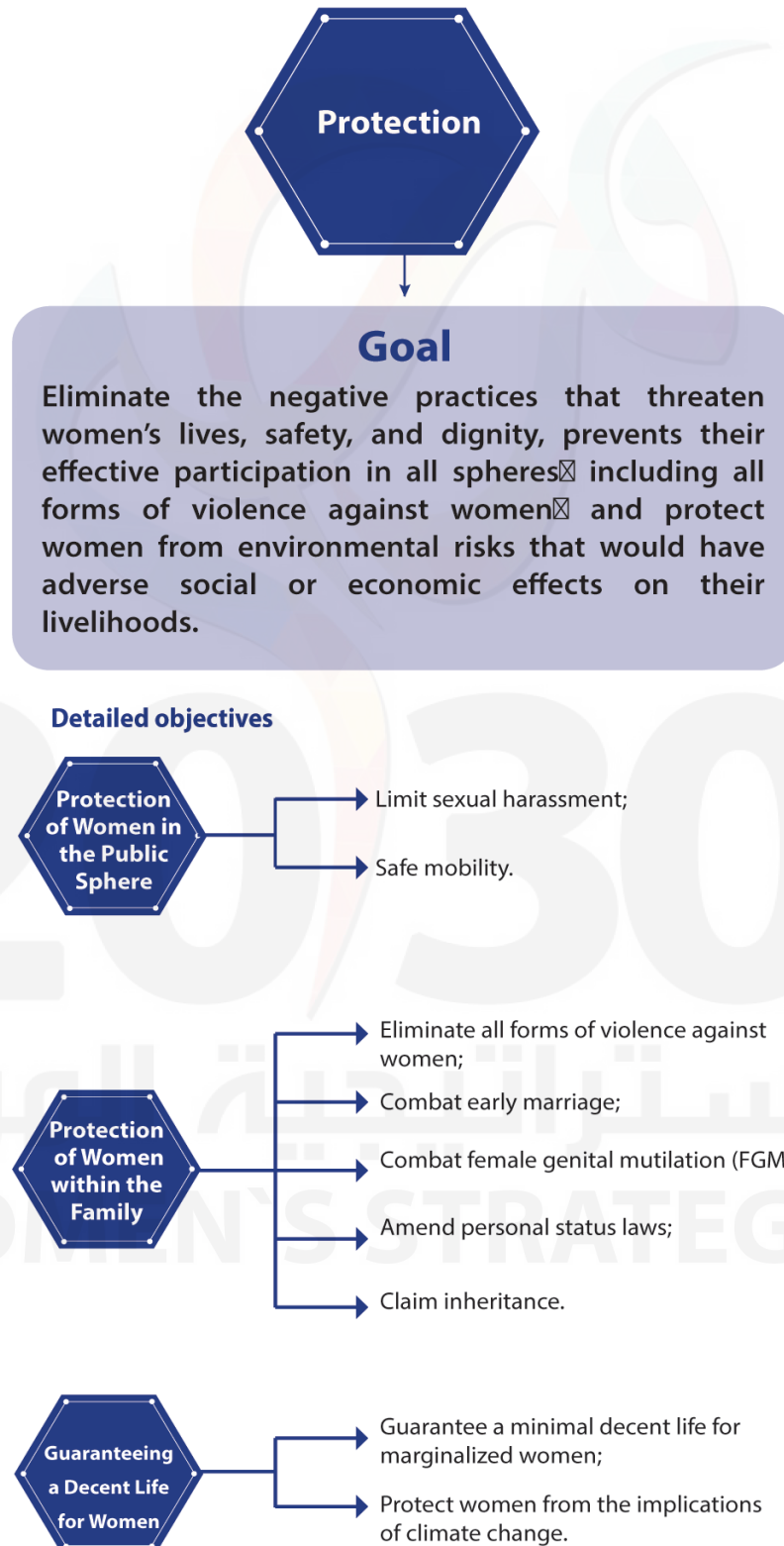


Table 4: Impact indicators of protection pillar

Impact indicators	Year	Current Value	Target value by 2030
Percentage of women aged 20-29 who married before the age of 18	2014	18% ^(h)	1%
Percentage of married women/women who have been married before, aged 20-29, who had children before the age of 20	2014	24% ^(h)	0%
Percentage of women who were subjected to harassment during the previous year	2015	13% ^(j)	0%
Percentage of ever married women aged 15-49 who have undergone circumcision	2014	92% ^(h)	55%
Percentage of girls under 19 years old who are expected to undergo circumcision	2014	56% ^(h)	10%
Percentage of women who have been subject to physical violence from their husbands	2014	25.2% ^(h)	0%
Percentage of women who have been subject to psychological violence from their husbands	2014	18.8% ^(h)	0%
Percentage of women who have been subject to sexual violence from their husbands	2014	4.1% ^(h)	0%

Interventions for the protection of Egyptian women

Eliminating sexual harassment

- Enforce robust laws that deter acts of women's sexual harassment;
- Increase the number of female police to monitor and prevent harassment in crowded areas;
- Strengthen the ability of victims of harassment to use their legal rights to sue harassers, and increase the support offered to victims in police stations;
- Expand and activate initiatives that increase awareness about all forms of sexual harassment; engage civil society organizations, universities and youth centers in anti-harassment-awareness campaigns;

- Incorporate into educational curricula topics that promote a culture of acceptance and respect to women's role as a key partner in society;
- Combat the widespread of drama productions that encourage all forms of harassment and violence against women.

Promoting women's safe mobility

- Apply stricter controls on harassment in public transportation, since it limits women's mobility and work;
- Support innovative approaches to make cities and their public places safe for all, particularly women and girls, and mainstream successful experiences in planning new cities and developing existing ones.

Promoting the rights of women and families in personal status laws

- Amend personal status laws to protect women, to ensure the best interests of the family, and to facilitate women's access to their full rights without delay;
- Develop all family courts in line with women's needs, particularly women with disabilities, and establish a national mechanism to speed the implementation of court orders regarding the alimony owed to women and the children in their custody;
- Expand the establishment of legal aid offices and dispute settlement offices attached to family courts, to ensure effective support for women and families seeking their rights after divorce.

Protect women and eliminate all forms of violence against them

- Continue implementing the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2015-2020;
- Enact and enforce a law on the elimination and protection of women against from all forms of violence;
- Develop policies that promote an enabling environment for the female victims of violence to report the perpetrators, and to benefit from protection services;

- Organize awareness campaigns to foster a social culture that opposes all forms of violence against women, encourages women to not tolerate violence or accept the impunity of perpetrators, and coordinate with the media and production companies to promote the same through TV and film

Combat early and unregistered marriage

- Continue implementing the National Strategy for the Prevention of Early Marriage 2010-2020;
- Establish a mechanism to increase control over licensed marriage officers (maazouns) to prevent early marriage
- Raise awareness among families of the risks of early marriage to girls and the negative consequences of informal marriage;
- Encourage families to support their daughters to complete their education, and enable them to do so by establishing more one-class and girl-friendly schools.

Combating Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- Continue implementing the National FGM Abandonment Strategy 2016-2020;
- Enforce the law that criminalizes FGM;
- Raise the society's awareness of the harms of FGM, and the lack of any origin to such practice in religion;
- Increase control over physicians and members of the medical establishment, to prevent them from performing such procedures.

Protecting women's right to access inheritance

- Enact laws that stipulate the compulsory distribution of inheritance immediately after a death, and consider courts responsible for notifying each of the heirs of their share in the inheritance;
- Organize awareness campaigns to change the culture, customs and traditions that encourage preventing women from inheriting, which is particularly the case in some areas in Upper Egypt; raise the awareness of women's

need to claim their inheritance immediately, to avoid the problems that occur when an inheritance is claimed long after a death;

- Offer legal support to women to help them access their rights through judicial routes, particularly since women are most affected by long litigation periods and taxing legal proceedings.

Provide support services for marginalized, female-headed-households and women in debt

- Review the support system to ensure support is given to women in need and to female-headed households;
- Expand the Takaful and Karama Programs to empower more female-headed-households, and extend support to marginalized women across Egypt;
- Increase the efficiency of services provided to marginalized women by the social service units of the Ministry of Social Solidarity.

Strengthen women's ability to cope with environmental risks, climate change and unsustainable consumption

- Raise awareness among women, particularly those working in agriculture, of the necessary measures to cope with floods and other outcomes resulting from climate change;
- Take the necessary procedures to protect women from all types of environmental risks and other outcomes of climate change;
- Provide appropriate and innovative technology and funding to women to allow them to engage in environmentally friendly industries such as waste recycling, organic agriculture, and biofuel and alternative energy production;
- Provide training and funding to women in protected areas, to allow them to benefit from economic activities based on the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity, including the production of aromatic and herbal products and environmental tourism activities;
- Expand the interventions which promote the culture of rationalizing consumption, and encourage women to save and invest instead of borrowing for consumption purposes.

7. Partners in Developing and Implementing the Strategy

The implementation of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 requires close collaboration and efficient coordination among many partners some of who are listed below. The Strategy's action plan will identify the interventions necessary to achieve the goals of the Strategy's pillars in a more detailed manner. It will also identify the concerned entities, their responsibilities and implementation timeframes, in order to facilitate joint planning and coordination and the management of relations between partners.

The following list shows some of the key partners who will make major contributions to achieving the Strategy's goals:

- The legislative authorities, including members of the Egyptian Parliament and of Local Councils;
- The judicial authorities, represented by the Supreme Judicial Council, various judicial bodies and Public Prosecution;
- The executive authorities, including ministries and concerned ministers, governors, national councils, executive bodies in the various ministries and entities, and equal opportunities units in ministries;
- All civil society parties, including civil society organizations, syndicates, think tanks (Research centers), entities working on women issues and gender equality, experts and academics, the media representatives, intellectuals, artists and athletes.

8. Critical Factors for the Strategy's Success

Political will and institutional support at all levels

Genuine political will to improve women's conditions in Egypt is the cornerstone for implementing the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030. Although this will is evident at senior political levels—as was clearly reflected in the declaration of 2017 as the Year of the Egyptian Women, to highlight women's issues—the lower administrative levels, both sectoral and local, do not show the same commitment, and decisions taken at these levels often discriminate against women. Despite the gains achieved, the status of Egyptian women is still not compatible with the country's long history. In addition, the participation of decision-makers in the in-depth discussions held as part of the preparation of this Strategy has shown response levels that are not commensurate with the efforts required to improve Egypt's position compared to other countries. Efforts must be doubled to ensure the commitment of central and local leadership to translating high level political will for women's empowerment into reality.

Expanding the Gender budgeting and planning approaches that are responsive to women's needs in various sectors

Adopting policies, planning approaches and budgets responsive to women's needs is one of the most effective methods to bring about social change; through allocation of resources dedicated to implement policies and programs entitled to reduce the gender disparities and eliminate obstacles depriving women from accessing the public services. In this context transforming traditional budgets into Performance based budget and inserting the suggested programs for women advancement into relevant Monitoring and Evaluation indicators are one of the most critical factors for the Strategy's success.

Traditional methods for budgeting usually disregard the disparities between men and women in Egypt in terms of conditions, capabilities, and roles, and does not include clear-cut allocations for women advancement programs, except for the financial assistance and direct services programs for women; which leads to difficulty of monitoring the desired outcome of women support programs.

Expanding the participation base for all relevant sectors of society

The ambitious goals of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 require broad participation of concerned stakeholders in the implementation process whether at the level of the three main authorities: the legislative , judiciary and executive authorities—or at the level of the private sector and civil society. Moreover, all citizens, men and women must engage in the implementation of the strategy, as the female citizens are the direct beneficiaries of it.

Partnership with civil society

Civil society is a key partner in implementing the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030, due to its wide presence on the ground and its significant role in achieving sustainable development. The Strategy affirms the necessity of engaging civil society organizations in implementing its programs and activities, especially Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (more than 40,000 NGOs are registered in Egypt). Moreover, it is particularly important to engage the limited number of NGOs that already play an effective role in improving the quality of Egyptian's lives.

Media support to promote a culture of respect for women and recognition of their capability for participation and effective leadership

The Strategy aims to establish an effective partnership with all media, particularly producers of media content, to promote its goals and support its implementation. The Strategy prioritizes the enhancement of cultural respect for women, challenging the negative values that foster discrimination against women, and promoting positive changes to existing stereotypes of women. The Media plays a significant role in raising the public's awareness and shaping community cultures. The Strategy does not only focus on talk shows and awareness programs, but also on Drama TV and cinema that proved to have a deeper impact that has been recognized on Egyptian society in the recent years, which portrayed negative images of women in the society as a whole.

Efficient institutional framework, coordination and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the Strategy

The implementation of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030, given the wide scope of its goals, multiple pillars, and the overlapping responsibilities of its actors—requires a robust institutional framework that tackles the tasks of joint planning, coordination and relationship management among all active partners (including the legislative, judicial and executive authorities, civil society organizations, and the private sector). This institutional framework must also govern the implementation of the programs, the formulation and evaluation of policies, research, and ongoing monitoring and assessment to identify the progress levels and impact of the achieved outcome. Accordingly, corrective measure will be taken if necessary. In this regard, the National Council for Women, according to its mandate under the Constitution and as the national machinery for women in Egypt, shall develop institutional framework and coordination mechanisms to implement the strategy, not only monitor the implementation and results.

Calculating the cost of the Strategy's implementation accurately

Part II of the Strategy will provide the action plan for achieving the Strategy's goals, the responsibilities of implementing partners, and the intermediate and final targets to be achieved by each partner. This will entail adopting approaches that have been successfully applied in several countries to calculate the costs of implementing proposed interventions and identify implementation priorities according to a cost benefit analysis as well as to the feasibility and resource mobilization under each intervention within the required time period. This costing approach will provide a strong basis for negotiations around arranging or redirecting the allocations needed from the state budget or sectoral budgets to finance priority interventions. It will also form a basis for advocacy with businesses and the private sector to contribute to funding the Strategy's activities. In collaboration with the Ministry of International Cooperation, a road map will be developed to coordinate between international organizations and donor agencies willing to offer support to the national efforts for the advancement of Egyptian women.

Developing an information and research database on the position of Egyptian women and closing information gaps

Studies and analysis on Egyptian women in general, and the strategy pillars in specific, indicate several information gaps, whether at the level of required indices to monitor the status of Egyptian Women at the national and lower administrative level or at determining baselines on which monitoring progress is based upon.

The development of agreed-upon measurement indicators, and the regular collection, compiling and publishing of data, are critical factors to monitoring the Strategy's implementation, progress in achieving goals, and the modification of implementation methods if targeted goals are not met. The National Council for Women will play a crucial role in coordinating among data-producing bodies, collecting and disseminating data, and results.

Efficient mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation processes will be carried out through the establishment of the Egyptian Women Observatory, under the umbrella of the National Council for Women. The Observatory will be responsible for collecting data and information on various issues pertaining to women, developing the indicators that will be used for monitoring and evaluation and preparing a biennial report on women's status in Egypt. The Observatory will also monitor new phenomena introduced to Egyptian women's lives, and raise them for discussion. Moreover, it will monitor the impact of new laws on women's conditions, and document successful experiences and lessons learned.

Developing accountability mechanisms and tools for Strategy implementation

Periodic accountability is one of the factors that ensure that developmental policies and programs have a positive impact on society. Accountability requires a clear division of responsibilities among partners, as well as agreement on specific monitoring and evaluation procedures based upon specific indicators. Part II of the Strategy will include detailed implementation plans, responsibilities of implementing partners, and goals specified for each partner, as well as the coordination mechanisms and accountability tools that are in line with the role of each partner, and joint responsibilities of the Strategy's implementation.

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9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Evidence- and indicator-based monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation based on rigorous methods is the cornerstone for identifying progress made towards achieving the goals of the Strategy. This can only be achieved by closely linking the general goals and the detailed objectives with their relevant indicators, in a systematic way that is based on accurate and updated data systems.

The Strategy is unique in translating its goals into quantitative indicators to monitor implementation and evaluate the proposed interventions, policies and programs based on information and evidence. Therefore, indicators have been developed for monitoring and evaluating the Strategy's implementation. The indicators used to monitor each of the Strategy's pillars are limited to those that reflect the results of the policies and programs to be implemented, in order not to disperse efforts on providing secondary data, given the lack of some data at the lower administrative levels. The implementation plans that will be developed in Part II of the Strategy will, however, include an additional set of indicators to monitor procedures and measures at the local level. The monitoring and evaluation system is designed to reflect the various pillars of the Strategy and it will be linked to the monitoring and impact indicators of the national sustainable development strategy, Egypt's Vision 2030, as well as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, announced in 2015.

Quantitative goals for each indicator, to be achieved by 2030, have been established according to the current value that express the current situation, as described above in each pillar of the Strategy. Furthermore, in Part II of the Strategy, which lays out the detailed plans and operational tasks, targeted goals will be set at significant milestones (for the years 2020 and 2025) of the Strategy's implementation that will be agreed upon by the implementing partners as the basis for regular monitoring and accountability.

Mechanisms and tools for monitoring

The implementation of the Strategy requires a robust institutional framework that ensures the implementation and evaluation of the policies and programs that will be adopted to achieve its goals. Accordingly, the National Council for Women will be responsible for establishing and managing the institutional framework and coordination mechanisms and not only monitoring the implementation and results of this Strategy.

In this regard, it is proposed that three major components of the monitoring and coordination institutional framework are integrated, as follows:

- Periodic monitoring of the Strategy at the level of the Cabinet by dedicating an item on the Cabinet's meeting agenda every three months to follow up on national efforts to implement the Strategy, in the presence of the President of the National Council for Women.
- Periodic monitoring of the Strategy at the level of the Governors' Council, by dedicating an item on the Council's meeting agenda every three months to follow up on national efforts to implement the Strategy on the local level, in the presence of the President of the National Council for Women.
- Continuous monitoring through the Egyptian Women Observatory of the National Council for Women; the Council will establish and strengthen the capacities of a special observatory to monitor the status of Egyptian women. The Observatory will be responsible for monitoring the indicators that reflect the progress of the strategy in a way that enhances the information and evidence based monitoring mechanisms.

In so doing, the Observatory will develop tools for monitoring and disseminating results that may include introducing scorecards for assessing performance at the sectoral and municipal levels. Moreover, biennial reports will be issued on the progress made, supported by extensive reports to be published in 2020 and 2025 that will analyze successes and challenges, and suggest methods for course correction as needed.

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