



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

**Consideration of reports submitted by States
parties under article 44 of the Convention**

**Third and fourth periodic reports of States parties due in
2007**

Egypt*

[29 December 2008]

* In accordance with the information transmitted to States parties regarding the processing of their reports, the present document was not formally edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	1-12	4
II. General measures of implementation (articles 4, 42 and 44 (paragraph (6)).....	13-89	9
A. Reservations.....	14	9
B. Legal status of the Convention under Egyptian legislation.....	15	9
C. Legislation	16-38	9
D. Coordination mechanisms	39-50	13
E. Mechanism for receiving children's complaints.....	51-52	15
F. Strategies and national action plans	53-54	16
G. Public expenditure to promote the rights of the child: Budget allocations in Egyptian society.....	55-62	16
H. Data collection	63-68	21
I. Civil society and civil associations	69-76	23
J. Raising awareness of the Convention	77-89	25
III. Definition of the child (article 1)	90-92	28
IV. General principles (articles 2, 3, 6 and 12).....	93-110	28
A. Non-discrimination (article 2).....	94-100	29
B. The best interests of the child (article 3).....	101	30
C. The right to life, survival and development (article 6)	102	30
D. Respect of the opinions of the child (article 12).....	103-110	30
V. Civil rights and freedoms (articles 7, 8, 13-17 and 37 paragraph (a)).....	111-122	32
A. Name and nationality (article 7).....	111-116	32
B. Preservation of identity (article 8).....	117	33
C. Access to appropriate information (article 17)	118-120	33
D. The right not to be subjected to torture (article 37 paragraph (a))	121-122	34
VI. Family environment and alternative care (articles 5, 9-11, 18 paragraphs (1) and (2), 19-21, 25, 27 paragraph (4), and 39).....	123-167	34
A. Parental guidance and family support (articles 5 and 18 paragraphs (1) and (2)).....	124-130	35
B. Children deprived of family environment and adoption (article 9 paragraphs (1 to 4), 20 and 21)	131-136	36
C. Family reunification (article 10).....	137-139	37
D. Recovery of child maintenance (article 27 paragraph (4)).....	140	38
E. Illicit transfer and non-return (article 11).....	141	38
F. Protection from abuse and neglect including physical and psychological rehabilitation, and reintegration (articles 19 and 39).....	142-167	39
VII. Basic health and welfare (articles 6, 18 paragraph (3), 23, 24, 26 and 27 paragraphs (1 to 3)).....	168-255	44
A. Children with disabilities (article 23).....	174-211	45
B. Health and basic services (article 24).....	212-248	52
C. Standard of living (article 27)	249-255	58

VIII.	Education, leisure and cultural activities (articles 28, 29 and 31)	256-309	59
A.	Vocational training (article 28)	259-261	60
B.	Objectives of education policy (article 29)	262-302	60
C.	Rest, leisure time, recreation, cultural and artistic activities (article 31)	303-309	68
IX.	Special protection measures (articles 22, 33-36, 37 and 38-40)	310-403	70
A.	Child refugees (article 22)	312-314	70
B.	Child offenders (article 40)	315-333	71
C.	Sentencing children (article 37 paragraph (a))	334	74
D.	Physical and psychological rehabilitation and reintegration (article 39)	335-337	75
E.	Economic exploitation and child labour (article 32)	338-371	76
F.	Protection of children from smoking, the use of drugs and harmful substances (article 33)	372-380	83
G.	Sexual exploitation and abuse, the sale, trafficking and abduction of children (articles 34 and 35)	381-403	85
X.	Conclusion	404-405	92
Tables			
1	Childcare expenditure in the State budget (2002-2003 to 2006-2007)		17
2	National Council for Childhood and Motherhood allocations (domestic) on programmes and projects (2002-2003 to 2007-2008)		19
3	Extra-budgetary allocations for Council programmes (2002-2007)		20
4	Total external assistance for childcare expenditure by authority (in United States dollars)		21
5	Areas of activity of the network of educational societies in partnership with the Ministry of Education		24
6	Total intake at all education levels (2001-2002 to 2006-2007)		63
7	Children held in care institutions by type of offence		74
Graphs and diagrams			
1	Relative distribution of public expenditure (2002-2003 to 2006-2007)		18
2	Malnutrition indicators-protein deficiency among children under the age of 5 (1992-2005)		53
3	Rate of reporting cases of sexual exploitation by gender of victim		88
4	Rate of reporting cases of sexual exploitation by age of victim		89
5	Rate of reporting cases of sexual exploitation by area of residence of victim		89
Annexes			
1	Demographic features		93
2	(a) Editing, drafting and technical review committee		96
	(b) List of participants in the preliminary meetings for the preparation of the report		97

I. Introduction

Rights of the child in Egypt: Overview

1. Egypt was one of the leading countries to call for the adoption of an international convention on the rights of the child. In 1988, it played host to a summit meeting in Alexandria where it presented the first draft of the Convention including article 21 on Kafalah as an Islamic alternative to adoption. Egypt had in mind the desire to see the widest Arab and Muslim ratification of the Convention. This effort was crowned with success and Egypt was one of the first 20 member States to ratify the Convention, to be followed by the ratification of the two optional protocols.

2. Egypt submitted its first report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in October 1992 and the report was discussed at the Committee's third session in January 1993. The second periodic report was submitted on 15 September 1997 and was discussed at the 27th session in January 2001. In accordance with the Committee's recommendation, the present document contains both the third and fourth periodic reports covering the period from 2001 to 2008. The form and substance of the report follows the general guidelines governing the submission of periodic reports to be presented by Member States in conformity with article 44, paragraph 1(b), of the Convention. In line with the instructions of the Committee, the report focuses on the actual implementation of, the changes introduced and the measures taken to comply with the concluding observations of the Committee on the previous report.

3. With the advent of the new millennium, the Technical and Consultative Committee of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood in Egypt decided to focus its attention on the rights of children in marginalized groups and to concentrate on core issues affecting them such as the reduction of poverty, empowerment of families, the elimination of the phenomena of street children and child labour, the rehabilitation and reintegration of children with disabilities and school drop-outs, the provision of education opportunities, and the protection of children against violence, exploitation, and discrimination. All these areas will be dealt with in detail in this report.

4. It is important to shed light on the legislative amendments introduced under the legal frameworks governing the rights of the child. It is also important to examine how society views children's issues from a juridical perspective. In doing so, a solid foundation is created for a forward-thinking approach whereby the State is legally committed to protecting these rights, especially for children in marginalized and vulnerable groups in society.

5. This approach is linked to other steps taken by the Council, prominent among them the adoption of a children's rights budget, which this report will outline in some detail. Practical measures are no less important and they include efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation and to close the gap in girl's education.

6. It is worth noting that the repeated reference to the Council in this report is attributed to the pivotal role it plays, as a State organ, in dealing with children's issues in terms of planning, evaluation and coordination with other entities such as other Government institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector and international donor entities. The report is the outcome of the collective efforts by all such bodies without exception. It must be borne in mind, though, that due to the lack of databases and the limited space available in this report, reference was not made to other entities, as the report will explain.

7. Results have fallen short of the desired objectives, due to limited resources, and domestic and international circumstances, ranging from an economic downturn to a cyclical recession, all of which have had an impact on social development plans as a

whole. Two areas serve to illustrate such difficulties: the problem of street children and child labour is yet to be eliminated. Efforts, however, are continuing to contain both phenomena. A legal framework, strategies and policies have been put into place to carry out surveys and studies, to assign roles to key players, to launch awareness campaigns and to implement pilot projects. Outcomes may not be immediately visible, but containment measures such as awareness-raising, combating poverty, empowering families and better education are steps in the right direction towards eliminating pockets/aspects of negative trends like street children and child labour. It is, therefore, important to look at the “overall positive direction” for remedying the situation. A closer look at the report points the reader in that direction.

8. What cannot be overlooked is that Egypt is at an important juncture in its modern history where democracy and human rights are assuming a leading role, and ordinary citizens are becoming the focus of attention when it comes to the quality of life. There is the firm belief that this general trend will have a positive impact on children’s issues and the results achieved.

Development indicators, 2006

Indicator	Percentage
Human development indicator and its components	
Human development	0.723
Life expectancy	0.722
Education	0.712
Purchasing power to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in US dollars	0.681
Per capita income of GDP relative to purchasing power in US dollars	5900
Health indicators	
Families with access to:	
Safe water: Urban areas	98.8 %
Rural areas	92.9 %
Sanitary drainage: Urban areas	82.5 %
Rural areas	24.3 %
Number of doctors per 10,000 inhabitants (Ministry of Health))	6.5
Number of nurses per 10,000 inhabitants (Ministry of Health)	13.8
Number of beds per 10,000 inhabitants: Gross	21.5
Number of health units per 100,000 inhabitants	3.8
Expenditure in the health sector as percentage of total public expenditure	3.8 %
Percentage of GDP	1.3 %
Education indicators	
Total intake into basic, secondary and university education	76.4 %
Expenditure in the education sector as percentage of total public expenditure	11.5 %

Indicator	Percentage
Percentage of GDP	4.0 %
Education index	0.718
Income and poverty indicators	
Total unemployment rate	9.3 %
Female	25.1 %
Total number of unemployed (15 +) (per thousand)	2040.6
Total number of unemployed (15 +) (per thousand) female	255.5
Workforce (15 +) as percentage of population	30.2 %
Percentage of female workforce	23 %
Percentage of poor families	19.6 %
Population rate of growth of	2.1 %
GDP at market rate (in billions of pounds)	617.7
Per capita income of GDP relative to purchasing power in US dollars	5899.7
Income index (GDP index)	0.681

Source: *Human Development report, 2007*

(See annex 1: *Demographic features*)

Difficulties impeding the implementing the Convention

9. As regards the observations by the Committee, in paragraph 201 of the concluding observations on the second periodic report, on the difficulties impeding the implementation of the Convention and the specific reference to the narrow interpretation by the authorities of Islamic texts when it comes to family law and the enjoyment of certain human rights, Egypt has taken a number of steps to address the observations made by the Committee. They include the adoption of the 2001 Act, which puts an end to discrimination against women by granting them the right to divorce their husband or to obtain a separation; Act No. 154 of 2004 amends the Egyptian Nationality Act No. 26 of 1975, whereby an Egyptian woman can pass her nationality onto her children, even when married to a foreigner; and the Family Courts Act, which is intended to eliminate discrimination against women and to provide for the right of the child to be heard in legal and administrative proceedings. These efforts were crowned in 2008 with the enactment of Act No. 126, which amended the Children's Act No. 12 of 1996. All these steps signalled a marked improvement thanks to the enlightened interpretation of the principle of expanding the scope of the rights accorded to children. All such amendments will be fully explained in other sections of this report. This part of the report, though, provides a snapshot of the guarantees provided by the State so that children can enjoy the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as other international instruments ratified and applied by Egypt. Article 3 provides for the four principles of the Convention, including the right not to be subjected to discrimination on any ground whatsoever. The rights of a child born out of wedlock are also guaranteed by law, such as the right to recognition as the child of his natural parents through all available means. In an unprecedented move, the mother has been given the right to register the birth of her child using her maiden name. This right, until recently, had been exclusive to men. The amendments also give the guardian mother the

right to take charge of the education of the child. Working and pregnant mothers enjoy more privileges. Prisons for women are obliged to have crèches and children remain with female inmates until they reach the age of 1. A female prisoner may not be separated from her child as a form of punishment for improper behaviour. The minimum age of marriage for girls has been raised to be the same as for boys to end any discrimination that existed in this area. The amendments prescribe punishment for preventing a girl from obtaining an education, forcing a girl under the age of 18 years to marry and for female genital mutilation. The minimum age of criminal responsibility has been raised from 7 to 12 years. A new system for the administration of children's justice has been introduced based on the 2007 General Comment No. 10 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The new system does away with punishment and focuses on protection, rehabilitation and reintegration, as will be outlined later.

Preparation of the report

10. The preparation process of the report was characterized by a wide participation of the various Government bodies, civil society and children (see annex 2 for list of participants). Work started with several expanded conferences in 2004 and 2005 to discuss the concluding observations by the Committee on the second periodic report and as part of the preliminary preparation of the third report. A second round of discussions was carried out in 2006 and 2007 to cover all the areas to be included in the third and fourth reports with the help of all the relevant parties. The current report, despite the long preparation period, does not do the extensive efforts made by the various Government and civil society justice. This is attributed mainly to the weakness in databases and lack of classification of information as required by the Committee. The process has been hampered by the lack of documentation of programmes and activities, and the weak coordination among Government bodies and civil society organizations active in the field of the rights of the child at both national and international levels. Recently, measures were put in place to address these problems as this report will show. Among the steps taken are the allocation of a budget for the rights of the child and the creation of a rights of the child observatory.

Ratification of international treaties, covenants and conventions

11. Egypt has ratified the following international instruments:

- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), 5 May 2001.
- The International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 (1999) concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 6 May 2002.
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 14 April 2008.

New positive developments

12. Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography, 14 July 2002, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 6 February 2007.

- Withdrawal of reservations to articles 20 and 21 of the Convention (2003).
- Act No. 126 of 2008 amending the Children's Act No. 12 of 1996.

- Act No. 154 of 2004 amending the provisions of the Egyptian Nationality Act No. 26 of 1975, to eliminate discrimination against a child born to an Egyptian mother and a non- Egyptian father.
- The establishment of the National Council for Human Rights as an independent supervisory body in accordance with the Paris Principles (2003).
- The National Survey on Child Labour (2001).
- Act No. 10 of 2004 on the establishment of family courts.
- The National Plan for Girl's Education and the detailed plan for seven provinces with the biggest gap in the national average (2002).
- The creation of a helpline for disabled children, September 2003.
- The creation of a child helpline, June 2005.
- The National Strategy for the Protection, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Street Children, 2003.
- The National Strategy for the Elimination of Child Labour and its action plan, 2006.
- The National Strategy for the Protection of Adolescents against Drugs, 2005.
- Five-year action plan in conjunction with the document "A World Worthy of Children", 2005.
- The national five-year plan to combat violence against children, 2006.
- Quality control standards for early childhood institutions, 2006.
- The Egyptian child budget, the first rights budget in Egyptian society, 2006.
- Training manual for street children workers, 2007.
- The street children survey, 2007.
- The draft national strategy for enabling the family.
- The establishment of the National Coordination Committee against Trafficking in Persons, 2007.
- The creation of a unit within the Council to combat child trafficking, 2007.
- The conclusion of a protocol between the Council and the Ministry of Education to promote an active education method at public schools, 2008.
- A ministerial decision to exempt graduates of girls' education schools from the minimum age rule for employment in public schools.
- The amendment of the Criminal Code by Act No. 126 of 2008 to prescribe punishment for female genital mutilation and trafficking in persons.
- The amendment to the Civil Status Act setting the minimum age of marriage for girls as 18 years.
- The establishment of the Childhood and Motherhood Fund.
- The draft national plan for combating trafficking in children.

II. General measures of implementation (articles 4, 42 and 44 paragraph (6))

13. Egypt has made extensive efforts to implement the concluding observations by the Committee (CRC/C/15/Add.145) on the second periodic report (CRC/C/65/Add.9), as well as other important additional measures not referred to in the observations as follows:

A. Reservations

14. In response to paragraph 204 in the concluding observations in document (CRC/C/65/Add.9), Egypt has withdrawn its reservations to articles 20 and 21 of the Convention by Presidential Decree No. 145 of 2003. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (the Council) has taken the initiative to call for the withdrawal of the reservations and has led a campaign to raise awareness to that end. These efforts were crowned by the said decision of the President of the Republic.

B. Legal status of the Convention in Egyptian legislation

15. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two optional protocols form a considered part of Egyptian legislation in accordance with Article 151 of the Constitution which stipulates that treaties have the legal force of law once they are signed, ratified and published in accordance with applicable regulations. This signifies that Egyptian courts are obliged to implement the provisions of the Convention as domestic legislation. The use of the Convention, however, has been limited depending on the awareness of the judge and the parties to a particular case with its provisions. To avoid such incidences, Act No. 126, which amended the children's Act No. 12 of 1996, contains an explicit reference to the application by stating that "the State shall guarantee, as a minimum requirement, the rights provided for in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant conventions applicable in Egypt". The text of the Law makes specific reference to a number of international instruments relative to the rights of the child such as the International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 (1999) concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, and the United Nations Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime that deals with children as both victims and witnesses.

C. Legislation

16. To respond to the concluding observations by the Committee and as a reflection of the developments taking place in Egypt over the past few years, the Council, inspired by the Convention and the concluding observations by the Committee on the second periodic report, adopted a draft amendment to the Children's Act No. 12 of 1996 through a participatory process that included civil society organizations and children with the aim of raising awareness levels of the content of the amendments. The Legal Committee of the Council had already embarked on a comprehensive review of the provisions of the Law in accordance with articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A list of proposed amendments was shared with and accepted by civil society organizations after making their own additional proposals. The Legal Committee visited several regions all over the country to listen to other proposals, to promote the amendments and to rally support for them. The proposed amendments covered more than 60 articles in the form of redrafting or additions. Some of the amendments such as

female genital mutilation, the minimum age of marriage for girls, medical examination before marriage, criminal responsibility and the right of a mother to register a child born outside marriage were the subject of an intense popular debate for being new notions and because of their incompatibility with Egyptian tradition in the eyes of segments of society. The Council, however, with the help of civil society organizations, led a campaign to explain the benefits of the change to both children and society. The drive resulted in the adoption by the People's Assembly of Act No. 126 Of 2008 which came into force on 15 June 2008. The adoption of the amendments by parliament is viewed as a great victory for the rights of the child and a quality shift in society's perception of such rights. It is safe to say that parliament successfully approved more than 90 % of the amendments submitted. The amendments focused on bolstering the perception of the rights of the child, the need to fully implement these rights and on ensuring that children from marginalized groups enjoy the same rights without discrimination.

The content of the amendments

17. As mentioned earlier, article 1 stipulates that the State shall guarantee, as a minimum requirement, the same rights provided for in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international instruments applicable in Egypt. The amendments further strengthen the principles of the right of the child such as the right to education, the right to health and good health care, and the right to a clean environment.

18. Article 3 of the Law makes specific reference to the four general principles in the Convention (articles 2, 3, 6 and 12) as follows:

a) The right of the child to life, survival and development within a harmonious family environment, and to enjoy full protection from all forms of violence, harm, physical and mental and sexual abuse, negligence, and all other forms mistreatment and exploitation;

b) Protection from any kind of discrimination irrespective of place of birth, parents, sex, religion, race, disability or any other consideration, and ensuring the equality of the enjoyment of such rights;

c) The right of a child who is capable of forming his or her own views and to express those views and to be given the opportunity to be heard in all matters affecting him or her including judicial and administrative proceedings in accordance with the procedures determined by the law;

d) The best interests of the child assume paramount priority in all decisions and measures taken or implemented by the authorities (this paragraph was not covered by the amendments as it was in the text of the Children's Act No. 12 of 1996 but was made extensively operational in all the other amendments introduced).

19. The amendments guarantee the elimination of discrimination against a child (not recognised by the father). The mother can register the birth and can obtain a birth certificate with her maiden name appearing in the appropriate field of the certificate until the identity of the father is legally proven. Article 4 asserts the right of a child to his or her legal ancestry by all possible means. The Law also asserts the right of the child to nationality and the non-discrimination against a child born to an Egyptian mother and a foreign father.

20. The amendments include raising the minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 years as the case is with boys. Moreover, medical examination before marriage were made mandatory and was added to the provisions of the Civil Status Act. Other amendments prescribe punishment for female genital mutilation, with a new provision also introduced to the Criminal Code, a prohibition on physical abuse, setting the age of criminal responsibility as 12 years as part of a new comprehensive judicial system for

children based on rehabilitation and reintegration as opposed to punishment, in line with General Comment No.10 by the Committee.

21. Another amendment is the abolition of fees and insurance charges for obtaining a birth certificate to encourage the immediate registration of births and the enjoyment of health and social care.

22. The Law has also introduced the term “children in danger” to replace the expression potentially deviant children. A new philosophy is adopted whereby children’s delinquency is not viewed as a natural instinct but an outcome of social, economic, psychological and environmental factors outside a child’s control in most cases. Moreover, the amendments are intended to provide protection for new categories of children such as child victims and witnesses of crime. This strengthened protection falls in line with international standards in terms of the right to rehabilitation, treatment and reintegration into society.

23. The Law provides for the prohibition of subjecting children to physical harm, illegal measures or emotional harm. It also provides for their protection from trafficking, sexual harassment, exploitation, physical or emotional harm, neglect by a parent or guardian or carer, economic or commercial exploitation. The Law prescribes punishment for such offences (article 7bis (b), now under article 291 of the Criminal Code).

24. Article 7bis (b) of the Law prohibits the use of children in armed conflicts or direct military operations. A new part, Chapter 10, has been added to the Children’s Act to establish a special fund for childhood and motherhood to be affiliated to the “Council” to provide for children in danger. The provisions of the project spell out the sources of funding and objectives of the fund (articles 144 and 144bis (c)).

25. In spite of the diversity of provisions in the Law to protect children, in general, and offences such as sexual exploitation, prostitution, theft and abduction, in particular, there is no specific reference to the use of violence against children by the family or at school, or elsewhere other than what is stipulated in articles 7bis (a) and article 96. The legislator deemed it sufficient to leave the issue of child protection from violence to the discretion of the judiciary. Marks on a child’s body such as scratches, or a simple body or skin traumas, even when caused by another member of the family, is considered a serious offence under the provisions of the Law. Article 98 makes reference to handing down warnings to parents and guardians by sub-committees upon a request from the public prosecution.

26. The amendments guarantee children the right to benefit from care in crèches and that the State is responsible for the enjoyment of this right.

27. According to the Law, every prison establishment for women must have a crèche meeting the legal requirements of similar institutions outside prison and where inmates’ children can be kept until the age of 4. The child is to be accompanied by the mother for the first 12 months.

28. Part 8 of the Children’s Act provides for the protection of children in danger through a new mechanism to strengthen the implementation of the Act. Protection committees involve the participation of civil society as authorised by law. The child helpline is another mechanism. Articles 97 to 99bis (a) determine the authority of these committees and method of work. These committees include:

a) The general committees for childhood protection: These are committees in charge of drawing up and implementing policies at provincial level. The governor chairs the committee and the membership comprises officials from bodies involved with childcare and a representative of civil society;

b) Child protection sub-committees: These are bodies at local Governments level- sections and centres-in charge of monitoring and following up the cases of children in danger and providing preventive and remedial measures. They come under the supervision of the provincial general committees. Their membership include a representative of civil society whenever this is possible. A public administration for child rescue was also established as a new mechanism to enforce the Law backed up by the Hotline 16000. The administration is responsible for the resolution of cases of children who find themselves on the wrong side of the law. They have raised the age of criminal responsibility to 12 years and have introduced new measures such as community service, and have placed special emphasis on the principle of liberty deprivation steps as a last resort. They also provide care for child victims and witnesses. The text of the amended Law has been expanded to cover cases when a child is facing danger making specific references to dangerous circumstances while prescribing punishment for offenders (article96). The draft Law aims to protect children from all potential dangers including deviancy.

29. The abovementioned committees rely on the partnership between the competent Government authorities such as the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior, and non-governmental organizations as provided for in the Law. This principle of having such committees is also intended to make use of existing Government services.

30. Decentralization of the work of such committees manifests itself in the method they function. At provincial level, they draw up comprehensive policies for child protection taking into consideration the multitude of dimensions involved and the rights guaranteed under international conventions. Such policies include health, education, social services and the relationship between a child and the law and law enforcement agencies. Sub-committees are responsible for the implementation of the above policies and the operational aspects such as monitoring children in danger and taking action when such intervention is warranted. The interaction between the general committees and sub-committees, as provided for by the Law, ensure the presence of a comprehensive network combining prevention and remedies, on the one hand, and monitoring the situation of children and providing them with the required services, on the other.

31. According to the Law, procedures for dealing with a delinquent child must be simplified taking into account the circumstances of the child. For example, children under the age of 15 years are not to be kept in preventive custody, and that no physical force is to be used in the execution of arrests.

32. Under the amendments, any adult, parent, guardian, custodian, carer or an employer of a child domestic worker is to serve double the punishment prescribed if they commit an offence against a child.

33. By law, any person found responsible for publicizing or divulging to the media information about or photographs of a child whose case, as an offender or as a child in danger, is being considered by the competent authorities, faces a penalty ranging from 10,000 to 50,000 Egyptian pounds.

34. Legislation obliges any person with information about a child being put in harm must act urgently to prevent or eliminate such danger (article96).

35. The Council was unable to convince the People's Assembly to pass a number of other amendments such as considering the failure to report violence against children as an offence and the full prohibition of corporal punishment by the family. As a next step, the Council intends to focus on raising awareness levels about these issues to lobby support within parliament. It is expected that the shift in attitudes generated by the approved amendments can pave the way for wider acceptance by society of further changes in future.

36. The Law came into force on 15 June 2008 and several cases have been brought before the courts as a result. The Council now faces the new challenge of effective implementation and raising awareness within society of its importance.

37. Since the entry into force of the Act, the Council has embarked on an action plan to train Government officials and civil society members on how to implement the amendments, mainly through the project on the elimination of violence against children which is being implemented by the Council in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

38. The Council has also prepared a draft law on the rights of persons with disability which is inspired by the international “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”. The intention is to present the draft to parliament at its next session.

D. Coordination mechanisms

39. As regards the observation by the Committee on paragraphs 206 and 207 (CRC/C/65/Add.9) concerning coordination, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood is designated as the supreme authority in charge of coordinating activities on the rights of the child at the national level. Previous reports submitted to the Committee indicate that the Council was established in 1988 by a decision of the President of the Republic and was followed by legislation promulgated by the People’s Assembly (parliament) and reports directly to the Council of Ministers. Its bureau is headed by the Prime Minister and has as members all ministers responsible for children’s affairs. The Secretary-General of the Council has the powers of a minister and the Council’s decisions are binding on all ministries and Government bodies. Ensuring a close coordination process between the various national and local Governmental bodies remains one of the biggest challenges facing the Council. This is compounded by the lack of coordination and networking between a multitude of diverse civil society entities involved in working with children. Efforts by the Council to overcome these difficulties have been revolving around creating a partnership between entities in both sectors to develop policy papers.

40. The creation of the Council is a statement of a clear political commitment to the rights of the child. The decision by the President of the Republic to issue the First Decade and the Second Decade documents on the Egyptian child have had a stimulating impact on the interest of the Government and civil society in children’s issues.

41. Upon a recommendation by the Council, the President of the Republic held a meeting in 2004 with the provincial governors, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Local Governments to discuss basic education issues. The meeting adopted several decisions to promote limited decentralization, to give governors more powers in the area of basic education and nutrition at schools, and to strengthen supervision on child labour and dropping out of schools. One example of the implementation of such measures is the decision by the governor of the province of Minya to close down quarries employing children under the age of 13 years, and the creation of a monitoring unit to oversee dropping out of schools as a means of eliminating child labour in quarries.

42. The First Lady, who is also the chairperson of the Consultative Technical Committee of the Council, held regular meetings with the Prime Minister, ministers, governors and other members of the Consultative Technical Committee to discuss problems affecting children and to follow up the implementation of programmes and projects. Minutes of meetings held between 2002 and 2007 reflect the importance that had been attached to vulnerable and marginalized children, and the protection of their rights. The meetings also laid special emphasis on child labour, street children, disabled children, girls’ rights within vulnerable groups, support for families to shoulder their

responsibilities towards their children and enabling poor families economically. Other activities involve the creation of a comprehensive database at the national level to classify information by type, age group and geographical zones using advanced scientific methods.

43. The Prime Minister convened a series of meetings with the Secretary-General of the Council on the conditions of marginalized children. He also held a set of meetings with the ministers and governors in the presence of the Secretary-General for the same purpose. During the meeting that was held on 21 July 2005, a decision was taken to set up a fund affiliated to the Council to be used to help “children in danger”. The fund was allocated 200 million Egyptian pounds with 50 million to be deposited into the Council’s account immediately. The Prime Minister also instructed the Ministry of Social Solidarity to start the implementation of the National Strategy for the Rehabilitation of Street Children to eliminate the phenomenon and to return children to their families.

44. The Council gives priority to activities at provincial level. The Secretary-General holds regular and periodic meetings with the governors to evaluate the implementation of the “child component” within the five-year National Plan for Economic and Social Development, and to address arising problems. Upon the adoption of the Children’s Act, the Secretary-General of the Council convened meetings with the governors and their deputies to explain to them the nature of the amendments introduced and to highlight the key role to be played by provincial leaders for the first time in the protection of children facing difficult circumstances.

45. All policies designed by the Council and the programmes it implements emanate from the rights enshrined in the Convention and they are put in place through the cooperation with Government entities and civil society organizations at both the local and national levels. Despite these efforts and meetings, coordination remains spontaneous and not methodically planned while decentralization is still in its early stages. That is why some operational tasks agreed to in such meetings have not been fully executed. One case in point is the National Strategy for the Protection, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Street Children, and Child Labour.

46. The Council, as mentioned earlier, has developed several policy papers as part of a new positive approach. They include:

- The development and implementation of the National Plan for Girls’ Education and other detailed plans for seven provinces suffering from the widest gaps in primary education intakes in comparison to the national average (2002).
- The development of the National Strategy for Enabling the Family (2007).
- The implementation of several pilot projects such as the Girls’ Education Initiative, The disabled children’s helpline, The children’s emergency line, the national project against female genital mutilation, protection of adolescents against drugs, Plato Programme for financial and economic education and the protection of children against violence. Some of these projects such as the Girls’ Education Initiative and the protection against drugs have been disseminated.

Coordination of domestic and international efforts

47. As part of its implementation process of child-related projects and programmes, the Council has intensified child protection efforts to mobilise society as a whole at all levels. Examples of such efforts are reflected in the Girls’ Education Initiative, combating female genital mutilation and other activities. The Council has, to that end, developed partnerships, not only with Government bodies and civil society and international organizations, but also with local communities, local and religious leaders,

and youth and children. This stems from the belief of the Council in the role and responsibility of society and stakeholders in a sustained process.

48. When implementing programmes and strategies, the Council relies on cooperation, networking and partnerships with all the relevant ministries, civil society and the private sector. The Council is currently working on providing resources and raising funds from donor agencies such as the Italian cooperation fund, USAID, the European Union, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP), as well as the Egyptian and international private sector.

Human and financial resources of the Council

49. Although resources available to the Council have increased over the past seven years as a result of the allocation of additional funds for the Girls' Education Initiative and the child emergency line 16000 from the regular budget, and the increase in allocations for combating female genital mutilation, the child observatory, family justice, child labour and children in danger from international assistance, these resources remain insufficient to meet the nationwide dissemination of programmes when children represent 38 % of the population.

Monitoring

The independent national institution for human rights

50. As regards the concluding observations by the Committee on paragraphs 212 and 213 (CRC/C/65/Add.9) and the recommendation by the Committee to establish an independent national institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (CRC/C/15/Add.145, paragraph 18), the National Council for Human Rights was established based on these principles by Presidential Decree No. 94 of 2003. The Council reports to the *Shura* Council (one of the two houses of parliament). Its terms of reference include the follow up of the implementation of conventions and treaties on human rights, looking into complaints, and the submission of proposals and observations to the competent authorities. The Council also coordinates and cooperates with other human rights bodies, receives complaints about alleged violations of human rights and refers them to the relevant authorities. The Council does not have a child or women-dedicated committee or administration. It publishes an annual report on the situation of human rights in Egypt.

E. Mechanism for receiving children's complaints

Children's emergency line 16000

51. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, in line with the recommendation by the Committee in paragraph 212 on a children's complaints mechanism, has established an emergency telephone service, known as line 16000. The service has an important legal status through its inclusion in the provisions of Act No. 126 of 2008. It plays a major role in monitoring violence against children, provides help and rehabilitation, and ensures the punishment of offenders. The service was launched in June 2005 as a 24-hour free child helpline to cover the whole territory of Egypt. Work has already started to train staff on communication skills, child psychology, receipt of complaints and the management of databases. Complaints are dealt with through a national network involving all the relevant ministries, the psychology unit at Ain Shams University, several teaching hospitals and 36 civil society organizations. The line provides specialist advice on female genital mutilation, and in many cases helps to

prevent its commission. The line also helps in providing previously inaccessible but vital information to be included in databases on marginalized children. Reports have helped to map out street children concentrations in the provinces of Cairo, Qalyubia, Alexandria and Giza, and to redirect efforts to deal with such problems. Databases also help to monitor the range of difficulties facing children and to understand their needs. In the period from 29 June 2005 to 17 December 2008, the service received 1,025,218 calls for legal advice, education, health and safety services. The database of line 16000 also contributed to the submission of proposals to amend the Children's Act. Article 144 of the Act bestows a legal status on the service as a monitoring instrument responsible for receiving, handling, referral and requesting the investigation of complaints. The service also follows up the outcome of the investigation process and the protection provided. The line has also started a family advisory service in collaboration with the family guidance unit at Ain Shams University to deal with domestic violence and other family problems.

Disabled children helpline 08008886666

52. This line provides an opportunity for families with disabled children to obtain free medical advice, information about services provided by the State, civil society organizations helping children with disabilities, and schools and universities capable of accommodating disabled persons. The line also provides free legal advice on a range of issues using experienced staff. This service also gleans information and proposals from callers to help create a viable database and to map out disability patterns in Egypt. The feedback also helps to pinpoint the shortcomings of the service. A total of 29,604 calls were received in the period from 1 March 2006 to 21 December 2008.

F. Strategies and national action plans

53. The childhood and motherhood component has been incorporated into the fifth five-year economic and social development plan, which has as its top priority the reduction of poverty and social exclusion, on the one hand, and helping the children of Egypt to stay abreast of the rapid developments in knowledge, on the other. Priorities focus on: early childhood development; a high standard of basic education; girls' education and the elimination of violence against them; paying attention to adolescents, child labour, street children and children with special needs; and the development of skills in communication and information technology.

54. The Council has prepared detailed area-specific strategies to identify and monitor the magnitude of problems to be dealt with, to develop solutions, to determine the requisite action and to find the resources and partnerships for implementation. Please see paragraphs 12 and 44 for information on these strategies.

G. Public expenditure to promote the rights of the child: Budget allocations in Egyptian society

55. This area has witnessed significant developments that were not referred to in the observations of the Committee. The Council prepared the first budget of rights in Egyptian society in 2005. It deals with the size of allocations in the State budget on the implementation of the rights of the child as stipulated in the Convention and as is provided for in the Second Presidential Decade on the rights of the child which was issued by the President of the Republic in 2000. The methodology of the allocation of resources for the rights of the child, in relation to overall public expenditure, is based on a model that links activities to the rights enjoyed and allows for an appraisal of Government policies for children. The model also evaluates both governmental and

non-governmental programmes, and the financial resources dedicated to the rights of the child in Egypt.

56. The financial statement by the Government reflects the annual financial activities to be undertaken by ministries and attests to the provision of allocations to meet the commitments declared before parliament. The report containing Government expenditure on the rights of the child from 2002 to 2007 is correlated to the items in the State budget. The difficulty in assessing the expenditure is attributed to the fact that the State budget is drafted by items and not by programmes. As such, the absence of clear action plans in the strategies makes it difficult to pinpoint expenditure on childhood especially when it comes to ministries such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the activities of which are directed not only to children. To make understanding estimates in the budget easier, three categories of public entities have been created. The first maintains full expenditure on children's programmes, while the second and third target children partially or as part of society in their overall activities.

Table 1

Childcare expenditure in the State budget (2002-2003 to 2006-2007) in millions of Egyptian pounds

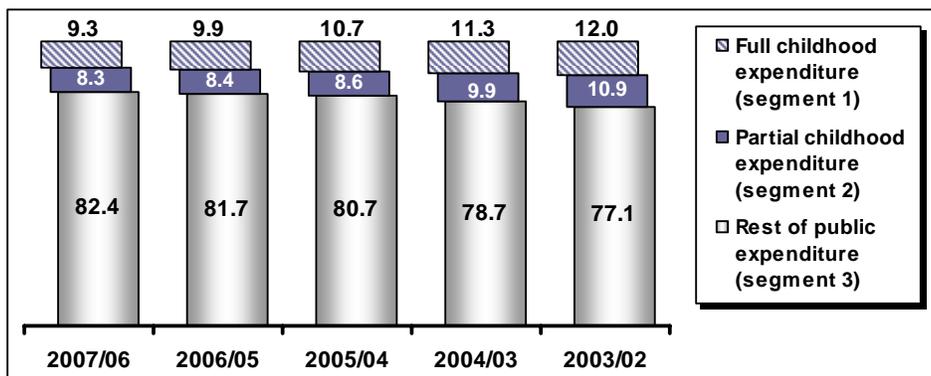
Item	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
Full childhood expenditure	15276.6	16569.7	17224.2	18673.6	20158.0
Partial childhood expenditure (category 2)	13851.2	14484.3	13977.5	15769.6	17983.1
Rest of public expenditure	98191.8	114933.8	130409.1	153374.1	179133.7
Total	127319.6	145987.8	161610.8	187817.3	

Source: State budget (close of public accounts 2002-2003 to 2006-2007), 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 budgets

57. Table 1 shows that full childhood expenditure had grown by 32 %, partial expenditure by 23 percent and overall expenditure, with children included, by 83 %.

Diagram 1

Relative distribution of public expenditure (2002/2003 to 2006/2007)



Source: Diagram from the State budget (closed accounts for the budgets from 2002/2003 to 2006/2007)

58. Indicators and indexes point to a relative drop in public expenditure on childhood in general which requires a review of the availability of funds to meet the various services. The report provides an explanation for this fall with a reference to the method of preparing the budget, which does not reflect rights and targets. The method also does not make a distinction between the ministries' strategies and executive activities. Although ministries were able to monitor rights, they had not been able, however, to translate this monitoring into efficiency measurement activities. As a result, levels of verification were confined to mechanical performances as opposed to an appraisal of the effectiveness of activities to realize rights and targets for which allocations were set aside. At any rate, this juridical approach is still in its infancy and is likely to take a firmer shape when preparing for future budgets.

59. The Council, effectively, has a dual role within the State budget appearing under the chapter on social protection as a functional classification. As such, it is an expending entity with the expenditure oscillating between the coordination with other entities providing childhood services in accordance with the national plan for childhood, on the one hand, and the implementation of pilot projects prior to their handover to other budgetary organs for wider execution, on the other.

60. Table 2 illustrates the programme budget implemented by the Council during the period 2002//2003-2006/2007. It indicates an increase of 7.9 million Egyptian pounds in 2002/2003 in comparison with the two following years. This is attributed to the Girls' Education Initiative and its infrastructure requirements, such as the construction of girls-friendly schools.

Table 2

National Council for Childhood and Motherhood allocations (domestic) on programmes and projects (2002-2003 to 2007-2008), in thousands of Egyptian pounds

Item		2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	Total
Childhood and motherhood care project		1,600	1,600	1,300	1,100	1,100	1,800	8,500
Illiteracy eradication project		1,550	1,800	2,000	1,500	1,500	2,000	10,350
Child and woman project	(1)	4,500	5,000	5,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	26,500
Girls' education initiative		31,600	5,100	5,100	24,230	24,500	12,200	102,730
Participation in children's fund	(2)					10,000	10,000	20,000
Total		39,250	13,500	13,400	30,830	41,100	30,000	168,080

(1) Several projects come under the item for children and women. They are: reduction of disability, reduction of drug use, combating violence against children, care for homeless children, combating female genital mutilation, awareness of the protection of the environment and reproductive health.

(2) Several projects come under the item on the contribution to the childhood fund (child emergency line 16000 and *Huras Al-Rukun Al-Akhdhar* initiative).

61. Table 3 shows the evolution in the programme budget implemented by the Council during the period 2002/2003-2006/2007. It indicates an increase of 25.8 million Egyptian pounds in 2002/2003 in comparison with the two following years. This is attributed to Girls' Education Initiative and its infrastructure requirements, such as the construction of girls-friendly schools.

Table 3

Extra budgetary allocations for Council programmes (2002-2007)

Programme	Grants in millions of Egyptian pounds	Expenditure from regular budget
Reduction of the use of drugs by adolescents	8,004,000	461,000
Protection of children at Manshiat Nasser	4,191,000	241,000
Combating female genital mutilation	36,782,000	2,117,000
Environment protection awareness	4,250,000	245,000
Social media for youth and adolescent (awareness campaign on enabling children)	111,090,00	639,000
Protection of children in danger	153,399,000	8,828,000
Elimination of child labour in Fayoum, Minya, Dumiyat and Sharqiya provinces	10,342,000	595,000
Family justice	16,526,000	951,000
Improving children's living standards at Hilwan and Tarra	8,000,000	460,000
Girls' education initiative	5,749,000	331,000
Homeless children	1,082,000	62,000
Combating violence against children	55,677,000	3,204,000
Media campaign on child labour	146,000	8,000
Reduction of disability	589,000	34,000
Plato for the dissemination of the rights of the child and the promotion of savings	2,063,000	119,000
Volunteers	75,000	4,000
Adolescent health	726,000	42,000
Reduction of poverty	22,050,000	1,269,000
Total	340,760,000	19,610,000

Source: The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

External resources for financing childhood activities

Table 4

Total external assistance for childcare expenditure by authority (in United States dollars)

Year	Government bodies	Civil society and private sector	Total
Prior to 2001	1,748,363,232	53,891,747	1,693,471,485
2001	593,319,402	170,715,395	422,604,007
2002	646,261,190	158,479,270	781,921,487
2003	533,344,293	133,882,224	299,462,069
2004	450,425,656	9,976,349	440,449,307

Source: Ministry of international Cooperation, 2006

62. Foreign assistance comes mostly in the form of grants, soft loans or as debt swaps. Although foreign assistance to fund childhood activities is of limited scope for the Government compared to civil society's share, their significance stems from the use of such assistance in running pilot projects. This, however, means that a reduction in the assistance can reflect negatively on the sustainability of projects.

H. Data collection

63. In response to the concluding observations by the Committee concerning paragraphs 210 and 211(CRC/C/65/Add.9), important measures were taken in this regard. The Council is cooperating with the National Centre for Statistics, as the official data gathering agency in Egypt, to plug the gap in Children's data with endeavours such as the national surveys for child labour and street children. To coincide with the national census of 2006, The Council requested the inclusion of specific questions about children in the census form, to some of which answers were provided. In addition to the Centre, there are other bodies that focus on children-related data among them is the National Planning Institute. Annual human development reports prepared by the Institute and the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), like the World Human Development report, constitute an important source of information on the development situation. These reports keep track of annual health, education, environment, child and family indicators in general classified by type, by age group and by region. Other sources include the Demographic Health Survey (DHS), prepared by the Ministry of Health and Population in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

64. The Information and Policy Decisions Centre at the Council of Ministers provides data on the conditions of children in a number of areas through studies such as the one conducted in 2008 on children in danger in the provinces of Cairo and Alexandria in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and UNICEF.

65. There is in Egypt several centres and administrations working on the development of specialised databases. They include:

- Provincial central and local information centres at the Ministry of Health and Population, and the Ministry of Education.
- The Centre for Child Disease at the Ministry of Health and Population: It specializes in the collection of data on child epidemics, the follow up of latest

research in combating disease to disseminate their findings and recommendations, and the exchange of information with other scientific and research bodies.

- The information, Statistics and Communication Administration at the Ministry of Justice in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC): This centre provides data and statistics about juvenile justice and the handling of cases. Data are classified by age group, gender, education level, etc. Other information is gleaned from other sources such as the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, universities and research institutions.

66. On its part, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood has worked since 2002 to bridge the gap in its own database. To that end, the Council entered into partnerships with the Information and Policy Decisions Centre, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, the National Centre for Statistics and other entities active in data collection and their analysis. The Council has been able to plug some of the gaps in the database, to analyse the childhood situation, and to provide accurate statistics and information. These achievements are attributed to benefiting from international experience and the partnerships struck with civil society, Government bodies and childhood experts. The information centre at the Council has embarked on a policy to build a comprehensive database on marginalized children to classify them by gender, age group and geographical zones. The database is used in drafting policies, directing resources for projects and programmes and the implementation of childhood activities. Such activities are:

- A separate database on girls outside the education system in the seven provinces where the gap in the quality of education is the widest, and where the initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to educate girls is being implemented.
- A survey of street children in cooperation with the National Centre for Statistics in 2007 to determine the magnitude of the problem in the areas where the phenomenon is concentrated-Cairo, Alexandria, Giza and Qalubiya.
- Several research studies on child labour. They include the national survey for child labour in cooperation with the National Centre for Statistics in 2001, the study on working children in Al-Salam city and the study on children in workshops in Duwaiqa.
- Other studies conducted deal with violence against children. They are: violence at schools in rural Egypt and the strategy to protect children at schools; a field survey on the mistreatment of children in deprived communities, in cooperation with UNICEF and the Social Research Centre at the American University of Cairo (2006); and the conditions of children in six rural areas- a study carried out by the Information and Policy Decisions Centre, the National Centre for Statistics and UNICEF in 2003.

Studies on the health and needs of adolescents

- Opinion poll on trends among youth carried out in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Al-Ahram Centre for Strategic Studies.

67. In spite of the abovementioned efforts to collect data on childhood, the process remains hindered by serious problems some of which relate to the lack of coordination between the relevant authorities and the different methods used in conducting research and collecting data creating considerable discrepancies in the database. Moreover, there is a lack of documentation of the activities and programmes implemented which makes their inclusion in any database difficult.

Future work trends: database

68. The Council, with the funding from Italian Cooperation and the technical assistance of UNICEF, has started the establishment of a rights of the child observatory. One of its tasks is to design, update and maintain a childhood and motherhood database to help ensure a comprehensive, constant and accurate monitoring of the implementation of the Convention in Egypt by all Government and civil society bodies. Work is underway in cooperation with UNICEF to determine childhood indicators to be adopted by the observatory.

I. Civil society and civil organizations

69. As regards the concluding observations by the Committee on paragraphs 208 and 209 (CRC/C/65/Add.9) and the concerns about the level of involvement of civil society, greater attention has been given recently to the role of civil society organizations, especially associations. Several such organizations are members of the Technical Consultative Committee of the National Council of Childhood and Motherhood, the body in charge of drafting policies under the chairmanship of the First Lady. The associations are also members of the National Committee for the Elimination of Violence against Children and the protection committees set up by Act No. 126 of 2008. A strong partnership between the Council and civil society organizations does exist with all programmes adopted by the Council being implemented by these organizations. They also participate in the work of the “Committee for the Monitoring and the Elimination of Violations against Children” and in the work of several regional networks involved in the rights of the child and the administration of child justice, and the Arab jurists network for the elimination of child mistreatment. Despite all this, the partnership between civil society organizations and the Government has not reached the desired level of maturity. Within the framework of modernizing civil society legislation, the organizations have started a dialogue to amend some of the provisions of Act No. 84 of 2002, which regulates the work of such organizations, with the aim of allowing them more freedom of operation and decentralization.

70. One of the other areas of activity where civil society plays an important role is education, the development of the education system and closing the gap in the quality of services. Civil society organizations are active in illiteracy eradication and supporting the right to education, particularly for women and girls, the building of schools, dealing with dropping out of schools, the training of teachers and the provision of teaching aids. Measures have also been put in place to train women pioneers on the skills of communication to convey social and environmental messages to the different segments of society on the importance of participation. Women volunteers have also played a role in dealing with societal and environmental problems, and in proposing solutions to them with the help of the relevant authorities. Civil society organizations also help in the development of schools in several residential areas through what is known as the 100 school project.

71. A civil society organizations’ administration was established at the Ministry of Education with similar entities at education departments at provincial level as a mechanism for coordination between civil society and the Ministry.

72. The civil society network, which comprises 339 organizations, works in tandem with the Ministry of Education on the implementation of 278 projects in Cairo and other provinces. Partners held 118 meetings and seminars to lay the groundwork for joint action. Table 5 shows the main areas of work undertaken by the network.

Table 5

Areas of activity of the network of educational societies in partnership with the Ministry of Education

Area of activity	Number of Societies	Number of projects	Beneficiaries	Funding (in millions of Egyptian pounds)
Support for the teaching profession	150	318	1,014,340	56,325,260
Support for the education profession	70	196	406,353	17,055,059
Support for family and school link	119	214	270,608	7,200,138
Total	339	728	1,691,301	80,580,457

Source: Data from the Public Administration for Civil Society Organizations, Ministry of Education, Cairo, 2007

73. As regards health services, civil society organizations have a solid base of grassroots. They provide high quality health services at cost price but there are no accurate statistics on the number of people benefiting from such services. However, data gleaned from the Comprehensive Health Survey indicate that the rate of beneficiaries from health services provided by civil society stands at 16 % of the total population requiring such services. Health services and reproductive health advice are provided under the supervision of the Ministry of Health with the aim of expanding services provided to cover villages and tribal hamlets.

74. Thirty-six civil society organizations play an important role in supporting the work of the children's emergency line. They help in examining cases filed using the form prepared by the Child Emergency Administration to document cases in detail and propose a solution for each case. Other tasks include the following up of cases involving children subjected to family violence whereby they report to the emergency line headquarters within 48 hours. Civil society organizations are also active in raising the level of awareness of the emergency line through organizing seminars at schools, the distribution of posters on the project, as well as networking with other organizations in the geographical zones where they are active.

75. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood is active in strengthening the participation of civil society organizations and local communities in drawing up policies, and implementing projects and programmes. The Council maintains a working relationship with 248 civil society organizations through the provision of training and the means for capacity building. Examples of such cooperation are the project on the elimination of female genital mutilation with 20 organizations, and the project for the protection of street children against drug use to train 15 members from various organizations in Cairo, Giza, Qalubiya and Alexandria. Support was also provided to another 20 organizations in 11 provinces on the appropriate approaches on how to deal with street children, as well as involvement with another 27 organizations in the area of family justice. The Council also cooperates with the UNICEF office in Cairo.

76. Data available indicate that there are in excess of 16,000 civil society organizations in Egypt, of which 2,177 are active in childhood issues. The capacities of these organizations vary from the very strong to those with limited scope (see table 5). The Council is making every possible effort to help these organizations strengthen their potential from a rights-of-the-child perspective to enable them target and help certain

groups of children. To that end a number of training programmes were put in place to help deal with proposed projects and to help plug the gaps in the finances of such organizations through the provision of funds to all partner organizations. There are other entities that provide support to newly formed organizations. At present, civil society organizations play a growing and important role. Businessmen are currently financing the rehabilitation of schools in impoverished areas through the 100 school project which comes under the patronage of the First Lady.

J. Raising awareness of the Convention

77. As part of the implementation of the concluding observations by the Committee in paragraphs 214 to 217 (CRC/C/65/Add.9) and in response to the concerns expressed about the insufficiency of activities to raise awareness of the Convention, The Council is making extensive efforts to bring the Convention to the fore on a regular and targeted basis taking into account the concluding observations on Egypt's reports. These efforts include cooperation with civil society organizations, UNICEF and other United Nations bodies to promote the Convention. Civil society and community activities to amend the Children's Act have contributed to the promotion of the rights of the child in an unprecedented manner. The outcome of such efforts has become tangible in the Government and private media. The Secretary-General of the Council, who is fully aware of the work of the Committee, has also contributed effectively to the awareness-raising process through contacts with the various media outlets and a series of lectures to universities, the judiciary, the police and the press. Achievements realized so far require continuity, support and additional financial resources to train personnel. Hereunder is a summary of the activities undertaken by the different bodies involved.

The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

78. The Council shoulders the biggest responsibility when it comes to the implementation of activities aimed at the promotion of the Convention. It undertakes to prepare and disseminate daily information and bulletins on the right of the child, and to organize press conferences on all projects and initiatives. Press conference are viewed as an important tool to promote the "Convention". Journalists, writers and interested parties are invited to listen to expanded explanations about these rights to rectify prevalent misconceptions.²

79. One of the programmes of the "Council" is the publication of an abridged copy of the Convention for distribution to intermediate and secondary schools' students. Other activities include organizing visits for students and researchers, and providing students with the Council's publications on the rights of the child and human rights in compact disc form.³ The Council's website (www.nccm.org.eg) provides information about all the activities and programmes being undertaken, their objectives and the services provided- the child emergency line 16000 and the disabled help line 08008886666).

² In the period from 2002 to early 2007, nearly 930 press articles were sent to 80 national daily and weekly newspapers and magazines, including those representing the opposition, as well as Arab and international news agencies. Nearly 690 press briefings were held during the same period. Twenty-three press conferences and television events were organized to cover issues such as the preparation process for Egypt's third and fourth reports to the Committee, the consultations held for the contribution to the study by the United Nations Secretary-General on violence against children, the publication of the Arabic version and the holding of the Arab Child Forum to discuss Egypt's periodic report.

³ There were 49 school trips and 163 research visits from 2001 to 2007.

80. The Council organizes media campaigns, awareness advertisements and competitions such as the television and radio programme “Red Card for Child Labour” in cooperation with the Ministry of Manpower and the International Labour Organization (ILO), the right of girls to participation in political life advertisement, the elimination of female genital mutilation and the impact of early marriage on girls’ education under the motto “No to Harmful Practices”. This campaign achieved a huge popular success with a considerable impact. It also won several national and international awards. Other campaigns dealt with the rights of disabled children (with the Ministry of Culture), adolescent health, the protection of youth from drug use and smoking (with the Ministry of Health). The “Council” also works on raising awareness of the presence of the child emergency line through the various media outlets and encourages children at basic education level to memorize and use the emergency line 16000.

81. The Council participates in the annual child film festival which takes place in March of every year by organizing a seminar to discuss a topic related to the rights of the child and the role of the media. The media unit at the Council also organizes children’s events, such as the “Nile Cruise for Development”, to raise awareness of the rights of the child incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF, and to celebrate the anniversary of the launch of the emergency line.

82. As part of the cooperation with Plato International, the Council is implementing the “Egyptian Plato” project to enable 300,000 children understand their basic rights and responsibilities, and to raise awareness among children of the rights of the child and human rights, the student’s responsibility towards the family, the school, the neighbourhood and society, accepting others, collective work, and democracy and free election. The Council is also working on the development of skills relative to critical and scientific thinking, planning for the future, the protection of the environment and other skills.

83. Another project which is being implemented by the Council in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Italian Cooperation is the “Social Media” project which aims to publish simplified literature on the right of the child intended for children. Such publications include the Egyptian Children’s Act, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Worthy of Children document, the second periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the concluding observations by the Committee. The Council uses television advertisement campaigns and children animation films to raise awareness of the rights of the child. It also had the opportunity to participate in the two summits on child media in Thessaloniki, Greece, and Johannesburg, South Africa. Before the latter summit, the Council organized a preparatory meeting to exchange views and expertise on child media with the participation of children.

Ministry of Culture

84. The Ministry organizes seminars on the rights of children with special needs and on how to care, educate and integrate them into society. It disseminates the culture of participation, promotes gender equality and encourages the rejection of violence. It also issues awareness publications such as the “Rights of the Child” leaflet. In conformity with articles 2 and 23, the Ministry produced a series of innovative publications depicting the writings and drawings by disabled children to reflect their thinking and aspirations using words, calligraphy, colours and pictures. Several art competitions have been organized by the Ministry as a means of allowing children to express their rights. Although such efforts are important, there is a need to ensure that such activities are accessible to a wider spectrum of children.

Ministry of Information

85. Children's programmes aim to promote their culture, to develop their talents, to inform them of their rights and responsibilities, to raise awareness among parents of the rights of the child and their role in bringing out the best in their children. These programmes are also intended to make parents aware of the dangers of child labour, the harm caused by violence, the need for health care and how to detect disability at an early stage. The Ministry has launched a special family and child television channel and has established a family and child committee representing the Broadcasting and Television Council. The committee is headed by the Secretary-General of the "National Council for Childhood and Motherhood" with the membership of the chairmen of television channels and independent experts. It oversees the implementation of the childhood and motherhood plan, enables children to understand and participate in the work of the media programmes intended for them, submits proposals on how to approach children's issues in the media, and participates in child-related regional and international conferences. Several of the high quality programmes produced by the Ministry have won international awards. There are, however, other programmes where children's participation is restricted.

86. Plans have been put into place to train staff working on family and children programmes. More than 100 personnel have received such training. However, the number of training courses remain limited and are not readily accessible to the majority of those involved. As part of the third consultative conference for the Middle East and North Africa held in Cairo in June 2007 to announce the Arabic version of the United Nations' Secretary-General Study on Violence against Children, a special session on "the role of the media in combating violence against children" was held with the participation of children, journalists, psychologists and artists. Other activities involved a follow up of the national campaign against female genital mutilation which led to a decision by the Minister of Health prohibiting this harmful practice. It is also worth noting that the Council has recently, after years of efforts, succeeded in bringing artists on board. They produced three drama works that were shown during the month of Ramadan at peak viewing times to reflect the problems of marginalized, disabled and street children, child labour, female genital mutilation, child abduction and the importance of child participation. The Council was quick to honour the artists to encourage similar works.

Civil society organizations

87. Civil society organizations play an important role in the dissemination of awareness of the Convention through the alliance of organizations active in the area of the rights of the child with the alliance issuing a simplified version of the Convention intended for children. The model was used by the Council in preparing a similar version for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Civil society organizations also organize children's workshops to raise their levels of awareness of the Convention, to promote the amendments to the Children's Act and to explain the link between the amendments and the Convention.

The challenges

88. In spite of the efforts exerted, there remains several challenges that need to be addressed. There is a need for continued training of journalists in broadcasting and television when it comes to respecting the privacy of children in danger such as street children, child victims of violence or children who find themselves on the wrong side of the law. Illiteracy remains the main obstacle in the way of media awareness which has confined itself to dramas and advertising to convey development messages. This renders television as the most powerful promotion tool, except for the high cost its use entails.

89. There is a need to increase budget allocations for the production of children's programmes and for the training of personnel to come up with quality productions. Another element requiring attention is research of children's issues to be dealt with in the media especially when it comes to monitoring and evaluation in light of the amendments to the Children's Act. One of the main challenges facing the promotion of the rights of the child is the cost of advertising campaigns making it difficult to select peak viewing hours and periods of airing. Despite the key role played by the media in mobilising interest in some issues, there is still a lot to be achieved. This requires a continuous time frame for the promotion of children's issues.

III. Definition of the child (article1)

90. With reference to the concluding observations on paragraphs 218-223 of the report (CRC/C/65/Add.9) on criminal responsibility, the discrepancy in the age of marriage between boys and girls, and the discrepancy in the definition of the child, work has started on the implementation of the recommendations as explained hereunder.

Criminal responsibility

91. The age of criminal responsibility was raised from 7 to 12 years in accordance with Act No. 126 of 2008 (chapter VIII, article 94) which precludes children under the age of 12 at the time of the commission of the crime from criminal responsibility. As such, any child between the age of 12 and 15 years who has committed an offence cannot face a criminal sentence. Rather, social measures are adopted to facilitate rehabilitation and reintegration into society as mentioned earlier.

Raising the age of marriage

92. The new amendments to the Children's Act has introduced a new provision raising the age of marriage for girls from 16 to 18 years. According to Act No. 126 of 2008, a new article, 31bis, is added to the Civil Status Act No. 143 of 1994 stipulating that no marriage contract shall be authenticated if the parties have not attained the age of 18 years, and prescribes administrative punishment for failing to meet this condition. What is worth noting here is that the mean for the age of marriage in 2005 was 20.5 years compared to 19.5 years in 2000 (source: the Demographic Health Survey, 2005). As regards the discrepancy in the definition of the child with respect to civil and criminal cases, no measures have been taken because of the assumption that it is only natural and justified to make a distinction in the age of majority between civil and criminal liability. This is dictated by the experience and behavioural maturity required in civil issues. The raising of majority age in civil cases provides a better protection for a child's financial interests and rights.

IV. General principles (Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12)

93. Concerning the concluding observations (CRC/C/15/Add.145, paragraphs 29-38) regarding paragraphs 224 (a) and (b) in the report (CRC/C/65/Add.9) on discrimination against children born outside marriage and the granting of nationality, and discrimination against girls in education, paragraph 226 on the elimination of poverty among children and paragraph 228 on the best interests of the child, reference is made hereunder to measures taken in response to the observations.

A. Non-discrimination(article2)

94. As regards the observations by the Committee on paragraphs 224-227 in the report (CRC/C/65/Add.9), Article 40 of the Egyptian Constitution guarantees equality between all citizens and the Children's Act of 1996 prohibits discrimination against children in particular. As mentioned earlier, the Amended Children's Act No. 126 of 2008 provides for the right of the child of non-discrimination in conformity with article 2 of the Convention. The amendments were specifically intended to respond to the observations of the Committee. Other amendments to other parts of the text are intended to eliminate specific forms of discrimination whether against girls, children from rural areas, or children of poorer or vulnerable backgrounds. The amendments also eliminate discrimination against children born outside marriage, the granting of nationality and setting the minimum age for girls' marriage while prohibiting early marriage and female genital mutilation. They provide for the right of the child to a quality free education, health care, protection from violence and from harmful practices. The amendments to the Nationality Act guarantees the right of non-discrimination between men and women. The Act also provides for a pension for the poor. All these amendments are dealt with under the section on legislation.

95. The introduction of the amendments were preceded by efforts by the Council to mobilize society to incorporate the proposed amendments into the projects being implemented to eliminate all forms of discrimination. One of such many projects is the Girls' Education Initiative leading to the construction of 1,076 schools in less than four years. Dropping out levels were reduced from these schools as will be described in a different part of the report. The Initiative helped change the perception of society of girls' education and by doing so eliminating discrimination against them. The campaign which was launched by the Council to emphasizes the link between the deprivation from education, and early marriage and female genital mutilation received popular support. Changes in attitudes over issues of this nature take time and the adoption of one law is unlikely to lead to rapid transformation in spite of the legal and juridical umbrella it provides.

96. Discrimination against children remains a reality on the ground. Gender, geographical location and the economic situation are the main reasons for such discrimination. Some girls from poorer and marginalized families, whether at school or not, bear the brunt of housework while boys do not. Girls are denied the right to education and suffer from lack of health care making them more susceptible to violence. Bringing about change and confronting this stereotype image requires an intensification of awareness campaigns. The Government has embarked on a series of measures to incorporate the societal component in the five-year national economic and social development plan, to establish units within the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Finance to deal with this component, and to organize training workshops for staff at the Ministry of Education in cooperation with donors, international organizations and the private sector.

97. The Council works closely with the ministries, civil society organizations and children on the implementation of initiatives, programmes and projects to combat discrimination. The range extends from the elimination of female genital mutilation, girls' education, combating early marriage, the protection and reintegration of street children, protecting the rights of working children to adolescent health programmes. The equality of education opportunities is considered one of the vital components to reduce the gap in the quality of education. The adoption of an annual event for Egyptian girls projected the issue into the national agenda for the reformulation of social values on how to deal with stereotypes. A more positive light has been cast on girls' problems which require the intensification of efforts to improve the conditions of Egyptian girls.

98. The National Council for Women is making exceptional efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and discussions are ongoing to amend the Civil Status Act to achieve this goal.

99. In response to the Committee's observation in paragraph 226 of the report on the negative impact of poverty on the enjoyment of children of economic, social and cultural rights, a concerted effort is underway to achieve this goal. To that end, the Ministry of Social Solidarity has prepared a programme to improve the lot of the 1,000 poorest villages, to renovate schools in poorer areas and to redevelop shanty towns. In spite of these efforts, the full elimination of discrimination requires additional financial and human resources, and innovative ideas to target children. Awareness campaigns remain a must if behaviour is to be changed.

100. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood is working in cooperation with UNICEF and the Economics and Political Science Faculty at the University of Cairo to prepare a study on poverty among children as part of a wider UNICEF project involving 44 countries.

B. The best interests of the child (article3)

101. Several important steps have been taken to implement the observations by the Committee on paragraphs 228 and 229. Although The Children's Act No. 12 of 1996, before its amendment, contained an explicit reference to the above principle, certain parts of the text were not formulated with the best interests of the child in mind. This situation was addressed by the amendments introduced, and are fully explained in the various sections of this report. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood ensured that this principle is fully explained and promoted prior to the adoption of the amendments. The promotion of this principle continued even after the ratification of the amendments. The Council targets society as a whole, decision makers and families to emphasize that the best interests of the child takes priority in any policy related to the rights of the child. The promotion of the amendments to tackle sensitive issues such as raising the age of marriage, female genital mutilation, the rights of a child born out wedlock, granting education guardianship to the person having custody of a child and raising the age of criminal responsibility reflect the attention given by the Council to the best interests of the child. It is fair to say that the Council has been successful in changing attitudes in this regard. Current training programmes to implement the amendments aim to explain the principle of the best interests of the child and to translate the principle into working models to provide solutions to existing problems. The Council hopes that the momentum of this drive is maintained and that the successful media campaign launched with the introduction of the amendments will instil this right in every citizen.

C. The right to life, survival and development (article6)

102. The Committee did not make any observations on this section. However, significant efforts have been made in this area and appear under the section on health.

D. Respect of the opinions of the child (article12)

103. As regards the observations by the Committee on paragraphs 230 and 231 concerning the limitations on the respect of the views of the child owing to traditional societal traditions in schools, the courts and the family, it must be recognized that any child capable of forming his or her own views should be able to express these views freely when it comes to issues affecting children, and that these views must receive the

deserved attention in accordance with the age of the child and his or her degree of maturity. Recognition of this nascent right is still in its early stages and is only being implemented in certain areas on certain occasions by certain groups. Further efforts are needed to promote this right on a wider scale. Real and transparent efforts have been made to ensure that the adopted amendments are in harmony with provisions of the Convention. The Children's Act provides, among other things, for the right of the child to obtain information that enables him or her to formulate views and express them, and to be heard on all matters affecting children rights including legal proceedings.

104. There are several new initiatives that endeavour to promote the participation of children and to have their views heard. A children's parliament which was established in 1999, the alliance of non-governmental organizations on the rights of the child, and the child and adolescent forum are platforms intended to give children a voice on issues affecting them.

105. Several programmes to help develop adolescents' potential and to provide them with the opportunity to express their views have been launched in cooperation with various Egyptian organizations and UNICEF. One example is the programme "A Step for Our Future", a partnership with the National Council for Youth and the Youth Association for Population and Development, which is being implemented in a number of youth centres to nurture leadership skills using the various components of youth initiatives intended to serve the various communities. It also includes the creation of advice centres employing trained instructors to help adolescents make their own decisions and to raise the problems they encounter in the transitional stages of their lives. Four advice centres were created in 2006 for the first time in Egypt. They are based in Alexandria, Assiut, Souhaj and Qana. The programme also incorporates the development of daily life skills such as decision making, planning for the future and communication using an interactive approach. Another programme is the "Child to Child" methodology which aims to enable adolescents manage their own projects. Another activity involves the development of skills among youth centre workers to enable them strengthen partnerships between adolescents and adults and to participate in the process of decision making at youth centres. A civil training programme is being implemented in cooperation with UNICEF with a view to enabling adolescents to acquire the knowledge and skills to be able to participate in the social and political life. This programme covers human rights issues, participation, voluntary work and citizenry. Nearly 3,000 adolescents benefited from the scheme in Cairo, Alexandria, Dimyat, Ismailia and Aswan.

106. The Council also established an adolescent volunteers unit in 2007 in cooperation with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. The unit has made a significant contribution and has a work programme to train volunteers to man the emergency line and to raise awareness about female genital mutilation.

107. An Egyptian volunteers centre has been established to become the first of its kind. Nearly 3,000 boys and girls are involved in national campaigns covering issues such as the polio immunization and AIDS awareness programmes.

108. The participation of children is a key component in all the programmes of the "Council". In any project, children's views and contributions are taken on board at every stage from planning to implementation. Children have been actively involved in the Girls' Education Initiative, the societal initiative on human rights and the rights of the child, the drugs prevention programme to train 7,000 youth on communication and expression of views, combating female genital mutilation in local communities and the child emergency line involving volunteers. All such programmes aim to ensure the participation of children to convey a message to their peers and to their societies. There are other programmes intended for youth where they become involved in adolescent health and the improvement of children's living conditions in poorer areas through a

call for a healthier and a more hygienic environment based on their understanding of the needs of children.

109. The participation of children in programmes and projects is multifaceted. They are involved in the drawing up of policies, action plans and training programmes such as the National Campaign for the Protection of Children and Adolescents from Drugs and the preparation of the National Strategy for the Protection of Adolescents from Drugs. They are also involved in the preparation of a training guide, the establishment of associations among students to combat the use of drugs, the exchange of expertise and the participation in media campaigns.

110. At present, a television programme entitled “Hear Us” is being produced and presented by children and deals with the rights of the child as part of the “Children Media Project” which is being implemented in cooperation with Plan International, Egyptian Television, Karma Production, the American University, local community organizations through the social media project, Italian Cooperation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Such programmes need to be disseminated on a wider scale to make children’s participation a regular occurrence in all activities. Adults must adapt their behaviour to recognize children as partners in decision making. The public education system represents one of the main challenges. It suffers from a rigid prompting approach and does not allow for a wider participatory role for children. The Council signed a cooperation protocol with the Ministry of Education in February 2008 to introduce an active education system to 1,076 schools built as part of the Girls’ Education Initiative.

V. Civil rights and freedoms (articles 7, 8, 13-17 and 37 (a))

A. Name and nationality (article 7)

Registration of birth

111. Important steps have been taken concerning the concluding observation by the Committee regarding paragraph 224 (a). The amendments to the Children’s Act provide for the free registration of newly-born children with the first copy of a birth certificate issued free of charge. Figures from the Ministry of the Interior indicate that the rate of registering births stand at 96 %. Every possible legal, administrative and media effort is being made to ensure that this rate reaches 100 %. Several programmes such as the elimination of poverty and the civil rights of children and women are being implemented by the Council with the help of Italian Cooperation and the World Bank to achieve this target.

112. The amendments also guarantee the right of a child-with a known mother- born outside marriage to be registered at birth and to have a birth certificate (article 15, last paragraph). Egypt has met its obligation to preserve the identity of a child including his name, nationality and family lineage as was indicated in the section on the right of the child to a name and a nationality. Egypt also guarantees a child, illegally denied all or part of the elements of his identity, the right to legal recourse by the child himself, or through his parents, guardian or a foster parent, as appropriate. According to the new amendment, a birth certificate is issued to a child born to a known mother once the birth is reported.

113. Article 3 of the general provisions in the amended Children’s Act provide for the elimination of discrimination against children born outside marriage in line with the provisions of the Convention. The amendments uphold the four basic principles outlined in the Convention including the principle of non-discrimination against children even when born out of wedlock. Article 4 guarantees the right of the child to establish his or

her natural lineage to his parents and to enjoy their protection, and to use all available scientific means to prove that lineage. This is an important development considering that fathers have refused in the past to undergo medical tests on the grounds of the unconstitutionality of the tests.

114. The amendments also guarantee the mother the right to report the birth her newly-born child and to obtain a birth certificate in which the child is registered under her maiden name. This amendment has enabled children born outside marriage to obtain a birth certificate after a long wait because of the father's refusal to recognize the child.

115. In the short period of time between the the Act entering into force and the preparation of this report, several children born outside marriage were able to obtain birth certificates in spite of the father's refusal to recognize the child.

116. The Council is in the process of implementing a programme on the elimination of poverty, and the legal rights of children and girls in cooperation with Italian Cooperation and the World Bank. The programme has succeeded in surpassing its set target. By 30 October 2008, It was able to obtain birth certificates for 24,149 newly-born children, 4,718 birth certificates for unregistered births and 23,415 national registration numbers for children in four provinces. The programme continues to be operational as this report goes to press.

B. Preservation of identity (article8)

The right to nationality

117. As part of the implementation of the concluding observations on paragraph 224 (b) of the report, Egypt addressed the shortcomings of Act No. 26 of 1975 on nationality. The legislation denied children born to an Egyptian women the original Egyptian nationality except in the cases where the father has no nationality, of unknown nationality or cannot be identified (article2). Act No. 154 of 2004 amended Act No. 26 of 1975 to ensure equality between Egyptian men and women in passing the nationality to their children. According to the amendment, a child born to an Egyptian women has the right to her nationality regardless of the nationality of the father, except in the case of a Palestinian father. These are special cases that are the subject of special treatment.

C. Access to appropriate information (article17)

118. Egypt is committed to the right of the child to have access to information. Article 3 (c) of the new Children's Act guarantees the child the right to develop his personal views on obtaining information, if he or she is able to do so, to express these views and to be heard on issues concerning children. There are no restrictions on children's rights to have access to information on the internet. Except for pornographic sites, there is no restriction on web access. The Council, among other bodies, works on raising the awareness of the family to monitor sites visited by children to protect them from sexual exploitation. There are no restrictions on the access of children to satellite channels which broadcast both liberal and conservative programmes. Egypt encourages the publication of children's books through national contests for written, audiovisual and interactive (computer-based) works through three annual competitions. A plan to expand children's libraries all over the country has been put in place. At present, there are 708 such libraries used by 93,651 children between the age of 6 and 15 years. The reading festival is an annual event and through it one million free books were distributed this year alone.

119. Egypt, through adopted legislation, is also committed to satisfy the cultural needs of the child in all areas of literature, art and general knowledge as part of the endeavour

to stay abreast of modern scientific progress (Children's Act, article 87). The Egyptian mass media, such as radio and television, plays a tangible role in ensuring the right of the child to obtain information through child-dedicated programmes. Work has started on the wider introduction of computers in schools at all levels to encourage children to make use of the world wide web (internet). This has led to an increase in the number of children accessing the web. Families are encouraged to purchase computers by paying in instalments and through having free internet services. Schools require larger numbers of computers to be placed at children's disposal to allow them to spend reasonable time to use the machines.

120. Despite Egypt's relentless efforts to update information technology and to expand its use, and the attempts by the various State bodies led by the Information Centre for Policy Decisions at the Council of Ministers, modernizing databases is still hampered by several obstacles that prevent children from having access to information. Poverty is one such obstacle with poor families unable to obtain the tools of knowledge while the levels of illiteracy, despite being in decline, is another. The Council for Childhood and Motherhood has undertaken to establish the Rights of the Child Observatory to be a source of information for both researchers and workers, and children.

D. The right not to be subjected to torture (article 37 (a))

121. The Egyptian legal system guarantees every individual this right through the Constitution, the Criminal Code and related criminal legislation. The violation of this right or the use of cruel or degrading treatment is dealt with under the existing Criminal Code which prescribes punishment for the perpetrators of such acts.

122. There are no regular reports on children's deaths resulting from the use of violence due to the fact that these acts are not committed in public. They constitute individual cases and not a criminal tendency. The Ministry of the Interior has started a human rights training programme for police officers where the Secretary-General and experts from the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood give lectures on the topic. This has led to a higher level of awareness of the right of the child not to be subjected to torture. Discussion of the Children's Act within society has also contributed to raising awareness of the issue. Mass media started to publish articles and provide coverage on police indiscretions at stations and detention centres helping to create pressure lobbies to expose violations, to identify perpetrators of such acts and to tackle impunity. This, however, does not mean that violations are not committed now. What is certain though, is that offenders against children, regardless of their position, find themselves facing the consequences of their actions more than ever before. Victims are becoming more aware of their rights and of the mechanisms at their disposal to report violations using the emergency line or the media. The latter has been consecrating large sections of its coverage to expose such practices (see paragraph 146).

VI. Family environment and alternative care (articles 5, 9-11, 18 (paragraphs 1 and 2), 19-21, 25, 27 (paragraph 4) and 39)

123. With reference to the concluding observations by the Committee on paragraph 232 of the report (CRC/C/65/Add.9) regarding the mistreatment of children in schools, and by the family and institutions, the sections hereunder outline the measures taken

A. Parental guidance and family support (articles 5 and 18 (1) and (2))

124. Greater attention has been given to dialogue within the family and the need to discard violence as a means of correcting children's behaviour. The media plays a significant role in breaking the wall of silence which normally envelops cases of violence in the family, at school and in institutions. The number of television programmes dealing with family relations and the quality of education are on the increase, while the press is paying a closer attention to the treatment of children in care institutions. Several Government bodies and civil society organizations provide help to vulnerable families facing problems. The Ministry of Social Solidarity has a number of programmes to extend help to parents or guardians to fulfil their responsibility of bringing up a child. The Social Defence Administration has a telephone line to give advice to families with child problems and to propose solutions.

125. The National Council organizes awareness seminars for families and child carers in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Solidarity. The seminars discuss children's problems and how to deal with them, the causes, prevention, types of family relations and how to deal with children. Other services provided include a societal rehabilitation programme to assist parents in the reintegration of disabled children in their local communities regardless of their age, gender or degree of disability.

Family justice programme- the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

126. To facilitate and support the administration of justice and to ensure the enjoyment of the rights of the child in a safe family environment, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Egyptian Government launched the family justice programme through the implementation of Act No.10 of 2004 on the creation of family courts. The project is being implemented in close cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. The programme started in January 2006 with a capital of three million

United States dollars and is expected to continue until 2010. The Council is implementing the programme in cooperation with civil society organizations through the allocation of grants to 31 selected non-governmental organization which cooperate with 65 civil society entities to help provide family advice and help settle family disputes before they are referred to the courts. They also help raise awareness of the work of family courts and their role, promote the rights of the child and the family, mobilize resources to support child and family, and provide social, psychological and legal family advice. Training staff is another component of the programme.

Services provided to families and child carers

127. The General Administration for Family and Childhood at the Ministry of Social Solidarity has implemented the Early Childhood Development project in cooperation with the Bernard van Leer Foundation of the Netherlands using the services of several civil society organizations in 10 provinces. One of the most significant outcomes of the project is the launch of the Early Childhood Development Union in Egypt (number 1 of 2003).

128. There are family guidance and advice offices that come under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Solidarity and are managed by civil Society organizations. Their task is to investigate problems encountered by families and to help find solutions for such problems. They also conduct and publish family studies and surveys, and provide advice to prospective couples.

Childhood and Motherhood social insurance services

129. These services aim to provide support to families with a limited income and families facing social, economic or health difficulties through the provision of income support to meet daily life requirements. The Government has issued a decision to raise social insurance support starting from June 2006 and to provide education grants for the children of eligible families. Social insurance support ranging from 70-100 Egyptian pounds is provided to orphans, widows, divorced women, the families of inmates serving a sentence exceeding three years and the children of divorced women after death or remarriage. The Children's Act No. 12 of 2003 provides for a social insurance benefit for children in these categories and for education grants.

130. Families of disabled children are entitled to special financial assistance to cover a mentally disabled child if the family's monthly income is below 300 Egyptian pounds. This assistance is renewed on annual basis until such time that the cause of disability has subsided or the child has reached the age of 18 years. According to the September 2007 figures, 868,026 families received social insurance benefits and 43,527 families received assistance under the Children's Act.

B. Children deprived of family environment and adoption (articles 9 (paragraphs 1-4), 20 and 21)

131. Civil status legislation govern the right of the child to custody and self care taking into account the best interests of the child when granting custody. Chapter III of the Children's Act (article 31 *et seq.*) regulate the establishment requirements and role of care homes, and are under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs. As for alternative care types, they are: (a) the alternative family system (article 46), (b) child club (article 47), (c) social care institutions for children deprived of family care article (48) and (d) social insurance benefit. Care institutions provide shelter for children between the age of 6 and 18 years who are denied family care as a result of the death of the parents, the rupture in family ties or the inability of the family to look after the child. A male child may stay at the care institution after the age of 18 years if he continues his higher education and the circumstances for his presence at the institution persist. Girls stay until they reach the age of marriage. Figures from the General Administration for Family and Childhood show that there are 306 care homes nationwide serving 8,318 children in addition to 180 shelters for the under 6 accommodating nearly 3,584 children. The executive rules and the decisions of the Minister of Social Solidarity detail the provisions of alternative care.

132. One of the elements of the work of the Ministry of Social Solidarity is social care which covers education, health and leisure. These services are provided through 306 institutions in 22 provinces using two systems for orphans. They are:

- Family alternative care
- Institution alternative care

133. The Government maintains a partnership with civil society organizations in the management of care institutions. Some projects in the investment plan are entrusted to non-profit organizations which benefit from Governmental technical support and secondment of Government staff.

Groups benefiting from social care institutions

- Children of unknown parentage
- Wayward children

- Children lacking care by their natural families (children of inmates, tuberculosis patients, mentally handicapped parents and lepers)

134. As regards children in danger, data from the Administration for Social Defence show that the abovementioned children are cared for by 33 institutions in 17 provinces. Fifteen of these institutions are based in the larger urban areas of Cairo, Giza and Alexandria. The institutions provide care for 5,737 children in the age group 7-18 years. There exists also 27 guest houses in 17 provinces accommodating 1,220 children.⁴ Twenty custody homes in as many provinces provide full accommodation and care for 2,553 children awaiting appearance before the courts. There are also 256 social surveillance offices in 27 provinces serving 45,845 children in their natural environment. The reasons for the separation of children from their parents are attributed to:

- Separation of parents and the taking of another partner who refuses the presence of the child in the household
- Dire economic situation, in particular that of the mother
- The death of the mother and the inability of the father or other members of the family to take care of the child
- Neglect by the family
- Family violence
- Court decisions instigated by harmful practices or offences putting children in danger

Care for children of unknown parentage (abandoned children)

135. More recently, greater attention has been given to children found abandoned. Ambulances specially equipped with incubators are used to transport abandoned children to the nearest paediatric or general hospital to be given the necessary medical care free of charge and children are kept in hospitals until they are fully recovered. Hospitals coordinate with the Ministry of the Interior and report such cases to the competent police station to complete the appropriate paperwork while the child is still in the hospital's care.

136. Abandoned children benefit from a free medical insurance and are placed in any of the 35 provincial childhood and motherhood care centres which are fully equipped to look after them and to provide them with food and hygiene. Nearly 1,857 children were cared for by these centres in 2006. The provision of a free health insurance has led to a reduction in mortality rates among abandoned children from 8.8 percent in 2000 to 3.5 % in 2008 (source: Ministry of Health and Population). Units in charge of abandoned children comprise teams working round the clock to deal with such cases.

C. Family reunification (article10)

137. Egyptian legislation is fully compatible with the provisions of the Convention when it comes to family reunification and the right of a child to enter or leave a State Party for that purpose. Article 51 of the Constitution stipulates that no citizen shall be deported or prevented from returning to the country.

138. Moreover, there are several executive and judicial bodies in charge of family reunification matters and is responsible for looking into claims by the child or the

⁴ Ministry of Social Solidarity figures, 2006/2007.

parents. They include: family dispute settlement offices, family affairs prosecution services and courts and some of the administrations within the Ministry of Social Solidarity. An international cooperation committee has been established at the Ministry of Justice (Ministerial Decision No. 613 of 2000) to settle disputes on custody or visits in the cases of mixed marriages or families living abroad.

139. Egypt participated in the “Malta Process” conferences held in Malta and the Hague under the umbrella of the Hague Conference on Private International Law as part of the attempt to reach an agreement between the signatories of the Hague Conventions and non-member States on the rights of parents to maintain contact with their children in their habitual place of residence. Child custody and the views of children require a definitive solution that can satisfy all parties concerned in cases of mixed marriages or when spouses live in different countries. Problems are compounded when disputes arise over custody leading to the abduction of the child by one of the parents or preventing the other parent from having access to the child. The Ministry of Justice is in the process of submitting a draft family law to deal with these problems in a satisfactory manner.

D. Recovery of child maintenance (article27, paragraph 4)

140. Egyptian legislation takes care of child maintenance through its imposition on the father (Act No. 25, article 18bis), determining claim procedures and the issuing of court decisions without legal fees or taxes. Recovery procedures may be voluntary or by the force of law through civil or commercial hearings, or through Nasser Social Bank in accordance with Act No. 11 of 2004 on the family insurance fund. The Civil Code Act regulates the implementation of maintenance decisions inside and outside the country. Egypt has concluded several bilateral agreements with other countries in the area of civil status matters including maintenance for children. Act No. 1 of 2000 sets the procedures of litigation and the enforcement of civil status decisions without guarantees (article65). Article 76bis prescribes imprisonment as punishment for the failure to pay maintenance. The amendments to the Children’s Act have gone a step further in article 99 paragraph(6) by entrusting child protection committees with reporting cases of children in danger to the family courts to oblige persons responsible to pay an interim maintenance. Such court decisions are mandatory and payment of maintenance cannot be suspended during appeal. In reality, however, the failure to implement court decisions to pay child maintenance continue to have adverse effects on families torn apart by divorce. Problems become more complicated when one of the parents (normally the father) refuses to accept the courts’ decision leading to intransigence on the part of the person having custody of the child (normally the mother) to allow the father access to the child. These situations are compounded by the resulting negative psychological impact. Debate continues at this moment in time on the main features of the intended legislation that can provide a radical solution to the problem.

E. Illicit transfer and non-return (article11)

141. The Egyptian Criminal Code prescribes punishment for the abduction of children which also covers their illicit transfer. There are several official mechanisms to deal with the removal of children from the parents care. Egypt has concluded several agreements with a number of countries to deal with such cases. They are: The agreement with the Government of Australia of 22 October 2000 which was approved by Presidential Decree No. 180 of 2001; the agreement with the Government of Canada which was approved by Presidential Decree No. 268 of 1999; and the Memorandum of Understanding with the United States of America on consular cooperation regarding parental contact with children which was signed on 22 October 2003. All such

instruments are intended to facilitate consultations and cooperation, to ensure respect for the rights of the child and the parents, to guarantee the maintenance of regular contact between child and parent, and to avert the illicit transfer of children when the parents are separated. The Council was unable to include in the amendments to the Children's Act the prohibition of and punishment for the abduction of children by a family member regardless of the degree of kinship. The new text precludes the mother, the father and the grandparents from persecution.

F. Protection from abuse and neglect including physical and psychological rehabilitation and reintegration (articles 19 and 39)

142. Pursuant to the observations by the Committee on paragraph 232 in document (CRC/C/65/Add.9) concerning the mistreatment of children in schools and by families, and domestic violence, Egypt played host to the three regional preparatory conferences (2005, 2006 and 2007) regarding the study by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Violence against Children. A children's forum was also organized in cooperation with the Save the Children Agency and UNICEF with the aim of encouraging the participation of children and youth in drafting the conclusions of the final document. Egyptian society has witnessed an important turn in breaking the wall of silence enveloping violence against children and the discussion of the United Nations' Secretary-General study provided the ideal platform. As part of a national drive, a national committee to combat violence against children was established, and a national strategy and mechanism monitoring and intervention were put into place. Egypt played a pivotal role in facilitating the discussions for the Middle East and North Africa region, and hosting the three meetings for regional consultations concerning the study. The contribution led to encouraging the countries of the region to adopt concrete measures to protect children against violence through the creation of national committees to combat violence, the adoption of strategies and action plans, the establishment of monitoring mechanisms, and the setting up of children emergency lines and complaints offices. The Council undertook to translate the study into Arabic in full for dissemination throughout the Arab world as an important step for implementing its recommendations and raising awareness of its importance. Egypt also headed the 2008 follow-up meeting. It is worth mentioning here that the regional facilitation group comprised representatives of the United Nations, several international and regional agencies, and civil society organizations to ensure the widest participation for the preparation of measures and the development of mechanisms to implement agreed conclusions.

143. The first Middle East and North Africa regional consultative meeting, which took place in Cairo for the period 27-29 June 2005, adopted the "Cairo Declaration" calling for the drafting of national action plans, the preparation of studies and the collection of data on the forms and levels of violence against children, and a review of national legislation to ensure their harmony with the Convention.

The National Commission to Combat Violence against Children

144. The Commission was established under the leadership of the "Council" in January 2005 to become the leading agency in the national planning and implementation of the recommendations adopted by the regional consultative meetings. Its membership includes representatives of the ministries, civil society organizations, the media, child experts and child representatives.

The National Action Plan against Violence

145. The Council played the coordinating role to develop the plan for the period 2005-2011 and to prepare for its implementation in cooperation with several United

Nations agencies and other development partners such as Italian Cooperation, the European Union, the World Bank, the Government of Japan, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), civil society and the private sector. Implementation steps cover monitoring, editing and reviewing the Plan before the ratification of the final version. The Plan contains a series of programmes starting with the review and the amendment of child-specific legislation, training staff, capacity-building among parents and custodians, awareness raising, child participation, and the treatment and rehabilitation of child victims of violence.

146. The adoption of the Plan complements other national strategies and plans prepared by the “Council” to protect street children and adolescents against the use of drugs, to eliminate child labour, to combat female genital mutilation, to promote girls’ education, to raise awareness, to enforce national legislation, to amend laws when necessary, and to ensure compatibility with international instruments and the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. The Plan was drafted with the participation of various players in the Government and civil society sectors, both central and local, and the children themselves. The Plan functions on several levels to include:

- Prevention through legislation, capacity building and societal awareness.
- Protection relying on monitoring mechanisms for children in danger, under the umbrella of the “Council” in coordination with other central Government agencies and civil society, and on the provincial and community levels.
- Remedies and rehabilitation aimed at reintegrating violence child victims through institution and capacity building, and the rehabilitation of offenders responsible for violence against and sex exploitation of children.

Corporal punishment

147. In compliance with the concluding observations by the Committee on paragraphs 232 and 233, the question of corporal punishment in the family and in schools assumed considerable attention. As regards violence in schools, The “child emergency line” has recorded several cases of violence in schools despite a ministerial directive prohibiting the use of corporal punishment and was followed by another decision in 17 November 1998 prohibiting the use of violence and the beating of students in all schools up to university level, including private schools. Complaints are submitted to the Minister of Education who, at times, gives his instructions to punish the perpetrator after investigating the case. Such measures have helped to a certain degree in breaking the wall of silence and has led to an increase in the number of reported cases. Society was recently rocked by the death in class of a child in November 2008 at the hands of a 23-year old teacher. The case was the first of its kind in Egypt. The Council held a seminar with the media to discuss the various aspects of the incident. It called for the ministerial directive banning beating in schools to become legislation to be adopted by parliament. The Council used the seminar to remind society of the article contained in the amendments to the Children’s Act to consider corporal punishment as an offence which was watered down during the parliamentary debate of the amendment. The seminar led the press to publish articles by leading journalists and television programmes calling for harsher punishment. The case and its repercussions continue to be the centre of attention in various circles in Egypt and the abovementioned amendment became the subject of heated debates. The new article was eventually adopted with one concession allowing the father to use reasonable corporal punishment without being held responsible.

148. The Council runs an awareness programme on the right of the child to be protected against corporal punishment and degrading treatment, to support correctional measures other than corporal punishment and to combat violence among school children. The programme has the objective of determining the causes of the rise in resorting to violence. Several training workshops were organized on how to use sound

methods of children upbringing. The Ministry of Social Solidarity also organizes training courses for childhood and motherhood researchers.

149. The Council has in place a social information programme known as “Think Once, Even Twice” implemented with the help of Italian Cooperation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It raises awareness of the problem of violence against children with a view to changing society’s perspective of child victims. The programme organized several advertising campaigns on violence such as female genital mutilation, family dialogue, the child’s participation in school activities, child labour, street children and discrimination against girls. These campaigns were broadcast at specific periods due to the limited available resources.

150. Other initiatives in this area is the civil society alliance to follow up the implementation in Egypt of the recommendations of the Beijing conference. Girls participated in highlighting to decision makers and journalists the violence they are subjected to and discussed with them methods of confronting these practices. More recently, attention has focused on sexual harassment and the need for legislation to deal with the practice. In November 2008, a court pronounced a prison sentence against a young man found guilty of harassing a girl in the street.

The elimination of female genital mutilation

151. Regarding the concluding observations of the Committee on paragraphs 240 and 241 in document (CRC/C/65/Add.9), Egypt has paid special attention to female genital mutilation, placing the issue high on the national agenda of the child. In this context, the “Council” initiated a national programme to combat the practice in 2003 with the premise that it violates the basic rights of a child and that it is neither a healthy nor a religious tradition, in mind. The section hereunder highlights the main features of the measures undertaken in this area.

Key elements of the programme

- The inclusion in the new Children’s Act the prescription of punishment for female genital mutilation through raising awareness among judicial circles (judges and prosecutors) and members of the People’s Assembly of the health, religious, social and legal drawbacks of the practice, as well as mobilizing public opinion against the practice using a strategic and intensive media campaigns (television, radio, press, internet and billboards) to respond to queries (medical, religious, social and legal) raised by society.
- The development of grass-root experiences to confront the practice in Egyptian villages in cooperation with civil society (21 organizations) and local leaders, with special emphasis on health, social, educational and cultural initiatives to counter perceptions. The programme is being implemented in 120 villages, with nationwide coverage to follow. Forty % of the national programme is allocated to support civil society organizations.
- Discouraging doctors from performing female genital mutilations through the support extended to doctors in health units in rural areas and providing them with scientific material on the practice. Doctors are trained to provide medical advice to the family. Health staff are reminded of the ministerial directives and legislation prohibiting the performance of female genital mutilation.
- Encouraging youth from both sexes to volunteer to work as groups in educational and cultural institutions to help change perceptions among parents using the approach “From Youth to Youth”.
- Providing advice to the public on female genital mutilation related queries and receiving reports about intended circumcisions on the 24-hour service 16000 line

(child emergency line). Queries about the practice account for 65 % of all calls received.

Results and change indicators

Drop in national indicators of female genital mutilation

152. Results of the study conducted by the Ministry of Health and Population in cooperation with the World Health Organization in 2007 showed a fall to 50.3 % in the rate of circumcised girls aged between 10 and 18 years (43 % in urban schools, 62.7 % in rural schools and 9.2 % in private schools) in comparison with the figure of 79 % for married women aged 15 to 49 in 2000 (source: Health Demographic Survey, 2002).

153. The research on social and political trends among youth conducted by the “Council” in 2005 in cooperation with the Ahram Centre for Strategic Studies and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) showed that 55 % of young men and women aged between 15 and 24 years were opposed to female genital mutilation and viewed the practice as a violation of the rights of the child.

Female genital mutilation as an offence under Egyptian law

154. The People’s Assembly and the Shura Council approved legislation considering female genital mutilation as a punishable offence that denigrates the rights and dignity of Egyptian girls. A new article, 242bis, was added by Act No. 126 of 2008 to the Criminal Code No. 58 of 1937. It reads: “ in accordance with article 61 of the Criminal Code and without prejudice to a more severe punishment under another law, any person found to be responsible for causing an incision, described as female genital mutilation, punishable under articles 241 and 242 of the Criminal Code shall be punished with a minimum imprisonment sentence of three months and a maximum of two years or a fine of a minimum of 1,000 Egyptian pounds and a maximum of 5,000 Egyptian pounds”.

155. A periodic booklet by the Prosecutor-General has been published to explain the philosophy behind the amendments to the Children’s Act. It contains a separate part explaining the steps of implementation and how to investigate cases of female genital mutilation.

Breaking the wall of silence with regard to female genital mutilation

156. Female genital mutilation remained a taboo in the media, in particular State television, for a long time. However, intensive media campaigns by the “Council” helped to break the wall of silence on the practice and to disseminate documented information and understanding among the various segments of Egyptian society. The campaign involved advertisements on national television under the motto “No to Female genital mutilation” and a series of messages to Egyptian girls under the heading “No to the Denial of Education, No to Early Marriage”. The campaign was expanded to cover other national channels and satellite television, special radio broadcasts, State and private press, and drama works. The impact of the campaign is reflected clearly in the increase of calls received on the emergency line 16000 in all provinces.

Village declarations against female genital mutilation

157. Grass-root work of the National Programme to Combat Female Genital Mutilation in 120 villages has contributed to the creation of groups comprising youth, Muslim and Christian religious leaders, doctors, Government officials and civil society members, opposed to the practice. These groups declare their opposition in public in the villages through a petition signed by the inhabitants. So far, 10 villages have made this declaration and others are likely to follow suit.

Muslim and Christian statements opposed to female genital mutilation

158. The Egyptian Fatwa House has adopted a decisive position vis-a-vis the practice through the recommendations adopted by the 2006 “Scholars International Conference on the Prohibition of the Violation of the Woman’s Body”. The conference brought together an elite of Muslim scholars who stated in one of their recommendations that “female genital mutilation is an old custom that found root in several societies and was copied by Muslims in several countries without any reference in the Qur’an or the tradition of the Prophet”. They appealed to all Muslims to abandon the practice and to show respect to Islamic teachings which forbid the infliction of all forms of harm on the human being.

159. The Egyptian Orthodox Coptic Church also reiterated its official stand against the practice during the Afro-Arab Consultations on Legal Tools for the Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation where the Church stated that “Christianity stood opposed to female genital mutilation as a violation of the bodies of young girls that is not justified in any religious text”. The Church also publishes booklets on the practice to hand out to its congregations all over Egypt.

Youth activism

160. Youth from both sexes are actively involved in educational and social voluntary work among youth groups to highlight the negative impact of the practice.

Egypt’s role on the regional and international levels

161. The National Programme for Combating Female Genital Mutilation plays an effective role in changing perceptions of the practice on the African continent with special emphasis on changing the Islamic discourse. One of the steps taken was to publish and to distribute a booklet by professor A.D. Mohammed Saleem Al-Awa, the Secretary-General of the International Federation for Islamic Scholars. “Female Genital Mutilation, an Islamic Perspective” explains that the practice has never been a religious tradition and that it runs contrary to the teachings of Islam for being a direct violation of the right of the child. Against this background, the Egyptian Fatwa House hosted an international conference on the prohibition of the violation of the woman’s body in 2006, with decisive conclusions barring the practice. In 2007, the House also issued a statement forbidding all forms of female genital mutilation. These Egyptian efforts have had an impact on the Islamic discourse in neighbouring countries such as the Sudan, Djibouti and others.

162. In June 2003, Egypt played host to the Afro-Arab Consultations on Legal Tools for the Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation under the patronage of the First Lady, the chairperson of the technical consultative committee of the Council for Childhood and Motherhood. The meeting reflected Egypt’s political commitment to the eradication of such harmful practices on both the national and international levels. Several countries plagued by the practice found in the conference a new impetus to deal with the problem. The adoption of legislation prohibiting the practice encouraged other countries to follow the example set by Egypt. In December 2008, The Council organized a high level conference in cooperation with the Italian association No Peace Without Justice to follow up the national and international progress achieved in the implementation of the Cairo Declaration. The conference was attended by 20 African countries affected by the practice, several European countries, international organizations and the United Nations. The Cairo +5 Declaration was adopted at the end of the meeting.

163. Egypt was awarded the “Euro-Med Child” prize in 2005 for having the best model to deal with this harmful practice and to protect the rights of girls.

164. Egypt’s experience has served as a model in several regional and international forums including:

- The International Conference on Female Genital Mutilation, Nairobi, Kenya, 2004.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) consultative meeting on the challenges facing female genital mutilation in rural areas, Mali, November 2004.
- UNICEF's Innocenti Digest report on Female Genital Mutilation, Cairo, November 2005.
- The "Road-map for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation" seminar, Addis Ababa, June 2007
- The Egyptian model the Muslim women programme, University of Alicante, Spain, 2007.
- Presentation of the Egyptian model during the 51st session of the United Nations on the World's Women Report, New York, February 2007.
- The " Together towards the Elimination of Violence against Girls" youth conference, Yemen, May 2007
- The Cairo Declaration on Legal Tools to Prevent Female Genital Mutilation, 13-15 December 2008.

165. The National Programme for Combating Female Genital Mutilation is exemplary when it comes to building partnerships and enjoys the support of the various ministries and international organizations (eight donor countries, the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF and Plan International).

166. The Egyptian contribution to the Programme is the largest and includes allocations for expenditure on media coverage with the support of the Ministry of Information, the provision of offices within the premises of the Council, the provision of trainers, and training staff from other ministries and other Government agencies.

167. The Programme also receives support from the European Union (three million Euros over four years starting in 2005). From 2003, the following countries and organizations provided 2.5 million United States dollars worth of support for the Programme over a period of three years: Italian Cooperation, United States Agency for International Development, Denmark, the Netherlands, Canada, Finland and Switzerland. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Unifam contributed USD 190,000, USD 55,000 and USD 29,000 to the Programme, respectively. Other United Nations' organizations are contributing to the launch of a joint programme with the Council to combat female genital mutilation. Plan International is funding Council activities to the tune of USD 400,000.

VII. Basic health and welfare (articles 6, 18 paragraph (3), 23, 24, 26 and 27 paragraphs (1-3))

168. As regards the concluding observations (CRC/C/15/Add.145, paragraphs 39-46) on paragraph 234 in document (CRC/C/65/Add.9) on children with disabilities, paragraph 237 on children's health and health care, paragraph 238 on adolescent health and paragraph 240 on female genital mutilation, responses are provided hereunder except for female genital mutilation, which was dealt with in paragraph 149 as a form of violence.

169. Egypt has achieved significant progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals compared to other developing countries. This puts it in a leading position as far as the following goals are concerned: Goal 4 on the reduction by two

thirds, between 1990 and 2015, of the under-five mortality rate; Goal 5 on the reduction by three quarters of the maternal mortality ratio; Goal 6 to halt the spread of disease, in particular HIV/AIDS; and Goal 8 to halt the spread malaria and tuberculosis as shown by the indicators listed below.

170. Mother and child health has witnessed tangible improvement in the past few years. Preliminary data from the Health Demographic Survey of 2008 and the 2007-2008 Human Development report indicate a fall the under-five mortality rates from 54.0 for every one thousand live births in 2000 to 28 per thousand live births in 2008. The rate of infant mortality dropped from 44.0 for every one thousand live births in 2000 to 25.0 per thousand live births in 2008. Figures for mortality rates among newly-born children under the age of 30 days fell from 24 for every one thousand births in 2000 to 16 per thousand births in 2008. The reduction is attributed to the implementation of several programmes such as the newly-born care programme, the expanded immunization programme, the sick child comprehensive care programme, the safe motherhood and breastfeeding programme and the early disability diagnosis programme, all of which will be explained in detail later in the report.

171. It must be noted that newly-born children's mortality rates are the highest and constitute 50 % of total child deaths. This is followed by deaths caused by respiratory system diseases, diarrhoea and accidents. This indicates that there is a need for continued training for basic health doctors on how to deal with pregnancies, natural births and the early detection of serious cases.

172. Despite all the efforts made, there remains a considerable gap between the provision of health care in rural and Urban areas. This is reflected in the levels of child mortality rates in rural areas which is double what is recorded in urban zones. Rates for the former stand at 51.6 deaths per one thousand live births compared to the latter which stand at 32.7 per one thousand live births.

Motherhood care

173. Maternal mortality ratios remain unsatisfactory in spite of the significant fall in figures as a result of improved motherhood care in Egypt. According to the figures of the Ministry of Health and Population, the ratio fell below the national average from 174 per 100,000 live births in 1992 to 52.9 per 100,000 live births in 2007. This represents a 68 % decline with urban areas accounting for 65 % and rural areas for 72 %. This decline is attributed to efforts to reduce maternal mortality in rural areas. Health care for pregnant women has been expanded over the past five years to reach 70 %. The average medical visits for the examination of pregnant women rose from two to four. Deliveries in the presence of specialists increased by 82 % in the period from 1990 to 2005. The Ministry of Health maintains more than 600 mobile units dedicated to motherhood care and family planning in deprived areas.

A. Children with disabilities (article23)

Legislative amendments

174- In compliance with the observations by the Committee in paragraphs 234 and 235, and in light of the general principles of the Convention and the commitment by the State to guarantee children the rights enshrined in the Convention, a review of the articles of the Children's Act concerning children with disabilities has been undertaken to strengthen the rights of the child as is shown in Act No. 126 of 2008. Article 75 stipulates that "the State shall guarantee the child protection from disability or any act that may harm his or her health, physical, mental, spiritual or social growth, and shall take every necessary measure to ensure the early detection of disability. The State shall be responsible for the rehabilitation, education and guaranteeing employment for

disabled children when they reach the working age. The State shall take the appropriate measures to ensure the participation of mass media in awareness and guidance programmes in the area of protection from disability, to disseminate the rights of children with disabilities, and raise awareness among children with disabilities and those who provide them with the care they need to facilitate their integration into society”.

175. Article 76 states that “A child with disability shall have the right to enjoy special social, health and psychological care to develop self-reliance and to help his or her integration and participation in society”. Article 76bis stipulates that “A child with disability shall have the right to education, training, vocational education in the same institutions available to other children, except in cases where the degree and type of disability prevents the child from doing so”. In such exceptional cases, the State is committed to providing education and training in specialized classes, institutions or centres on a case-by-case arrangement. These specialized institutions must meet the conditions set out by law to ensure that the rights and dignity of the child and his ability to integrate into society are guaranteed. Article 86 states that “All aid and support equipment, their spare parts and production tools, and transport means for use by and rehabilitation of a child with disability shall be exempt from all taxes and levies”. Work is ongoing to include a disability component in the next national five-year plan.

176. The council held a series of meetings attended by representatives of civil society organizations, persons with disability and disability rights activists to discuss the draft United Nations Convention on Persons with Disability and their dignity. The meetings helped the development of a strong position reflecting the views of persons with disability in Egypt. Egyptian nationals with disability participated in the drafting of the comprehensive and over-arching convention intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disability. Egypt ratified the Convention on 14 April 2008. The Council and other relevant bodies played a key role in bringing the Egyptian perspective of the Convention together in support of Egypt’s ratification.

177. Several of the programmes developed by civil societies active in the field of disability focus on the link between the Rehabilitation Act No. 38 of 1975 and the proposed drafts for a new law, on the one hand, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on the other. A number of workshops and round-table discussions have been organized at provincial level to raise awareness of the Convention and to bring domestic legislation into line with its provisions. Persons with disabilities, their families, civil society and Government agencies took part in these discussions. Disabled Egyptians also took part in the formulation of the policies of the Arab Decade for the Disabled (2004- 2013).

Awareness, advocacy and the defence of the rights of children with disabilities

178. Civil society organizations’ role of advocacy and the protection of the rights of persons with disability, in particular children, has witnessed important developments in the past few years. Several networks have been set up to involve disability experts and stakeholders. They include:

- The Education Integration Network. It brings together the representatives of 20 specialist organizations, stakeholders and their families, and Government education specialists. The network supports the efforts of the Integration Administration at the ministry and has the mission statement of putting the education of children with disabilities on equal par with the education of normal children.
- The Social Rehabilitation Network. As a juridical entity, this network has brought together an elite of specialists under its umbrella since its inception in

September 2008. It enjoys the support of the National Council of Childhood and Motherhood.

- The Disability Awareness Network. It was established through the internet using information technology to bring disability rights advocates, family members and specialists together. The network monitors media coverage of disability issues, suggest solutions to problems and engage journalists on their projection of disability. The network also reviewed the admission policy of persons with disability at one of the private universities.

179. Other civil Society organizations focus, as part of the “Children in Danger” programme sponsored by the Council and the European Union, on raising the levels of awareness of the rights of persons with disability among disabled children and their families through:

- The simplification of the explanation of the Convention.
- The facilitation of meetings between groups of disabled children and some Government officials to demand their rights and submit problems affecting the enjoyment of these rights.
- The preparation of a comprehensive review of the rights of persons with disabilities under Egyptians and a services guide of the rights guaranteed to the disabled and how to obtain them.

Awareness, definitions and trends

180. Civil society organizations, the Council and the media assume a collective role in altering views towards disability and in changing perceptions through the emphasis on the juridical and development aspects of disability. Such efforts are beginning to yield the desired results as can be seen in the approach by the media to disability awareness. In July 2008, the Council, in cooperation with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Disability, organized a conference on the media’s coverage of issues affecting persons with disability, the main provisions of the Convention, the juridical aspect of their rights and the need to change the sense of pity and charity directed at persons with disability. The conference agreed to produce a procedures manual for future media and drama works.

Data and information

181. Definitions and terms used in the area of disability remain lacking in uniformity and tend to focus on the nature of the disability in spite of the adoption by the World Health Organization of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) in 2001, and the definition adopted by the United Nations. Such definitions are not commonly used in official communications between the competent authorities and data collection agencies. This has led to major discrepancies in the available data. Equally, data available on children with disabilities remain limited and not properly classified to allow an easy and efficient use. Efforts, however, continue to improve the situation as follows:

- The creation of an official website for the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood.
- The establishment of databases for every project implemented, including the Children in Danger programme.
- The publication of several guides of available services produced by civil society organizations in a number of provinces.

Programmes and services for children with disabilities

182. Although services intended for children with disabilities are provided by several ministries and agencies, the rates of children benefiting from such services remain low at nearly 4 % of the total number of children with disabilities.

183. Efforts to raise the levels of awareness and the need to bridge the gap have borne fruit. The number of civil society organizations specializing in dealing with children with disabilities has risen to more than 500. Other organizations have added a disability component into their scope of activity and have joined the disability network. Government services to persons with disability have also been increased and improved as explained hereunder.

Prevention programmes

184. The Ministry of Health has implemented a programme for the early detection of lymphatic gland deficiencies among newly-born babies at provincial levels. Several hospitals, health centres, and social rehabilitation societies have had their early detection and intervention capabilities developed. As a result, levels of disability among infants have been drastically reduced.

185. The Cairo Children in Danger programme funded a laboratory for the early detection of a vast range of genetic metabolism disorders providing services to more than 25,000 newly-born infants over the duration of the project. Work has been ongoing to expand the testing through a protocol signed with the Ministry of Health and Population. Another laboratory was established to deal with two major disorders, *Phenylketonuria* and *Glactosemia*, and to test all infants born in Alexandria.

186. The increased number of awareness-raising programmes on the normal growth of children has contributed to the prevention of disability through early detection of disease.

187. Another method of dealing with genetic metabolism disorders detected at an early stage, is the provision of special diet and dairy products. One such example is the dietary regime introduced at the main Cairo paediatric hospital. Early intervention for the rehabilitation of children under the age of 4 is another programme introduced by several civil society organizations. Genetic and paediatric units at research centres and university teaching hospitals provide similar services and training for staff using the expertise of civil society organizations.

Social rehabilitation services and programmes

188. There is consensus that a community-based rehabilitation strategy represents the ideal approach to closing the wide gap between the needs of persons with disability, and the available services and resources. Several governmental and non-governmental entities have contributed to the planning and execution of programmes and projects.

Ministry of Social Solidarity

189- In spite of the various rehabilitation services provided by the Ministry through centres, institutions, physiotherapy units, crèches, protected workshops and multiple disability centres at the national level the rate of use of such services does not exceed 1 % of the targeted groups.

190. The Ministry adopted a community-based approach to target persons with disability and their families without limitations on age, type or degree of disability through the various institutions which conduct an evaluation of every case and through the centres which oversee the implementation of projects within specific geographical zones. It has also embarked on reviving the Higher Council for Rehabilitation. New

members have been selected to include experts and activists in the field, and its terms of reference and future role set.

Ministry of Health and Population

191. The Ministry has implemented a limited number of community-based rehabilitation programmes using motherhood and childhood care centres. At present, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood is working, through the Children in Danger programme, on expanding the areas where community-based services are provided by networking with the health centres in the areas designated for the implementation of the project. Thirty-two villages and centres in rural and urban areas are covered.

192. The Ministry of Health provides State-paid treatment (clinical and pharmaceutical), rehabilitation sessions, and support for uninsured children although this system falls short of meeting all needs of those children.

The Public Authority for Health Insurance

193. The Authority provides training for the parents of students in the public and private education systems. It also relies on the parents of students in the public education system to disseminate health information. Other training programmes cover the use and maintenance of disability aids. The Authority has trained 660 doctors, 1774 health workers, and 1219 teachers on the use of disability early detection forms. Services do not cover children with disabilities outside the education system. They constitute the largest percentage especially when it comes to mental, severe and multiple disability.

Civil society

194. Several civil society organizations implement community-based rehabilitation programmes and projects in 11 provinces with activities and programmes designed to meet the requirements of the system. They also design and implement training programmes of different levels of specialization to include carers, paediatricians, teachers, sociologists and psychologists. Other organizations provide training to parents on how to accept and provide support to their disabled children. These efforts have had a major impact on parents forming support groups to uphold the rights of persons with disability and to bring their problems to the attention of society.

The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

195. The Council has organized diverse programmes to train staff involved with children with disabilities like doctors, education experts, sociologists, psychologists and administrators on how to deal with health needs with special emphasis on child disability. Between 2003 and 2007, nearly 4000 persons were trained in various disciplines.

196. At present, work is underway to develop a strategy to promote quality services provided to persons with disability with the aim of coming up with proposals to guide the policies governing such services.

197. The “Children in Danger” programme (2006-2008), which comes under the supervision of the Council with funding from the European Union, focuses on the regions in need and relies on civil society organizations and local communities to deliver services to children with disabilities, their families and communities.

198. Services are provided through the “Complaints Office” of the Council and the “Child Treatment Technical Decision Committee”. The Council has set up a complaints office in 2001 in cooperation with other agencies and civil society to help solve

problems. The technical committee deals with medical assistance decisions reported to the complaints office, to Hotline 0800666888 or the emergency line 16000. Free services are provided to children without a health card or who do not enjoy the health insurance coverage. The line received 29,570 calls in the period from March 2006 to July 2008.

Universities

199. A number of colleges provide innovative programmes that do not require full-time attendance with a view to allowing those who enrol more flexibility. Examples of such programmes is the psychology instruction course at the Education Faculty at Ain Shams University. Upon completion of the course, graduates receive a professional diploma.

200. One private university established a centre for the care of persons with special needs. The centre enjoys full technical, financial and administrative autonomy, and plays a pioneering role among Egyptian universities. It provides comprehensive medical and educational services for all types of disability, conducts research, organizes training courses, holds seminars and conferences, and cooperates with a specialized civil society organization that trains support teachers for children with special needs. The centre has a cooperation agreement with the World Confederation for Functional Therapy to grant diploma degrees. It also cooperates with the Ministry of Social Solidarity to provide loans to the disabled and their families to start small businesses.

Services and education programmes

201. In spite of all the efforts made by the Ministry of Education to provide services to children with disabilities in three main areas namely the deaf and hard of hearing, the blind and visually impaired, and simple mental disability, there remains a wide and important gap in the provision of these services. According to the 2005 statistics of the Ministry, there were 804 special needs schools accommodating no more than 36,808 students, which accounts for only 1.48 % of the total number of children with disabilities at school age.

202. A comparison of education coverage rates for normal children and children with disabilities up to the age of 18 years shows that the former enjoy a coverage rate of 73 % to the latter's 1.1 %. In the case of normal children there is one school to every 454 students as opposed to one special needs school for every 44,850 students with disability. This represents a serious deprivation of the right to education. Opportunities for students with disability to attain higher education remain extremely limited. Deaf students cannot effectively enrol in a higher education institution while blind students and students who are physically handicapped can only enrol in a restricted number of faculties which constitutes a serious breach of their right to education.

203. The Ministry has started a programme for the development of intellectual education in cooperation with the Comprehensive Care Association. Fourteen schools in Cairo have been introduced to the scheme as a first step to cover a total of 429 schools nationwide.

204. Integral education is another area where programmes and projects have been developed. Between 2003 and 2008, the European Union funded a technical assistance programme that was executed by two civil society organizations as an extension of an integral education pilot project which was started in 1998. As a result, 15 primary schools and 15 kindergartens in Cairo, Alexandria and Minya benefitted from the programme with more than 300 students with disability integrated into the system. More than 300 teachers received integration education training. Two parents' associations and two integral education networks in Cairo and in Minya were established. The Ministry

of Education published special teaching books for children with disabilities taking into account their needs and respect for their dignity.

205. On the policies level, the success of the abovementioned project has had an important impact. Integral education for children with disabilities became part of the strategy to overhaul the education system as was outlined in the Presidential Statement of 2006, as well as in the political platform of the ruling party, the National Democratic Party. In 2008, an integral education committee was established at the Ministry of Education and included in its membership representatives of civil society. The five-year national plan for educational reform (2007-2012) has integral education as a component in its programmes.

206. The number of special needs schools has been on the increase. Such schools rely on the teacher and assistant teacher method in the classroom, facilitating participation in classroom activities, the adaptation of the normal curricula to suit the needs of students with disability, measuring the performance of students to adapt the individual curriculum to students' requirements, and enabling students with disability to be involved in extracurricular activities such as music, drama and sport.

207. A number of private centres have started providing services to children with learning difficulties. They include the measurement and evaluation of psychological and educational aptitudes, educational support, the training assistant teachers on how to work with students with disability in integral education schools and the training of teachers in regular schools on how to pay attention to learning levels among students in the same class.

Recreational and cultural programmes

208. Mentally handicapped children participate on a regular basis in the special Olympiads organized on the regional and international levels and have won 47 gold, silver and bronze medals at the 2007 Beijing Games. They also participate in activities and competitions organized by the Sports Federations for the Disabled. Results in these competitions are used for qualifying purposes when determining participation in world events and the Olympic Games.

209. As part of the implementation of ministerial decisions, an increasing number of youth centres are now accessible to children and youth with disability to use sport facilities and to benefit from recreational activities. In the same context, staff of youth centres are trained to plan and execute activities to integrate persons with disability. At present, only 2 % of existing youth centres cater for children with disabilities. Other activities involve the provision of access to public children's libraries (Suzanne Mubarak libraries- Comprehensive Care Association) for physically handicapped and visually impaired children.

Cooperation and coordination with the relevant authorities

210. Cooperation between the bodies responsible for funding disability services like the relevant ministries and the Council, civil society organizations, the World Bank, the European Union and the private sector (major companies) saw a noticeable improvement. Cooperation in the area of funding initiatives also improved as the case was with the "Children in Danger" programme referred to earlier. The initiative was supervised by the Ministry of Social Solidarity, funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Council with the help of civil society organizations.

Challenges

211. Despite the intensification of efforts, several areas continue to suffer from shortcomings and require solutions. Such areas include:

- The absence of agreement among the competent authorities on the adoption and development of a national strategy to deal with disability through a partnership and through the distribution of tasks to give disability priority in development plans, and the lack of a legal framework to guarantee persons with disability their rights and equality of treatment instead of the charitable approach.
- The absence of accurate databases to help provide a clear picture on the magnitude of the problems and types of disability, available services, how to access them and the effectiveness of these services.
- A shortage of qualified staff in all areas of specialization, limited exposure to good training programmes, poor quality of services and coverage for more vulnerable children with disabilities (children with severe or multiple disability) attributed to the lack of resources available to the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the reticence of civil society organizations to be involved because of the difficulties encountered.
- The need for additional funds to improve the quality of services, the adoption of the minimum required standards for such services and a quality control regime.
- The need to include the rights of children with disabilities as a component in all children's activities (health, education, culture, work...etc).

B. Health and basic services (article24)

212. Egypt has faced a series of challenges over the past few years in the forefront of which was the need to restructure health care services to meet new requirements, demographic growth and the changing disease patterns. The State takes charge of more than 70 % of health services provided nationwide. In recent years, major health indicators saw important developments where life expectancy indexes for both sexes were on the increase. Rates over the past five years show women's life expectancy rise from 71 years in 2000 to 73.5 years in 2005. Men's figures rose from 66.7 years to 69.8 years for the same period.⁵

213. One of the main challenges facing the health sector in Egypt is the availability of resources. According to the State budget, health expenditure accounts for 5.8 % of the total annual allocations and represents 1.8 % of the Gross National Product (GNP). This goes to show that State expenditure is insufficient in comparison with individual expenditure. World Bank figures show that individual expenditure on health stands at 62 % of total health expenditure. Total investment in the sector for the period 1981/1982 to 2006/2007 reached nearly 33.2 billion Egyptian pounds, 26.1 billion of which comes from the Government sector and 7.1 billion from the private sector. Investment in the health sector reached 2.75 billion Egyptian pounds in 2006/2007 compared to 350 million pounds invested in 1981/1982. Egypt spends 3.7 % of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on health services annually, 2.2 % of which is shouldered by the individual and the State taking charge of the rest.

214. The December 2007 statistics book issued by the Central Office for Statistics gives some of the data published by the Ministry of Health and Population for 2006. They are:

- 831 general and central hospitals, and 931 rural hospitals.
- 152,134 beds in ministry hospitals: 26,307 beds in private hospitals, 78,894 beds in ministry hospitals, 17,447 beds in institutions affiliated to the Ministry and 29,486 beds from other ministries.

⁵ Data from the Central Statistics Office, 2006.

- Ministry units with beds by specialization: 1,184 units with 78,894 beds including 17 children units with 728 beds.
- 48,111 medical doctors averaging 6,68 doctors per 10,000 inhabitants and 99,022 nursing staff averaging 13,75 per 10,000 inhabitants.

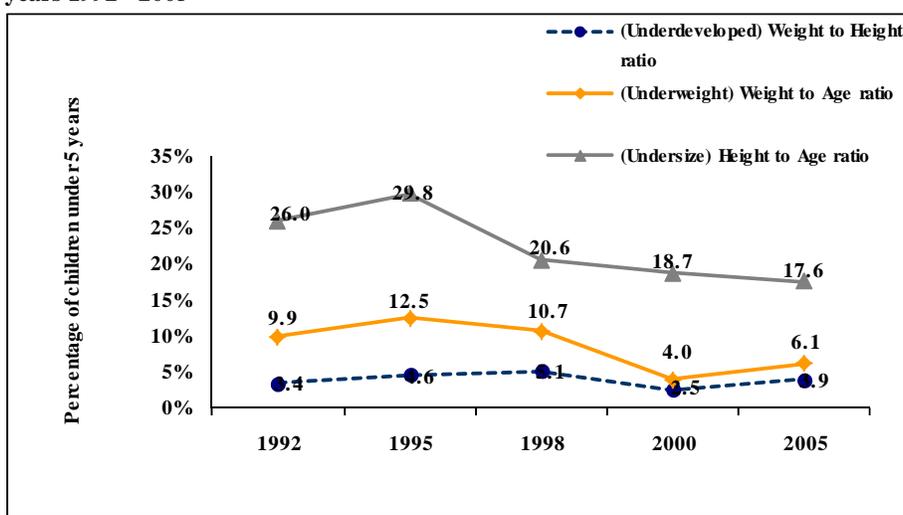
Malnutrition-related diseases

215. Protein and carbohydrates deficiencies are the main reasons for child morbidity in Egypt and manifests itself in under-weight and undersized children. Children's health also come under threat from the lack of vital food ingredients three of which constitute a cause of grave concern, namely iodine, iron and vitamin A. Estimates indicate a shortage of vitamin A among children. However, the supplementary programme adopted by the Ministry of Health and Population shows that by 2000 nearly 96 % of children aged six months and 94 % of children aged 18 months had received a supplementary dose of vitamin A.

216. In 1996, Egypt started the process of introducing iodine to salt. By 1998, the Ministry reported that 94 % of salt on sale contained iodine. Rates for the domestic use of salt with iodine, however, remain very low and requires raising awareness of the importance of iodine. Only 78 % of households use iodine-treated salts and the percentage is lower in rural areas (Demographic Health Survey, 2005).

Diagram 2

Malnutrition indicators-protein deficiency among children under the age of 5 years 1992 - 2005



Source : Demographic Health Survey, 1992-2005.

217. Iron deficiency and the resulting anaemia is another cause for concern, especially among girls. The 2005 Demographic Health Survey shows that one child in every two suffer from one of several degrees of anaemia and that 1 % of children are affected by a severe form of the illness while one child in five suffer from a moderate degree of anaemia. Anaemia morbidity is higher in rural areas (51 % compared to 44 % in urban areas). Anaemia contracted by children under the age of 5 years rose from 30.3 % in 2000 to 48.5 % in 2005. The same can be said of girls and adolescents with rates rising from 28 % to 36 % and among women of child-bearing age from 28 % to 39 % during the same period.

218. The Ministry has expanded the anaemia programme among intermediate and secondary education students by providing weekly iron supplements. It also holds health and nutrition seminars, encourages breast feeding, provides training on the inclusion of food supplements and the preparation of balanced meals and raises awareness of the importance of hygiene to eliminate communicable diseases and parasites. The Health Insurance Authority, on its part, has introduced a programme at the provincial level intended to protect adolescents from anaemia in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Population and the Ministry of Education. Preventive services and remedies are provided through seminars on nutrition and health, the dispensing of medicine and the distribution of booklets and posters to disseminate information about the health cover.

219. The Council launched a programme to improve the quality of life for children in Tarra and Helwan in cooperation with the Suez Cement Plant with a budget of 8,400,000 Egyptian pounds over two years. As part of an environmental camps scheme, children are handed hygiene kits containing iodine salt, sulphur and glycerine soap, a tooth brush and paste, a medical loofah and hair disinfectant. The contents of the kit are the subject of discussions with children on the use of each item. Several meetings on healthy food, personal hygiene and avian flu have been organized with topics for discussion turned into puppet shows by the children. These activities covered 1,477 students including 37 with disabilities. The Council aims to expand the activity to cover all schools in poorer areas.

220. The State provides primary health services through family medicine as a basic component of a consolidated and comprehensive health insurance. The system aims to develop and update services by pinpointing health problems and to provide solutions to 80 or 90 % of cases. The system has been introduced to 19 provinces through health units at the rate of one doctor for every 500 families in designated residential areas whereby families receive 70 % of their health care needs at the nearest unit. Such health care is mainly preventive starting with children vaccination, primary health services, dispensing medication, mother and child care, family planning and laboratory services. A health record of genetic diseases is kept for each family as part of the medical cover intended for every citizen within the next five years.

Health insurance

221. The State provides several services such as health insurance to students through this authority. According to Act No. 99 of 1992, all 17.293 million students are covered by this service through 7,829 school clinics and 314 specialist clinics, against an annual subscription of four Egyptian pounds and a State contribution of 12 Egyptian pounds for every student. The State covers one third of the cost of medicine obtained outside hospitals. Students suffering from chronic diseases receive medication free of charge.

222. Newly-born children were added to the health insurance cover from 1 October 1997 pursuant to Ministerial Decision No. 380 of 1997. Infants and children up to the age of 6 years may be included in the cover against an annual subscription of five Egyptian pounds and a 50 cents fee for every visit and one third of the cost of prescribed medicines for ordinary cases. Children suffering from chronic disease enjoy free treatment and free referrals to hospitals. According to the 2006 statistics, nearly 10.651 million children come under this scheme.

223. School health insurance focuses on preventive care and the provision of clinical testing and vaccination services by age group, the monitoring of mental and psychological disorders, congenital diseases, mental and visual and hearing and elocution and physical disabilities, and nutrition. The scheme is also involves disability programmes organized by the Ministry of Health and civil society organizations.

224. The health insurance scheme is confronted with several challenges ranging from the lack of awareness of entitlements and service points, the cost of the service and the

shortage of trained doctors in health units (one doctor for all the villages under the health unit with long distances to cover).

The National Programme for the Care of Newly-born Children

225. Mortality rates among newly-born infants account for the highest percentage of deaths among children during the first year after birth. This has led the Ministry of Health to attach the added importance to this programme to protect children's lives and to expand services, strategies and targets to enhance performance. Care is provided throughout the pregnancy period starting with the embryonic phase. Staff is trained on resuscitation procedures and intensive care units are on the ready to deal with serious post-natal cases.

The Expanded Programme for Vaccination

226. Vaccination is a right that must be enjoyed by every child. It is the responsibility of every family and society as a whole to guarantee this right. Vaccination remains as the first defensive line against serious children's diseases and children receive the mandatory nine vaccinations during the first year of their lives followed by booster doses in the second year according to a pre-planned schedule.

227. The rate of children aged 12-23 months receiving vaccinations for tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio and measles reached 88.7 % in 2006.⁶ This is attributed to the success achieved by the Expanded Programme for Vaccination in reducing morbidity levels and the total elimination of polio in Egypt. In 2006, levels of vaccination coverage for polio's third booster, hepatitis B, Triple Vaccine, measles and MMR exceeded 95 %. Campaigns have targeted shanty towns, impoverished rural areas and border provinces. Contracting measles dropped from 4,597 cases in 2000 to 953 cases in 2006 while post-natal tetanus cases fell from 321 to 46 over the same period. The World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and the Ministry of Health and Population are to announce Egypt a country free of post-natal tetanus soon.

The national programme for the early detection of lymph hormone deficiency

228. This is one of the most important health programmes dealing with genetic and congenital disorders children develop at the embryonic stage. Early detection and treatment gives the child a new lease of life. The programme was launched in April 2000 and attained nationwide coverage by 2003.

The Integrated Management of Childhood Illness

229. Efforts during the 1990s focused on the care for children under the age of 5 years with the addition of the nutrition supplements list (Iodine salt, vitamin A and iron) and the early detection of the lymph hormone deficiency. In order to provide a comprehensive range of services, the Ministry adopted the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMIC) strategy in 1997. At present, the programme is used in 218 health units at the provincial level and aims to provide sick children with a consolidated health service.

Breast feeding

230. According to the 2005 Demographic Health Survey, 95.2 % of Egyptian mothers breastfed their children and the majority of children continued to feed naturally beyond the age of 1 year. It is estimated that 80 % of children aged between 12 and 17 months

⁶ According to the various human development reports, Ministry of Health and Population reports and reports by the National Institute for Health Data.

are breastfed. However, post-birth synthetic feeding for the first three days remain a common practice. The “Council” has a policy of promoting breast feeding in all its programmes.

Adolescent health care-reproductive health

231. In response to the Committee’s comment in paragraph 44 on adolescent health care, every effort is being made to ensure the enjoyment of the highest standard of health care in preparation for adulthood and for adolescents to contribute to the welfare of their communities.

232. There are no sufficient data on vulnerable adolescent groups or those affected by sexually transmitted diseases. Egypt has embarked on the implementation of several programmes aimed at the prevention of health problems among adolescents in spite of the cultural barriers associating reproductive health with promiscuity.

233. Among the main challenges facing the dissemination of reproductive health education are the shortcomings in the advice services provided and the lack of preventive policies. There is also a lack of adolescent data and an absence of reproductive health material in the curricula of the Ministry of Education. Parents, on the other hand, are reticent to accept their children receive advice and testing before marriage for fear of stigmatization.

Harmful customs

234. According to the indicators of the 2005 Demographic Health Survey, malnutrition is prevalent among adolescent groups aged between 10 and 19 years. Obesity affects 6 % of unmarried boys and 8 % of unmarried girls while 3 % of boys and 2 % of girls are underweight. Anaemia is commonplace among adolescents and in particular among girls.

Programmes targeting the adolescent

235. There are several programmes which focus on adolescent health care and are being implemented in cooperation with international organizations and civil society. One example is the adolescent health care programme which is being implemented with the help of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on raising awareness among the adolescent. And the development of the capacity of civil society organizations, volunteer groups and reproductive health specialists. Another programme focuses on the role of the media in highlighting the importance of reproductive health education. As a result, adolescent health care was introduced into school curricula for the first time in Egypt.

236. The Shoorouq programme was launched with the help of Save the Children Fund to design a health guide for the adolescent at the secondary education level, a guide for nutrition education for secondary school teachers and a plan to build the capacity of basic health doctors in the province of Minya.

237. Other programmes targeting boys and girls concentrate on the acquisition of daily life skills and are carried out with the help of the Centre for Development and Demographic Activities. The Council, with the Centre, also provided training for trainers for secondary school teachers in the provinces to educate boys and girls on daily life skills, reproductive health and adolescent health care, using a simplified scientific method.

238. The Shoorouq programme which was launched in cooperation with the Save the Children Fund, the Centre for Demographic Activities, the National Council for Youth, Caritas and the Adult Education Authority targets girl school leavers in the age group 13-15 years. It endeavours to provide safe areas for girls to practice sport and literacy

activities, to enable them acquire daily life skills, to train, and to learn how to earn a living.

239. In 2006, the first adolescent psychology clinic was established at the medical school of Cairo University to be affiliated to the Qasr al-Aini hospital. It provides adolescent mental health services and training for members of the community on treatment methods, and cooperates with the Council through the mobile adolescent health care clinic intended for villages and hamlets.

240. In 2004-2005, the Ministry of Health and Population established youth advice clinics in several provinces in cooperation with the Teaching Hospitals Authority. Other clinics were established in cooperation with civil society organizations and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to provide advice and testing on a voluntary basis. The Health Insurance Authority provides services to help combat violence among adolescents. To that end, several training courses were organized for doctors and psychologists in cooperation with the "Council" and the University of Alexandria. The General-Secretariat for Mental Health at the Ministry established an adolescent unit to provide in-patient and out-patient services to adolescents aged 12-19 years.

241. As regards the concluding observations by the "Committee" and its recommendation to undertake a comprehensive study to understand the nature and extent of adolescent health problems and, with the full participation of adolescents and to use this as a basis to formulate adolescent health policies and programmes, it is worth noting that several such studies have been initiated. They include, among others:

- A study on the needs of adolescent craftsmen and craftswomen in Salam city's industrial estate, launched by the "Council" in cooperation with the Reproductive Health Authority, Catalyst, in December 2004. The study showed that misconceptions were rife among those surveyed and that obtaining advice on adolescence problems was difficult.
- A study on the characteristics of the Egyptian family and early marriage within the framework of family health and support for reproductive health, 2006-2007. The study was conducted in cooperation with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society with the results indicating that early marriage was no longer a problem in the communities surveyed due to the high level of education among girls.
- A study in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to target secondary school students in relation to nutrition trends, and discrimination between both sexes in the process of decision making.
- A joint study between the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Egyptian Society for Family Planning, March 2004. It covered four provinces to determine reproductive health needs among youth. The study showed that there is a need to provide clear information on reproductive health and sex education using the appropriate tools.

Children infected with HIV/AIDS

242. Egypt is considered one of the countries with the lowest incidences of HIV/AIDS infections with less than 0.1 % (Ministry of Health and Population). A cause of concern, though, is the high number of new reported cases (according to UNAIDS estimates, June 2008). By the end of May 2008, the National Programme for HIV/AIDS of the Ministry of Health and Population has recorded 2,301 cases. The main risk of infection may be attributed to the increase in the population of youth in the age group 15-24 years and to poverty (20 % of the population live below the poverty line). The problem is compounded by illiteracy among women, weaknesses in the health system and late marriages among the youth.

243. Of the total cases reported there are only 19 involving children, eight of whom died according to the UNAIDS regional office 2005 report. Reported cases by no means reflect the actual levels of infection but efforts are continuing to deal with the syndrome through better surveillance to identify positive infections and provide the necessary services.

AIDS-related activities

244. The National Programme for HIV/AIDS undertakes several activities to prevent the spread of the virus and to reduce the number of infections and deaths caused by the syndrome. Raising awareness among youth is one of them. An epidemiological monitoring system has been put in place to oversee laboratories, blood banks and to provide advice to infected patients and their families. Levels of diagnosis were raised to meet the highest standards through training and the use modern equipment. Fifteen fixed centres have been designated nationwide to give advice and to conduct voluntary testing. Nine provinces have been allocated mobile advice and testing units.

245. The adolescent health care programme, implemented by the Council in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund and UNAIDS, provides information about methods of the transmission of the virus while the United Nations Development Programme is involved in a project to protect street children from AIDS with the help of civil society organizations at Al- Amal village.

246. An AIDS guidance centre and hotline were set up in 1996 to provide information about the epidemic, the locations of testing centres and support agencies for the patients and their families. The Ministry of Health and Population also provides support for AIDS patients and their families through 700 specially trained doctors and nurses who provide social and moral support for the patients and help them and their families to overcome the stigma associated with the disease. The Ministry of Social Solidarity and civil society are also involved. HIV/AIDS patients also receive free Triple Vaccine inoculations free of charge.

247. Annual cancer deaths stand at 21,000 of which children account for 10 % (Ministry of Health and Population, 2004). Egypt was one of the first Arab countries to tackle cancer by establishing the National Oncology Institute in the 1960s, which provides services free of charge. The Institute is seeking additional funding to meet the increasing demand for its services by the poor.

248. A specialized cancer hospital was built in Cairo with the help of civil society and the Association of Friends of Cancer Patients. Under the patronage of the First Lady, the hospital provides the most advanced cancer treatment services and is financed through contributions by the Egyptian people, civil society and the private sector, with Government participation. The hospital relies on the exchange of expertise with the most advanced institutions worldwide. It has 185 beds with an expansion potential to 350 beds.

C. Standard of living (article 27)

249. Despite the improvements registered in economic and social indicators at the national level, economic growth has not translated into a sustained improvement in standards of living and levels of welfare. The reduction of poverty remains one of the main challenges facing the Government. Levels of poverty have been on the rise in the past few years, particularly in rural areas. Available data (HDR 2004)⁷ show that poverty levels had reached 16.7 % with 11.8 million citizens living below the poverty

⁷ Human Development Report, National Planning Institute, 2004.

line. The Government has put the reduction of poverty as one of its top priorities and has targeted poorer families with job creation projects and food and basic goods programmes.

250. As for families deprived of sanitation facilities and drinking water, the 2006 census shows that the overwhelming majority of households has access to water from a nearby source (95 %) while most of the remaining families have to travel 30 minutes to the nearest source. Egypt is making every effort to provide safe drinking water as part of its commitment to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. Households with sanitary disposal systems do not exceed 50 % with levels in urban areas put at 82 % compared to the 24 % recorded in rural areas.

251. The Council introduces a poverty reduction component to every programme and project it implements. Remote areas, marginalized groups and those most in need are specifically targeted with poverty being the main cause for child labour, dropping out of school and street children.

252. “Improving the Standard of Living of Children” project: Under this project, 710 children from poorer families receive a full education grant to help reduce dropping out of school levels and 163 mothers are assisted in obtaining a national number card. Other activities include a survey of families lacking electricity and coordination with the Ministry of Electricity to link families to the national grid, and the construction of a sanitary disposal network with the help of the Greater Cairo Water Company. The Council also organized a number of awareness-raising seminars for families and children on the safe sanitary disposal of human waste, ran mobile trachoma clinics with the participation of 400 parents, provided 136 pairs of prescription glasses and helped provide medicine and surgical interventions.

253. As part of a 44-nation study on poverty among children, the “Council” is collaborating with the Centre for Developing Countries at the Economics and Political Science Faculty at Cairo University, and UNICEF to have an input into the study, which is due for publication in December 2008.

254. The Environmental Protection Fund, which is affiliated to the Environmental Authority, is implementing several projects to reduce green-house gas emissions, to provide safe drinking water, to lay down a sanitary disposal network, to build public toilets in rural areas, to recycle organic waste and to ensure a safe disposal of medical waste, in cooperation with civil society organizations and non-governmental agencies.

255. The State Ministry for Environmental Affairs has set up a unit to oversee conditions in shanty towns to reverse the deteriorating conditions and build the capacities of civil society organizations active in these areas. The unit also provides training on the implementation of environmental projects and encourages volunteering among youth. In spite of the strict regulations imposed by the Ministry on industrial activities, environmental pollution remains one of the main hazards affecting children’s health. Measures taken so far have failed to improve the quality of air all year round with air pollution levels reaching unacceptable proportions with the open burning of rice husk.

VIII. Educational, leisure and cultural activities (articles 28, 29 and 31)

256. As regards the concluding observations (CRC/C/15/Add.145, paragraphs 47 and 48) on paragraph 242 of the report (CRC/C/65/Add.9) on the quality of education, the measures outlined hereunder have been taken.

257. Improving the quality of education is a real challenge that is preoccupying Egyptian society as a whole and is the subject of heated debates in parliament, the media and among parents.

258. As part of its efforts to improve the quality of education, the Ministry of Education has adopted a strategic plan for the period 2007/2008 to 2011/2012 which includes 12 programmes of reform. They cover the development of new curricula, school reform, the development of vocational and human resources, institutional decentralization, technological advancement and information technology development, the building of schools, the development of kindergartens, reforming basic education, the development of secondary education, the development of societal education for boys and girls outside the school system and the development of the integration of children with special needs.

A. Vocational training (article 28)

259. The Ministry of Education has introduced a system through which students who fail in their studies or do not wish to continue with their academic education can change the course of their education. The total number of boys and girls who opted for the change is 157,446 students at the vocational preparatory level. In 2006/2007, secondary industrial vocational schools accepted 73,365 students while the agricultural branch took 16,270 students.

260. The Ministry of Manpower is implementing a project to provide guidance and vocational training using existing workshops to train boys and girls aged 12 to 18 years over a period of two to three years with 6,318 graduates (71.8 % boys and 28.1 % girls) completing the course in 2006. The Ministry is also implementing another seven-month vocational training programme targeting dropouts from basic education taking into account the demand in the labour market. In 2006/2007, about 615 trainees graduated from the course.

261. The Ministry of Social Solidarity has established several centres for the development of human and vocational resources for dropouts and those who fail to enrol in school. Seventy centres exist in all provinces with the exception of Marsa Matrouh. In 2005/2006, the centres provided training for 3,462 candidates.

B. Objectives of education policy (article 29)

262. Article 53 of the Children's Act relevant to pre-university education objectives has been amended to include the realization of peace in full conformity with the Convention and the observations by the Committee. Measures taken in this respect are:

- The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential while ensuring the conformity of educational programmes with the respect for the dignity and personal identity of the child; the preparation of a child to participate in life and share responsibility; and develop in him or her the sense of respect for the rights and freedoms of others.
- The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, and for national and religious values; the preparation of the child for loyalty to his or her country, tolerance and respect for others; and the preparation of the child to accept the principles of equality of sexes, and non-discrimination against all peoples regardless of religion, ethnic origin, race, social background, disability or any other grounds for discrimination.

- The development of respect for the natural environment and the preparation of the child for a responsible life in a civil society based on solidarity and interdependence between the awareness of the rights, commitments and responsibilities.

Quantitative objectives

- Raising intake levels at basic education to achieve a full intake by 2015.
- Providing equal education opportunities to all.
- Raising registration rates at all education levels.
- Reducing dropping out rates.

Qualitative objectives

- Improving the quality of education at all levels.
- Introducing changes and reform to the process in accordance with the highest standards of quality control.
- Providing quality education to all.

263. In addition to the principles of peace and respect for others as pillars of the various educational programmes (as indicated in article 53 of the Egyptian Children's Act), other principle include:

- The development of respect for the rights and freedoms of human beings.
- The development of the child to respect loyalty to his or her country of origin, and to show friendship and tolerance towards others
- The preparation of the child to accept the principles of equality of sexes, and non-discrimination against all peoples regardless of religion, ethnic origin, race, social background, disability or any other grounds for discrimination.

Early childhood development

264. The Presidential Declaration for the Second Decade for the Protection of and Care for the Egyptian Child (2000-2010) includes an objective to admit 60 % of all children aged 4-6 years into kindergartens with a 100 % intake to be achieved by the year 2015. The 2006/2007 registration records of 16.7 % net and 17.5 % gross remain below the set targets. Kindergarten classes are concentrated in urban areas (63.38 %) which is an indication that children in rural areas are not afforded the same opportunity as their peers.

265. In order to provide the opportunity to every child to enjoy his or her right to develop his or her talents to the maximum at an early stage without discrimination, the Council:

- Developed the comprehensive quality standards for early childhood institutions (10 standards).
- Prepared a study on the conditions of crèches in the provinces of Giza and Qalubiya.
- Organized training courses for crèches teachers on the application of quality standards.

266. The Early Childhood Education Enhancement Programme (ECEEP) is being implemented in the deprived and marginalize areas in 15 provinces with funding from the World Bank, the Canadian Commission and the World Food Programme (WFP). An early childhood programme was carried out in association with UNICEF to build 300

kindergartens for 8,000 children. The programme was part of the cooperation with the Ministry of Education and local civil society organizations.

Equal education opportunities

Urban and rural areas

267. Student registration records reflect a balanced level of admission to primary and intermediate education in urban and rural areas compared with the population distribution. They indicate that 59.5 % were registered in rural areas and 57.5 % in urban areas. At the secondary education level the balance is tipped in favour of urban areas to indicate a gap in the opportunities available.

Free education and the poor

268. Ministerial Decision No. 226 of 24 August 2005 confirms the continuation of free education policies for the poor. The levels of registration at public schools give a clear indication of the availability of free education to all and in particular the poor. The 2006/2007 figures for enrolment in public schools show that 91.9 % were registered in primary schools, 95.2 % in intermediate schools and 92.9 % at the secondary level.

Quality gap

269. One of the main requisites of realizing the equality of opportunity is to bridge the gap in the quality of education. Efforts to that end at the primary education level have produced the desired results. Statistics for 2006/2007 indicate that the quality gap stood at -1.5 % in favour of girls compared with 6.41 % gap in favour of boys in 2000/2001. These figures, however, represent the national average and do not reflect the situation in remote areas, especially rural Egypt where the gap in basic education puts girls at a huge disadvantage. This requires special attention as this report will explain later. At the intermediate education level, the gap narrowed to 0.4 % in 2006/2007. At the secondary level, although the gap was reduced between 2000/2001 and 2006/2007 the difference remains noticeable between boys and girls attending vocational schools for agriculture and industry (4 % and 7.7 % respectively). For general studies and vocational commercial schools, girls fared better (-4.5 % for girls and 11.6 % for boys). These outcomes shed light on the efforts made to bridge the gap through initiatives at the basic education level and the drive to increase enrolment.

Education expenditure

270. In 2001/2002, pre-university education budget allocations stood at 13,337,708,300 Egyptian pounds. By 2006/2007, this figure rose to 19,787,676,000 Egyptian pounds to mark a 48.36 % increase for the last year. This increase must be put into perspective taking into account the rate of inflation and the number of admitted students. In 2001/2002, 48.4 % of the education budget was allocated to school buildings at a cost of 6,449,967,700 Egyptian pounds. In 2006/2007, this figure plummeted to 773,742,000 Egyptian pounds accounting for only 3.9 % of the budget for that year. This change in allocations does not meet the demand for school buildings and has had a negative impact on the number of students in the classroom.

Access to education

Intake by education level

271. Available data indicate that the number of children who fall outside the umbrella of primary education may vary according to the net or gross registration records which vary from 9.5 % to 3.4 % respectively. The table below shows a drop of -1.08 % in the net registration of primary education in 2006/2007 compared with 2001/2002 which is

largely caused by the rates for boys who recorded a -8.05 % in comparison with the girls' 2.08 %. The net registration for intermediate schools in 2006/2007 was affected by the absence of new admissions to the third form as a result of the reintroduction of the six primary form to the system. Figures for that period stood at -11.77 for boys and -5.49 % for girls.

Table 6

Total intake at all education levels (2001-2002 to 2006-2007)

Education level	2001/2002			2006/2007			Variance		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary	93.65	89.42	91.58	89.6	91.5	90.5	-8.05	2.08	-1.08
Intermediate	78.87	75.99	77.46	67.1	70.5	68.7	-11.77	-5.49	-8.76
Secondary	58.4	60.2	59.3	55.9	49.9	52.8	-2.5	10.3	-6.5

Source: Ministry of Education

Dropping out of school and staying within the education system

272. Dropping out of school is one of the main challenges facing the provision of an education opportunity and is the main source of other problems such as child labour and street children. Reducing dropping out levels is an important indicator of the ability of an education system to retain students and to increase education opportunities. Available data show better levels of retention of registered students at the primary and intermediate levels for 2005/2006 in comparison with other years. Dropping out rates at the secondary level remain higher than primary education with the likely cause being child labour. Intake rates and the full registration of children are linked to the ability to retain students who finish the whole of an education level. Retention levels at primary education saw a drop from 93.7 % to 91 % reflecting the same trend seen in net registration rates with girls' retention rates exceeding that of boys. The same can be said of secondary education retention rates.

Quality of education

273. In the effort to develop the quality of education, the State adopted in September 2006 a nationwide project for the introduction of national education standards outlining the main features of the education process, its framework and evaluation measures. A national authority for education accreditation and quality control was established by Act No.182 of 5 June 2006 to take charge of the evaluation of all educational institutions. Decision No. 334 of 14 September 2006 provides for the establishment of a commissioners and parents council at every school with the participation of civil society organizations active in the education field. The objective is to create a link between the school and society, to encourage self-driven voluntary work in support of the education process, to achieve decentralization in administration and follow-up and to give the school the status it deserves in serving the environment and the local communities.

274. The quality of education and its improvement is inextricably linked to the development of the school infrastructure and resources available. Class numbers, teacher to student ratios, the development of curricula, teaching methodology and school equipment are also important quality indicators. Efforts to deal with these elements are listed hereunder.

Class numbers

275. High class numbers are synonymous with a sub-standard education quality. However, despite the efforts to reduce numbers (using the shift system) figures remain high by international standards. In spite of considerable increase in the number of classrooms between 2001/2002 and 2006/2007, primary schools class numbers reached 42.86 students per class in comparison with 40.94 in the former years. By contrast, class numbers at other education levels dropped to 30.3 students per class in kindergartens, to 38.36 student per class in intermediate schools and to 37.2 students per class in secondary schools.

Teacher to student ratio

276. This ratio registered an improvement at all levels of education except for the primary and industrial vocational education levels. Figures for 2006/2007 show one teacher for every 26 students at the primary level and 10.66 students for every teacher at industrial vocational schools.

Quality of curricula and teaching methodology

277. The Ministry of Education has developed curricula and has introduced the rights of the child to teaching material. It has also launched several pilot projects linking improvements in schools to specific standards. One such attempt is the active learning project which was started in 2004/2005 and is being implemented in 500 schools with the help of UNICEF. The new school project is another endeavour that is being implemented in 100 schools with the help of the United States International Development Agency (USAID) whereby national education standards are converted into standardized units and plans for the development of schools.

Educational accreditation

278. Accreditation was applied in 2006/2007 through the selection of 1400 schools nationwide as a first step. A further selection of schools representing 20 % of the total number is then added every year before the completion of the process in 2011/2012. UNICEF provides support for 200 schools in two provinces while United States International Development Agency (USAID) provides support to the National Agency for Accreditation. A strategic plan has been put into place to develop education in several other provinces through the creation of guide models to enable schools to use their own initiative to improve its ranking based on standards set by a unit selected by the province. Examples of such development projects are:

- Active school: This project is implemented in 400 schools in cooperation with the World Bank and the European Union. It sets a model for the school to follow in terms of vision, message, social environment, teaching methodology and the teaching environment.
- USAID development project in 21 schools aimed at a sustainable reform process, the expansion of national teaching standards and the adoption of executive plans to improve the school's accreditation potential.

Illiteracy eradication

279. Egypt continues to exert efforts to eliminate illiteracy. Figures show that illiteracy levels among the population aged 10 years and above have dropped from 39.6 % in 1996 to 29.33 % in 2006. Of the total figures, 64 % are concentrated in rural areas and 69 % among women. From 1993/1994 to 2004/2005, in excess of 157,964 students graduated from illiteracy eradication schools to enrol in intermediate education, while 17,870 graduates joined secondary vocational education between 2000/2001 and

2005/2006. Another 6,854 graduates joined the general secondary education over the same period. There are several other nationwide illiteracy projects and guidance campaigns run by civil society organizations and other Government agencies. Some of these projects are the illiteracy programme for girls and women, the learning village programme, the cultural content integration project and the computer literacy campaign.

280. The Ministry of Higher Education also plays a role in the eradication of illiteracy through the contribution made by the universities to help children prevented by their families from going to school and to help the elderly within the framework of the ministerial working group. Zaqazeeq University has the Assaia Centre while Bani Swaif university has launched its own programme in the villages of Bnana and Hananba. The experiment is being expanded to include other universities. Other faculties specializing in education and child care have their own programmes.

281. The National Council, through its illiteracy programme, is focusing on girls under the age of 18 years in the provinces most in need of the service. It also provides health and nutrition care, skill development assistance for projects and help for illiteracy graduates to find work as facilitators. The project was implemented in four provinces in rural Egypt between 2006 and 2007 with 4,000 girls in the targeted age group obtaining birth certificates to enrol in regular schools or the one-class system schools. The scheme helped 320 women gain employment.

282. In a different awareness-raising project in the northern part of Cairo, nearly 2,005 women and girls graduated from a literacy course and were rewarded with loans to finance small projects as part of the economic and social enablement process.

The Girls' Education Initiative

283. This initiative comes under the umbrella of the "Council" and targets poor girls in remote areas. Girls receive good quality education free of charge through active education and strong child participation. The initiative aims to reduce the qualitative gap in primary education by 2007 in targeted villages in seven provinces by 60 % in comparison with 2002. The project is intended for girls aged between 6 and 13 years and a percentage of boys not exceeding 25 %. The Initiative was implemented by the Council with eight United Nations agencies led by UNICEF, 18 ministries using seven teams of volunteers, seven local civil society organization from the provinces, a number of central civil society agencies, provincial authorities, local community committees and the private sector. The Initiative is funded by Government expenditure and contributions from donor bodies such as the European Union, and the Egyptian and foreign private sectors.

284. Among the main programmes of the Initiative are:

- Database completion
- Awareness and societal mobilisation
- The expansion of user-friendly schools
- The reduction of poverty
- Follow- up and evaluation

Implementation and results

285. The implementation of the Initiative began in January 2003 with the inauguration of 1076 girls' user-friendly schools, the enrolment of nearly 27,436 students from both sexes, the training of 2,241 facilitators and 73 supervisors, the retraining of staff on active education, the completion of databases, and determining the quality gap between the different villages and hamlets for the first time.

286. Local volunteer teams (140 volunteers) and teaching committee members (5-7 volunteers) were given the relevant training.

287. Nutrition was provided in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the World Food Programme (WFP), while school supplies and teaching aids were provided through cooperation with the European Union.

288. Among the outstanding achievements of the Initiative is the introduction of societal participation that is based on coordination and non-discrimination, the application of active learning, the use of a special methodology of planning and implementation aimed at building capacities within the civil society to enable it play an active role in the realization of objectives.

289. The “Council” ensured that through the Initiative seven reputable civil society organizations are set up to take charge of implementation at the local level, in addition to undertaking the follow up, awareness-raising and societal mobilization activities.

290. An awareness component has been integrated into reproductive health, adolescent health care, early marriage and protection from HIV/AIDS in the active learning programme. Other awareness services cover early marriage, dangerous pregnancy and pre marriage testing. One of the success stories is that of a rural town accepting the introduction of girls reproductive health counselling.

291. The Initiative attracted the interest of the Egyptian Government which described the “Council” as a centre of experience in societal education. The First Lady, Suzan Mubarak, expressed support for the Initiative at its various stages. The process was crowned by the signing of a protocol with the Ministry of Education to replicate the Initiative. The signing ceremony was attended by the First Lady during a regional conference for the launch of the documentation of the Initiative on 26 January 2008.

292. The Egyptian model for girls’ education is a unique experience in the region because of its holistic and comprehensive development approach which attracted international attention prompting UNICEF to document the Initiative. The Government earmarked 157 million Egyptian pounds for implementation and the European Union contributed 6.5 million Euros to the Children in Danger programme which is being implemented by the Council since 2005. Other United Nations agencies contributed technical and financial assistance to the Initiative in the early stages. The project also attracted the attention of the private sector and civil society partners with the quality of the programmes prompting them to invest in it. Foreign contributions focused first and foremost on the educational quality that became the landmark of the Initiative which also led the Ministry of Education to replicate the model in public schools nationwide. In June 2008, around 550 students, including 16 boys, graduated from the programme and 95 % of them enrolled in intermediate schools.

One-class schools

293. These schools rely on the principle of enabling girls to unleash their potential and talent to contribute to society. The reintroduction of girls who drop out of the regular education system into these schools is viewed as a long term social and economic investment whereby new skills and practical experience are gained in several areas to contribute to major development programmes. In 2004/2005, the number of registered students reached 69,170 of whom 66,623 were girls. Graduates of these schools were allowed to enrol in intermediate and secondary schools and the age of admission up to secondary education levels was raised to 20 years, and in remote areas to 22 years. This project started in 1993/1994 with the participation of 211 schools rising to 3,147 schools by 2004/2005 to mark a 14 fold increase.

Societal schools

294. This is another format of schooling aimed at providing learning opportunities in areas deprived of education services. Under this plan, local communities are helped by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF to have education services. The project was launched in 1992 with the establishment of four schools rising to 339 schools by 2004/2005 to cover a wide range of needs. Places in these schools are distributed at a rate of 30 % for boys and 70 % for girls. The Ministry provides curricula, teaching material, teacher training and organizational support to ensure the success of the project.

Small schools

295. These schools are intended to provide education opportunities in deprived areas with the help of local communities and international organizations. There are five such schools in Cairo, 25 schools in Souhaj and 13 schools in Fayoum.

The “100 schools” development project

296. This project is implemented by Misr Al-Jadida Society which is headed by Ms. Suzanne Mubarak. The success achieved by the society in the first phase of its work made the project a national objective attracting several business entities to vie for a contribution into it to raise the levels of education services. The first phase succeeded in developing 100 public schools which lacked the requisite standards in the residential quarters of Al-Salam, Al-Nahdha, Al-Murj and Al-Zaitoun in Cairo and involved 150,000 students in 2,860 classes. The business sector’s contribution to the first phase of the project was estimated to be 79 million Egyptian pounds. The second phase covers the provinces of Cairo and Giza as an extension to the work of the Society in the areas of Al-Zaitoun, Al-Matariya and Ain Shams. The second phase of development comprises three stages going into 2010.

The dissemination of information technology culture among marginalized children in villages and hamlets

297. The “Council” is implementing an information technology and communication programme in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Population Foundation (WPF) to improve services for children, to protect them from exploitation over the internet and provide them with the latest communications technology. The programme covers the provinces of Fayoum, Giza, Souhaj, Minya, Buhaira, Assiut, Bani Swaif and Aswan. It targets girls in the Girls’ Education Initiative, the adolescent, girls dropping out of schools and children benefitting from the emergency line services.

International cooperation in the field of education

298. The Ministry, in cooperation with other donor agencies, has contributed to projects aimed at raising intake levels at schools. The World Bank has provided institutional and capacity building support to the Ministry of Education, and contributed laboratories and computers to schools. The World Bank and the European Union also contributed to the Education Enhancement Programme (EEP) which targets basic education systems in deprived areas. This project is being implemented in 15 provinces. UNESCO, the Anti-Poverty Programme and civil society organizations are building user-friendly schools for children living in difficult conditions. The World Bank is contributing 30 % of the cost of building 405 schools as part of the Education Enhancement Programme (EEP). The European Union is funding the construction of another 150 schools. Cooperation with other international bodies cover the training of staff in the education sector in the field of sciences and mathematics with the help of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), training teachers and the development

of teacher guides. A middle management training programme has been implemented in 15 provinces with funding from the European Union while UNICEF has funded the training of 1500 primary education teachers to use the active education method.

299. The Environmental Affairs Agency has adopted a policy of developing schools in cooperation with the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE). Part of the cooperation involved the distribution of 400 computers in the villages and hamlets of Assiut province, and in active education schools. Similar donations will be made to the provinces of Souhaj, Minya, Bani swaif and Wadi al-Jadeed. Such unconventional efforts to help educate the poor will have an impact on the reduction of child labour.

Educational and cultural challenges

300. Several challenges continue to face the educational development process. Infrastructure requirements is one of them with the existing need to provide an additional 57,022 new classrooms to reduce the number of students per class and the provision of services in deprived areas and kindergarten facilities. All this requires additional funds and allocations. There is also the need to build 1,833 new classrooms to solve the problems associated with the reintroduction of the sixth form after years of abolition which led to an increase in the number of students.

301. Other challenges include the raising of teaching standards and the quality of education provided. Efforts to achieve these goals are at an early stage and pilot projects remain of limited scope of implementation. Equally, the National Agency for Accreditation and Education Quality Control is still new and will need time and resources to be able to apply standards and quality control procedures nationwide.

302. The absence of an accurate database on illiterate children aged between 14 and 18 years, especially in targeted and deprived areas, makes the task of drawing up a viable national plan doubly difficult.

C. Rest, leisure time, recreation, cultural and artistic activities.(article 31)

Ministry of Education

303. In an effort to achieve full children intake at schools, the Ministry of Education resorted to the multiple shift system at schools which led to the reduction of tuition time to 4 or 5 hours and at the expense of physical education and arts classes. Figures for 2006 show that only 44.3 % of primary schools, 44.8 % of intermediate schools, 62.1 % of secondary schools and 27.4 % of vocational schools operate a single full day shift. The Ministry of Education has recently laid greater emphasis on physical education and sport activities by granting secondary school graduates who distinguish themselves in sport additional grades to allow them to enrol in universities. Greater attention is also being paid to cultural, sport, social, elocution and art activities.

The National Council for youth

304. As a result of the greater emphasis laid on sport at the expense of other youth recreational activities, two presidential decrees were issued in 2005 to split the National Council for Youth and Sport into two separate entities. Presidential Decree No. 426 of 2005 established the National Council of Sport with the mandate to expand the exercising of sport, to disseminate the culture of sport, to develop a plan to produce champions, to develop human resources and sport infrastructure, to establish management and funding methods, and to help develop sport legislation. Presidential Decree 425 of 2005 set forth the mandate of the National Council for Youth. It is

charged with the adoption and implementation of a plan for the adolescents and youth sectors, the dissemination of youth culture with emphasis on values and behaviour, the encouragement of volunteer work, the development of human resources, the development of adolescent and youth skills and the strengthening of youth activities infrastructure.

305. The National Council for Youth undertakes several activities and is involved in projects aimed at providing recreation and leisure time for children and youth from both sexes. Examples of such activities include:

- Pioneers' parliament: This project aims to involve children in exercising democracy, to familiarize them with political and parliamentary life, and to encourage them to work collectively. Nearly 177,450 boys and girls benefitted from this programme in 2007.
- Pioneers' clubs: This project enables youngsters to get involved in the various activities with a view to tapping talent. By 2007, around 1,000 clubs were operational to serve 27,800 boys and girls. The use of computers and its applications, as well as using the internet were the focus of training in 2006/2007.
- Scouting activities and cultural projects which cover the development of libraries, organizing competitions and the publication of booklets.

Ministry of Social Solidarity

306. Children's clubs: They are viewed as cultural institutions for children in the 6-15 years age group intended to help them make the most of leisure time. There are 492 clubs frequented by 61,017 children from both sexes. There are also 708 children's libraries used by 93,651 boys and girls. All these facilities are complemented by 63 children's parks visited by 278,640 children.⁸

The National Centre for Child Culture

307. The Centre is tasked with the development of children's talents and to redirect these talents towards the development of their personality, their mental ability and their conscience through arts and cultural workshops, and through seminars organized on the sidelines of the international festival for children's cinema and reading festivals. The Centre has prepared several studies to try and establish cultural trends among children. It has also organized summer camps, competitions, fairs, seminars and celebrations.

The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

308. The Council, through its varied programmes, has organized artistic and environmental competitions to help determine students' and teachers' aptitude for making the most of their participation in environmental camps where they were involved in the creation and development of green areas, the recycling of organic refuse and the design of environmental settings. Participants who distinguished themselves received awards from the Council for their contribution. The Council also contributed to the improvements introduced to sport halls in Youth centres by providing new equipment for use by youth in their spare time.

309. The previous examples cited above do not cover all the activities undertaken in this field. However, Egyptian children lag behind when it comes to the amounts of time

⁸ Decision No. 173 of 9 August 1999 on the regulations for model parks. They are defined as the green surfaces with an area of 1,000 square metres or more for leisure, sport and cultural use by children and their families.

allocated to sport and recreational activities. School curricula are dense and encroach upon the time allocated to extra-curricular activities. More often than not, children with sporting talent are obliged to quit the sport they excel in to concentrate on the academic part of their education.

IX. Special protection measures (articles 22, 33-36, 37 and 38-40)

310. With reference to concluding observation by the Committee CRC/C/15/Add.145) on paragraph 220 in the report (CRC/C/65/Add.9) on child labour, paragraph 246 on sexual exploitation, and paragraphs 228 and 229 on juvenile justice, the following section of the report outlines the measures taken.

311. Special protection measures are an integral part of the package of the rights that guarantee a child development, care, protection and support for families. Egypt has adopted all these principles in dealing with children's issues as part of the comprehensive approach to social development. It was against this backdrop that the document on the Second Decade of the Child (2000-2010) was published to include an ambitious plan aimed at a civilised, quantitative and qualitative shift at all levels of childhood. The document attaches particular importance to the protection of "children in difficult conditions especially drop-outs, working children, street children, and children in care and correctional institutions". The Presidential Declaration, on its part, underscores the need to "put a comprehensive programme in place to ensure the elimination of the problems facing those children, and the enjoyment of correct upbringing psychologically, socially and professionally".

Vulnerable children

A. Child refugees (article 22)

Child refugees in Egypt

312. According to the 2007 figures, there are 35,657 refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. Of the 18,000 refugees, children under the age of 17 years account for 31.5 % with boys making 16.7 percent and girls 14.8 %. The majority of refugees are Sudanese nationals (67 %) followed by Somalis and Ethiopians (24 % and 2.7 % respectively). Of the 17,000 asylum seekers, 72.5 % are Sudanese and 1.1 % are Somalis. More recently, the rate of Iraqi nationals seeking asylum rose to 23.17 %. A comparison between the figures of 2006 and 2007 shows an increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers. In 2006 there were 33,000 cases of which 31 % involved children. There is a need for the Ministry of the Interior to determine the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, and to determine the figures of illegal displaced individuals in order to establish the eligibility for protection as a refugee.

Services and programmes for child refugees

313. In 2004, the "Council" started to implement a programme for the protection of child refugees in deprived urban areas with the cooperation of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and civil society organizations. The programme aimed to survey the conditions of children and mothers, and the integration of families and children and youth in these deprived areas known as Kilo 4.5 shanty town, east of Nasr City in Cairo province.

Protection measures for refugees

314. An assessment of the needs of these communities has been carried out to draft practical measures for implementation. The measures cover security and legal awareness. In the field of education:

- The provision of common schools in each area for low-income families.
- Health: The provision of health services through advanced health centres and a referral system for refugees.
- Economy: Encouraging civil society organizations and Government bodies to provide small credit to youth to set up income-generating projects.
- Raising awareness among families regarding family planning. Establishing community training centres with emphasis on job creation for women. The following steps were taken:
 - Organizing seminars and training courses for the refugees to inform them of the services available to them and their rights, including those of their children.
 - The establishment of crèches for Sudanese and Egyptian children and the creation of jobs for young girls. Training for facilitators was also provided for illiteracy eradication classes.
 - Equipping a health centre for women in Al-Hajana to allow for greater communication between Sudanese and Egyptian women, to provide free health services, to ensure that children receive the requisite vaccinations, to register all births of Sudanese children and to provide an information network about the frequency of use of the centre.
 - Raising awareness among adolescents about issues such as mortality among mothers, the consequences of female genital mutilation for girls, and AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.
 - The implementation of environmental programmes using Egyptian youth and their refugee peers to clean streets and to provide small carts.
 - Providing recreational and cultural activities for Egyptian and child refugees to encourage interaction and mutual respect.
 - The establishment of a community executive committee from the locals, the Sudanese refugees, and the representatives of international organizations and donors to monitor and assess the impact of implemented projects.
 - Setting up consultative committees to meet quarterly to provide support to executive committees when implementing projects. Health services in Government health centres are provided to all mothers and children free of charge or against a nominal fee of one Egyptian pound. Efforts aim to ensure the participation of refugees with Egyptians in all activities as a means of interaction.

B. Child offenders (article40)

Administration of child justice

315. As regards the concluding observations by the Committee on paragraphs 248 and 249, the following measures have been taken:

Amendments to legislation

316. Amendments to articles 37 and 40 of the Children's Act aimed at bridging the gap between the Convention and Egyptian legislation. They establish a new system for child justice which recognizes the rights of the child under juvenile justice as provided for by the Convention and the Committee's General Comment No. 10 on the rights of the child under child justice and other relevant international instruments. The new system is based on social intervention, rehabilitation, protection and reintegration into society as opposed to the penal approach that characterized Law No. 12 of 1996.

317. In response to the Committee's concluding observation No. 248 on considering begging and dropping out of school as punishable offences, article 96 of Act No. 126 provides a long list of categories of children, including the two mentioned above, who are considered children in danger. The law replaces the expression of potentially deviant child by the term child in danger thus expanding the categories requiring protection (annex containing text of the law).

318. With regard to article 37 of the Convention, article 1 of the amended Children's Act No.126 of 2008 states the following: "The State shall guarantee the protection of childhood and motherhood, child care and provide for children to be brought up in an appropriate environment of freedom, dignity and humanity". A new paragraph was added stating : "The State shall guarantee, as a minimum standard, the rights of the child provided for in the Convention of the Rights of the Child and other relevant international instruments applicable in Egypt".

319. Article 41 of the Egyptian constitution stipulates that " individual freedom is a natural right and safeguarded and inviolable. Save for the case of being caught red-handed, no person may be arrested, inspected, detained or his freedom restricted or prevented from free movement except under an order necessitated by investigations and preservation of the security of the society. Such order shall be given by the competent judge or the Public Prosecution in accordance with the provisions of the law. The law shall determine the period of custody"(constitutional amendments, 2007).

320. Article 42 of the Constitution states: "Any person arrested, detained or his freedom restricted shall be treated in such a manner that preserves his human dignity. No physical or moral harm shall be inflicted upon him. He may not be detained or imprisoned in places other than those defined by laws regulating prisons. Any statement proved to have been made by a person under any of the aforementioned forms of duress or coercion or under the threat thereof, shall be considered invalid and futile".

321. Article 107 of the amended Children's Act takes care of this matter. Moreover, measures may be amended or overruled by a court decision based on submissions by the Ministry of Social Solidarity or the Child Protection Sub-commission in accordance with the amendments to the Act.

322. Amendments also provide for the prescription of punishment for the detention of a child with adults (article112): A child shall not be detained or held in prison with adults and shall be classified by age, sex and offence committed when held in custody. A public officer or a law enforcement agent found in breach of these rules shall be sentenced to a minimum of three months and maximum of two years imprisonment and a minimum fine of 1,000 Egyptian pounds or a maximum fine of 5,000 Egyptian pounds, or by one of the two penalties.

323. Amendments to article 128⁹ state: A child has the right to have legal representation if charged in accordance with the provisions of articles of the Criminal

⁹ Replaced by Law No. 126 of 2008.

Code leading to a prison sentence. He or she shall have a lawyer present during investigation and trial. In the absence of a lawyer, the court shall appoint one in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Criminal procedures.

324. Article 126 states: A child's hearing before a juvenile court shall be attended only by the next of kin, witnesses, lawyers, social workers and persons authorized by the court. The court may order the removal of the child from the hearing after making a statement, or the removal of any of the persons mentioned in the previous paragraph if it sees fit. The court may not order the removal of the child's lawyer or the social worker having ordered the child's removal. The court may not pronounce judgment prior to explaining to the child the procedures followed in his or her absence. The court may excuse the child from attending the hearings in person if it sees fit, and allow a parent or a guardian to be present to hear the pronouncement of the judgement instead.

325. Article 1 of the amended Act above falls into line with article 40. Equally, Article 67 of the Egyptian Constitution states that a "defendant is innocent until proved guilty in legal trial, in which he is granted the right to defend himself. Every person accused of a crime shall be provided with counsel for his defense". This applies to children in infringement of the law. Article 71 states that "Any person arrested or detained should be informed forthwith of the reasons for his arrest or detention. He shall have the right to communicate, with whoever he deems fit to inform, and ask for his help in the manner regulated by the law. He shall be promptly faced with the charges levelled against him. Any person may lodge an appeal to the courts against any measure taken to restrict his individual freedom. The law shall regulate the right of appeal in a manner ensuring decision within a definite period; otherwise release is imperative". The Ministry of the Interior, however, does not execute the court's decision or respond by resorting to administrative detention!

326. As for having "the matter determined without delay by a competent, independent and impartial authority or judicial body in a fair hearing according to law", articles 121 and 122 of the amended Act provides for specialized courts to consider cases brought against children and special prosecution services to investigate offences committed by them before referral to court or the dropping of charges. The sub-commissions have the powers to amend or abolish measures in accordance with article 99bis of the amended Act of 2008.

327. As regards child witnesses, article 116bis (d) of the amended Act states: Child victims and witnesses shall have the right to be heard and treated with dignity and compassion, enjoy the full respect for their physical and psychological and moral safety, have the right to gain access to health and social care and legal assistance, enjoy rehabilitation and reintegration to society in line with guiding principles of the United Nations on the provision of justice to child victims and witnesses.

328. In order to deal with children in this situation, the amended Act introduces a comprehensive system known as the Child Protection General Committees at the provincial level. Each committee is headed by the governor in all 26 provinces and has on its membership representatives of civil society. Around 200 sub-committees emanate from the provincial committees to oversee the protection of children in danger nationwide.

Children in detention, prison or in care institutions

329. Egyptian society witnessed rapid social and economic changes during the 1980s and 1990s as was the case with other countries worldwide. These changes have had a considerable impact on the lives of families which led to vulnerable segments of society coming under pressure and consequently the disintegration of family ties. As a result, children faced difficult circumstances caused by leaving school and entering the labour market. Ministry of the Interior figures show an increase in child crime and a variation

in the level of criminal offences. Although the level of such offences has declined in the past few years, there was a relative increase in the level of minor offences in the period from 2001 to 2006.

330. Children aged between 12 and 18 years held in custody pending investigation reached 4,173 during the same period with detention periods ranging from four to 45 days. Figures also show that offences committed were higher among boys than girls. Several studies show that the main cause of deviancy is problems within the family environment and include deprivation, poor quality of living standards, mistreatment and neglect. The studies also show that there is a correlation between deviancy and shattered families. The negative influence of bad company comes second in effect.

331. The Ministry of Social Solidarity is responsible for the management of social care institutions responsible for sentenced children. Such institutions prepare programmes covering social, psychological and health care as well as educational and training schemes. Figures from the Ministry of the number of children separated from their parents because of court decisions in 2006 are as follows:

Table 7

Children held in care institutions by type of offence

Type of offence	No. Of children
Anti-social behaviour or infringement of the law (minor offences)	2,081
Criminal offences	923 (15 + years)
Deviancy as described by the amended Act	1,220
In supervisory detention pending referral to court	2,553
Preventive custody	678

Source: Social Defence Administration, 2006

332. Twenty supervisory detention establishments in as many provinces are affiliated to the Ministry of Social Solidarity where children are kept pending their referral to court. Figures for children under the age of 18 years in custody under this arrangement stood at 3,054 in 2006. The average period of custody varies from three years for the open or semi-open establishments to five years for the closed institutions. Children aged between 15 and 18 years who were sentenced by the courts in the same year was 497 with an average sentencing period of five years.

333. Approximately 29,649 children received legal and social assistance while 12,224 received social assistance only in 2006.

C. Sentencing children (article 37 (a))

334. The law prohibits handing down the death penalty and life imprisonment to children. According to the 2006 figures, 18,919 children aged under 18 years received prison sentences, suspended sentences or punishment that does not deny them their freedom. Children who received suspended sentences numbered 2,001. Other forms of punishment include compelling a child to do specific tasks, enrolling in vocational training, undergoing judicial tests or referral to a hospital for treatment.

D. Physical and psychological rehabilitation, and reintegration (article 39)

335. Social care institutions have rehabilitation programmes intended to reintegrate children into society and to encourage them to enrol in the various education and vocational training systems. The Children's Act executive rules (adopted by Council of Ministers' Decision No. 3452 of 1997) determine the terms of reference of the Social Supervisory and Follow-up Care Bureau affiliated to the Ministry of Social Solidarity which include overseeing the implementation of social care measures, family guidance and financial support for the child and his or her family (article 207 paragraph (2)). The implementation of these guidance and assistance programmes requires resources and mechanisms yet to be realized. Civil society organizations and professional networks are the main bodies in charge of reintegration.

Woman and child programme for combating violence

336. This programme is implemented by the Council in cooperation with the International Development Agency over a period of five years with a total budget of 18 million dollars. It involves the participation of governmental and non-governmental bodies and targets several categories of children. Components of the programme include:

- Child justice: The programme evaluates Egyptian legislation, guidelines and practices and their compatibility with guidelines in General Comment No. 10 by the Committee (2007) concerning the rights of the child under juvenile justice, discusses the recommendations regarding the introduction of necessary amendments, build the capacities of staff working with detained children, evaluates detention centres, develops a supervisory system for penitentiaries, proposes alternatives to detention and raises awareness within society about how to deal with offending children.
- Street children: the programme assesses the role of reception centres and other relevant services provided by civil society organizations, improve services provided to street children and reception institutions, and expand the role of civil society organizations dealing with street children.

337. The programme works on:

- The drafting and implementation of a training plan for staff involved in manning the Council's hotline as well as the development of plans for civil society organizations, experts and Government officials.
- The development of a strategy and a database for street children, child justice/children in infringement of the law and children cared for by governmental and non-governmental agencies.
- The development of a strategy and programmes for the protection of children against violence with special emphasis on street children and child justice/children in infringement of the law.
- The mobilization of society to raise the level of contribution of the private sector in activities directed at vulnerable children and children in infringement of the law/child justice.
- Obtaining approval for the code of conduct for specialists involved in child protection, in particular those dealing with street children and children in infringement of the law/child justice.

Children in difficult conditions

E Economic exploitation and child labour (article32)

338. Pursuant to the Committee's concluding observations on paragraph 244 (a), (b) and (c) in the report (CRC/C/65/Add.9) with regard to the lack of sufficient data, the non-respect of regulations governing working hours and exposure to hazardous conditions for children, and the effective enforcement of these regulations, the following measures have been taken:

The legal framework for the protection of and care for working children (Act No. 12 of 2003)

339. With the shift towards a free market economy, the new Labour Code No. 12 of 2003 was adopted. This piece of legislation contains a full chapter on regulating child labour with the exception of children working for their families or children employed as domestic workers. Three central committees emanating from the Ministry of Manpower are reviewing the amendments to the Labour Code to ensure its compatibility with the international instruments. The Code prohibits the employment of children from both sexes before completing basic education or before reaching the age of 14 years whichever comes first. Children, though, may be employed in a specific type of work by the age of 12 subject to certain conditions. This has been used as a loophole to employ children irrespective of age and the nature of work. Article 100 provides for the regulations governing child work, the conditions of work and the types of prohibited work by age group. To regulate child labour in the agricultural sector, the Government of Egypt ratified the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on 20 June 2003.

340. Article 64 of the Children's Act has been amended to be in line with the Labour Code No. 12 of 2003 and the Education Act following the addition of a sixth form to primary education. It prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15 years and prohibits the training of children under the age of 13 years. In conformity with the ILO Convention on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, Article 65 of the Act has been amended to prohibit the employment of children in types of work where their health, safety and morality are in danger. It specifically stipulates that no person under the age of 18 years can be employed in any of the forms of employment mentioned in Convention No.182 of 1999. Article 66 of the Act has been amended to prohibit the employment of children between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. as opposed to 8 p.m. and 7 p.m. in the current Act. A new paragraph has been introduced to give children the right to a medical examination prior to starting employment and a periodic examination later, and it introduces new measures such as an additional seven days of leave compared to adults. Article 68 provides for the responsibilities of employers towards a child worker such as reporting to the authorities on the number of children in their employment, the provision of separate accommodation for overnight stay and safety equipment, and the training children on their use.

341. The Egyptian Government ratified the ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No.182) on 6 May 2002. It must be noted that such a prohibition should be matched by efforts to provide children with alternatives ranging from education opportunities to training or safe work to develop their potential. Another alternative can be financial assistance to their families through income-generating loans. In spite of the awareness-raising campaigns the enforcement of legislation remains in the shadow of the conviction that child labour alleviates the burden of poverty faced by families.

342. Although the legislation provides protection for a working child, enforcement and implementation mechanisms remain a source of the problems that arise. Most

children start working at the age of 15 years, which is an infringement of the strict provisions of both the old and amended Acts. Yet, follow-up and inspection by the competent authorities remain below expectations.

Efforts to protect working children

343. In conformity with the recommendation by the Committee on the development of a database for working children, the Central Statistics Office conducted a national survey on child labour in 2001 upon the request of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. The survey estimated that the number of working children stood at 2.786 million, mostly in rural areas (83 %) and that 73 % were boys and 27 % were girls.

344. The survey sheds a new light on the conditions of working children by helping to identify the trends of the phenomenon and to determine the policies to deal with it. It goes without saying that the different practical and personal conditions of children require measures of similar diversity if the best interests are to be met. Children's conditions are affected by the type of activity they are involved in. The relative distribution of working children in the age group 14-16 years shows that 64 % are involved in agricultural work followed by children working as craftsmen at 14 % while children in commercial activity accounted for 11 % and those working in the services sector represent 9 % of the total. The survey indicates that 80 % of working children are enrolled in education. The significance of this survey lies in that the outcomes were used to develop and implement the National Strategy for the Elimination of Child Labour and the action plan drafted by the Council in 2005 cooperation with the relevant ministries, civil society and the private sector.

345. As regards the concerns expressed by the Committee on the use of children in the spraying of pesticides, The Ministry of Agriculture has confirmed the imposition of a total ban with inspection measures and awareness campaigns put into place. No accurate data are available to the Council on the scope of the problem especially with regard to children under the age of 12 years working in agriculture.

Ministry of Manpower and Immigration

346. In the context of the implementation of the ILO Convention No. 182 (1999), the Ministry of Manpower organized training courses for labour health and safety inspectors in cooperation with the ILO. More than 2,000 such inspectors cover all private sector enterprises. In the area of child labour, training was provided to 2,159 in 2003/2004 with 40 % of them undergoing retraining the following year. By 2005/2007 another 38.7 % had acquired new skills. Other training programmes cover school drop-outs aged between 12 and 20 years.

347. In April 2007, the Ministry of Manpower signed cooperation protocols with UNICEF and WFP to implement a programme to combat child labour through education with the objective of withdrawing 4,300 children from the labour market in four provinces using education programmes and incentives. In the period from 2004 to 2006, nearly 632 children were enrolled in basic education, another 3,830 children joined illiteracy classes, a further 5,108 children enrolled in the one-class system and 371 children left hazardous employment. Social services were provided to 2,938 children, another 600 children received health care and 236 children obtained financial assistance. Awareness seminars totalled 1,653 events.

348. In 2001, the Ministry established a national committee with a mandate to develop policies and programmes aimed at eliminating child labour. Another administration was set up to care for working children and to draft and implement inspection policies and to develop a national database.

Ministry of Social Solidarity

349. The Ministry established 14 care centres for working children in several provinces to provide services covering child care, family support and employer awareness. The child care programme includes illiteracy eradication, health and psychological care, and cultural and leisure activities.

The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

350. In February 2006, the Council adopted the strategy to combat child labour based on the results of the child labour survey with a view to developing and strengthening preventive, remedial and rehabilitation programmes, as well as amending and enforcing legislation. This strategy is being implemented in cooperation with 23 ministries, civil society organizations, businessmen and international organizations such as UNICEF, the ILO and others.

Protection programme for children working as craftsmen

351. The Council has expanded the implementation of a 1996 pilot project to protect children working in an industrial estate in one of the suburbs of Cairo where 700 children are employed in small workshops. The project provides integrated education, health care and awareness services. Other awareness services are provided to the families and employers as well as a poverty eradication programme.

Working children protection programme in cooperation with the World Bank and Japanese funding

352. This pilot project is part of the Council's plan to combat child labour in five provinces with the help of 19 civil society organizations. The project has a two-pronged approach. The first focuses on the root of the problem and the prevention of other children from entering the labour market while the second is remedial and tackles the negative consequences of child labour.

Important project outcomes

- The publication of the training guide for use by bodies active in eliminating child labour. The six-part guide contains a general section, civil society, local community leaders, workshop owners, working children's families and working children. The establishment of the standing committee on the elimination of child labour to present the recommendations of the local communities committee to decision makers. The preparation of the follow-up and evaluation form dealing with the general framework, follow-up tools, and the direct partnership between the local Government headed by the governor and the main and branch societies. The creation of the local community committee for the elimination of child labour under the chairmanship of the governor and the membership of representatives from governmental entities and civil society to meet twice a year and to deal with problems facing the implementation of the project. The local committee for combating child labour undertook the following tasks:
- The adoption of a decision by the governor of Minya province to prohibit access to persons under the age of 18 years to quarries, to suspend quarries operating without a licence and to investigate offenders.
- The establishment of a unit for school leavers under the direct supervision of the governor to monitor illiteracy rates among children in the third to sixth forms of primary education, and to monitor the situation of families with children of school age to ensure their enrolment in the education system with the help of supervisors from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Solidarity.

- The registration of poor families in the social security scheme and the provision of loans to families to start small businesses.
- The adoption of a decision to provide villages with electricity and water.
- The adoption of a decision to allow children employed by workshops to have three hours daily to attend user-friendly and alternative education schools.
- The adoption of a decision to cover working children with health care and receive hospital treatment.

Education

353. As part of the scheme, 1,414 working children were reintegrated into the regular education system and a protocol was signed with the Public Authority for the Eradication of Illiteracy to open 69 classes for alternative education to accommodate 947 working children and school leavers. A further 74 refresher classes were introduced to take in 1,416 child who are likely to leave school because of poor performance. Another measure taken to deal with the problem of remoteness of schools is the provision of a 100 Egyptian pound micro loans for the purchase of bicycles for transport.

Workplace safety

354. Occupational safety equipment were distributed to 400 workshops of various types. Workshop owners in the provinces of Dimyat and Qalubiya, and 11 quarry operators also signed a pledge to respect the rights of the working child. Other steps taken include the enrolment of 554 children in vocational training courses and their transfer to a safer working environment.

Legal assistance

355. The issue of 825 national insurance numbers for families to benefit from loans and salaries.

Working child protection project, Nasser Enterprise, Duwaiqa, Cairo

356. This projects aims to transform dangerous work into child-safe employment. The project was executed in cooperation with the Work Safety Administration at the Ministry of Manpower through the classification of jobs following visits to 162 enterprises where 294 children worked. Other similar pilot projects are being implemented in other provinces.

The elimination of child labour in dangerous smelters

357. This is a pilot project that was implemented in Qalubiya province which is home to the biggest concentration of smelters in Greater Cairo. The project, which was started in 2008, aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labour as the case is with children working in smelters where they are exposed for long periods to the treatment process of heavy metals such as lead, copper and chromium. Work has also started on a survey on the conditions of work of children in these locations. The project aims to provide education and training alternatives for those children to help develop their potential in a safer working environment. It also aims to provide support for their families through income-generating loans. The project also establishes partnerships with the families, civil society organizations, the private sector and other entities and local communities to ensure the sustainability of the introduced measures.

358. It must be noted here that the Council in dealing with child labour issues bases its approach on the principles of the right of the child as the case is with other child-

related problems. In spite of the efforts mentioned above, child labour continues to affect society especially when the conviction is that the phenomenon is a means of alleviating poverty among families. The Council, in cooperation with all the bodies referred to earlier, is making every possible effort to raise awareness of the negative impact of child labour on society and to highlight that child labour violates the rights of the child as provided for under the Convention, the Children's Act and the Presidential Document on the Second Decade for the Egyptian Child (2000-2010). On the occasion of the completion of the elimination of child labour in partnership with the World Bank and with Japanese funding, an economic feasibility study of child labour was prepared and was launched in a public ceremony aired on television and covered by the media, and was attended by the First Lady, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Manpower, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Social Solidarity, the Minister of International Cooperation and the Minister of Local Development. The study's results reflected the heavy toll of child labour on the economy as a whole and prompted the key players to call for a review of the outcomes. The results proved to be the alarm bell for the dangerous consequences of child labour for children, their families and society as a whole. Emphasis at this moment in time revolves around ensuring the enrolment of all children in the education system, the prevention of dropping out from schools and making education more attractive to poorer children. The Girls' Education Initiative which involved the construction of 1,076 model schools in four years is an example to follow despite the high cost of such a programme in comparison with the public education system with an intake of thousands of children for every school. In summary, it is safe to say that several successful pilot projects were implemented and need to be implemented on a wider scale with the help of key players. They also require the allocation of financial and human resources as well as the training of labour inspectors and helping families find alternative sources of income other than wages earned by children. One of the most effective measures in this regard is attracting children of pre-school age to enrol in free crèches to pre-empt their families reliance on income generated from child labour. Measures are being put into place to target siblings of working children.

Children living in or working on the streets

359. Problems facing working children/street children in Egypt are:

- The lack of free health care services, the spiralling cost of treatment due to the absence of accident insurance coverage and the non-payment of financial compensation.
- The exposure to acts of violence by the family, society and police (in particular homeless children who are subjected to such acts merely for being on the street). When arrested, street children are detained with adults where they are subjected to physical and verbal abuse before they are transferred to child care institutions.
- The difficulty of obtaining official papers such as a birth certificate, an identity card or workplace identification making them susceptible to police harassment.
- The difficulty of reinsertion into the education system or illiteracy classes due to the lack of a birth certificate.
- The exposure to injuries or disabilities caused by their presence on the streets, workplace pollution and hazards, and sexual abuse.
- The exposure to psychological trauma resulting from family violence or the treatment by society as a whole.
- Stigma associated with working and homeless children.
- The lack of interest in the media in the plight of children.

- The exposure to organ trafficking and recruitment into gangs of organized crime.
- The increase in the number of girls on the streets following rape and the rise in the number of abandoned infants due to the mother's inability to register their birth.

Protection measures and programmes for street children

360. Egyptian society has become more aware and conscience that child labour and their presence on the streets constituted a violation of the rights of the child. The Council took the initiative of bringing the problem to the attention of society by launching the 2003 Strategy for the Protection, Rehabilitation and reintegration of Homeless Children at a time when society regarded the use of the term "street children" as an insult to all children. Awareness efforts succeeded in changing attitudes from that of viewing them as criminals to that of being victims in need of special protection and the enjoyment of rights society must guarantee. On the occasion of the launch of the Strategy, the Council called for changes to a piece of legislation adopted barely seven years earlier. The shift from the prescription of punishment approach to the provision of protection became the foundation of the amended Act. The notion of children susceptible to deviancy became an approach of children in danger (article 96) based on the assertion of their right to protection by family and society. Interventions in dealing with street children have adopted human rights principles such as the child's right to family care, the right to education, and the right to protection from violence and exploitation as top priority. More focus was put on rehabilitation and remedies such as reuniting the child with the father (guardian) or placing the child in the care of a specialist hospital or a care home. Article 99 of the Act provides for the establishment of local community committees to ensure an early intervention to protect a child.

361. The 2003 Strategy was prepared through a collective effort involving several government agencies and civil society organizations active in the field of the protection and rehabilitation of street children entitled to their rights. The strategy aims to eliminate the causes of the phenomenon and to commit to the protection of street children using mechanisms to ensure their reintegration into society and the enjoyment of their civil, economic, social and cultural rights. It also strives to stem the tide by dealing with the economic and social reasons that force children onto the streets. The main elements of the Strategy are:

- The endeavour to change the negative perception of society vis-a-vis street children through training and media programmes to cover policy and decision makers, journalists, the judiciary and the police, workers in children institutions and citizens in general.
- The creation of a database on street children.
- The training of qualified staff to deal with street children from the rights of the child perspective.
- The mobilization and provision of resources to fund the programmes of the protection and rehabilitation of homeless children.
- The removal of children from the streets and the elimination of the causes while enabling children to attain their social and economic rights, and develop their capacity to reintegrate into society.

Street children survey project

362. The Council conducted this survey in the provinces with the highest concentrations of street children (Cairo, Alexandria, Giza and Qalubiyah) in December 2007 in an attempt to determine the numbers of street children, their demographic

pattern, the main reasons for ending up on the street, the services provided by civil society, and to assess the needs of their reintegration. The survey was able to glean important information on the various patterns of the problem showing that violence was the main cause for children fleeing their families. It also showed that the majority of children have not finished primary education due to poverty or family problems. The survey put the number of street children in the four provinces at 9,111.

Protection of street children against drugs

363. This is a pilot project implemented with funding from the Danish embassy in Cairo with the help of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to develop the capacity of workers in social care institutions, the police force and civil society dealing with street children. The project involved the preparation of a theoretical and practical guide, the provision of technical and financial support and training for the media, social defence, civil society and juvenile administrations in Cairo, Alexandria and Giza provinces.

Street children reception centre project, Al-Salam city

364. Work on equipping the offices of the project in Al-Salam industrial estate has been finalized by the Council in cooperation with Lions Club and a Belgian civil society organization. The project has the objective of the rehabilitation of street children and their reintegration into their families. It also aims to provide them with health, nutrition, psychological, professional and leisure care as well as strengthening the ties with their families. Other objectives include assisting the families to fulfil their role with special emphasis on the family environment and to enable children to acquire skills.

The protection of street children from street risks

365. The implementation of this project began in 2007 under the supervision of five Cairo-based organizations (Al-Amal village, Caritas, the Egyptian Association for Society Building, Shelter and Noor Al-Hayat) with the help of UNICEF. Among the achievements of the project is reaching out to 2,000 street children on the streets of Cairo through a mobile unit to encourage them to contact the reception centre for rehabilitation, to provide them with training on how to respond to risks and to help build a permanent centre for 20 children in al-Haram area and a reception centre in Al-Muneeb. Another 1,500 children with previous contacts with the project were given guidance through artistic expression and socio-psychological mentoring to encourage them to leave street life. Opportunities were also provided to 5,000 children with previous contact with the project to benefit from guidance on HIV/AIDS diagnosis, the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and other problems associated with street life.

Capacity building of staff in Government agencies dealing with street children

366. This project is being executed in cooperation with the Arab Council for Childhood and Development with the aim of building the capacity of staff in agencies dealing with street children (social defence institutions, the ministry of Social Solidarity and the Ministry of the Interior). The project targets 400 sociologists and psychologists nationwide of whom 20 will go on to become trainers.

Social development and civil society programme “Children in Danger”

367. This programme targets several categories of children in danger and is being implemented in cooperation with the European Union over a period of four years at a total cost of 20 million Euros. The programme also involves 101 civil society organizations and other Government agencies and targets five groups of marginalized children: those outside the education system, street children, children with disabilities

and girls facing female genital mutilation. It also has components relevant to civil society capacity building and networking to ensure the sustainability of meeting targets.

368. The programme, which started in March 2005, has achieved significant results such as bringing basic education to the fore through the preparation of guides on societal participation, the development of curricula and the training of women facilitators. Another achievement is the development of a comprehensive follow-up and evaluation guide, and a Geographical Information System (GIS). The programme has introduced to Egypt, for the first time, an early warning system to detect disability in infants and has succeeded in bringing the industrial sector on board to deal with child labour problems.

369. In spite of the continued efforts to deal with child labour, acute problems persist and additional measures are required to deal with dropping out of schools caused by the belief among the poor that there are no direct benefits to be gained from education, and the lack of awareness of the dangers associated with child labour even within the educated classes of society.

370. Although there is political support for these issues, there is a prevalent culture of indifference towards the rights of the child with the depiction of the problem as a natural social outcome of the economic situation in Egypt. This has translated into a poor return on the comprehensive development effort.

Prevention efforts

The Egyptian Strategy for the Protection of the Adolescent against Drugs (June 2005)

371. This strategy is the result of a major joint operation and active dialogue led by the Council between governmental and non-governmental entities, on the one hand, and adolescents, on the other. It aims to achieve a reduction in demand for drugs among those who are under the age of 18 years with the departure point being the rights of the child. Work started immediately the programme was launched in June 2005 to mobilize efforts nationwide.

F. Protection of children from smoking, the use of drugs and harmful substances (article 33)

372. Studies indicate a noticeable drop in the age of drug use. Drug dealers habitually targeted users aged between 30 and 40 years but trends show that children and adolescents are more susceptible to such problems. Drug use age now hovers between childhood and youth in their teens.

373. This development made finding new methods to confront the phenomena a necessity. With children and adolescents being the target, a more proactive approach is needed to deal with the problem.

The National Programme for the Protection of the Adolescent against Smoking and the Use of Drugs

374. This programme is being implemented by the "Council" in cooperation with the Italian side and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNDCO) and with the participation of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Endowment, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Health and Population, the National Council for Youth, the National Council for Combating Drug Use and Addiction and civil society organizations. The programme has a budget of 8,005,000 Egyptian pounds part of which is allocated to civil society. Training and capacity building activities were allocated 1,033,444 Egyptian pounds. The active participation of children and the adolescent is one of the main features of the

programme whereby selected candidates act as speakers to raise the level of awareness among their peers. Family awareness, the use of the media and staff capacity building are among the other components of the programme.

The Ministry of information

375. The Ministry of Information has aired 138 television and radio programmes totalling 6,660 hours on the problem of drug use. It forbids scenes of smoking or drug use in all areas under its supervision and prohibits tobacco and alcohol advertising. It has organized several training courses for writers and programme producers to tackle the issue within an appropriate media context. The Ministry of Social Solidarity, in cooperation with the Fund for the Combating and Treatment of Addiction, held 85 seminars and 181 training courses to raise awareness among 7,500 children and their families. The Ministry of Culture organized 45 workshops and art exhibitions to highlight the role of arts in bringing the attention of youth to the problems of smoking and drug use. The Fund for the Combating and Treatment of Addiction launched the permanent programme for students and was able to train 19,115 students. It also organized 38 summer camps, 11 sporting events and 44 discussion sessions to disseminate an anti-drug culture among the adolescent. The Fund also participated with the Ministry of Health and Population to send 67 mobile units to raise awareness about the risks of drugs use in rural areas in 21 provinces.

376. In 2007, the People's Assembly issued a decision to amend the provisions of the Prevention of Smoking Act imposing harsher penalties for those who sell tobacco products to persons under the age of 18 years, raising tobacco products prices and adopting stricter measures against smoking in public places.

Curative and rehabilitation programmes

The Public Authority for Health Insurance

377. The Authority is involved in the development of addiction treatment procedures in the psychiatric hospitals in Misr al-Jadida, the psychiatric centre at Ain Shams University, Tahansha hospital in Minya province and Ma'moura in Alexandria. It also signed a protocol of cooperation with the Fund for the Combating and Treatment of Addiction under which 1,300 school clinic doctors and 5,200 visiting health workers and psychiatric and sociology specialists were trained nationwide.

Existing challenges

378. There are several challenges that need to be addressed. Among them is the lack of a comprehensive database on the actual magnitude of the problem and the need for the competent authorities to determine the required resources to mobilize them on a sustainable basis if they were to play the role assigned to them in the Strategy.

379. As far as prevention is concerned, it is difficult to assess the efficacy of preventive measures. There is also a need to develop performance indicators in view of the diverse nature of the targeted groups. More over there is a need to:

- Train social workers and other staff on the various prevention methods and on how to apply these methods.
- Address the low level of interest by schools and youth centres to address smoking and addiction problems to a degree where programmes are not implemented for fear of an implicit recognition of the existence of the problem.

380. Challenges facing the curative and rehabilitation aspect are:

- The difficulty of detaining addicts under the age of 18 years when they accept treatment voluntarily or through their families for reasons of legislation relating to the treatment of children.
- The remoteness of some areas from the range of government services provided.
- The existence of addiction treatment units within psychiatric hospitals which makes stigma a problem for the addict.
- The lack of conviction in the impact of treatment, the shortage of trained staff and the unsuitability of treatment locations.

G. Sexual exploitation and abuse, the sale, trafficking and abduction of children (articles 34 and 35)

The legal status of international conventions in Egyptian legislation in light of the concluding observations of the Committee on paragraph 246 of the report

381. The following measures have been taken pursuant to the recommendation by the Committee:

382. As part of its multilateral activities and positive contribution to the formulation of international standards relative to transnational organized crime, Egypt attaches special importance to trafficking in persons. This commitment is manifested in the ratification of all international and regional instruments governing trafficking in humans¹⁰ including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two optional protocols: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. All international and regional instruments ratified by Egypt have the force of law in accordance with Article 151 of the Egyptian Constitution.

383. In conformity with the relevant international instruments ratified by Egypt, domestic legislation¹¹ prescribes punishment for related offences ranging from abduction, rape, prostitution and soliciting to child sexual exploitation. Punishment

¹⁰ The Slavery Convention signed in Geneva in September 1926 and the Special Protocol to amend the Convention; the ILO Convention on Forced Labour, 1930 (No. 29); the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1950; the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956; the ILO Convention on the Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957 (No. 105); The Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959; the Charter of the Rights of the Arab Child, Tunis, 1983; the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, signed in Addis Ababa on 7 July 1990 which calls for the adoption of all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of sexual exploitation of children, to protect children from all forms of exploitation and sexual abuse, and to prohibit the abduction or trafficking for any purpose; and the ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No.182).

¹¹ The Elimination of Prostitution Act, 1961; the Public Premises Act No. 371 of 1956; the consolidated Labour Code No. 12 of 2003 and its executive rules governing the domestic and foreign employment of Egyptian nationals, the regulations governing the issue of work permits for foreign nationals and the regulations for the employment of women and children; and the Money Laundering Act of 2002.

involves imprisonment and fines. Egypt has no reservations to the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

384. To reaffirm its commitment to the Convention and to the Optional Protocol, Egypt reviewed the Children's Act to bridge the gap between domestic legislation and the instruments. Amendments to the Act involved the inclusion of article 291 to the Criminal Code and article 116bis (a) which stipulates that: "Any person found guilty of the import, the export, the production, the editing, the projection, the copying, the promotion, the possession or the transmission of child pornographic material or other material involving child sexual exploitation shall be punished with a minimum of two years imprisonment and a fine of a minimum of 10,000 Egyptian pounds and a maximum of 50,000 Egyptian pounds. All accrued funds, equipment and property used in the commission of the offence shall be confiscated without prejudice to the rights of third parties inadvertently implicated in the offence and without prejudice to other more severe punishment under a different act. The same punishment applies to any person found guilty of:

a) The use of computers, the internet, information technology or animation pictures to produce, process, store, project, print, publish or promote child pornographic material or exploit children for prostitution or the production of such material;

b) The use of computers, the internet, information technology or animation pictures to encourage the involvement of children or exploit children in illicit or lewd acts before the incidence of the offence (this article was introduced to ensure compatibility with and implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on child pornography);

c) "If a child is encouraged by the family, school, care institution or other similar entities to use illicit drugs, alcohol, violence, to take part in pornographic work, or if a child is subjected to commercial or sexual exploitation, or harassment. Another provision has been introduced as part of the amendments to the Children's Act to protect street children from danger.¹²

¹² - If a child's safety, behaviour, health or life is in danger.
 - If a child's upbringing in the family, at school or care institution may put him or her in danger or if a child is the subject of neglect, abuse, violence, exploitation or homelessness.
 - If a child is unjustifiably denied, even partially, the right to custody, seeing one of the parents or other persons he or she has access to.
 - If a child is disowned by a supporting guardian, lost one or both of his parents or was disowned by them or by a custodian.
 - If the child is denied the right to education or if his or her future education is denied.
 - If a child is encouraged by the family, school, care institution or other similar entities to use illicit drugs, alcohol or violence, to take part in pornographic work, or if a child is subjected to commercial or sexual exploitation, or harassment.
 - If a child is found begging. This act covers street vending of trivial goods or services, busking or other acrobatic acts which do not provide sufficient income.
 - If a child collects cigarette butts or rummages in waste bins.
 - If a child has no fixed abode or has to sleep in the street or locations not fit as accommodation.
 - If a child is mixed up with deviant persons, suspects or persons of ill repute.
 - If a child is misbehaved, disobedient or out of control. No action can be taken against the child without the consent of the parents or guardian.
 - If a child has no legal source of income or someone to support him.
 - If a child is physically, mentally or psychologically ill or is mentally handicapped affecting his faculties putting his life at risk.
 - If a child is under the age of 12 years and is implicated in a criminal act or a minor offence.

385. Egyptian laws lack the provisions to deal with human trafficking (whether for sex trade or for forms of slavery), the elements of the crime, punishment for the offenders and the recognition of the offence as a separate crime.¹³ There are also loopholes in the Children's Act in relation to deviancy making children susceptible to the dangers listed in the Protocol. Examples of such loopholes are:

- Article 103 of the Children's Act No. 126 of 2008 on custody arrangements stipulates that a "child shall be in the custody of a parent or any other person granted guardianship. In the absence of either arrangement custody shall be given to a trusted person or a trusted family". Despite the significance of this provision, the Act does not specify the criteria of a trusted person or the eligibility of the family to host the child resulting in the child slipping into deviancy again.
- The legislator overlooked the need for a legal framework for the arrest, identification and questioning of children susceptible to deviancy. This has led to children being subjected to traumatic experiences with beating, sexual abuse, blackmail, and deprivation of food, sleep and medical care and these practices becoming the norm during arrest and questioning.¹⁴

386. A separate piece of legislation has been drafted to deal with trafficking in persons. A small open-ended drafting committee was set up by the National Coordination Committee for the Prohibition and the Elimination of Trafficking in Persons which was established by a decision of the Council of Ministers in 2007. Its task is to prepare a draft law to deal with the various aspects of the problem in a consolidated approach to replace the piecemeal solutions scattered in various legislation and to be compatible with international efforts to tackle the phenomenon. The drafting committee is currently researching and studying a comprehensive draft law to deal with trafficking in persons already prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before referral to the Coordination Committee for approval and submission to the People's Assembly.

387. Among the main features of the draft law are the adoption of a specific definition for trafficking in persons, determining what activities constitute a form of trafficking, victim protection, dealing with both transnational and domestic trafficking and cooperation with foreign judicial bodies. The draft law also focuses on child victims of trafficking with the best interests of the child born in mind. It prescribes a more severe punishment if the victim is a child or a person with special needs while it stipulates that child victims may not be held in detention centres where common criminals or suspects are held. Rather, special holding centres are to be provided with all the necessary requirements to guarantee the enjoyment of their rights to health, psychiatric and mental care, as well as education along the lines of the public system. The draft law also provides for child witness protection, the confidentiality of their identity and testimony, and their reunification with their families in their country of origin.

388. On 14 December 2008, The Arabic version of the guide of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was launched in Cairo. It is to be used as one of the tools to contain human trafficking, tackle the root of the problem and help victims. The

- Any person found guilty of exposing a child to danger shall be punishable with a minimum of three months imprisonment and a maximum of two years and a minimum penalty of 500 Egyptian pounds and a maximum of 2,000 Egyptian pounds, or one of them.

¹³ Usama Al-Ghezouli, "Human Trafficking: The Borders of Tragedy". Paper submitted to the cultural gathering at the Cairo Centre for Human Rights Studies, 23 May 2007.

¹⁴ Mohammed Fahmi, 2000, in Hassan Issa "The Dangers of bringing up a child outside a family". Paper submitted to the cultural gathering at the Cairo Centre for Human Rights Studies, 23 May 2007.

event was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the IOM and the representatives of 22 Arab countries, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies in Cairo.

Competent authorities responsible for the implementation of the Optional Protocol and coordination

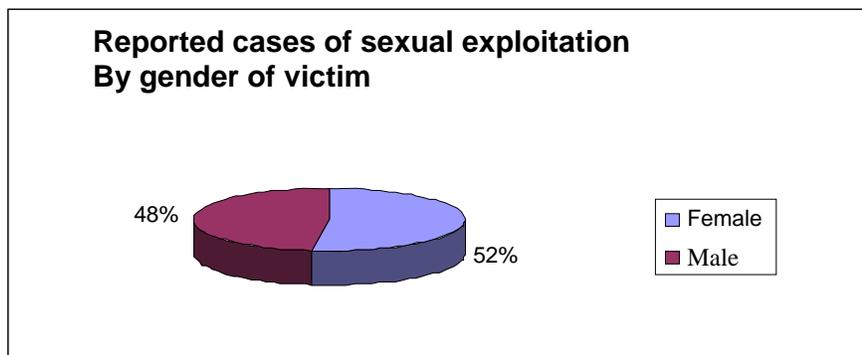
389. The Ministry of the Interior has an administration responsible for public morality and conduct and comes under the social protection sector. The administration is in charge of protection from prostitution and the sale and sexual exploitation of persons from both sexes. It is also tasked with fighting international prostitution activities, monitor and deal with prostitution-related activities of Egyptian nationals abroad and foreigners in Egypt, as well as monitoring the activities of agencies handling women seeking employment abroad. Another administration within the Ministry is in charge of the protection of children. It registers all cases of offences committed against children by adults including cases of sexual exploitation and prostitution, conducts inquiries for the protection of women applying for jobs abroad and deals with social problems behind the sexual exploitation of women.¹⁵ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of International cooperation and the Public Administration for the Legal Protection of Children at the Ministry of Justice are all involved in the coordination process. The “Council” takes charge of raising awareness of the Convention and its two Optional Protocols, monitors implementation mechanisms and coordinates with the competent authorities to ensure the enjoyment of children of their rights.

Incident reports to the child helpline 16000

390. In the period from 1 July 2005 to 21 December 2008, the total number of child sexual exploitation cases reported to helpline 16000 was 634 accounting for 0.01 % of all cases reported. A preliminary trend can be established indicating that more girls were reported to have been affected compared to boys (52 % and 48 % respectively) as diagram 3 shows.

Diagram 3

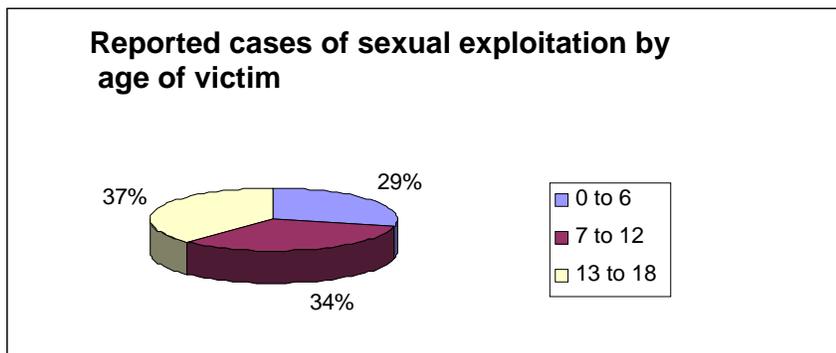
Rate of reporting cases of sexual exploitation by gender of victim



¹⁵ Memorandum addressed to the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Diagram 4

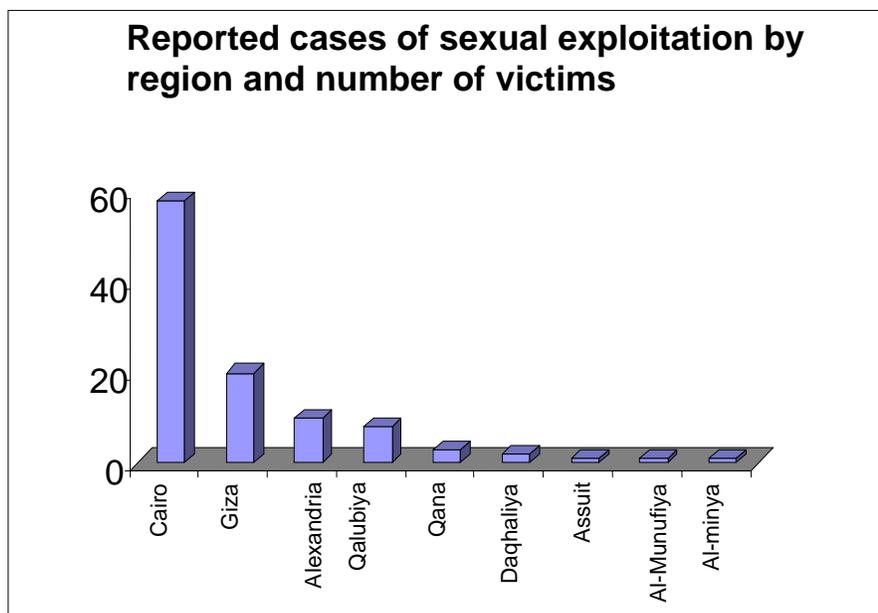
Rate of reporting cases of sexual exploitation by age of victim



391. Figures show that the highest percentage of children subjected to sexual exploitation (37 %) are in the age group 13-18 years followed by children in the age group 12-17 years (34 %) as demonstrated in diagram 4.

Diagram 5

Rate of reporting cases of sexual exploitation by area of residence of victim



392. Diagram 5 shows that most of the reports come from the Greater Cairo provinces (Cairo, Giza and Qalubiya) followed by the coastal regions (Alexandria, al-Daqhaliya and Munufiya) and rural Egypt (Qana, assiut and Minya). No reports come from the other 17 provinces which is an indication that urban areas are more affected by the phenomenon than rural regions.

Challenges facing the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

393. One of the main challenges is the absence of accurate data to help assess the magnitude of the problem and its causes. Another factor is the refrain from reporting

cases for fear of being stigmatized. This is compounded by the lack of awareness of existing reporting mechanisms and the content of the Optional Protocol. There is also the difficulty of raising public awareness of the instrument due to societal rejection.

394. Other causes such as low standard of living, poverty, lack of work opportunities, violence against women and children, the demographic explosion, dropping out of basic education and the disproportion between qualifications (especially intermediate school diplomas) and the market needs continue to be a source of violation of the provisions of the Optional.¹⁶

395. The exposure of street children to exploitation and violent act is another problem. Because of their social environment and the lack of care provided to them, children are seen as an easy target for criminals to use in illegal and criminal activities in an environment where violence, organized crime and thuggery are prevalent. This leads to the attempted use of street children to promote prostitution or begging and to distribute prohibited substances.¹⁷ Cases of prostitution occur when gangs use children for sexual ends for their own members or for paying customers.¹⁸ As such, the main dangers facing street children are violence and sexual exploitation by gangs, individual adults, police officers or adult detainees. Studies indicate that at least half of the street children are exposed to sexual exploitation (including perverse sexual tendencies)¹⁹ and the use of drugs and prostitution.²⁰ The case of Ramadan “the Turbine” came into the public domain following confessions to crimes of child abduction, sexual assault and murder. Among street children, girls are the more likely victims of violence, violation and sexual exploitation.

396. A number of children work as domestic servants where they are subjected to verbal or physical abuse and the denial of wages or part of it. More often than not, a girl domestic worker becomes a merchandise in the hands of an agent who takes the girl from one household to another and deny her part of her wages. The agent overlooks exploitation and mistreatment of the domestic worker as long as she gets her cut from the deal.²¹

Measures taken to eliminate the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography and child trafficking

397. The Egyptian Government attaches special importance to these issues for being social problems with far reaching economic, political and international implications. The issue of child trafficking constitutes one of the components of the National Plan for the Protection of Children against Violence. The National Commission against Violence has adopted a charter of honour for all workers in the tourism sector containing all the standards and guidelines on the prohibition of all practices related to child trafficking including prostitution, perverse tendencies, abuse or exploitation. Hotel staff, police

¹⁶ Usama Al-Ghezouli, “Human Trafficking: The Borders of Tragedy”. Paper submitted to the cultural gathering at the Cairo Centre for Human Rights Studies, 23 May 2007.

¹⁷ Mohammed Fahmi, 2000, in Hassan Issa “The Dangers of bringing up a child outside a family”. Paper submitted to the cultural gathering at the Cairo Centre for Human Rights Studies, 23 May 2007.

¹⁸ Usama Al-Ghezouli, “Human Trafficking: The Borders of Tragedy”. Paper submitted to the cultural gathering at the Cairo Centre for Human Rights Studies, 23 May 2007.

¹⁹ Sami Abdel-Radhi, “Street Children”. Paper submitted to the cultural gathering at the Cairo Centre for Human Rights Studies, 23 May 2007.

²⁰ Hassan Issa “The Dangers of bringing up a child outside a family”. Paper submitted to the cultural gathering at the Cairo Centre for Human Rights Studies, 23 May 2007.

²¹ Usama Al-Ghezouli, “Human Trafficking: The Borders of Tragedy”. Paper submitted to the cultural gathering at the Cairo Centre for Human Rights Studies, 23 May 2007.

officers and tourism support services workers are also trained on how to respect the charter.

398. The Prime Minister's Decision No. 1584 of 2007 for the establishment of the National Coordination Committee for the Elimination of Trafficking in Persons reflects a strong political will to stamp out such criminal practices and to put into place the required measures to help and protect victims. Accordingly, the constitution of the Committee²² involves all the competent national bodies, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, the National Council for Women and the National Council for Human Rights. Among the several competencies of the Committee is the drafting of a national action plan to confront trafficking in persons, the development of the skills of criminal justice staff, law enforcement officers and the personnel of other agencies dealing with the problem, organizing information campaigns, cooperation with non-governmental and civil society organizations, monitoring the progress achieved and reporting back to the Council of Ministers on an annual basis.

Anti-child trafficking unit

399. This unit was established by the Council in 2007 as a continuation of efforts started in 2000 to protect children from all forms of violence and exploitation. The unit has prepared a national action plan to combat trafficking in children through raising awareness of the offence of child trafficking and to support the role of governmental and non-governmental bodies. It has also organized training courses for staff in the tourism sector, judges, sociologists and psychiatrists at family dispute settlement offices in the provinces of Cairo, Giza and 6 October. Other courses were organized for juvenile, morality and prison officers, bailiffs, Ministry of Health and Population staff, religious leaders and preachers. The unit took charge of the preparation of a minimum standards code on combating child trafficking, as well as a study on international standards on the elimination of the sexual exploitation of children via the internet and their compatibility with Egyptian legislation.

400. Egypt participated in all international conferences including the 1996 Stockholm First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, the 2001 Yokohama The Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and the 2008 Rio de Janeiro World Congress III against the Sexual Exploitation of Children which adopted the "Rio Declaration", known as the roadmap to stopping sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. It provides guidance to States on future action to put an end to the practice. Egypt also participated in the February 2008 Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking and the May 2008 conference of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) on child trafficking: responses and challenges at local levels.

401. The head of the unit in charge of combating trafficking in persons at the Council took part in the International Visitors Programme against Trafficking in Persons to the

²² The Prime Minister issued the decision on 15 July 2007 to set up the National Coordination Committee for the Elimination and Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons to be part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the supervision of the deputy foreign minister for international organizations and the membership of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Health and Population, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Manpower and Migration, the Ministry of Higher Education, The Ministry of Education, The Intelligence Service, the Public Prosecution, the National Council for Human Rights, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the National Council for Women. The General-Secretariat is the responsibility of the office of the deputy minister for the Ministry of Human Rights.

United States of America as part of a delegation of Egyptian experts. The programme is intended for capacity building and exposure to the American model of combating trafficking in persons.

402. Work has started to execute two projects to eliminate child trafficking in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Terres des Hommes agency and the Swiss embassy. Work is ongoing to establish a child rehabilitation centre in Al-Salam city in cooperation with an international civil society organization, FACE, for child victims of trafficking. A specialized library on trafficking has been completed and a website for the unit for combating child trafficking is in the pipeline.

The Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement

403. The movement, founded by Ms. Suzanne Mubarak, is the first of its kind worldwide and was launched in June 2006. The Movement aims to expand the role of women in decision making and the establishment of peace, finding solutions to conflicts, and strengthening the culture of peace all over the world. The Movement has established an international alliance to deal with specific peace and security issues such as the role of women in bolstering and protecting peace, combating trafficking in women and children, and confronting violence against women. The alliance works to mobilize international efforts, raise funds and provide moral support to achieve the designated objectives. Against this background, Ms. Mubarak, the president and founder of the Movement, launched the initiative "Stop Human Trafficking Now" during the roundtable meeting in Athens in January 2006 with a wide participation of the business sector.

X. Conclusion

404. This report is the outcome of an extensive effort and hard work over a period of several years that preceded the preparation period and will continue during the years to come. Numerous bodies and entities matching the diversity of child issues have been involved in an attempt to deal with inherent customs and traditions difficult to overcome. Yet, every effort is being made to dislodge obsolete beliefs and have them replaced with notions based on fact, science and logic. The Council for Childhood and Motherhood is currently working on raising awareness of the importance of the amendments to the Children's Act and the training of law enforcement officials. To that end, it has set its sights on providing the necessary financial resources. An action plan has been put into place from June 2008 when the Act came into force. The task is not going to be an easy one but with the help of partners the objectives will be achieved.

405. Every possible effort has been dedicated to achieving the goals. Not every single objective may have been fulfilled, but there is confidence that Egypt is on the right path.

Annex 1

Demographic features

Education

Description	Total	Type	Numbers
Population, 1 July 2007	73,435,640	Male	37,538,734
		Female	35,896,906
Population under the age of 18 years	27,010,097	Male	14,395,933
		Female	13,523,164

Basic education dropping out levels, age group 6 years to under 19 years

Description	Total	Type	Numbers
		Male	Female
Not enrolled	19,312,987	Male	521,250
		Female	732,115
Enrolled but did not drop out		Male	9,146,292
		Female	8,407,591
Enrolled and dropped out		Male	294,730
		Female	209,530
Not specified		Male	794
		Female	685

Source: The Central Statistics Office, 2007.

Distribution of school students (rural/urban), 2002/2003 to 2006/2007

Education level	2002/2003		2006/2007	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Pre-primary	26.8 %	73.2%	36.3%	63.4%
Primary	60.2%	39.8%	59.5%	40.5%
Intermediate	56.6%	43.4%	57.5%	42.5%

Source: Ministry of Education

Schools, classes and students by sector and education level, 2006

Education level	Private sector			Public sector		
	Student	Class	School	Student	Class	School
Pre-primary	172,480	6,233	1,429	407,409	12,898	5,259
Primary	722,561	21,694	1,490	8,160,236	185,538	15,074
Intermediate	137,453	4,694	1,072	2,740,589	70,336	8,74
One class, girls				64,938	3,119	3,119
One class mixed				3,515	65	65
Girls-friendly				10,807	386	386
Special education	646	94	18	36,424	3,928	790

Source: Ministry of Education

Enrolment in primary and intermediate education

Education level	2004/2005		2006/2007		Rate of change	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
Primary	99.1%	88.8%	101.6%	90.5%	2.5%	1.7%
Intermediate	92.5%	75.7%	100.2%	67.5%	7.7%	-8.2%

Source: Ministry of Education

Crèches for children with disabilities, 2006

Number of children		Number of crèches
Boys	Girls	Total
1,205		1,833
		88

Source: Ministry of Social Solidarity

Development of education for students with disability, 1981/1982 to 2005/2006

Education level	1981/1982			2005/2006		
	Student	Student	class	School	Class	School
Pre-primary				85	15	11
Primary	6,703	835	105	24,481	2,830	197
Intermediate	460	42	10	8,533	765	217
Secondary	315	18	5	3,709	319	79
Total	7,478	895	120	36,808	3,929	804

Source: Ministry of Education

Health

Births, mortality and natural growth, 2006	
Births	25.8 1,857,907
Mortality	6.3 451,908
Natural growth	19.5 1,405,999

Life expectancy at birth by year and by type, 2006

Male	69.2
Female	73.6

Source: Central Statistics Office, 2007

Infant and maternal mortality rates

Description	Rate	Source
Under one month mortality per 1,000 live births	16.0	Demographic Health Survey, 2008
Under 1 year infant mortality per 1,000 live births	25.0	Demographic Health Survey, 2008
Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births	55	Maternal mortality monitoring system, Ministry of Health and Population, 2007

Alternative care institutions, 2006-2007

Number of institutions	Number of children		Total
	Male	Female	
306	4,707	3,611	8,318

Source: Ministry of Social Solidarity

Alternative care crèches, 2006-2007

Number of shelter crèches	Number of children		
	Male	Female	Total
180	2,041	1,543	3,584

Source: Ministry of Social Solidarity

Combating drug trafficking through the use of children

Year	Number of arrested children	Total number of arrested children	Percentage
2004	634	34,415	1.84
2006	1,779	43,951	4.05

Source: Ministry of the Interior

Annex 2

a) Editing, drafting and technical review committee

The drafting committee prepared this report under the supervision of ambassador Mushira Khatab, the Secretary-General of the National Council of Childhood and Motherhood with the participation of :

- Ambassador Hussein Al-Sader
- Dr. Lamia Bulbul
- Professor Rolla Al-Toubaji
- Professor Nuha Al-Labban

During the preparation process of this report, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood relied on consultations with and information from several governmental bodies and civil society entities as shown in this annex. The Council also used material at its disposal compiled by:

a) The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

- Professor Mohammed Fayad Chief of Finance and Administration
- Dr. Fatima Rakha Chief of Follow-up Unit
- Huda Al-Tahawi Chief of Follow-up Unit from 2007
- Dr. Kajdi Al-Atwi Education adviser
- Dr. Azza al-Ashmawi Director-General, Child Trafficking and Disabled Children Hotline
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b) Council programmes

- Professor Aziza Hilmi Children in Danger programme
- Professor Raja Shihata Family Justice programme
- Professor Majda Barsoum Combating Violence against Children programme
- Dr. Jihan Shawqi Information Technology Unit
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- Professor Muna Ameen Female Genital Mutilation programme
- Professor Amro Shaheen Combating drugs, Plato savings and volunteers programme
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- Professor Chirin Khalil Disability

b) List of participants in the preliminary meetings for the preparation the report

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Lieutenant-Colonel Said Al-Najjar	Ministry of the Interior	Juvenile Investigation Division
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Ms. Zainab Khairi Mahmoud	National Council for Youth	
Mr. Mohammed Mustafa Abdulateef	Public Authority for Adult Education	Director, Planning Administration
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Mr. Majid Maher	Egyptian Child Rights Centre	
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Ms. Thaira Shaalan	Arab Council for Childhood and Development	
Ms. Iman Bahaeldin	Arab Council for Childhood and Development	
Dr. Saad Al-Attar	UNHCR	Commissioner
Dr. Ashraf Azar	UNHCR	
Dr. Ziyad Al-Rifai	UNFPA	Regional representative
Dr. Mohammed Abdelaziz	UNDOC	Regional representative
Ms. Mirna Bouhabib	UNODC	
Dr. Fatima Al-Awa	WHO	East Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO)
Dr. Hussein Jaafar	WHO	Regional Adviser, Healthy Life Patterns
Dr. Majdi Al-Sindi	UNICEF	
Ms. Shahida Adfar	UNICEF	Former representative
Dr. Erma Manencourt	UNICEF	Representative
Ms. Nadira Zaki	UNICEF	Head, Protection Unit
Youssra	Actress	Goodwill ambassador, UNDP
Mahmoud Qabeel	Actor	Goodwill ambassador, UNICEF

Representatives of the media

Ms. Suzanne Hassan	Egyptian Television	Chairman
Ms. Muna Al-Sagheer	Egyptian Television	
Professor Adil Mahmoud Maatti	Egyptian Television	Vice-chairman
Ms. Suzanne Mustafa	Egyptian Television	News desk
Ms. Muna Rajab	Al-Ahram newspaper	
Ms. AAfkar Al-Kharadili	Nisf Al-Duniya magazine	Editor
Ms. Iqbal Baraka		Writer
Ms Shwikar Khalifa		Director, children's programmes
Mr. Mounir Amer		Writer
Ms. Iman Hamza	Hawaa magazine	Editor

Representatives of scientific organizations

Dr. Lubna Abdelateef	Cairo University	Head, Economics Faculty
Dr. Muna Al-Baradai	Cairo University	Dean, School of Economics and Political Science Faculty
Dr. Madiha Khatab	Cairo University	Dean, School of Medicine
Dr. Fathi Al-Sharqawi	Ain Shams University	Psychology Services Centre, Literature Faculty
Dr. Hala Abdulhaq	American University, Cairo	Psychology professor
Dr. Azza Omar Hassan Al-Fandari	National Planning Institute	Professor
Ms. Shahida Al-Baz		Expert, political economics development
Ms. Samiha Aboufotouh		Expert, Children's affairs
Dr. Zainab Shaheen		Expert, development issues
Ms. Amal Jawda		Lawyer

Representatives of religious institutions

Dr. Mohammed Wisam	Egyptian Fatwa House	Secretary-General
Bishop Yoannis	Orthodox Coptic Church	Private secretary to Pope Shenouda III and Director of Patriarchate Services
Dr. Salim Abdeljaleel	Ministry of Endowment (Awqaf)	Deputy Minister

Children

Ahmed Swailim Awad	Hazim Tha Mohammed
Mutafa Ismail	Mahmoud Saber Ahmed
Ahmed Alaa Sayed	Lubna al-Baghdadi
Mina Adil Tharwat	Nadir Adil Tharwat
Salma Sayed Salout	Shadi Imad Tharwat
Adil Khairi Salih	Dina Wadi Zaki
Bishwi Adil Tharwat	Barra Atif Said
Ahmed Hisham Antar	