



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

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

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**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties
under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

**Replies of Egypt to the list of issues and questions in relation
to its combined eighth to tenth periodic reports***

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Replies of Egypt to the list of issues and questions in relation to its combined eighth to tenth periodic reports

Question 1

1. It is established in international law that decisions to accede to and submit reservations to international conventions are sovereign. That includes the Egyptian reservations to articles 2 and 16 of the Convention. Nevertheless, two things should be noted. First of all, Egypt periodically reviews its positions on treaties in the light of national priorities; Egypt will notify the Committee if any reservations to the Convention come up for review. Secondly, the Egyptian position does not affect rights and protections already guaranteed under the Constitution without discrimination between men and women in line with the Convention, article 2. For example, there are 22 articles in the Constitution that provide for equality between men and women in rights and freedoms, most notably articles 11 and 53. The legal system guarantees legal protection for women on an equal footing with men before the courts. That information was provided in our report submitted to the Committee, paragraphs 18, 31, 32 and 33. The State is working to ensure equality and prohibit discrimination against women through a number of public policy, legislative, administrative and institutional measures. That includes the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030, which was recently launched in coordination with stakeholders and is consistent with both the Constitution and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Question 2

Measures to raise awareness among women, including disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women, about their rights

2. The State implements a variety of measures to educate women about their rights. That includes various programmes and campaigns to raise awareness through the media and social networking sites, and other campaigns based on direct contact with beneficiaries, such as the “The *ta’ al-marbutah* [womanhood] is the secret of your success” campaign, the “Don’t miss your station stop” campaign, the “Together we serve the homeland” campaign and the “Because I am a man” campaign, as well as the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign. Two films and a song were produced to spread messages on ending female genital mutilation and early marriage, and the importance of girls’ education and equal opportunities for women and men in the workplace.

3. The National Council for Women has carried out a door-to-door campaigns to educate women from marginalized groups in villages and hamlets. Those campaigns have reached over 17,000,000 people in 3,000 villages through local community leaders and rural women entrepreneurs. The campaigns address awareness legal rights, women’s issues, violence against women, harassment, and female genital mutilation. Some 2,500 women entrepreneurs and personnel been provided with capacity-building. The Ministry of Local Development also organizes “enlightenment caravans”, which use direct persuasion to spread positive social values, customs and norms, and repudiate negative values. The Ministry of Social Solidarity oversees 565 women’s clubs that serve 362,083 women beneficiaries all over the Republic. They provide consciousness-raising and education to promote women’s awareness of their rights.

Training of judges

4. The National Council for Women, in collaboration with the Office of the Public Prosecutor, has conducted a number of training programmes to enhance the capacities of prosecutors to respond effectively to violent crimes against women. That included 27 training courses for 509 staff from 2018 to 2020. In 2019, the Council held capacity-building sessions for 558 new judges. Some 33 men and women judges were also trained as part of a 2014–2016 project on strategic interventions against violence against women.

Question 3

Impact of the pandemic on women's rights and gender equality

5. In March 2020, the National Council for Women put forward a draft programme and policy paper for the Government's rapid response plan to address the special needs of women during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. It consisted of four parts: the human component (health, education, social protection and psychological support); women and decision-making (leadership and protection against violence); economic opportunities; and data and knowledge. That earned Egypt first place in the report issued by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on measures taken to support women during the pandemic. The Council monitors policies and programmes to respond to women's needs during the pandemic through the Egyptian Women's Observatory, which had issued five reports as of January 2021, and monitored 165 measures, including actions, policies and decisions that are either being taken for the first time, or being expanded or developed.

6. The Ministry of Health has launched a nationwide series of campaigns to raise awareness of the need to get vaccinated. That has included multiple field visits, both to remote areas and areas with high concentrations of population, especially women. The Ministry of Health is also leading efforts to ensure vaccine availability, both by importing it directly and by nationalizing the manufacture of vaccines registered with the World Health Organization (WHO).

7. In May 2021, the National Council for Women launched a door-to-door campaign in all the governorates in cooperation with the Ministry of Health. The goal was to educate women about the importance of registering for a vaccine and help them obtain one. The campaign relied on the participation of Council leaders, volunteers and members, as well as branch members in the governorates, for whom various training programmes were held. In the course of the campaign, National Council of Women branches in the governorates received women wishing to get the vaccine and helped them register their particulars on the Ministry of Health website. They also took calls to register the particulars of women wishing to receive the vaccine and responded to inquiries through the abbreviated number 15115. The campaign aims to reach women in villages, hamlets and remote areas in all the governorates, and is being timed to coincide with a media awareness campaign on broadcast stations and social media.

Addressing and preventing gender-based violence against women and girls

8. The National Council for Women conducted a public opinion survey of Egyptian women on the just emerging COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020. The survey included 1,518 females and covered the impact of the pandemic on violence against women. The Council then expanded the package of basic services that it provides for women and girls who might have been subjected to violence since the onset of the COVID-19

pandemic as part of its pandemic preparedness plan. From the onset of the pandemic through December 2020, the Council's Complaints Office had received 66,254 inquiries and complaints, which it referred to the appropriate authorities in a timely and efficient manner.

9. The National Council for Women also launched a number of awareness campaigns on social media during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, to raise awareness of the dangers of bullying and cybercrime as part of its measures to contain the repercussions of COVID-19. Initiatives and campaigns have aimed to raise awareness about cyber risks, cybersecurity, reporting cyberviolence through digital protection tools, how employers and companies can provide a safe working environment for women, and how to report harassment and bullying. The Council has also made short films to raise awareness to support women's mental health under lockdown conditions. The Ministry of Social Solidarity has produced 17 videos by a group of psychiatrists and experts aimed at families with a view to addressing domestic violence. A psychological support programme has been designed. Registered psychological sessions and family counselling are provided online, and abbreviated telephone numbers have been set aside for psychological support.

10. The Anti-Violence Against Women Unit at Cairo University has launched an awareness campaign on combating and protecting against all forms of cybercrime and digital violence against women. The National Council for Women, in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and development partners has launched three "safe women" units at Qasr al-Ayni, Mansurah and Ayn Shams university hospitals to treat women victims of violence. Some 190 doctors and nurses have received training.

11. The Office of the Public Prosecutor has stepped up its efforts to prosecute cases of illegal exploitation of women and girls in human trafficking offences perpetrated via social media applications. Legal procedures have been initiated in an incident in which three girls were subjected to the crime of female genital mutilation. The goal is to deter attempts to exploit pandemic conditions to perpetrate that crime. The National Committee for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation has stepped up its efforts to spread awareness about that crime and how to report and protect against it. It held 788 activities in 2020, and conducted digital social media campaigns that brought the Committee's messages to 74 million followers.

12. The Ministry of Justice has excluded related lawsuits pending before family courts from any suspensions of court activities. The Office of the Public Prosecutor has launched four digital offices for family prosecution services in four governorates.

13. The Ministry of Social Solidarity has stepped up precautionary measures and awareness-raising campaigns in social care homes and women's centres. The first shelter for victims of human trafficking crimes has been opened, and necessary health and psychological services are being provided. Campaigns have also been stepped up on social media to raise awareness of the dangers of sexual exploitation, forced labour, organ removal, exploitation of displaced children, forced marriage and child marriage through a series of informational videos. The National Centre for Social and Criminal Research has published several studies on illegal migration, violence, older persons' issues, remote education and telecommuting during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Guaranteeing equal participation by women and girls in political and public life, decision-making and economic empowerment, and equal benefit from the stimulus package

14. Measures taken by the Egyptian State include the provision of exceptional loans, postponement of repayment of certain outstanding loan instalments, and allocation of funding to support small enterprises and microenterprises, which largely benefits women. The Enterprises Development Agency announced the allocation of a funding portfolio of 5,400,000,000 to finance women's microprojects, particularly in the border governorates and Upper Egypt. Some 40 per cent the 1,500,000 recipients of the grant for informal sector workers were women. Programmes to issue national identity numbers to women have expanded and some 250,000 social housing units have been built.

15. Other measures have included emergency social protection programmes, monthly stipends for rural women entrepreneurs, extra ration card points and bonuses for medical personnel. The State has also enhanced digital financial services. It launched the "Egypt Health" application for inquiries about prevention and treatment and the "Access" application to support people with disabilities. It has also digitized financial training programmes offered through the Skills Development Centre of the National Council for Women. The beneficiary base of the Takaful and Karamah (Solidarity and Dignity) programmes has expanded by 160,000 new families, for a total of 4,000,000 beneficiaries.

16. Measures have also included the provision of basic needs, food and medicines for people stricken with COVID-19 among the neediest groups. Refugees and migrants are covered by health programmes and systems offered in Egypt. Women over 65 in need of care in homes for the elderly are covered by the social protection umbrella.

17. Exceptional leave has been granted to pregnant women, mothers working in the government sector, and women with children under 12. Protection has been strengthened for the elderly and women with disabilities living in social care homes. Measures have been taken to protect women's centres. At the onset of the crisis, provision was made for three-month supplies of family planning methods and children's milk. The State has also stepped up work on the Egyptian Women's Health initiative launched by our President, which has provided 11 million women with exams for the early detection of breast cancer and other diseases, and has compiled databases that include comprehensive data on families with sick members that deserve care.

18. Legislative elections were held for the Senate and the House of Representatives that provided for social distancing precautions.

19. Priority has been given to women and children in the State's efforts to bring home Egyptians stranded abroad.

Question 4

20. Further to the information provided in paragraphs 18 and 119 of our report, the Government has submitted a new Personal Status Code that is currently under consideration by the parliament. The Code reflects changes in Egyptian society, as well as obligations and rights provided for in the Constitution and international commitments undertaken by Egypt, including with regard to gender equality. The Supreme Standing Committee on Human Rights is considering amendments to the Penal Code having to do with gender equality.

Question 5

21. Further to the information provided in paragraph 20 of our report, the Office of the Ombudsperson for women's complaints performs a number of functions. It receives, examines and analyses complaints of violations of women's rights and freedoms. It handles complaints and reports, contacts submitters to help them document their complaints, refers them to the relevant authorities and works with the parties concerned to resolve grievances. It provides legal assistance and reports violations of women's rights and freedoms to the public authorities. It handles personal status complaints, complaints of deprivation of workplace rights, civil and administrative complaints, complaints of violence of all kinds, and requests to enforce court rulings.

22. In cases of reports that constitute punishable offences, the Office of the Ombudsperson for women's complaints informs the Office of the Public Prosecutor, which has the authority to investigate, file charges and initiate criminal proceedings before the courts. The Office identifies problems facing women and brings them to the attention of decision-makers in the form of legislative proposals, policy papers and other measures. The complaints database is analysed periodically and regularly. The Office works with several partners, whether the public authorities of the State or non-governmental actors and civil society organizations such as the volunteer lawyers' network and the psychological support network to resolve problems reported to it.

Question 6

23. Further to the information provided in paragraph 41 of our report, the National Council for Women launched the Egyptian Women's Observatory in 2017 as a mechanism to follow up targets related to the status of women during the 2017–2030 period. The Observatory serves as a tool to monitor indicators for the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030, enhance follow-up and assessment of that Strategy, and ensure effective implementation of its objectives. The Observatory carries out those tasks by compiling indicator values and displaying them on its website, drafting periodic reports on the status of Egyptian women and the gender gap, and compiling and submitting laws concerning women.

24. The Observatory has issued several reports on the status of women. These include reports on policies and programmes to respond to women's needs during the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, and on the roles of various actors in implementing the objectives of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030. They address gender issues relating to health, information technology, economics, leadership positions, marriage and divorce. The Observatory has prepared in-depth studies on a number of topics, including disability, care and women's participation in the Egyptian workforce; care services for the elderly and their impact on women's participation in the workforce; and in-depth analyses of the future of work.

Question 7

25. Further to the constitutional and legal framework for promoting women's rights, the Egypt Vision 2030 sustainable development strategy represents the general framework for achieving inclusive development and building a just society characterized by equal economic, social and political rights and opportunities. Vision 2030 treats gender equality as a cross-cutting issue that touches on all its axes.

26. The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 contains several axes. The first addresses political empowerment and access to decision-making positions, strengthening women's leadership roles, encouraging women's political participation, preventing gender discrimination in leadership positions in executive and judicial agencies, and laying the groundwork for women to succeed in public posts. The second addresses economic empowerment. It aims to develop women's capacities to expand their employment options and increase their participation in the workforce, to bring about equal opportunities in the employment of women in all sectors, and to allow women to assume key positions in public agencies and private companies.

27. The Government is making constant efforts to close the gender gap and empower women through a number of measures, including the following:

- The third year of the sustainable development plan, 2020–2021, included measures to encourage women's participation in the labour market, especially in small enterprises and microenterprises, which are especially important for generating income for women breadwinners in rural areas.
- The Government implements gender-responsive programme and performance budgets. Equal opportunities are guaranteed to both sexes to benefit from programmes funded by the State budget. The basic outlines of the gender-responsive budgets indicate that 14 per cent of the State budget for the period from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020 was spent directly on women's issues.
- Cash support provided to women came to EGP 65.5 billion for the period from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020. Compared to the period from 2010/2011 to 2014/2015, the number of families benefiting from cash support programmes increased by 2.4 per cent to 3.8 million in 2019/2020. Some 830,000 women benefited from health insurance provided to women breadwinners, with allocations amounting to EGP 633,000,000 for the period from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020. An additional EGP 12,000,000,000 was allocated for medical treatment of women citizens at the expense of the State.
- Equal Opportunity Units have been established in ministries. Since 2000, the National Council for Women has set forth plans to mainstream the gender perspective in national plans, an effort that culminated in the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women. The 32 Equal Opportunity Units in various ministries are one of the mechanisms aimed at instilling the principle of gender equality and equal opportunity in all institutions, with a view to improving the situation of Egyptian women by supporting women's access to leadership and decision-making positions, thereby narrowing the gender gap. The Equal Opportunity Units provide statistical data on women in leadership positions. They help women benefit from projects implemented by ministries and their subsidiary agencies. They work to integrate the principle of gender equality and equal opportunities into all stages of drafting, planning, follow-up and evaluation of national strategies and plans. They prepare studies and conduct research on women's empowerment, and help to raise awareness about gender equality and gender-responsive budgeting.
- According to the Global Gender Gap Report, Egypt ranked 8th out of 19 countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. Egypt had ranked 9th in 2018, 10th in 2017 and 2016, and 13th in 2010.

28. Positive discrimination measures have allocated a quarter of the seats in the House of Representatives to women. That is the largest percentage of women in the history of the Egyptian parliament. A quarter of seats on local councils are allocated to women, as are at least 10 per cent of the total seats in the Senate.

29. The State is trying to improve empowerment mechanisms, particularly with regard to the appointment of women to senior positions and leadership posts. The judicial agencies have taken measures to appoint women to the State Council and the Public Prosecutor's Office for the first time. At the level of leadership positions in the executive agencies of the State, women are increasingly occupying posts of minister, deputy minister, assistant minister, governor and deputy governor. Women accounted for 25 per cent of all Cabinet members in 2018.

Education

30. We refer you to our response to question 15. Further to that, in 2017/2018, the proportions of females among recipients of diplomas and master's degrees were 55.9 and 54 per cent, respectively. The proportion of female doctoral students was 52.8 per cent compared to 47.2 per cent for males.

Health

31. We refer you to our response to question 18. Further to that, the First Thousand Days programme for children targets young pregnant and nursing mothers. It gives them EGP 100 worth of additional ration points per month on condition that they bring their children for health follow-up and vaccinations, and also offers women reproductive health care. During the 2019–2020 period, it served a total of 41,000 mothers at a cost of EGP 68.56 million. It is funded by the World Food Programme.

Employment

32. We refer you to our response to question 17. Further to that, we note that Egypt is the first Arab country to award gender equality certificates to private and public institutions. Egyptian companies are provided with guidance on how to address challenges facing women, including access to work, wage inequality, sexual harassment, work-life balance and access to leadership positions.

33. World Bank projections suggest that women's participation in the labour market has improved, with a lower female unemployment compared to previous years. Egypt was the first country in Africa and the Middle East to launch a Closing the Gender Gap Accelerator in collaboration with the World Economic Forum. The Accelerator supports business community leaders in developing innovative paths to gender parity.

34. Many businesses and agencies have childcare facilities attached to the workplace to help mothers take care of their children during working hours. The Ministry of Social Solidarity established an association to provide services to women working as household domestics. It has established centres for working women with the aim of alleviating their burden by assisting them with services that working women need at reasonable rates. There were 39 such centres in 22 governorates, with 41 units serving some 1,855,235 beneficiaries between 2008 and 2017. The proportion of women providing the service has increased from 38,000 to 120,000 annually.

35. The State is making efforts to support and disseminate gender-sensitive measures and standards in various labour sectors. For example, the Ministry of Higher Education, in partnership with civil society institutions and the private sector, has provided suitable employment and training opportunities for women college graduates. The idea is to encourage girls to enrol in this type of education. New technical disciplines of interest to women have been added. In cooperation with the Women's Skills Development Centre and the Women's Development Fund, the National Research Centre held 25 training courses to help disseminate a culture of equal opportunities at private companies and factories. The Ministry of Solidarity supports mothers during maternity by paying women working in the private sector

compensation equivalent to 75 per cent of their most recent wage. That is for 90 days, paid by social insurance funds.

Question 8

36. We refer you to paragraph 48 of our report. Further to that, the *Ta'al-marbutah* campaign disseminated a series of advertising messages on social networks and media channels to raise awareness of women's rights to economic development and education, and the importance of confronting and addressing harassment. These messages reached 135,300,000 followers. The campaign consisted of three stages. The first involved presenting successful women's models in various fields. The second launched a new campaign against violence against women. The third, entitled "Productive women", was aimed at supporting and empowering Egyptian women through targeted videos. The campaign won the Gold award at the MENA Cristal Festival for best and most influential advertising and media campaigns.

37. The Council launched the first stage of the "Because I am a man" campaign in 2018. It aims to involve men in supporting women's causes. It has successfully highlighted positive examples of men supporting women during different stages of their lives. It affirms the principles of gender equality, equal opportunities and equality of rights and duties. A total of 479,961 men benefited from various awareness programmes. They also received 10,500,000 views on social media. The second stage was launched in 2020 to bring the campaign's messages to young people at youth centres, cafes, social clubs, youth gathering places and elsewhere.

38. The Council launched the "Don't miss your station stop" campaign in 2018 to raise awareness about women's protection, reproductive health and participation in the labour market. It reached an estimated 21 per cent of Metro riders, or 4.5 million people. The campaign focused on four key topics: harassment, early marriage, the "Be productive" message for girls, and reproductive health. An advertising campaign was launched on Egyptian broadcast media to coincide with the campaign; it was broadcast at select times on 13 local and regional stations.

Female genital mutilation

39. We refer you to paragraph 140 of our report. In addition, Act No. 10 (2021) amended the Penal Code to penalize female circumcision with hard imprisonment of 5 to 10 years. The Act increases the penalty for perpetrators who are doctors or nurses to 20 years, along with disqualification from practicing their profession for at least three years after the end of the sentence, and closure of the facility where the circumcision procedure took place. Persons who seek out female circumcision and persons who publicly advocate, promote or encourage the practice are also subject to imprisonment.

Child marriage

40. We refer you to paragraphs 51, 63 and 140 of our report. Further to that, the State has taken a number of measures to eliminate child marriage, including the launch of a national strategy to reduce child marriage (2015–2020). In 2018, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood established an Anti-Child Marriage Unit to monitor child marriages through a Children's Helpline and protection committees. It also drafted a policy paper on eliminating child marriage.

41. The Children's Helpline received 1,439 reports of child marriage nationwide from 2009 to 2019. All those marriages were averted in cooperation with the Office of the Public Prosecutor and the protection committees. Pledges were obtained from the guardians not to go through with the marriages until the legal age.

42. The Pioneering Mothers initiative in Fayyum governorate has started classes for marginalized mothers to raise their awareness of the dangers of child marriage. A total of 69 classes for 1249 women were started in 2018.

43. The Minister of Justice issued Decision No. 6927 (2008) providing that a marriage contract may not be initiated or concluded unless the both bride and groom are 18 years old at the time of the contract. The President of the Republic has directed the Government to enact legislation prohibiting child marriage and providing expressly for a minimum marriage age.

Virginity testing

44. There is no legal or medical definition for the so-called “virginity test”. Tests conducted by the forensic department of the Ministry of Justice are authorized by the Office of the Public Prosecutor in cases of violence and sexual assault for the purpose of establishing that sexual abuse occurred. That test uses modern technical means, including a scope for vaginal exams. It is carried out in accordance with strict criteria at special “clinics to combat violence against women and children”. These clinics comply with United Nations-approved operating standards. Technical and legal documentation is provided to help women prove the crime of sexual assault. The clinic also performs an important legal function by identifying and exposing crimes of female genital mutilation, with staff determining medical and legal liability.

Polygamy

45. Polygamy is not widespread in Egyptian society. It is permitted only in accordance within certain rules, and above all, only with the consent of the parties involved. Under Act 100 (1985), the husband must declare his marital status in the marriage document. If he is married, he must indicate in the declaration the name(s) and residence(s) of his wife or wives. The registrar must then notify them of the new marriage by registered letter with receipt confirmation. A groom who makes false statements about his marital status or the residence(s) of his wife or wives is subject to penalty, and the registrar is penalized if he fails to notify them. The purpose of this declaration is to allow the first wife to sue for divorce on the grounds of her husband marrying another without her approval, even if she did not specify in the marriage contract that he may not take other wives. A new wife who was unaware that her husband was married to someone else is entitled to sue for divorce after learning of it.

Question 9

46. Article 242 of the Penal Code punishes beatings that cause serious injuries. Article 377 (9) penalizes minor abuse that does not result in injury. There is no legal provision or judicial precedent exempting the perpetrator from punishment, no matter what his relationship with the victim. With regard to article 60 of the Penal Code, the Supreme Court has ruled that it only permits acts committed in exercise of a right approved by the law in general. Therefore, it may not be cited to claim exemption from criminal liability for an act punishable by law.

47. The crime of rape only exists in Egyptian law in the context of natural sexual intercourse engaged in by a male with a female without her consent. Other acts of sexual abuse against a female – or a male – are not classified as rape; that includes non-vaginal penetration. However, it is treated as a crime of indecency, and is punishable by a sentence of up to life imprisonment, just like rape.

48. There is no such thing as an “honour crime” in Egyptian law that provides grounds for leniency. However, article 237 of the Penal Code provides that anyone

who surprises his wife in the act of adultery and kills her and her adulterous partner on the spot may be punished by imprisonment.

49. The main axes of the National Strategy to Counter Female Genital Mutilation include law enforcement, implementation of ministerial decisions, social cultural change in support of the rights of children, women and the family, development of information systems, and follow-up and evaluation of family empowerment and anti-female genital mutilation programmes. A range of issue relating to violence against women is included in the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 in the chapter on protection.

50. We refer you to our response to question 4. Further to that, the Government, through the Ministry of Health, tries to punish doctors and other medical professional who have practiced female genital mutilation. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood has launched the “Doctors against female genital mutilation” campaign, which aims to make doctors aware that the practice is against the law and contrary to medical ethics. Recent legal amendments have stiffened penalties for doctors or other medical professionals who perpetrate female genital mutilation.

51. The National Council for Women has conducted a number of campaigns to raise awareness of issues of violence against women and patterns of discrimination to which they might be subject. They include the “*Ta’ al-marbutah* [womanhood] is the secret of your success” campaign, the “Don’t miss your station stop” campaign, the “Protect her from female genital mutilation” campaign and the “Break the barrier of shame: you have the right to live in security” campaign. The Safe Cities Free from Violence Against Women project was launched with several components, including a human rights awareness and protection component. The Office of the Ombudsperson has held legal awareness seminars in support of survivors of violence and on the negative impact of the TikTok phenomenon in distorting women’s image.

52. With regard to law enforcement and judicial personnel, the Office of the Public Prosecutor and the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the National Council for Women, have issued a guide for prosecutors on handling crimes of violence against women, and prosecutors are being trained how best to use that guide. A guide has also been issued covering mechanisms for receiving and providing services to abused women. Training is being provided to staff at intake centres. Some 162 staff at the local and national levels have received training on women’s legal and financial rights, monitoring and responding to cases of violence, and community relations. The National Council for Women held a series of training programmes jointly with the Ministry of Justice to raise the capacities of judges and prosecutors in combating violence against women in accordance with Egyptian judicial standards. Some 650 men and women trainees have benefited.

53. On 11 May 2021, in the case known to the media as the Fairmont case, the Office of the Public Prosecutor issued an temporary order that there was no grounds for bringing rape charges in an attack on a woman in the Fairmont Hotel in 2014, owing to insufficient evidence. The suspects were ordered released. A statement noted that the investigations had lasted nine months, in the course of which the prosecution had exhausted all possible avenues to uncover the truth. It concluded that the accused had attacked the victim without her consent in a hotel suite after she had lost consciousness during a private party she had attended in 2014. However, the evidence against the suspects was not sufficient to bring criminal proceedings. The statement explained that the investigations had gone through two phases. During the first phase, at the end of July 2021, prosecutors monitored information circulating about the incident on various social media sites, where opinions ranged from condemnations of the accused to claims that the incident did not happen. Then they interviewed the victim, a witness who had been present in the suite on the night of the incident, and

39 other witnesses, some of whom saw a few seconds of a video clip of the incident shortly after it happened, and others who had heard about the incident and the clip without having viewed it, and knew little about the circumstances. Hotel officials, forensic doctors and police officers were also questioned about the incident. The Office of the Public Prosecutor was supplied with photographs of the body of a naked girl that did not show her face or anyone else, allegedly captured from the video clip.

54. The statement added that the public prosecutor's office has been trying since the beginning of the investigations to initiate proceedings against the accused. It put them on travel ban lists and arrival watch lists. It issued international arrest orders for suspects who had left the country in the wake of the allegations circulating on social media before the investigations started. Three of them were arrested in Lebanon and another inside the country. It should be noted during questioning, witnesses contradicted each other on key details of the incident. Some of them amended statements they had made previously. For example, one witness initially stated that he had seen a suspect on the video clip of the incident starting to rape the victim. Then he later stated that he had not actually seen that, and that his previous statement had just been an account he had heard from other witnesses. However, those other witnesses had not conveyed those particular details during their interviews. Another witness amended a prior statement that he had been able to hear the voice of one of the suspects on the video clip. Many of the witnesses related hearsay they had heard from others without identifying the sources for prosecutors. That made it impossible to follow up with those sources to ascertain their authenticity and check the information. For these reasons – which are detailed in the investigation – the evidence in the charges was unsupported. It did not fit together into a whole that would allow the incident to be attributed to the accused. The preferable course of action was therefore to issue an order temporarily suspending the case owing to insufficient evidence.

55. The Office of the Public Prosecutor stressed that its order was temporary and that the case could be reopened if new evidence worth looking into was presented before the statute of limitations ran out. It also stressed that it had been careful in investigating this case – as in all cases – to exhaust all possible leads at the local and international levels to uncover the truth, even though it had been nearly six years since the incident occurred and no conclusive evidence had been presented in the course of the investigation. It acted in keeping with its mission to realize justice and fairness, which calls for perpetrators to be prosecuted and brought to trial.

56. In the case known to the media as the Zaki case, the accused was sentenced to three years' imprisonment on one of the counts, namely, misuse of communications devices; his trial is ongoing on the rest of the charges.

57. In addition to the above, the Egyptian legislative system criminalizes all forms of violence against women. In court proceedings, the law does not differentiate between citizens and foreigners residing on Egyptian territory. There is no truth to allegations that non-Muslim women have been targeted for not wearing the hijab.

Question 10

58. There are nine housing and guidance centres across the country for women and girl victims of violence and a shelter for human trafficking victims, spread across eight governorates. Seven of them have been expanded at a total cost of EGP 1,345,000. Each centre has a staff of 12-14 persons who perform administrative, medical, social and legal functions. Total funds allocated to the shelter for human trafficking victims came to EGP 2,330,000.

Question 11

59. The following table shows some data on human trafficking cases:

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of incidents that constituted human trafficking offences	34	87	154	156
Total number of accused	83 (57 males and 26 females)	193 (150 males and 43 females)		30 (205 males and 125 females)
Total number of victims	60 (10 adults and 50 children)	152 (31 adults and 121 children)		365 (123 adults and 242 children)

60. The Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons is working in collaboration with all relevant judicial and police agencies to develop and update the database on this type of offence to enhance cooperation and find solutions to combat and curb the phenomenon. In that regard, since 2020, the Egyptian Public Prosecutor's Office has implemented an electronic criminal justice programme under which information is entered on cases under investigation by the Office of the Public Prosecutor, including human trafficking cases. It is then analysed by the Department of International Cooperation and Sentence Enforcement of the Office of the Public Prosecutor. This mechanism allows for facilitated access, information retrieval and analysis of cases, which in turns helps to verify enforcement by prosecutors of the Anti-Human-Trafficking Act.

61. Act No. 5 (2010) regulates the transfer and transplantation of organs. It prohibits the transfer of organs between Egyptians and foreigners with the exception of spouses who have been married for more than three years. It prohibits the transfer of any human organ or body except as a donation between Egyptian relatives, or non-relatives, provided that the donation is made out of free will. The Act requires both recipient and donor be informed of the nature and potential risks of transfer and transplant operations. The Act expressly prohibits any act that might be construed as trafficking in human organs. It provides for deterrent penalties of up to life imprisonment for violations.

62. The Act established a high committee chaired by the Minister of Health to manage and regulate organ, body part and tissue transplants, identify facilities authorized to do transplants, and supervise and monitor them to ensure that they comply with internationally accepted rules. The Office of the Public Prosecutor has launched investigations into a number of incidents that constituted offences of human trafficking for the purpose of organ transplantation. There were 9 such cases in 2017, 18 in 2018, 15 in 2019, and 9 in 2020.

63. As for "tourist" and "temporary" marriages, they are considered under Egyptian law to be crimes of sexual exploitation punishable under the Act No. 64 (2010) on combating human trafficking, and article 291 of the Egyptian Penal Code. The Office of the Public Prosecutor has launched investigations into several such incidents. It brought 8 cases in 2017, 19 in 2018, 30 in 2019 and 50 in 2020.

64. We refer you to paragraph 64 of our report. Further to that, there are measures aimed at the early identification of women and girls who are victims of human trafficking. The brief guide for prosecutors states that prosecutors should conduct thorough investigations into crimes suspected of involving human trafficking. That includes prostitution cases that suggest that organized criminal groups and

international networks are exploiting victims. The guide also covers exploitation of children for begging; it requires further investigation into what motivates children to commit crimes and whether or not there is someone making them do it. It also covers child marriage, forced labour (especially of children and domestic workers), the transfer and transplantation of human organs and the exploitation of children in criminal and terrorist activities. Chief prosecutors must establish special divisions in every office to investigate human trafficking crimes.

65. With regard to mechanisms for supporting and protecting victims, the Office of the Public Prosecutor takes a number of measures. Victims are put in touch with the relevant authorities to be provided with psychosocial and legal support in accordance with an expert's decisions. Victims may be placed in homes established for that purpose if necessary. Where the victim is an adult female, the prosecutor puts her in touch with the National Council for Women in order to consult on appropriate measures for her case. Appropriate health, psychological or social support are provided. The prosecutor may instruct the relevant agencies to take the appropriate measures. The prosecutor must instruct the police to provide the necessary protection to the victim or witnesses when they are being transferred from the prosecutor's office to the agency that will be providing them with housing, if that is called for. Health care must be provided as soon as the prosecutor becomes aware that the victim needs it. The prosecutor must follow up protection and assistance measures, and may request the agencies ordered to take those measures to provide periodic reports on the condition of the victim and the measures taken.

66. With regard to international cooperation, the Department of International Cooperation of the Office of the Public Prosecutor engages in judicial cooperation with its counterparts in other countries. It drafts, sends, receives, considers and implements requests for judicial cooperation in human trafficking offences in the light of the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and protocols thereto, and bilateral and multilateral agreements. The Office of the Public Prosecutor has signed memorandums of understanding with prosecutors from countries around the world to strengthen cooperation in the fight against transnational crime, including organized crime and human trafficking.

Question 12

Women human rights defenders

67. Egypt has a categorical reservation regarding the term "women human rights defenders" in the absence of a comprehensive international agreement concerning the criteria that can be used to define it. At the same time, the State takes all constitutional and legal measures to protect the rights of the accused, whatever their allegiances or the charged against them. Numerous constitutional and legal measures are in place to ensure that the accused receive a fair trial. All those measures are subject to intensified judiciary oversight. All judgments or preventive measures that could be classified as restrictions to freedom fall within that legal framework, according to the circumstances of the judgment in each specific case. In addition, Egyptian law provides that defendants have access to numerous stages of the judicial system in order to ensure that the judgments are sound.

68. Citizens are equal before the law and have rights and duties grounded in the principles of citizenship and equality. Nobody is above the law, and that includes human rights defenders. Strengthening respect for the rule of law is the cornerstone of a democratic system and is the way to ensure respect for the human rights of all people without distinction. The Egyptian Government is committed to implementing the instruments on human rights and women's rights to which it is a party. Those

instruments have the force of law. Under the Egyptian legal system, defendants have guarantees during the investigation and trial in order to prevent violations. Those guarantees include the right of defendants to be questioned with the knowledge of the competent judicial authority; the right to a lawyer; the right to be informed of the charges made against them; protection from coercion; the right to remain silent; the right not to be required to take a legal oath; and the prohibition of psychological pressure. Those points show that legal guarantees are available for all defendants during investigation and trial and prevent their being subjected to any violation.

69. The Tik Tok women cases are still under investigation. Any intervention in the investigative process would affect the independence of the judiciary, a principle to which Egypt is committed. It should, however, be pointed out that, on 12 January 2021, the Economic Court of Appeals of Cairo acquitted Haneen Hossam, Mawada al-Adham and three others of the charge of infringing family values and principles.

Question 13

70. With reference to paragraphs 76 through 83 of the official report, we wish to note that, owing to the legislative reforms mentioned above, the proportion of seats occupied by women in the current house of representatives is the highest in the history of Egypt. Women gained 164 of the total number of parliamentary seats, or 27.7 per cent. Women also gained 15 seats on the specialized house committees. The opening session of the House of Representatives was chaired by a woman. Although the Senate Act provides for a quota of no less than 10 per cent of seats for women, the President has appointed 20 women to appointee posts in the Senate, bringing women's Senate representation to 14 per cent.

71. It should be mentioned that the laws regulating appointments to judicial, academic, diplomatic and consular posts all guarantee equality and equal opportunities for women and men. Candidates are rated on their competence and academic qualifications the posts.

72. Women account for 43 per cent of the administrative prosecutor corps. Twenty-six new female judges have been appointed to courts of first instance, and 66 female judges to Egyptian courts. A woman was installed as Chief Justice of the Economic Court in 2018. Women have been appointed as judges on the Criminal Court and the Constitutional Court. On International Women's Day 2021, the President instructed that women should be appointed to the Office of the Public Prosecutor and the State Council in fulfilment of the constitutional requirement of equality and non-discrimination. The State Council announced that it would accept women. Women account for 25 per cent of diplomats and 50 per cent of the most recent intake. The Government is working to improve opportunities for women in senior and leadership roles. Women occupy some 10.5 per cent of posts for lawmakers and senior officials, 6 per cent of directors of institutions, and 25.5 per cent of directors-general. The first female national security advisor to the President has been appointed. She is one of only 12 women to have assumed such a post anywhere in the world. Women now account for 25 per cent of ministers, as compared to 20 per cent in 2017 and 6 per cent in 2016. They accounted for 28 per cent of deputy ministers in 2018, as compared to 17 per cent in 2017. Two women have been appointed governor, and 31 per cent of deputy governors are women. In 2019, women accounted for seven of 23 governors.

Question 14

73. With reference to paragraph 27 of the official report, conditions under which Egyptian nationality may be granted to a foreign woman married to an Egyptian man are set out in articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Egyptian Nationality Act. A foreign woman who marries a foreign man who has acquired Egyptian nationality may acquire Egyptian nationality by applying to the authorities two years before the end of the marriage, except in the event of the husband's death (article 6, paragraph 1). A foreign woman who marries an Egyptian man can acquire nationality by applying to the authorities stating that she intends to acquire Egyptian nationality. The application must be filed more than two years before the end of the marriage, except in the event of the husband's death (article 7).

74. The condition that the foreign woman must live in the country for no less than ten successive years to acquire Egyptian nationality thus does not apply in those cases.

75. The Supreme Standing Committee on Human Rights is working to list and sort all the concluding recommendations and observations concerning the legislative framework that have been made by United Nations treaty bodies with a view to improving the consistency of laws and of the country's constitutional and international human rights commitments.

76. The Nationality Act addresses situations of statelessness from several points of view. Egyptian nationality is an established right for anyone who is born in Egypt to unknown parents. A foundling is considered to have been born in Egypt unless proven otherwise. Under the Act, minors who acquire the non-Egyptian nationality of their parents may recover their nationality within a year of reaching the age of majority (article 2). When an Egyptian man loses Egyptian nationality by acquiring a foreign nationality, it does not follow that his wife loses it too, unless she states her intention to acquire her husband's nationality. Instead, she may keep her Egyptian nationality (article 11). An Egyptian woman who has lost her Egyptian nationality by marrying a foreigner and acquiring his nationality may recover Egyptian nationality.

77. In any event, acquired Egyptian nationality may be revoked only by a justified decision taken by Cabinet in cases of fraud, false statements and other specific instances. The revocation of acquired nationality does not necessarily entail its revocation from others who acquired it by extension. Egyptian nationality can be lost only based on a justified decision taken by the Cabinet, and its revocation affects only the individual concerned. All decisions concerning the acquisition, revocation, loss, recovery or restitution of nationality must be published in the *Official Gazette*. The individuals concerned may appeal against those decisions before the judiciary. All judgments handed down in cases involving nationality are binding on all parties and shall be published in the *Official Gazette*.

Question 15

78. With reference to paragraph 24 of the original report, we wish to add that the Government has taken several measures to improve school attendance rates and reading and writing skills. One example is the Strategic Plan for the Development of Pre-University Education (2014–2030), whose purpose is to provide equal access to education for all residents of school age, particularly in poor areas, and to improve the quality of educational services. Another is the National Education Project, which was launched in 2018 with a view to expanding the opening of social education classes across the country, making available 4,957 social classes in all Governments for girls' education, and opening 26 social schools in cooperation with partner

associations. In order to improve the teaching process and encourage girls to attend school, 1,891 social classes have been refurbished and 400 computers have been made available. The information technology infrastructure of schools has been improved to ensure that information services reach all rural and remote areas. During the period from July 2014 to May 2020, some 9,000 school workshops and 27,000 advanced classrooms were installed. Some 1.4 million tablets were provided free of charge in 2018 for pupils in the first year of secondary school. Secondary schools were given internal networks with a server and high-speed internet.

79. Women and girls who benefit from the Takaful and Karamah project attend literacy classes. These are combined with development projects to provide employment for women and develop their capacities and skills. Other literacy classes that are combined with small industry: women learn professions and skills that will enable them to find permanent work from home. In July 2020, in villages targeted by the President's "Dignified life" initiative, the Ministry of Social Solidarity implemented an initiative entitled "A dignified life without illiteracy" in cooperation with the National Literacy Authority. The first phase is taking place in 143 villages in 11 governorates.

80. The Government has taken several measures to address the dropout rate. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood has implemented the Girls' Education Initiative in governorates where there is a gender gap in primary education. A total of 1,191 girl-friendly schools have been established through the initiative. The Council has also implemented the Combating Dropout programme. A final draft of the guidelines on interacting with children vulnerable to dropout has been compiled. Committees have been established to curb dropout in 30 primary schools. Other anti-dropout committees, known as anti-dropout teams, have been put in place. A national anti-dropout plan has been announced, and 720 teachers, social and psychological workers, and headmasters have been trained.

81. The Ministry of Education has compiled a concept note on public health and sex education for learners of both genders, from the start of their development up until secondary school. The document, entitled Health Education Document, sets out concepts relative to health and safety of human body organs in general, including the reproductive system of men and women; diseases that could affect the reproductive system; and ways to keep it healthy. The contents of the document have been incorporated into curricula from kindergarten to the third year of secondary school. At the start, pupils are taught about their senses and how to protect them. They then study the functions of the bodily organs. In middle school, they learn about reproduction and the male and female reproductive organs. In secondary school, certain essential concepts involving sex education are taught as part of the biology curriculum.

Question 16

Ensuring that girls and young women benefit from technical and vocational training

82. In 2019, the National Council for Women launched the "She leads" programme, whose purpose is to train 50 female students in leadership, entrepreneurship and how to turn ideas into projects. The programme consists of interactive workshops and counselling sessions with entrepreneurship experts. The "My profession is my strength" digital platform is used to highlight women with skills and qualifications and assist with networking in the jobs market. An Egyptian women's guide to entrepreneurship has been compiled with a view to building capacities of women who want to start a project and earn an adequate income. In 2018, a project entitled

“Egyptian women: entrepreneurs for the future” was launched to ensure professional equality in education and in technical and vocational training for women in slums and deprived neighbourhoods. The Ministry of Education has trained 1,870 teachers, 69 per cent of whom are women, in professional guidance and counselling. Training in innovation and entrepreneurship has been provided to 1,077 teachers, some 60 per cent of whom are women. Training has been organized in the governorates of Aswan and Kafr al-Shaykh in the “Here I am” programme, whose purpose is to raise awareness of a freelance work culture consistent with their work culture. Training has been carried out in 24 schools in Luxor governorate to support women’s work in Upper Egypt.

83. The Life 2 programme is being implemented in Suhaj governorate with a view to supporting women’s work in Upper Egypt. It adopts the European Union entrepreneurship competence (EntreComp) framework, which consists of 15 competences. The Government has implemented a national programme that has benefited some 18,000 women. The programme provides concessional loans through the Local Development Fund. Training and technical assistance are provided for small enterprises and microenterprises. Forty-one centres for working women have been established in 22 governorates in order to encourage labour force participation, benefiting some 195,000 women. In 2017, the Ministry of Trade and Industry inaugurated the “I am an entrepreneur” programme to develop women’s business management skills and professional training, and to provide the skills that women need in order to develop their business.

Protection of schools, male and female teachers, boys and girls from terrorist attacks

84. The police takes the necessary measures to secure educational facilities and those who study there. In certain parts of north Sinai, law enforcement forces take legal measures, in accordance with international standards for human rights while countering terrorism, to eradicate the infrastructure of terrorist elements in order to ensure that normal life can return and that civilians are protected from the threat of terrorism. Schools and universities cannot in any way be used to support military endeavours. Law enforcement forces are in constant communication with civilian entities, including directorates of education, to ensure that pre-planned security arrangements are in place to protect the education sector, including both the material infrastructure, i.e. school and university buildings, and the means of transport used by students and teachers. Checkpoints and patrols are organized around the clock to protect schools and the roads used by students and teachers, without there being a military presence in the schools and universities.

Question 17

Employment

Tackling high unemployment

85. With reference to paragraph 97 of the official report, we wish to add that Egypt has adopted numerous policies and programmes for the economic empowerment of women and to mainstream them into the labour market. As a result, female unemployment fell from 24.2 per cent in 2015 to 21.4 per cent in 2019. In order to ensure equality in employment opportunities, the Government is committed to creating jobs aimed at women through targeted productive projects. The proportion of small-scale projects aimed at women has increased from 22.5 per cent in 2015 to 64.5 per cent in 2019. The proportion of microfinance loans granted to women has increased from 45 per cent in 2015 to 48.8 per cent in 2019. Financing of

microenterprises and small enterprises granted to women has increased from 719 million EGP in 2014 to 1,884 million EGP in 2018.

86. Several programmes exist for mainstreaming women into the labour market. The “Opportunity” programme helps the families most in need of care by finding appropriate work opportunities that can help generate income. Some 50,000 people benefited from the first phase, in 2020–2022. The “Masturah” programme provides microfinance for women. A savings programme for villages is also in place and has benefited some 18,000 women.

87. In the period 2014–2018, the Government undertook numerous cooperation initiatives with international and local entities including UN-Women. Examples include an initiative for people with special needs; one for women breadwinners with special needs; the “Daughter of Egypt” initiative for rural women breadwinners, organized in cooperation with the Agricultural Bank of Egypt; the “Our future is in our hands” initiative, in cooperation with the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development; and the “Land of bounty” project.

Equal pay for equal work

88. With reference to paragraph 25 of the official report, we wish to add that, under article 88 of the Labour Code, all provisions concerning the employment of workers apply to women at work. and that there is no discrimination between them when the conditions of work are similar. It is provided that the employer or their representative shall be fined in the event of a violation. The Labour Code bans wage discrimination on grounds of gender, origin, language, religion or conviction. The Penal Code prohibits any action or failure to act that could result in discrimination among individuals, or against a category of people, on certain grounds that include gender. In early 2020, Egypt joined the Equal Pay International Coalition, whose purpose is to achieve wage equality between women and men everywhere. In July 2020, the Ministry of International Cooperation, the National Council for Women and the World Economic Forum launched the Closing the Gender Gap Accelerator to help Governments and companies to close the economic gap in wages between genders, improve women's labour force participation. The Accelerator has succeeded in bringing together 100 companies that have committed to promote the Accelerator and take proactive measures to foster the economic empowerment of women.

Domestic workers

89. With reference to paragraph 26 of the report submitted by Egypt to the Committee, we wish to add that a draft law on domestic employment is before the House of Representatives. The draft law provides for the establishment of a Department of Domestic Work within the Ministry of Workforce. Domestic workers are exempted from court fees in legal disputes; the licensing of a company for domestic labour; a ban on employing individuals aged under 18 unless permitted by a ministerial decision; and a ban on paying domestic workers less than the minimum wage. A provision is in place to punish violations of the draft law. Parliament is discussing amendments to the Labour Code to cover all pending issues.

Night work and work in certain occupations

90. In April 2021, the Ministry of Workforce adopted decisions amending the rules concerning the employment of women at night and defining professions in which women may not be employed. The decisions authorize the employment of women at night if they so request. The employer must, however, commit to make daytime employment available as an alternative to night work. during the periods before and after childbirth. The decision concerning the definition of professions in which

women may not be employed has been amended to encompass underground work, including work in mines and quarries and in the extraction of minerals, excepting women who work in administrative posts and in health care or care services, women who have trained in underground quarrying, and other women who need to spend a certain time in underground mines to fulfil a non-manual task. Women cannot be employed while pregnant or breastfeeding in jobs that entail risks to their reproductive health or to that of their child or fetus, or that entails chemical, physics-related, biological or engineering risks. Women may be employed when not pregnant or breastfeeding once workplace health and safety conditions are in place.

91. The Unit for Gender Equality and the Economic Empowerment of Women within the Ministry of Workforce has coordinated with the National Council for Women to follow up the rules periodically, follow up new developments and assess the effect of the decisions.

Right to maternity leave

92. The Children Act provides that women working in government, the public sector, the public works sector and the private sector have the right to three months' maternity leave at full pay. Article 91 of the Labour Code provides for maternity leave of 90 days with compensation equivalent to full pay. Article 52, paragraph 2 of the Civil Service Act provides that workers in the public sector shall accrue four months' leave, a maximum of three times during the course of their employment in the civil service.

Criminalization of sexual harassment in the workplace

93. All forms of violence against women are criminalized by law. The penalty for sexual harassment has been strengthened in the Penal Code, and its scope has been expanded to encompass the criminalization both of violence against women and of sexual harassment. The law provides penalties for disturbing women by gesture, word, action or any means, including wired and wireless defences. Under the Penal Code, the penalty is also strengthened if the acts are intended to secure a sexual benefit, something that is characterized as sexual harassment. The penalty consists of imprisonment for a period from six months to five years and a fine of up to 50,000 EGP. The penalty specified in article 267 is strengthened for anyone who has professional, family or academic authority over the victim. The scope of the offence has been expanded to include the areas of family, school and work, thus including harassment by supervisors and colleagues, even if the harassment occurs outside the workplace.

Addressing the horizontal and vertical segregation of women

94. Whether in law or in actual practice, Egypt does not have vertical or horizontal segregation of women. Egyptian women have the right to work on an equal footing with men. The Government complies with its constitutional obligation to uphold equal opportunities among all citizens. Under labour legislation, prohibitions on women's work exist only where such work poses a risk to them. As has been mentioned, numerous efforts have been made, and many Government entities work to uphold equal opportunities and encourage women to join the labour market. The Civil Service Act includes a comprehensive set of regulations for promotion and seniority, which applies to men and women on an equal footing.

Question 18

95. Below are some additional comments on the most important points raised under question 18:

- There has been an increase in budget allocations for the public health sector, which now accounts for 3 per cent of gross domestic product, at a value of 258.5 billion EGP for the financial year 2020–21, an increase of 150.9 EGP on the 2017–18 financial year. Additional allocations have been made to confront the coronavirus crisis.
- The country took a significant step by adopting the Comprehensive Health Insurance System Act, which provides mandatory coverage for all citizens without discrimination. The system will be introduced in six stages up until 2032. The current, first phase includes six governorates, at a cost of 1.8 billion EGP. As at February 2021, 600,000 citizens were enrolled in the system. Three million medical services have been provided to citizens, including 1.2 million family medicine services, 500,000 outpatient procedures and 30,000 surgical procedures.
- The President of the Republic has adopted an initiative to combat Hepatitis C and detect non-communicable diseases, at a cost of 4 billion EGP. As a result, the prevalence of Hepatitis C has decreased from 7 per cent in 2018 to 2 per cent in 2020. A survey of 50 million citizens was carried out as part of the non-communicable disease early warning initiative. Further to the survey, 8.11 million patients were treated.
- The Government has made numerous efforts to curb the rising birth rate while respecting the right to families to determine the number of children they will have. The Ministry of Social Solidarity launched the “2 Are Enough” initiative in September 2018. Four million men and women were targeted by knocking on doors in order to raise awareness of family planning methods. In 2020, 2,359,757 women were reached, and 328,914 women were referred to family planning clinics. For that purpose, 1,159 volunteers worked as social awareness raisers.
- In 2020 alone, 64 family planning clinics were developed and equipped by partner civil society organizations. In that year, a total of 61,897 women visited the clinics and 51,455 women used family planning services.
- Abortion is not permitted by law in Egypt as a family planning method. Abortions may be performed to save the life of the pregnant woman in cases of necessity. In 1998, however, the Dar al-Ifta issued a fatwa allowing abortion in cases of rape and abortion in general within the first 120 days of the pregnancy. Al-Azhar University has supported the fatwa, as have several senior religious and legal scholars in Egypt.

Question 19

96. Some 254,000 refugees and asylum seekers, with 56 nationalities, are registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In addition, some five million people have fled armed conflict in their home countries without asking for refugee status, because they have been able to integrate easily into society. The Government provides health care and education to refugees and asylum seekers on an equal footing with Egyptian citizens, without discrimination. The implementing regulation of the Comprehensive Health Insurance System Act provides that foreigners resident in Egypt and refugees are included in the system.

Decision No. 601 (2012) of the Minister of Health provides that children of refugees and asylum seekers have a right to health services on an equal footing with Egyptian children.

97. Refugees and asylum seekers have been included in the numerous health campaigns launched by the President of the Republic in such areas as detecting and treating viral liver inflammation (Hepatitis C), combating polio, obesity, anaemia and stunting among schoolchildren. Refugees receive the support provided by Governments to their citizens with regard to commodities and basic services. More than 65,000 pupils from other Arab States have benefited from educational services in Government schools.

98. The Government provided 36,209,139 EGP worth of assistance to families of convicted prisoners in the financial year 2019–20; most of the 8,809 beneficiaries were women and girls. As at the end of the 2018–2019 financial year, women accounted for 27.8 per cent of the 305,000 beneficiaries of support from the Social Housing and Real Estate Financing Fund. Those beneficiaries belong to the lowest-earning 40 per cent of the population.

99. All inmates are treated in a manner that preserves their dignity, as required under the Constitution. Prisons are under comprehensive judicial supervision to ensure compliance with the law. The law entitles the National Human Rights Council to visit prisons and treatment and reform institutions. Visiting teams may include heads and members of national and human rights councils and certain civil society organizations, in addition to journalists and foreign correspondents.

100. Under Egyptian criminal law, there are no places of detention specific to transgender persons. In accordance with the applicable international guidelines, there is a complete separation between men and women. If an inmate claims to be transgender, or if a doctor is unable to determine their gender, the Office of the Public Prosecutor is contacted for a forensic examination to ascertain the person's gender and accordingly have them sent to a men's or women's prison. An appropriate independent location is identified in view of their circumstances so that they can be protected from harassment.

101. The prison sector is committed to providing medical care to all inmates without distinction through its own hospitals and clinics. When an inmate's health conditions so require, they are referred to an outside hospital for tests or surgery that cannot be provided in prison hospitals. Medical convoys can also be organized for surveys with a view to improving living conditions in such areas as nutrition, exercise facilities, cafeterias, means of subsistence, organization of visits allowed by law, handing over of incoming letters from family members, social and sports activities, prison libraries, prison workshops, hobby displays and, for Christians, Sunday Mass. Nurseries are provided for female inmates, who have every opportunity to care for their children.

102. In the event of a complaint, the female inmate contacts the prison management so that the necessary action can be taken. If they do not want prison management to see the complaint, they can write it down and send it to the prisons department for evaluation in accordance with article 883 of the Prison Operating Procedures Act. Rehabilitation programmes are implemented in cooperation with civil society organizations.

Question 20

Measures to support rural women through cash transfers

103. The Ministry of Local Development provides loans under the "Your enterprise" national project for local and community development. It has financed 770,000 small

enterprises, with 38.2 per cent going to women. Loans were provided to 2,175 small enterprises and microenterprises from the Local Development Fund, with 67.53 per cent going to women.

104. The Takaful and Karamah programmes were launched in 2015 to expand social safety nets. As of November 2020, the programmes had expanded throughout the Republic to cover 27 governorates, 345 districts and 5,630 villages. Some 3,413,006 families have benefited, 63.7 per cent of them from the Takaful programme and 36.3 per cent from the Karamah programme, with a total of 15 million individual beneficiaries. The budget allocated to the programmes increased from EGP 147 million when it was first launched in 2014/2015 to EGP 17.5 billion in the 2018/2019 budget and EGP 18.5 billion in the 2019/2020.

105. Interventions by the Ministry of Solidarity in partnership with international entities have benefited some 77,600 families (75,889 in partnership with the World Food Programme and 1,702 in conjunction with Plan International) that were among the most likely to fall below the poverty line. They were provided with transfers of 400 Egyptian pounds per month. Some 96 per cent of beneficiaries were divorced women, widows, the elderly and women breadwinners. Some 49 per cent were women with children under the age of 3.

106. Nasser Social Bank launched the “Masturah” microfinancing programme for women breadwinners in cooperation with the Long Live Egypt fund. More than EGP 320 million has been disbursed to 19,000 beneficiaries, along with 3,000 loans set aside for women with special needs.

Measures to improve land ownership by women

107. Act No. 219 (2017) concerning inheritance provides for stiff penalties of no less than 6 months’ imprisonment and a fine of up to 100,000 pounds for anyone deliberately failing to turn over to an heir their lawful share. The goal is to ensure that women get their rightful inheritance.

108. The State is making clear efforts to integrate a gender perspective into its rural development policies. That includes door-to-door campaigns aimed at raising the awareness of marginalized groups of women in villages and hamlets, which have reached more than 4 million families in 3,000 villages. Efforts are being made to create job opportunities and raise living standards in rural areas through horizontal expansion of agriculture and the development of small enterprises and microenterprises and income-generating projects for rural women. The National Population Strategy 2015–2030 provides family planning and reproductive health services in rural areas and slums.

109. The expansion of the Takaful and Karama social safety net programmes effectively mitigates the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 on rural women in several ways. The Ministry of Social Solidarity provides cash support services to a total of 1.3 million informal workers adversely affected by COVID-19. It also provides cash support to 478,000 of the neediest families with women, disabled or elderly breadwinners, and, in coordination with non-governmental partner organizations, support in the form of food packages to 3.8 million families with pregnant women, nursing mothers or children under 2. Some 500,000 hygienic and sterile items have been given out to the neediest families. During the COVID-19 crisis, the Ministry of Social Solidarity announced an increase in the monthly stipend for rural women entrepreneurs from 350 to 900 pounds per month. The Project Development Authority allocated a funding portfolio of up to 5.4 billion to finance women’s microprojects in the border governorates and Upper Egypt to support women in the light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Basic services

We refer you to paragraphs 116, 117 and 118 of our report, and add the following:

110. In November 2020, the Ministry of Planning approved funding for projects to create household sanitation links in villages covered by our President's "Decent life" initiative to provide facilities and services to the neediest groups. There are projected to be some half a million beneficiaries for the 2020/2021 fiscal year, including residents of 56 villages, with total projected funding of EGP 500 million. The first payment of EGP 50 million has already been approved. The "Decent life" initiative has carried out a variety of projects in 143 other villages populated by some 1.8 million citizens. The projects include safe sanitation and clean drinking water, increased school capacity, and renovating and equipping health units in line with the comprehensive health insurance model. The initiative also pumped funding of EGP 20 million into small enterprises and microenterprises that and provide transformational training and literacy classes to village residents.

111. The "Decent housing" initiative was launched in 2018 in the five poorest governorates of the Republic. The total cost of both the "Decent housing" initiative and the first phase of the "Decent life" initiative came to EGP 969 million during the 2018–2020 period. During that first phase, some 186,525 families benefited from services, covering some 1 million citizens. Services included 8,400 drinking water connections, 6,300 sanitation links, 11,000 roof installations and 9,5[00] renovated homes. Some 116,000 families made use of medical caravans. There were 10,000 surgeries and prosthetic device procedures and 19,400 thousand eye exams and eyeglasses made. There were also more than 50 veterinary caravans. Economic empowerment opportunities were made available to some 6,700 families. The initiative has been expanded to cover 1,400 villages in 50 districts in 20 governorates.

Health

112. The Ministry of Health has expanded the availability of family planning and reproductive health services at nominal prices through 5,350 health-care units and general and district hospitals. In poor villages, services are provided free of charge. Some 28 family-planning clinics have opened in 10 governorates. A national strategy was launched in December 2017 to support 20,000 rural women entrepreneurs, who have received training in reproductive health, neonatal care, nutrition, infectious and non-communicable diseases, and healthy lifestyles. The Ministry of Social Solidarity has conducted more than 5 million door-to-door visits and held some 40,000 educational seminars at health units, with the participation of more than 100 civil society organizations. The roles of 2,485 women's clubs across the Egyptian countryside have been enhanced through awareness-raising seminars. A free family planning counselling hotline is operated by women specialist doctors. Informational materials are designed, printed and distributed to the units free of charge to make people aware of family planning methods. The first women's and family planning hospital has been established in the South New Valley region.

Question 21

113. The Government has submitted to the parliament a draft law to amend the Personal Status Code to regulate provisions on marriage, divorce and spousal rights when a marital relationship is initiated or terminated, as well as guardianship and custody, in accordance with constitutional provisions and the international obligations of Egypt. The Government is preparing a draft law to prohibit child marriage ("early marriage") that explicitly provides for the minimum legal age for marriage.

114. Egypt takes a number of measures to ensure that there is no discrimination between citizens. According to article 3 of the Constitution, personal status laws, including those relating to inheritance, are based on divinely revealed laws. In the Islamic sharia, there are 30 cases in which men and women receive equal share, 10 in which women inherit more than men, and 4 in which men inherit more than women. Moreover, a will can stipulate complete equality of shares in those cases for one third of the inheritance. The rule in Christian law is equal shares for heirs.
