



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Combined twenty-third to twenty-fifth periodic
reports submitted by Egypt under article 9 of the
Convention, due in 2018***

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



1. As part of its commitment to cooperate with international human rights mechanisms, and in expression of its readiness to fulfil its treaty obligations, Egypt is submitting the present combined twenty-third to twenty-eighth periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, under article 9 (1) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Egypt remains determined to meet all its obligations under the Convention, and the report covers the most important advances in legislation and practice related to its implementation in the period between 2016 and 2025. The report also takes full account of the comments made by the Committee on the previous report, each of which will be referred to as the subject arises.

2. The report was drafted by the Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights, which started its work at the beginning of 2020. The Committee, which was established by decree of the Prime Minister, includes all ministries and government bodies involved with human rights and is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is responsible for monitoring the implementation by Egypt of its obligations under the relevant international treaties and protocols and for proposing the necessary legislative measures and procedures. The technical secretariat of the Committee collects and analyses data and information to create a database of the recommendations Egypt has received from international and regional mechanisms and to follow up on progress. It also reviews human rights legislation and policies, and follows up on the implementation of national human rights strategies. The Committee also provides technical support to various national authorities, with a particular view to creating specialized human rights units within ministries and in the governorates, and it provides training in disseminating a culture of human rights and incorporating human rights into policies and programmes. The Committee acts as a standing national framework for coordination between ministries and other national institutions, and it cooperates with various international and regional human rights mechanisms.

3. The Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights developed the National Human Rights Strategy (2021–2026), the first such strategy in Egypt, which was launched in September 2021. The vision behind the Strategy is to continue efforts to promote and protect human rights in accordance with the Constitution and the law, in line with the international obligations of Egypt. The Strategy has four main areas of focus: civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; human rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, young persons and older persons; and human rights education and capacity-building. In addition, the strategy seeks to achieve progress in three directions: legislation, institutions and education/capacity-building.

4. The Strategy is rooted in fundamental norms that have been enshrined in the Constitution, upheld in rulings of high-level courts and enunciated in international and regional human rights treaties. These norms include that of non-discrimination and of guaranteeing human rights within a framework of equality, equal opportunities and respect for the principle of citizenship.

5. The launch of the National Human Rights Strategy was attended by the President of the Republic, reflecting the importance the State attaches to its commitment to implement the objectives of the Strategy, which was prepared through a consultative process that included ministries, government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Meetings were held with civil society representatives, and use was made of international experiences and best practices from countries around the world. Three reports on the implementation of the Strategy have already been issued.

Legislative developments affecting the implementation of the Convention during the reporting period

- Act No. 81 of 2016 promulgating the Civil Service Act
- Act No. 82 of 2016 promulgating the Irregular Migration and Migrant Smuggling Act
- Act No. 197 of 2017 amending certain provisions of Act No. 94 of 2003 establishing the National Council for Human Rights
- Act No. 213 of 2017 promulgating the Trade Unions Act
- Act No. 10 of 2018 promulgating the Persons with Disabilities Act

- Act No. 30 of 2018 promulgating the Act regulating the National Council for Women
- Act No. 148 of 2019 promulgating the Social Insurance and Pensions Act
- Personal Data Protection Act No. 151 of 2020
- Act No. 177 of 2020 amending certain provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure regarding the non-disclosure of information concerning victims of certain crimes
- Act No. 200 of 2020 regarding the creation of the “Differently Abled Fund”, which is intended to support persons with disabilities; the Act has been amended to provide greater care and support services to persons with disabilities in various areas
- Act No. 214 of 2020 promulgating the Medical and Clinical Research Act
- Act No. 189 of 2020 amending certain provisions of the Criminal Code to penalize bullying offences
- Act No. 10 of 2021 amending certain provisions of the Criminal Code to introduce harsher penalties for practitioners of female genital mutilation
- Act No. 141 of 2021 amending certain provisions of the Criminal Code to address the issue of sexual harassment
- Act No. 22 of 2022 amending certain provisions of Act No. 82 of 2016 promulgating the Irregular Migration and Migrant Smuggling Act
- Act No. 165 of 2022 amending certain provisions of Act No. 143 of 1994 promulgating the Civil Status Code to reduce from 16 to 15 the age at which persons can legally apply for an identity card
- Act No. 14 of 2022 amending certain provisions of Prisons Act No. 396 of 1956
- Act No. 28 of 2023 amending certain provisions of Act No. 26 of 1975 regarding the conferral of Egyptian nationality on the children of Egyptian mothers
- Act No. 161 of 2023 boosting the “Differently Abled Fund” with an additional 1 billion Egyptian pounds (LE)
- Act No. 182 of 2023 reorganizing the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood; amendments to the Act have elevated the legal status of the Council and expanded its mandate as an independent constitutional institution
- Act No. 185 of 2023 amending certain provisions of the Criminal Code, notably articles 306 bis (1) and 306 bis (b), to increase the penalties for harassment
- Act No. 186 of 2023 amending certain provisions of the Children’s Code by increasing the penalties envisaged for persons who fail to register a birth
- Act No. 171 of 2023 establishing the National Alliance for Civil Development
- Act No. 1 of 2024 amending certain provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Act No. 150 of 1950) with regard to appeals against verdicts handed down by criminal courts
- Rights of Older Persons Act No. 19 of 2024
- Foreigners’ Asylum Act No. 164 of 2024
- Act No. 14 of 2025 promulgating the Labour Code

Policies and measures to provide greater protection for human rights and to implement the Convention

6. The Government of Egypt has launched a nationwide project to develop villages in rural areas. Implementation of the project, known as the “Decent life” initiative, began on 1 July 2021 and envisages 3 phases covering 4,500 villages and 28,000 surrounding settlements in 175 districts in 20 governorates across the country. In all, around 58 per cent of the national population is benefiting from the project, which aims to improve quality of life and the level of service provision. This process entails a body of interconnected

procedures, including the provision of infrastructure for drinking water, sanitation and housing; an increase in the number of schools and health centres; and the creation of ways to raise income and provide decent standards of living in rural communities. The project also contributes to the outcomes of the National Human Rights Strategy. The first phase of the project, which is to be completed in 2024 and has been allocated a budget of LE 400 billion, covers 1,477 villages in 52 districts and provides services that will benefit around 19 million people. The second phase of the project, which is to begin in 2024/25, covers 1,667 villages and envisions costs of around LE 700 billion. An online system for monitoring projects under the “Decent life” initiative has been integrated into a platform intended to accelerate action for the Sustainable Development Goals, run by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

7. During the period covered by the present report, a number of national strategies have been put in place and updated that are intended to incorporate overarching human rights principles and concepts into different areas. As of May 2024, the “Information and Decision Support Centre” of the Office of the Prime Minister had identified some 90 strategies for assessment, including the following, which have been approved and launched:

- The Egypt Vision 2030 sustainable development strategy, which was updated at the end of 2023, places the human being at the centre of development and emphasizes the interconnectedness between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The Egypt Vision incorporates several strategic indicators wherewith to monitor performance and progress.
- The third national strategy on combating and preventing trafficking in persons (2022–2026).
- The national alternative care strategy (2021–2030), which aims to provide family or foster care for the upbringing and protection of children, as an alternative to institutionalization. This is in line with the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2009.
- The national strategy for population and development (2023–2030), which aims to strike a balance between population growth and development by promoting reproductive health, empowering women, investing in youth, increasing education opportunities and raising awareness about demographic issues, as well as achieving social and economic well-being for all citizens.
- The national early childhood development strategy (2024–2029) and its associated plan of action.
- The strategic plan of the Ministry of Education and Technical Education (2024–2029), which has been updated to ensure universal access to education, without discrimination, and to improve the quality of education.
- The national anti-corruption strategy (2023–2030), which is entering its third stage.

The present report is divided into two parts. The first covers legislative developments relating to the Convention and a substantive review of its provisions; the second includes replies and clarifications regarding the Committee’s concluding observations following its consideration of the 2015 periodic report

Article 1: Meaning and definition of racial discrimination

8. Successive Egyptian constitutions, including the present Constitution, have reaffirmed that all citizens are equal before the law, with equal rights, freedoms and duties, and without discrimination on grounds of religion, belief, sex, origin, race, colour, language, disability, social status, political affiliation, geographic location or any other reason.

Discrimination and incitement to hatred are crimes punishable by law, and the State is to take the measures necessary to eliminate all forms of discrimination (art. 53).

9. The Supreme Constitutional Court has defined discrimination as: “Any distinction, restriction, preference or exclusion that arbitrarily detracts from the rights and freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution and the law, whether by denying or suspending them, or by diminishing their effect in a manner that prevents persons legally entitled to such rights and freedoms from exercising them on a basis of full equality, particularly in political, economic, social, cultural and other aspects of public life.” This definition thus covers numerous forms of discrimination and helps to ensure that it can be prevented and eliminated in all areas where rights and freedoms are exercised.

10. In its legislative and executive plans to combat discrimination, the State has embraced a broad definition of the phenomenon, which is considered to consist in any distinction, restriction, preference or exclusion that arbitrarily detracts from the rights and freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution and the law, whether by denying or suspending them, or by diminishing their effect in a manner that prevents persons legally entitled to such rights and freedoms from exercising them on a basis of full equality, particularly in political, economic, social, cultural and other aspects of public life.

11. One recent example of legislation prohibiting discrimination is Act No. 14 of 2025 promulgating the Labour Code. Article 4 of the Code prohibits any actions, behaviours or measures that would cause discrimination or distinction between persons vis-à-vis training, the advertising of posts, employment, the terms or conditions of employment or the rights and duties stipulated in a contract of employment, when such discrimination or distinction is on grounds of religion, belief, sex, origin, race, colour, language, disability, social status, political or trade union affiliation, geographical location, or any other reason that would violate the principle of equality and equal opportunity. Any advantage, preference, benefit or protection envisaged under the Code and its implementing decrees and regulations that favours women, children, persons with disabilities or persons with dwarfism is not considered prohibited discrimination. In addition to this, the Code defines bullying as any act or behaviour in the workplace or during the course of work, whether by words, displays of power or control over others, exploitation of others’ weakness or of a situation that the perpetrator believes to be harmful to them, such as their sex, race, religion or physical characteristics (see art. 1 (32)).

Article 2: Eliminating racial discrimination

12. Under article 161 bis of the Criminal Code, anyone who commits a discriminatory act or omission against individuals or groups on grounds of their sex, origin, language, religion or belief, the which act results in a violation of the principle of equal opportunity or social justice or a breach of the peace, is liable to a term of imprisonment. The penalty is aggravated when the offence is committed by a public official.

13. The criminalization of discrimination has not been limited only to public life but has extended to include other activities that might be affected by acts of racial discrimination. Sports Act No. 71 of 2017 envisages a term of imprisonment of not less than 1 year and/or a fine of between LE 1,000 and LE 3,000 for any person who, during the course of sporting activities, insults, slanders or humiliates a natural or legal person using words, shouts or gestures, or who incites hatred or racial discrimination using any means of public expression. For its part, the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 10 of 2018 enjoins non-discrimination on grounds of disability, of type of disability or of the sex of the person with a disability. It also serves to ensure effective equality in the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields, and it places an obligation on the State to remove all obstacles and barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from enjoying their rights. In addition to this, the Act prohibits any discrimination or denial of benefits or rights in recruitment, type of work, promotions or pay and benefits on grounds of disability. Under the Act, persons with disabilities are considered to be at risk – apart from in other situations identified in the Act – if the discrimination they face is motivated by their disability, and it envisages criminal penalties for those responsible. Laws in Egypt include provision not only for custodial

penalties but also for the payment of financial compensation to victims of racial discrimination or hatred.

14. Legislators have acted to criminalize bullying under Act No. 189 of 2020, which defines bullying as the display of power or control over others, exploitation of others' weakness or of a situation that the perpetrator believes to be harmful to them, such as their sex, race, religion, physical characteristics, state of physical or mental health or social status, with the intention of intimidating or ridiculing or demeaning victims or excluding them from their social environment. The Act envisions severe penalties for such actions, as perpetrators of bullying are liable to a term of imprisonment of not less than 6 months and/or a fine of between LE 10,000 and LE 30,000. If the victim is a servant of the offender, the penalty is increased to a term of imprisonment of not less than 1 year and/or a fine of between LE 20,000 and LE 100,000. The minimum penalty is to be redoubled if both these circumstances subsist, while both the maximum and minimum penalties are to be redoubled in cases of recidivism (art. 309 bis (b) of the Criminal Code).

15. Persons who commit acts of bullying against persons with disabilities are liable to a term of imprisonment of not less than 2 years and/or a fine of between LE 50,000 and LE 100,000. The maximum and minimum penalties are to be redoubled in the case of repeat offences. The penalty goes up to a term of imprisonment of between 3 and 5 years and/or a fine of between LE 100,000 and LE 200,000 if the crime is committed by two or more persons or if the perpetrator is an antecedent of the victim, is responsible for the victim's upbringing and care, has authority over the victim or has been granted legal custody of the victim by a court order, or if the victim is a servant of the perpetrator or of one of the aforementioned persons. The penalty is to be redoubled if two of these circumstances subsist.

16. Acting to enforce the law and to protect against bullying and discrimination, in June 2019 the State Prosecution Office referred two accused persons to the criminal courts on charges of bullying a child from South Sudan. The two were charged with having insulted the victim and denigrated his honour, thereby practising discrimination on grounds of origin, and with violating the victim's private life without his consent by posting a video of the assault against him. The court ruled to sentence the defendants to 2 years' imprisonment and to payment of a fine of LE 100,000. The incident aroused widespread condemnation across social media and came to the attention of the President of the Republic, who insisted on hosting and honouring the child victim at the Sharm el-Sheikh World Youth Forum to draw attention to the seriousness of acts of discrimination, hatred and bullying, all of which are penalized under Egyptian law. Additionally, in the context of enforcing the law and protecting persons with disabilities from bullying, in March 2023 a court in Shubra al-Khaima sentenced a person accused of having bullied three siblings with disabilities to a term of imprisonment of 3 years with hard labour and a fine of LE 100,000.

17. In March 2025, the Consumer Protection Agency, in coordination with the Supreme Media Regulatory Council, decided to suspend and prohibit the circulation of an advertisement for a product on the grounds that it violated article 13 of the Consumer Protection Act. That provision prohibits the advertising of any goods or services in a manner that discriminates against or offends citizens, or that violates public order and public morals. The Consumer Protection Agency obliged the offending company to suspend the advertisement and to rectify the contents thereof so that it could be republished in a manner that does not violate public order and public morals or discriminate against or offend citizens. All advertising material must comply with the codes, standards and rules of the Supreme Media Regulatory Council.

Article 3: Racial segregation and apartheid

18. The Government can affirm that no territories under the jurisdiction of Egypt are affected in this regard. Under Presidential Decree No. 62 of 1977, published in the Official Gazette on 11 August 1977, the Government ratified the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, which had been approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations during its twenty-eighth session, under resolution 3068 dated 30 November 1973.

Article 4: Condemnation of propaganda and of organizations based on ideas of racial discrimination

19. Incitement to discrimination in any form is penalized under Egyptian law (arts. 40 and 176 of the Criminal Code), irrespective of whether or not any action amounting to discrimination actually takes place. In addressing offences that entail verbal or physical attacks on religious sites and symbols, the executive branch and the judiciary make a neat distinction between such actions and freedom of belief and expression. In this connection, court rulings in Egypt have established that, although freedom of belief is guaranteed under the Constitution, such freedom does not permit anyone who disputes the fundamentals of another religion to deliberately violate the sacrality of that religion or to belittle or disparage it. If it is clear that the purpose of such an action was to undermine the sanctity of a religion and mock it, the party responsible cannot plead that they are exercising freedom of belief (Appeal No. 21602 of judicial year 84).

20. Christian citizens in Egypt do not face any obstacles in expressing their Christian culture through religious books, audiovisual materials and films, in which Muslim actors also sometimes participate. This is a manifestation of freedom in the cultural and artistic expression of religious belief. There are also a number of Christian satellite channels which, in addition to religious programming, also cover topics of general interest, with Christian and Muslim speakers. This is an important factor contributing to national integration.

21. In an effort to promote the principles of tolerance, understanding and peaceful coexistence, practical steps have been taken to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination and incitement to violence on grounds of religion or belief. Most notably, these include the following:

- A forum for tolerance and moderation has been created as part of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, and seminars and courses on religious subjects have been organized that emphasize freedom of expression and respect for human rights, promote a culture of dialogue and reject violence, intolerance, terrorism and religious hatred.
- Printed materials have been produced to raise awareness about human rights, principles of citizenship and peaceful coexistence, and to combat extremism and radicalism. These include books such as “Protecting Churches in Islam”, “Understandings in Need of Correction” and “Online Preaching” which, along with a number of religious sermons, have also been translated into other languages.
- A module has been introduced into courses of different levels at Al-Azhar University, which is intended to instil Islamic values, explain how they can be applied at a practical level, guarantee the protection of human rights and support religious, sectarian, and cultural pluralism.
- An initiative entitled “Al-Azhar unites us” is being run in youth clubs in order to promote the values of tolerance and acceptance of others.
- Al-Azhar University has established a “global observatory”, which monitors the social media activities and publications of groups dedicated to takfirism and violence, corrects misguided opinions and provides responses and messages in several languages.
- In January 2020, under the patronage of the President of the Republic, Al-Azhar University held an international conference for the renewal of Islamic thought and science. The conference called for the relaunch of religious discourse, the rejection of intolerance and hate speech, the correction of misconceptions that have taken root in some minds and the protection of young persons against the ideas of extremist organizations. It also sought, more generally, to raise awareness, resist extremism and terrorism and liberalize religious dialogue.
- Al-Azhar and the Egyptian Orthodox Church have launched the “Family Home” initiative to promote interreligious dialogue, the purpose being to reaffirm the principle of shared citizenship, combat incitement to discrimination and religiously

motivated violence and promote a culture of tolerance among all Egyptians. The “Egyptian Family Home” initiative – which brings together ulama, thinkers, and both Muslim and Christian specialists – is alternately headed by the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and the Pope of the Egyptian Orthodox Church. It meets periodically to address any causes of tension among citizens and to propose solutions which can then be submitted to government officials.

22. Law enforcement agencies receive reports of any incidents of racial discrimination and take appropriate legal action. In addition, the National Council for Human Rights – which, in terms of its independence and the diversity of its membership, is consistent with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) – is also authorized to receive any complaint relating to rights enshrined in the Convention. It examines and analyses such complaints to determine their veracity, seeks ways to resolve them and, when necessary, refers them to the competent judicial authorities.

Article 5: Guaranteeing equal rights

23. The preamble and the body text of the Egyptian Constitution constitute a single interdependent and indivisible fabric, a coherent organic unit with numerous provisions guaranteeing equality and non-discrimination. National unity is underpinned by the principles of equality, justice and equal opportunities for all citizens (art. 4), while the State, for its part, is to undertake to achieve equality of opportunity for all citizens without discrimination (art. 9). The State, furthermore, is to guarantee equality between women and men in all civil, political and cultural rights, in accordance with the Constitution, and to take steps to ensure that women are adequately represented on representative councils, as stated in the law. In addition to this, the State is to guarantee women’s right to hold public office and senior management positions in the State and to be appointed to judicial bodies, without discrimination (art. 11). Other articles of the Constitution relating to equality are explained below.

Equality before the courts and other bodies responsible for administering justice

24. The Constitution stipulates the principle of the equality of all citizens before the law, with equal rights, freedoms and duties. It also states that the right of recourse to the courts is protected and guaranteed for all persons. The State, for its part, is to undertake to bring the courts closer to the people and to expedite the adjudication of cases. Moreover, no administrative action or decree is to be shielded from judicial review, persons may be tried only before their natural judge and the establishment of special courts is prohibited (art. 97). The right of recourse to the courts and of equality before the law has also been upheld in codes of civil, commercial and criminal proceedings and by the Council of State and the Supreme Constitutional Court. Under the law, anyone with a personal and direct interest, even if only a potential interest, has the right to have recourse to the courts and to submit any application or defence. The Constitution also contains fundamental fair trial safeguards and stipulates that the rule of law is to be the basis of governance in the State. The State, moreover, is subordinate to the law, and the independence, immunity and impartiality of the judiciary are fundamental guarantees for the protection of rights and freedoms (art. 94). Additionally, the Constitution includes fundamental principles and rules to ensure fair trials (arts. 184, 185 and 186) and non-interference in judicial matters. Such interference is considered to be an offence and is not subject to a statute of limitations.

25. The Supreme Constitutional Court has established that there is to be no distinction between persons in their right to resort to their natural judge or in the substantive and procedural rules governing the judicial proceedings in which they are involved. In the same way, persons are to enjoy the same guarantees of an effective defence for the rights they are seeking to uphold, as envisaged in the Constitution, and there is to be no distinction between them in the application of uniform standards, when the requisite conditions are met, and in their right to the same channels of appeal. Proceedings must be regulated by uniform rules, irrespective of whether a case is brought to assert a right, to defend against a claim or to appeal against rulings handed down in that regard. Thus, legislators may not suspend the

application of rules for the benefit of a particular category of citizens, nor may they diminish the role of judicial proceedings, which are considered the only means of guaranteeing and enforcing the right of recourse to law. Nor can legislators deprive litigants of judicial satisfaction, the loss of which would constitute a violation of the protection envisaged in the Constitution.

26. Act No. 7 of 2000 sets forth the rules governing appeals to conciliation committees in disputes involving ministries and public legal entities.

Right of all persons to freedom and personal security and to State protection against violence or physical abuse

27. The Constitution contains safeguards to protect personal freedom and safety (arts. 54 and 55). One of these safeguards is that no one may be arrested, searched, detained or have their freedom restricted save in cases of flagrante delicto or on the basis of a reasoned judicial warrant, if necessary for the investigation. Persons deprived of their liberty are to be informed of the reason for their detention, to be notified of their rights in writing, to be allowed to contact their relatives, to meet with a lawyer immediately and to avail themselves of the lawyer's services during the evidence-gathering and investigation as well as during trial. Having questioned suspects, law enforcement officials must refer them, within 24 hours of the arrest, to the investigating authorities, be it a public prosecutor or an investigating judge, for them to conduct their own investigations and decide how to proceed. Questioning may begin only once a lawyer is present. A lawyer is to be appointed for persons who have no lawyer of their own, and persons with disabilities are to be provided with the requisite assistance. Under the Constitution, persons whose freedom has been restricted, as well as other persons, have the right to appeal against that decision before the courts, which must rule on the appeal within one week. Otherwise, the person must be released immediately. In all cases, persons accused of an offence that attracts a term of imprisonment cannot be tried save in the presence of their own lawyer or of one appointed on their behalf.

28. With the aim of upholding the values of personal freedom and safety, as well as other fundamental human rights and freedoms, article 99 of the Constitution stipulates: "Any assault on the personal freedom of citizens or on the sanctity of their private lives, or on other public rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution and the law, is an offence that is not subject to any statute of limitations for either criminal or civil proceedings. Injured parties may launch criminal proceedings directly and the State is to guarantee just compensation for victims. The National Council for Human Rights is to report any violation of rights to the State Prosecution Office, and the Council may intervene in civil proceedings on behalf of the injured party, at the latter's request and in accordance with the law."

29. Legislation includes numerous provisions the purpose of which is to give effect to constitutional norms concerning personal freedom and safety. The Code of Criminal Procedure (art. 22) stipulates that law enforcement officials are subordinate and responsible to the Prosecutor General in the performance of their functions.

30. The Code further stipulates that persons who have been arrested or are held in custody must be immediately informed of the reasons for their arrest or detention (art. 139) and that they have the right to contact a person of their choice and seek the assistance of a lawyer. Prosecutors as well as presidents and deputy presidents of courts of first instance and of appeal have the right to visit the correctional and rehabilitation centres (prisons) within the area of their jurisdiction to ensure that no one is being held unlawfully (art. 42). Once there, they have the right to examine prison records and arrest and detention warrants, and to meet with any of the inmates to listen to their complaints. Each inmate, in fact, has the right to submit a written or verbal complaint to the director of the correctional and rehabilitation centre, and request that it be forwarded to a public prosecutor (art. 43). The director is required to accept the complaint and, having verified it, forward it immediately. Anyone who is aware that a person is being held illegally or in a place not designated for detention may notify the State Prosecution Office. Upon receiving such notification, prosecutors must immediately go to the location where the person is being held and conduct the necessary inquiries.

31. Articles 124 and 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure provide that, in cases other than flagrante delicto or urgency owing to a fear of loss of evidence, suspects may be interrogated or confronted with other suspects in connection with a crime that attracts a mandatory prison sentence only after their lawyer – if they have one – has been invited to attend. If a suspect has no lawyer, the authorities must delegate one and allow that lawyer access to the details of the investigation on the day prior to the interrogation. In no case may accused persons be separated from their lawyer during the questioning.

32. Act No. 145 of 2006 amending the Code of Criminal Procedure reorganized the rules governing pretrial detention, including the conditions regulating its use in certain crimes, and set upper limits on the duration of such detention that vary depending on the nature of the crime. During the initial investigation and the other stages of criminal proceedings, the duration may not exceed one third of the maximum penalty of deprivation of liberty. It may not exceed 6 months for misdemeanours, 18 months for serious crimes and 2 years if the penalty is life imprisonment or death.

33. Under the Code, warrants for pretrial detention are to be issued only by officials of a certain rank. The Code also regulates the procedures whereby appeals against such warrants can be filed, and it envisages other measures that can be used as alternatives to pretrial detention, such as requiring accused persons to remain at their place of residence, to report to police stations at specific times or to refrain from frequenting certain locations. In addition, the State Prosecution Office is required to publish – in the Official Gazette and at State expense – sentences of acquittal and decisions that there are no grounds to pursue criminal proceedings. The purpose of this is to exonerate persons wrongly accused and to provide them with material compensation for any pretrial detention they have served.

34. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the State Prosecution Office rolled out an electronic system via which the extension of detention for accused persons being held pending investigation could be considered via videoconference. Having thus heard the accused persons make their statements in the presence of their lawyers, a decision on the matter could be issued. The system served to limit the transfer of prisoners and their contact with others. A similar system was used to allow the courts to consider detention orders for accused persons being held pending trial, likewise enabling them to present their defence in the presence of their lawyers.

35. The Government has pursued a clear policy aimed at preventing impunity. The policy is based on a zero-tolerance approach to torture or ill-treatment, wherein all allegations, whether against law enforcement personnel or public officials, are duly investigated. For example, the Ministry of the Interior has taken disciplinary and criminal measures against its own staff for incidents ranging from ill-treatment to the use of force. There were 1,217 such incidents between November 2019 and July 2024. A number of the persons implicated were found guilty by the competent investigative authorities. Severe disciplinary and legal measures have also been taken against public officials such as doctors, teachers and governmental staff for verbally or physically abusing citizens or using corporal punishment against children in schools.

Political rights, right to vote and to stand for election

36. The Constitution includes provision for the involvement of citizens in the administration of public affairs through referendums and through elections for the President of the Republic, the House of Representatives, the Senate and local councils. Articles 4 and 5 of the Constitution stipulate that the people are the source of authority, and that the political system is to be based on pluralism and a multiplicity of parties. In addition to this, the Constitution guarantees the freedom to form political parties and the right to participate in elections, and it allocates a minimum of 25 per cent of seats in the House of Representatives and on local councils, and 10 per cent in the Senate, to women. Further quotas in the House of Representatives are reserved for workers, farmers, Christians, persons with disabilities, young persons and Egyptians living abroad (arts. 243 and 244).

37. The Act regulating elections to the House of Representatives, as amended in 2020, provides for the fair and equal representation of voters across the governorates. Under the Act, each electoral district is allocated an appropriate number of seats proportional to the

population there. At the same time, positive discrimination seeks to favour sparsely populated border areas such as the governorates of North and South Sinai, Al-Wadi al-Jadid, Matruh and Red Sea, which are allocated more parliamentary seats proportionally to the population than in other governorates. The Supreme Constitutional Court has considered that this exception – even though it entails some degree of discrimination between citizens of those governorates and their peers elsewhere – to be based on such grounds as not to constitute arbitrary discrimination in favour of the electoral districts in those governorates. The discrimination is justified and positive, underpinned by objective foundations and does not violate any principles of equal opportunity and equality in the exercise of the right to vote.

38. As a way of upholding these constitutional prerogatives, a number of laws have been enacted or updated to ensure that citizens are able to exercise their political rights. These include the Exercise of Political Rights Act, the National Electoral Commission Act, the Presidential Elections Act, the Division of Electoral Districts Act, the Political Parties Act, the Act regulating the House of Representatives and the Act regulating the Senate.

39. The Exercise of Political Rights Act prohibits the use, during elections and referendums, of slogans or propaganda that are religious in nature, that incite discrimination or that promote hatred. The Act also envisages the automatic registration in the voter database of all citizens aged 18 or over, on the basis of their national identity card number, and it makes provision to facilitate voting for persons with disabilities. In addition to this, the Act seeks to promote transparency in elections and the voting process by enjoining the use of phosphorescent ink and transparent ballot boxes, the announcement of the results of the count in electoral subcommittees and the monitoring of voting by representatives from the media and civil society organizations.

40. The National Electoral Commission is a standing body that enjoys technical, financial, and administrative independence and that runs the entire electoral process, from the start to the announcement of the results. The process of filing electoral appeals is regulated by designating the authorities competent to adjudicate on the conduct of elections, the announcement of the results and any appeals concerning the validity of a candidacy. Campaign financing and electoral advertising is regulated under the Exercise of Political Rights Act in a manner that guarantees impartiality and transparency.

41. During the period covered by the present report, the country saw a referendum on constitutional amendments as well as elections for the Senate and the House of Representatives. The referendum to amend certain provisions of the Constitution was held in April 2019 and was open to Egyptians at home and abroad. The proposed amendments included the allocation of a minimum 25 per cent quota for women in the House of Representatives as well as adequate quotas for young persons, Christians, persons with disabilities, Egyptians living abroad, workers and farmers. Another amendment envisaged the establishment of the Senate to ensure broader participation and representation of citizens and to develop legislative processes. Provision was also made for the appointment of deputies to the President of the Republic. These constitutional amendments serve to strengthen and protect democratic and civil and political rights, and they promote the rights of women, young persons and other groups in society. Elections to the Senate were held in August 2020, with 797 candidates running for individual seats and 100 candidates running on party lists. The total number of voters registered in the voter database stands at 62,940,165.

42. Elections for the House of Representatives were held over two stages between October and December 2020, with 568 candidates running on four closed lists (the National List for Egypt, the Independent Alliance List, the Call of Egypt List and the Sons of Egypt List). In addition, a total of 3,964 candidates ran for office under the individual system, including 3,097 independent candidates (78.1 per cent) and 867 candidates from various political parties (21.9 per cent). In the resulting 2020 House of Representatives, a number of groups had the highest levels of representation they had ever enjoyed in the parliamentary history of Egypt. Foremost among these were women, with 164 seats in the House; young people under the age of 40, with 123 seats; Christians, with 37 seats; persons with disabilities and Egyptians residing abroad, with 8 seats each; and workers and farmers, with 29 seats. Presidential elections were held in December 2023, with four candidates running. The President of the Republic Abdel Fattah El Sisi won. The voting rate was 66.8 per cent, with

women making up 60 per cent of voters. The election was held under full judicial supervision, with open media coverage and monitoring by various international, regional and local organizations.

Right of access to public service

43. The Civil Service Act reaffirms that citizens have the right to employment, and it guarantees the principle of equality of opportunity in access to posts in the public sector. According to the Act, public servants are to be appointed on the basis of competency and merit by decree of the President of the Republic, or a person acting on the President's behalf. This takes place after a vacancy announcement containing information about the opening and conditions of employment has been posted on the Egyptian Government's online portal in a manner that upholds equality and equal opportunities. Any violation of these rules constitutes a punishable offence. Appointment to such positions entails an exam, which is conducted by the State Authority for Organization and Administration via a selection committee. The appointment is made by order of precedence on the basis of the exam results. In the event of a tie, precedence is given to the candidate with the highest grade in the qualification required for the post, followed by the highest-ranking candidate of the same grade, followed by the most qualified, followed by the most senior in terms of graduation, followed by the oldest. The decree appointing persons to public-sector posts is an administrative decree and, as such, it may be challenged before the competent court in accordance with the general rules governing the Egyptian legal system, if it violates the rules of equality and equal opportunity.

44. As an example of how equality and equality of opportunity are upheld, Presidential Decree No. 51 of 2022 was issued, under which Judge Boulos Fahmy, a member of the Supreme Constitutional Court, was appointed as President of that Court, the first Christian judge to hold the position.

45. Equal opportunity units are mechanisms that seek to mainstream gender equality in government agencies, help women gain access to leadership and decision-making posts and narrow the gender gap. They also serve to provide statistical data on women in leadership positions, to maximize the benefit women derive from projects implemented by ministries and other bodies, and to integrate the principle of gender equality and equality of opportunity into the drafting, planning, monitoring and evaluation of national strategies and plans. Equal opportunity units also undertake studies and research in the area of women's empowerment, and they participate in awareness-raising activities about the concept of gender equality in the implementation of budgets. In this connection, the State has set up 254 equal opportunity units at the ministerial, governorate and local levels to make working women cognisant of their rights, to draw attention to the importance of participating in the development process and to raise awareness among male and female workers in the political, economic and social spheres.

Freedom of movement, residence and return

46. Freedom of movement and residence are public rights that are guaranteed for all citizens. It follows that any restriction on such rights is admissible only if there is legitimate justification, otherwise it would constitute an infringement on the individual freedom of citizens. The Constitution therefore safeguards freedom of movement, residence and emigration, and stipulates that no citizen may be expelled from State territory or prevented from returning (art. 62).

47. The Constitution further states that no citizen is to be prevented from leaving the territory of the State, subjected to a compulsory residence order or prevented from residing in a particular place except by a reasoned judicial order, for a specified period of time and in the cases specified by law (art. 62). Act No. 97 of 2015 introduced amendments to the Illicit Gains Act No. 62 of 1975 and the Cybercrime Act No. 175 of 2018. Under the changes, if there is sufficient evidence to suggest that an offence envisaged in either of the Acts has taken place, the competent investigative authorities are authorized to prevent accused persons from travelling abroad or to place their name on watch lists, while also guaranteeing their right to appeal against such a measure before the competent court.

Right to nationality

48. Egyptian nationality is designated in the Constitution as a legal and political bond between citizen and State, the core of which is that citizens' affiliation to the State arises directly from the Constitution and the law if they fulfil the requisite legal conditions. Neither the citizens themselves, nor the competent authorities, can intervene in any way in the acquisition of citizenship or the right to hold citizenship. Under the Constitution, Egyptian nationality is to be conferred upon anyone born to an Egyptian father or to an Egyptian mother. The Constitution also stipulates that legal recognition and official identity documents are rights that are guaranteed and regulated by law (art. 6).

49. All procedures surrounding birth registration and identity cards are comprehensively set forth in the Civil Status Code (Act No. 143 of 1994). An amendment was introduced to article 2 of the Nationality Act No. 154 of 2004, as a result of which, in 2007, Egypt was able to withdraw its reservation to article 9 (2) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. According to the amendment, Egyptian nationality can be conferred upon anyone born to an Egyptian father or to an Egyptian mother, and to children born in Egypt to unknown parents (a foundling is considered to have been born in Egypt unless there is evidence to the contrary). Persons holding a foreign nationality in addition to Egyptian nationality have the right to declare to the Minister of the Interior their desire to renounce their Egyptian nationality. For minors, such a declaration can be made by their legal representative or their mother or, in the absence of either, by their guardian. Minors who have lost their Egyptian nationality in this way may declare their desire to regain it within one year of attaining their majority. Act No. 28 of 2023 amends certain provisions of Act No. 26 of 1975 regarding the conferral of Egyptian nationality on the children of Egyptian mothers, in order to achieve greater equality between men and women.

Right to marriage and choice of spouse

50. A contract of marriage is a consensual contract based on an offer and an acceptance. Such a contract can be concluded only with the consent of the bride, otherwise it is void. Furthermore, it is not permissible to register a contract of marriage for anyone of either sex who is under the age of 18 at the time the contract is stipulated. The family is enshrined in article 10 of the Constitution as the cornerstone of society, and the State must undertake to ensure its cohesion and stability and consolidate its values. The Constitution also serves to empower women and to ensure that they are able to reconcile their family duties with the needs of work; it underscores the State's obligation to protect motherhood and childhood, female breadwinners, older women and women in need; and it ensures comprehensive legal protection against any discriminatory act. Childhood is defined as lasting until a person reaches the age of 18, which is consistent with the Convention. National legislation – in particular the Children's Act, the Criminal Code and the Civil Status Code – includes provisions that address violence in all its forms, including domestic violence, child marriage and forced marriage.

51. The State remains determined to protect families. Under the law, both parties to a marital relationship have rights that are counterpoised so as to achieve a fair and just balance between them. Under the Egyptian legislative system, the woman has the right to choose her husband, and a marriage contract is a consensual agreement that is offered and accepted. A contract of marriage cannot be concluded if one of the two contracting parties has not reached the age of 18. It is worth noting that the Supreme Constitutional Court has found an article in the Act regulating the Council of State to be unconstitutional. The article in question prohibited persons married to foreigners from being appointed to the Council of State, and it was deemed to be unconstitutional because it amounted to arbitrary discrimination that violated both the Constitution and the Convention. The Court ruling, in fact, invoked article 5 of the Convention, which concerns the right to marry and to choose one's spouse.

Right to own property alone or in association with others

52. The right to private property – which is a source of wealth and driver of development – is guaranteed and protected under the Constitution. This right cannot be disregarded, save in exceptional circumstances and in the public interest. Moreover, any expropriation of property in the public interest must be fairly compensated in advance, in accordance with the

law (art. 35). As further protection on private property and to safeguard against unwarranted attacks thereon, the Constitution places an absolute prohibition on any public appropriation of private assets. Private appropriation of assets is likewise disallowed, save by court ruling and under the law (art. 40). Egyptian legislation includes detailed regulations governing private property rights and the restrictions that apply thereto. Article 805 of the Civil Code stipulates: “No one may be deprived of property except in the circumstances and the manner prescribed by law, and in return for fair compensation.”

53. The expropriation of property for the common good is regulated by Act No. 10 of 1990, under which real estate property required for the public weal can be expropriated and compensation provided. In this regard, works for the common good include the construction, expansion, modification or extension of roads, streets and squares; the establishment of new neighbourhoods; the building of water, sanitation, irrigation, drainage, energy or transportation projects; urban planning; and the improvement of public facilities. The Act contains an important safeguard in that the common good is to be established by a decree of the President of the Republic accompanied by a document detailing the project to be undertaken with designs and plans of the necessary building work. Any decree regarding the expropriation of property for the common good must be published in the Official Gazette and any such expropriation is to entail fair compensation for the owner and the occupant. The amount of compensation is determined by a committee to be set up in each governorate by decree of the Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation with its membership drawn from ministries and government agencies. The committee calculates the amount of compensation on the basis of current prices at the time the decree of expropriation was issued then adds an additional 20 per cent to the estimated value. The entity demanding the expropriation is to disburse the agreed compensation within no more than a month of the issuance of the decree of expropriation. With the agreement of the owner, the compensation may be paid fully or partly in kind. The parties concerned can contest the compensation assessment before the courts of first instance. The Court of Cassation has published a manual containing the text of the Expropriation of Property in the Public Interest Act as well as relevant Court rulings and other details relevant to the enforcement of the Act.

Right to inherit

54. The right to inherit is enshrined in article 35 of the Constitution, and Inheritance Act No. 77 of 1943, as amended by Act No. 219 of 2019, guarantees the right of inheritance for relatives up to the fourth degree. These provisions, which are based on sharia law, are underpinned by justice, fairness and equality, and duly reflect degree of kinship, the duties of women and the financial obligations of men. The share of inheritance depends upon degree of kinship to the deceased, with men and women receiving equal shares in some cases. In more than 20 other cases, women actually receive more than men and, sometimes, a woman may inherit where a man does not. Under the Constitution, moreover, non-Muslims have the right to apply their own laws in matters relating to personal status. Act No. 219 of 2017 amending certain provisions of Act No. 77 of 1943 makes it a crime to deprive anyone of their inheritance.

55. Accordingly, all matters relating to marriage, divorce and family disputes are subject to the laws of the parties involved. An Egyptian court recently ruled that the distribution of inheritance for non-Muslims is to be subject to the regulations governing their own personal status and that, therefore, the inheritance shares stipulated in sharia law are inapplicable to them (case No. 1478 of 2019).

Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion

56. Freedom of belief and freedom to practise religious rites and to establish places of worship are enshrined in the Constitution. Articles 3, 53 and 64 state that the laws of Egyptian Christians and Jews are to be the principal regulator of their personal status, religious affairs and the selection of their spiritual leaders. At the same time, citizens are equal before the law and have the same rights, freedoms and public duties, with no discrimination on grounds of religion or belief. Freedom of belief is absolute, while freedom to practise religious rites and to establish places of worship is a right regulated by law for followers of the Abrahamic religions.

57. The National Human Rights Strategy (2021–2026) aims to achieve a number of outcomes, also by focusing on freedom of religion and belief. Among other things, this entails intensifying awareness-raising campaigns, especially among the young, to promote coexistence, tolerance and acceptance of others and to reject violence and hatred; running activities to shape community awareness of religious freedom; rejecting intolerance and extremist ideas; enhancing coordination between religious institutions on the implementation of plans to renew religious discourse and spread religious tolerance and respect; continuing to review religious curricula to purge them of any materials that do not help to promote tolerance; and monitoring content broadcast by media outlets that may involve discrimination or incitement on religious grounds.

58. Act No. 80 of 2016 regulating the construction and restoration of churches reaffirms the right of the Christian citizens of Egypt to build and renovate churches, thereby guaranteeing their freedom to practise religious rites. The Act establishes, for the first time, a legislative framework that clearly defines the rules and procedures to be followed to obtain authorization for any construction work related to churches. In addition, the Act envisions ways to put an end to previous administrative violations and to legalize the status of buildings where religious rituals have been held in the past. The criterion applied is that every church building that – on the date the Act comes into force – exists and where religious rituals are held is to be considered as an authorized church, provided that it is structurally sound and that the applicant for legalization can provide proof of ownership of the building. As of January 2025, 3,453 churches and buildings had been legalized under the Act, and 13 synagogues and Jewish heritage sites had been restored.

59. Egyptian labour legislation also upholds the freedom to practise religious rites and enables all citizens to perform the duties and obligations envisaged by the Abrahamic religions, on a basis of equality and without discrimination among workers holding equal legal status. Act No. 14 of 2025 promulgating the Labour Code, which is dated 3 May 2025 and is applicable to workers not employed in the government sector, states that any worker who has spent five consecutive years in the service of an employer has the right to one month of paid leave to perform the hajj or to visit the Holy Land. This leave entitlement, which may be taken just once during the entire period of a worker’s service, protects the right of all citizens to practise their religious rites by allowing Muslims to perform the Hajj and Christians to visit the Holy Land.

60. Article 71 of Civil Servants Act No. 47 of 1978 did not envisage the mandatory right to leave for Christian staff subject to the provisions of the Act. It did include provision for one month’s leave on full pay, once during a worker’s period of service, to perform the hajj but not to visit the Holy Land. The Supreme Constitutional Court ruled that the article in question was unconstitutional insofar as it limited the scope of application to performing the hajj but not, for Christian staff, to visiting the Holy Land. Legislators duly addressed this matter in article 52 of Act No. 81 of 2016 promulgating the Civil Service Act, which replaced the Civil Servants Act. The article in question still stipulates that staff are entitled to one month’s leave on full pay, once during their period of service, to perform the hajj. However, article 143 of the implementing regulations of the Act confirms that the reference to “performing the hajj” in article 52 also means visiting the Holy Land. This, then, constitutes further protection for the right of all citizens to practice their religious rites.

Right to freedom of opinion and expression

61. Freedom of thought, opinion and expression, as well as of artistic and literary creativity are enshrined in the Constitution, which enjoins the State to support creative individuals and protect their creative works. Under the Constitution, moreover, the launch of proceedings to suspend or confiscate artistic, literary or intellectual works is the prerogative of the State Prosecution Office alone. In addition, no custodial penalty is admissible for offences that entail the publication of artistic, literary or intellectual works unless these incite violence or discrimination, or defame others (art. 67). Article 67 of the Constitution also safeguards freedom of the press, printing and publication via print, audiovisual or electronic media, and it grants Egyptians the right to own and publish newspapers and to set up audiovisual and digital media outlets. The Constitution stipulates, moreover, that newspapers can be founded merely by notifying the authorities, as regulated by law, and it prohibits any

ensorship on newspapers and media except in times of war or general mobilization. In addition to this, no custodial penalty is admissible for offences that entail the publication of works unless these incite violence or discrimination or defame others, save where the law provides otherwise (art. 71). The State must guarantee the independence of its own press institutions and media outlets so as to ensure that they remain impartial, express all political and intellectual opinions and leanings, cover all social interests and guarantee equality and equal opportunities for addressing the public (art. 72).

62. The Supreme Media Regulatory Council was established under the Constitution as an independent body responsible for regulating audiovisual, print, digital and other media institutions. The Council seeks to maintain the independence, impartiality, pluralism and diversity of such institutions; prevent monopolistic practices; monitor the integrity of funding sources; and establish the necessary controls to ensure that the press and the media adhere to professional standards and ethics (art. 211). The National Press Authority was also established under the Constitution as an independent body responsible for managing and developing State-owned press institutions, increasing their assets, ensuring their independence and impartiality, and upholding their commitment to sound professional, administrative and economic practices (art. 212). For its part, the National Media Authority, which was likewise established as an independent body under the Constitution, is responsible for managing and developing State-owned visual, radio and digital media platforms, increasing their assets, ensuring their independence and impartiality, and upholding their commitment to sound professional, administrative and economic practices (art. 213).

63. Acts No. 178, No. 179 and No. 180 of 2018 together constitute a body of laws that regulate the press and the media and seek to make them more independent, in accordance with the Constitution. Under those Acts, newspapers can be founded merely by notifying the authorities, while opinions expressed by journalists or media professionals cannot constitute grounds for prosecution. The Acts also uphold the right of journalists and media professionals to obtain and disseminate information and not to be under any obligation to reveal their sources. It is prohibited, moreover, to confiscate, suspend or close print or online newspapers or audiovisual media outlets, or to impose custodial penalties for the publication of works, except in cases envisaged in the Constitution. Furthermore, it is forbidden to search the office or residence of a journalist or media professional in the context of offences committed via newspapers or media outlets, save in the presence of a public prosecutor. In addition, journalists and media professionals cannot be punished for using written or broadcast media to challenge the actions of public officials, public representatives or persons entrusted with public service, unless it is proven that they did so in bad faith or if their claims were unfounded or unrelated to the work of the individual concerned.

64. The press and media landscape in Egypt is characterized by diversity and pluralism, with a total of 580 registered newspapers, 74 licensed satellite channels, more than 200 licensed websites and more than 14 radio networks. The Supreme Media Regulatory Council independently supervises these outlets. Any decisions the Council takes have to be duly reasoned, and they are subject to judicial review.

65. The Office of the Prime Minister launched an online platform called “Dialogue”, which aims to create an interactive environment that encompasses all segments of Egyptian society by opening channels of communication and community dialogue on various issues, identifying community priorities and helping to arrive at common visions for the best solutions to the obstacles and challenges facing society. The goal is to promote sustainable development and support and improve public-policy decision-making.

Right to freedom of peaceful assembly

66. The right to peaceful assembly and demonstration is a form of collective expression of opinion that is guaranteed under the Constitution. Citizens, in fact, have the right to organize public meetings, marches, demonstrations and other forms of peaceful protest, provided that they give notification as required by law. The right to peaceful private assembly is also guaranteed, with no requirement for prior notification, and security personnel may not attend, monitor or eavesdrop on such gatherings (art. 73).

67. Act No. 107 of 2013 regulating the right to hold peaceful public meetings, processions and demonstrations guarantees the exercise of that right, upon condition of prior notification. Under the Act, then, citizens have the right to organize a public meeting, march or demonstration, provided that notification is given – at least 3 working days but no more than 15 days before the event – to the police station in whose jurisdiction the public meeting is due to take place or the demonstration is due to start. If the event is an election meeting, the notification period is reduced to 24 hours. The notification must include the location of the public meeting or the route of the march or demonstration, the start and end times, the subject, the purpose, the demands participants will be making and the slogans they will be using. This serves to determine the extent to which the event complies with the Constitution and the law and to prevent gatherings whose purpose is to incite discrimination and hatred or to instigate criminal activity (art. 8).

68. The Act prohibits public gatherings for political purposes in places of worship or any courtyards or annexes associated with such places. It is likewise prohibited to undermine public security or damage public facilities or to use weapons thereby endangering individuals or property (arts. 5, 6, 7).

69. Under the Act, the Minister of the Interior is to coordinate with governors before issuing a decree to set up secure perimeters around vital sites such as the Presidential Palace; parliament; the headquarters of international organizations and foreign diplomatic missions; government, military, security and regulatory facilities; courts and prosecutor's offices; hospitals; airports; petroleum facilities; educational institutions; museums; archaeological sites and other public facilities. The Act prohibits participants in public meetings, processions or demonstrations from crossing such perimeters (art. 14).

70. Security forces are required to take measures and precautions to secure public meetings, processions or demonstrations whereof notification has duly been received, to ensure the safety of participants and to protect public and private property, without hindering the purpose of the event (art. 11). If, during a public meeting, procession or demonstration, participants commit an act that constitutes a punishable offence or that deviates from the peaceful expression of opinion, uniformed security forces have the right, upon the order of the competent field commander, to disperse the gathering and arrest those suspected of having committed an offence. Under article 12 of the Act, the action of the security forces in this regard must follow a number of stages. Firstly, they must call upon the participants in the public meeting, procession or demonstration to disperse voluntarily, by repeating audible verbal warnings to that effect and identifying and securing dispersal routes. Then, if participants fail to respond to the warnings, the security forces can disperse them using different methods applied in the following order: water cannons, tear gas then batons. If these methods fail to break up the participants or the crowd commits acts of violence or vandalism, destroys public or private property or assaults bystanders or law enforcement, the Act allows security forces to make gradual use of force as follows: warning shots, then flash grenades or smoke grenades, then rubber bullets, then non-rubber munitions. If the crowd uses firearms against security forces in a manner that entails a right of legitimate defence, the response is to be commensurate with the degree of danger to life and property.

Right to freedom of association

71. Under the Constitution, citizens have the right to form associations and civil society institutions on a democratic basis, merely by notifying the authorities. Such bodies have legal personality, and the administrative authorities of the State are forbidden from interfering in their affairs. Neither the bodies themselves nor their management boards or boards of trustees may be dissolved save by a court order. It is prohibited to establish or operate associations or institutions that engage in clandestine, military or paramilitary activities (art. 75).

72. Act No. 149 of 2019 regulating the activity of civil society associations, and its implementing regulations, were issued in January 2021 following a consultative process that had involved more than 1,300 representatives of Egyptian and foreign NGOs across the country. Under the Act, NGOs are prohibited from calling for discrimination between citizens on grounds of sex, origin, colour, language, religion or belief, and from undertaking any activity that promotes racism or incites hatred. This new legislative framework envisages unprecedented advantages and addresses concerns associated with previous legislation. In

that regard, it guarantees the establishment of associations and institutions merely by notifying the authorities; in addition, all custodial penalties have been abolished, and it has now become easier to receive foreign funding. An Internet platform has been created to facilitate the registration of civil society organizations and to help them regularize their status. Also, an integrated online system has been launched to regulate and facilitate civil society activities, providing services such as document management, case management and complaint handling. Over 35,770 national and foreign NGOs have filed to regularize their status. Paperwork and electronic documents have been completed for 34,756 of them, while the rest remain under consideration. Sixty foreign NGOs have been regularized, and total funding for civil society organizations in the period 2019–2024 amounted to LE 24 billion.

73. The declaration of 2022 as the Year of Civil Society in Egypt is an expression of the State's appreciation of the vital role that civil society plays. Pending cases have been settled and, most notably, investigations were wrapped up in case No. 173, known in the media as the "foreign funding" case, which was fully closed in March 2024. The political leadership has responded quickly to many of the National Dialogue's demands for the release of convicted persons who meet the conditions for a presidential pardon.

Economic, social and cultural rights

Right to work

74. The National Plan to Promote Gender Equality in the Workplace was launched in 2022. The Government has also developed a national employment strategy which envisages job creation mechanisms and infrastructure to regulate the supply and demand of Egyptian labour on the job market at home and abroad. In addition, it has launched the "Career 2030" project, which aims to train 1 million persons in the professions most in demand on the national and international job market. More than 30,000 persons with disabilities have been hired over the past 10 years, including 14,000 since the beginning of 2023. The Government also managed to reduce the unemployment rate from 13 per cent in 2014 to 6.4 per cent at the end of 2024.

75. The Government is striving to create 900,000 jobs per year over the next four years, while the Ministry of Labour has launched its National Employment Gazette, which shows all available job openings in the private sector. Unemployment rates among young persons of both sexes have fallen. The Ministry of Labour has employed 593,859 young men and women through the National Employment Gazette, and it has made around 91,000 foreign job openings available for young people via the country's labour offices abroad. It has also provided thousands of young persons with training in 49 different professions that are in demand on the labour market. The training, which was delivered at 75 vocational training centres, is part of the presidential "dignified life" initiative.

Legal safeguards protecting workers

76. Workers' rights, protection against workplace hazards, the provision of safe and healthy working conditions, the creation of well-balanced labour relations, equality of opportunity, the fair distribution of the fruits of development, the reduction of income disparity, a minimum wage to live a life of dignity and a maximum wage for persons working in State institutions are all upheld under the Constitution (arts. 13 and 27). These values are duly reflected in the laws that regulate workers' rights and in the Government's efforts to maintain fair and fulfilling working conditions.

77. The National Wage Council was established under Prime Ministerial Decree No. 983 of 2003 and is headed by the Minister of Planning. The Council was reconstituted, and its terms of reference redefined in 2011 and in 2020. The Council is responsible for setting the national minimum wage, taking due account of the cost of living while also pursuing means and finding measures to strike a balance between wages and prices. Setting and amending the minimum wage takes place within the framework of the State's commitment to protect workers' rights and interests, to preserve the gains they have made, to enable them to live lives of dignity in the light of new developments and economic changes at home and abroad, and to balance the interests of the two parties in the production process (employers and

workers). In fact, the minimum wage has been raised several times in both the public and private sectors. In the public sector, it was raised from LE 1,200 in March 2019, to LE 3,500 in March 2023, to LE 4,000 in September 2023 and finally to LE 6,000 in March 2024. The minimum wage for private sector workers, which stood at LE 2,400 in January 2022, was raised to LE 2,700 in January 2023, to LE 3,000 in July 2023, to LE 3,500 in January 2024, to LE 6,000 in March 2024 and to LE 7,000 in January 2025.

Right to form and join trade unions

78. The core provisions of relevant conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) are all enshrined in the 2014 Constitution, article 76 of which stipulates: “The establishment of democratic unions and federations is a right guaranteed by the law. Such entities are to have legal personality, to exercise their activities freely and to contribute to honing the skills of their members, while defending their rights and protecting their interests. The State guarantees the independence of unions and federations, the boards of which may not be dissolved save by a court ruling.” Act No. 213 of 2017 promulgating the Trade Unions Act, as amended, is consistent with international standards for the formation of unions and grants all trade union organizations – whether a trade union committee, a general trade union or a trade union federation – legal personality. Article 10 of the Act sets forth the different levels of trade union activity, which are: trade union committees, general trade unions and trade union federations, and it places no requirement on unions of a lower level to join those of a higher level. The right of workers to form, join or withdraw from trade unions is enshrined in articles 4 and 21 of the Act, and workers who practise more than one profession have the right to join more than one trade union organization.

79. Under amendments to the Trade Unions Act, which were enacted pursuant to Act No. 142 of 2019, the minimum number of workers required to form a trade union committee was reduced from 150 to 50. If that minimum cannot be attained, or in the case of businesses employing fewer than 50 workers, the minimum quota can be reached by joining with workers engaged in professional groups or industries that are similar or related, or that are involved in producing the same goods. Also under the amendments, the number of trade union committees required to form a general trade union was reduced from 15 to 10 and the number of members from 20,000 workers to 15,000. Similarly, the number of general trade unions required to establish a trade union federation was reduced from 10 to 7, and the number of members from 200,000 workers to 150,000. The Act places no restrictions on trade union activity other than by prohibiting the formation of union organizations on grounds of religion, belief, party affiliation, ethnicity or political views. Under Egyptian law, trade unions have the status of an administrative body that acts on behalf of the State by meeting many financial and social obligations towards their members, while the unions themselves rely partly on the State for their funding.

80. The Trade Unions Act grants unions – whether a trade union committee, a general trade union or a trade union federation – legal personality from the date the necessary documentation is deposited with the competent administrative authority. As of that date, unions have the right to exercise their activities. In order to ensure the independence of trade union organizations in the conduct of their affairs, articles 59 and 64 of the Act stipulate that such organizations are to be financially and administratively independent and free of undue oversight or supervision. Article 7 of the Act states that the board of a trade union organization cannot be dissolved save by a court ruling, while article 30 affirms that the general assembly is the organization’s supreme authority, which sets policy and supervises all matters in accordance with union statutes.

81. The Act allows trade union organizations to take the measures necessary to protect the legitimate rights of their members. This includes participation in discussions on draft laws and on economic and social development plans, as well as the right to organize strikes, to conclude collective labour agreements and to conduct collective bargaining. Trade union organizations also have the right to take court action to defend the rights and interests of their members. Trade union elections were held under the Act in 2018, following a 12-year hiatus. The elections resulted in a change of 80 per cent of the membership on around 2,500 union committees, of which 145 are not affiliated with the General Federation. People do not face

criminal prosecution for criticizing the General Federation, but only for committing criminal offences unrelated to their right to exercise trade union activity.

Right to housing

82. According to article 78 of the Constitution, the State is to safeguard citizens' right to adequate, safe and healthy housing in order to preserve their human dignity and to achieve social justice. The State, moreover, is to develop a national housing plan that takes due account of environmental specificities, that envisages contributions from individual and collective initiatives, that regulates the use of State land and that provides basic facilities. This is to take place as part of a strategy for population distribution within a framework of comprehensive urban planning for cities and villages, the aim being to achieve the public good, improve citizens' quality of life, and preserve the rights of future generations. Additionally, the State must elaborate a comprehensive national plan to address the problem of informal settlements, covering replanning, infrastructure provision, utility supply, quality-of-life improvement and public health. It must also guarantee provision of the resources needed for implementation within a set time frame. Under article 236 of the Constitution, the State is to formulate and implement a comprehensive economic and urban development plan for border areas and deprived areas, including Upper Egypt, Sinai, Matruh and the regions of Nubia. The people of those areas are to be involved in, and be the foremost beneficiaries of, development projects, which must take due account of the cultural and environmental specificities of local communities. The State has pursued a series of legislative reforms, notably the Real Estate Financing Act and the Social Housing and Real Estate Financing Subsidy Act.

83. The Egypt Vision 2030 sustainable development strategy duly addresses the issue of housing, at the level both of the individual and the community. At the individual level, the Vision seeks to ensure that suitable housing is available for Egyptians at prices that suit all groups, while at the community level, it aims to build cities with modern infrastructure and ample green spaces. The Egypt Vision 2030 seeks to provide decent housing for all Egyptians without exception, and to put an end to insecure housing zones and informal housing by providing legitimate alternatives that are consistent with development plans, improving the effectiveness of basic services in residential areas, and increasing the per capita share of open areas and green spaces.

84. In 2020, the State launched its housing strategy for Egypt, the aim of which is to provide suitable accommodation for all citizens while also taking account of the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, upholding the principles of social justice and equality of opportunity and avoiding any form of discrimination or marginalization. The right to decent housing is also contemplated in the National Human Rights Strategy (2021–2026). In 2014, the Government launched its national strategic plan for urban development, which aims to transform Egypt into an advanced and globally competitive country. The aim of the plan is to double the urbanized portion of Egypt from 7 per cent to 14 per cent.

85. The State has been continuing its efforts to provide decent housing, especially for low- and middle-income groups, as part of its "housing for all Egyptians" initiative, which has now delivered 1 million housing units, in addition to a further 300,000 units in unsafe housing areas. This project – which is intended to meet the needs of young persons as well as of low- and middle-income groups – has benefited 7.5 million citizens, with 5 per cent of the units allocated to persons with disabilities. Thus, by the end of 2022, Egypt was able to declare itself free of unsafe informal settlements. Its efforts in this regard drew praise from the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in 2020 while, in 2022, the United Nations ranked Egypt as one of the top performing countries in reducing slum dwellers as a proportion of the total urban population.

Improving slums and unsafe housing areas

86. Over recent years, the State has been seeking to make breakthroughs in the redevelopment of informal settlements and infrastructure which, covering 152,000 feddan, account for 37.5 per cent of urbanized areas in cities. In all, 60 areas have been developed to the benefit of the 468,000 families dwelling there, at a total cost of LE 318 billion. This includes 31 areas in Cairo alone, benefiting 263 families, at a cost of LE 350 million. A total

of 342 unsafe housing areas were developed between 2014 and 2022 while, in the period 2014–2023, the total cost of development projects in unsafe housing areas amounted to LE 67.8 billion. By the end of 2021, Egypt was able to declare itself free of unsafe informal settlements.

87. In Sinai and around the Suez Canal, seven new cities have been, or are in the process of being, established and developed. In addition to the cities, which are designed to accommodate in excess of 5 million people, more than 110,000 housing units are being built, including 54,500 units for the redevelopment of informal settlements. These steps have helped to eliminate the presence of unsafe informal settlements in Sinai and cities along the Canal.

Social housing

88. This is one of the most important projects being implemented by the State, because it has gone a significant way to resolving – by up to 60 per cent – the housing crisis suffered by persons on low incomes. The total cost of social housing units over the period 2014–2023 amounted to LE 193 million, with 630,500 units completed and 229,800 under construction.

Right to public health services and medical care

89. The right of all citizens to health and to integrated healthcare that meets due quality standards is enshrined in the Constitution, which also enjoins the State to support and maintain public healthcare facilities, to improve the effectiveness of such facilities and to ensure their fair geographical distribution. The Constitution also requires the State to create a comprehensive health insurance system for all Egyptians, covering all diseases (art. 18). The healthcare component of the Egypt Vision 2030 strategy aims to ensure that all Egyptians are able to enjoy their right to a safe and healthy life, thanks to an integrated health system that is accessible, high quality and non-discriminatory. The right to health is also reflected in the State budget, which envisages increased allocations for public spending on health. Those allocations went up to LE 496 billion in the financial year 2024/25, an increase of LE 465 billion compared to the budget for the financial year 2013/14.

90. A national health strategy for the Arab Republic of Egypt 2024–2030 has been launched with the aim of improving demographic characteristics, reaching an overall fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman and pursuing human development. Egypt has made considerable progress in its implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals related to the reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality rates, and in October 2024 the country received certification of malaria-free status from the World Health Organization (WHO). Also, in October 2023, Egypt was recognized by WHO for having reached the gold tier on the path to eliminating hepatitis C, the first country to achieve that status. In fact, Egypt has diagnosed 87 per cent of people living with hepatitis C and has provided curative treatment to 93 per cent of those diagnosed.

91. One objective of the government programme of action (2024–2027) is to establish a universal healthcare system and to provide outstanding health services to all citizens. It also aims to improve the system of health insurance by increasing beneficiary coverage to 85 per cent and to renovate 520 healthcare facilities, including intensive care units. To this end, the programme envisions four subprogrammes which aim to provide high-quality medical services and consolidate preventive care, improve public health, boost healthcare services for women and children, and deliver safe and effective drug treatment. The government programme of action also seeks to set in train a digital transformation in the field of healthcare as a way of developing the system and improving the services provided to citizens. This is to be achieved via a digital health initiative which aims to apply artificial intelligence and digital technology in the realm of medical services.

92. The number of primary care units and centres in urban and rural areas went up from 4,988 in 2014 to 9,162 in 2021, an increase of 83.7 per cent, while the number of dialysis units increased by 16 per cent, from 576 in 2014 to 668 in 2022. The number of intensive care beds in public and district hospitals went up from 1,634 in 2014 to 2,389 in 2021, an increase of 46.2 per cent. Lastly, the number of family planning units went up from 5,242 in 2014 to 5,431 in 2021, which constitutes an increase of 3.6 per cent.

Medical treatment at State expense

93. Allocations from the State budget earmarked for “treatment at State expense” have been increasing steadily and reached LE 8.516 billion in the budget for the financial year 2024/25, as compared to LE 5.516 billion in the budget for 2020/21. In addition to this, the specialized medical councils issued 2,435,900 orders for treatment at State expense, while 383,400 surgical procedures were carried as part of an initiative to end waiting lists under the “100 million health” campaign, between July 2023 until August 2024. Between January and March 2025, 803,646 orders for treatment at State expense were issued at a total cost of LE 6,027,256.

Public health initiatives

94. The State has rolled out 14 presidential initiatives as part of its “100 million health” campaign, the aim of which is to provide comprehensive healthcare for all citizens while ensuring ease of access to available services. Thanks to these initiatives, some 218 million services have been delivered via 3,527 health units, benefiting 94 million people. In addition to this, in the 100 days since its launch in September 2024, the “New beginning for human development” initiative has delivered 224.8 million healthcare services.

95. More than 50 million citizens have been tested as part of a project for the early detection of non-communicable diseases, with treatment being provided to 1.8 million persons with diabetes and 10 million with high blood pressure. In the context of a scheme intended to ensure the early detection of anaemia, obesity and stunting, 22 million schoolchildren were tested, with treatment then being provided via 300 clinics connected to the scheme’s online network. An initiative to detect and treat hearing loss in newborn infants was launched in September 2019, since when more than 1.25 million infants have been tested. In addition to this, 2,410 foreign children residing in Egypt have been examined at the 3,500 healthcare units distributed across the country, and an integrated infrastructure for the early detection of hearing loss has been developed at a cost of LE 120 million.

96. More than 15 million students have been tested as part of a presidential initiative to screen schoolchildren for hepatitis C, and a total of 28,517 cases have tested positive since the initiative began. In addition, around 49,780,000 students were tested as part of a presidential initiative to detect malnutrition, obesity, anaemia and stunting among schoolchildren. A further 5,030,000 children were examined during the academic year 2023/24.

97. An initiative to support the health of Egyptian women aims to reduce breast-cancer mortality rates via early detection, the promotion of health education, the training of medical service providers to provide high-quality treatment consistent with global standards and the improvement of the infrastructure for cancer treatment. More than 11 million women have been examined since the initiative was launched in July 2019. In addition, medical services have been provided free of charge to 683,000 women under an initiative to support maternal and fetal health, which was launched in March 2020. In the context of the initiative, an integrated system has been created, at a cost of LE 31 million, for the early detection of mother-to-child transmissible diseases. The initiative – which has operational and supply costs amounting to LE 30 million – aims to reduce mother-to-fetus transmission rates from 45 per cent to 2 per cent. Under an initiative to detect and treat chronic diseases and to ensure the early detection of kidney disease, 24 million citizens have been screened and provided with treatment free of charge, 180 dialysis units have been replaced or renewed, and 2,600 dialysis machines have been provided, at a total cost of LE 714 million.

Comprehensive health insurance

98. Comprehensive Health Insurance Act No. 2 of 2018 envisages mandatory coverage for all citizens residing inside the country, plus provision for optional extension to citizens living abroad. Under the Act, the State is required to provide a body of services: public health, preventive treatment, ambulance services, family planning, free health services during disasters and epidemics and workplace injury services. The Act is being applied gradually across the governorates to ensure its financial sustainability and maintain actuarial balance.

It also requires the State to upgrade the efficiency of its health facilities on an incremental basis before beginning to implement the new comprehensive health insurance system, the philosophy of which is based on compulsoriness and on social solidarity, with the State bearing the cost for persons who are unable to pay. The system – in which financing, on the one hand, is separate from service provision, on the other – is funded and administered by the General Authority for Comprehensive Health Insurance. At the same time, the General Authority for Healthcare is responsible for providing healthcare and treatment services inside and outside hospitals.

99. The Government is working to reach 100 per cent health insurance coverage by 2030. Its current programme of action aims to achieve 85 per cent coverage by 2026/27. The transition period between the old health insurance scheme and comprehensive health insurance will see – in the light of an annual budget increase of 20 per cent – a 35 per cent increase in coverage that will include farmers, agricultural workers, irregular workers and other vulnerable groups. The second stage of the comprehensive health insurance scheme will see coverage extended to five new governorates and a further 12.8 million citizens.

Right to insurance and social security

100. According to the Constitution, the State is to guarantee the provision of social insurance services, while citizens who are not covered by the social insurance system have the right to social security, in order to ensure a decent life, if they are unable to support themselves and their families, and in cases of incapacity, old age or unemployment. The Social Insurance and Pensions Act No. 148 of 2019 serves to develop and update social insurance systems; to ensure that they keep pace with global changes and comply with relevant international and regional agreements; and to unify the benefits such systems provide across all groups in society in order to uphold the principle of equity and equality of opportunity. The Act also addresses the disparity between pensions and incomes, and it envisages pensions in cases of old age, disability, injury and death, as well as insurance for sickness and unemployment. In addition, the Act discriminates positively in favour of certain vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, apprentices and informal workers of all kinds. This positive discrimination takes the form of incentives to encourage insurance, such as having the employer's quota paid out of public funds and a mechanism whereby pensions are increased in line with the rate of inflation (up to a maximum increase of 15 per cent) with the costs to be borne by the social insurance system.

101. In 2024, a total of 13.8 million persons were contributing to the social insurance system, while recipients of pensions and other benefits numbered 11.2 million. Annual expenditure on insurance amounted to LE 105.3 billion in 2014 and to LE 434 billion in 2024. On 1 March 2024, pension recipients were given an annual increase of 15 per cent, which entailed an annual expenditure of LE 66 billion. The minimum pension has increased from LE 450 in 2014 to LE 1,300 in 2024. The minimum insurance contribution was raised from LE 142 in 2014 to LE 2,000 in 2024, while the maximum contribution was raised from LE 2,603 in 2014 to LE 120,600 in 2024. The State treasury has undertaken to pay an annual quota for the coming 50 years, of which LE 903.2 billion has been disbursed until the financial year 2023/24, under the provisions of the Social Insurance and Pensions Act.

Non-contribution-based cash support and social assistance programmes

102. The State launched its “Takaful” and “Karama” social protection programmes in 2015. The “Takaful” programme is a conditional cash transfer scheme that provides income support to poor families with children under the age of 18. In order to benefit from the programme, the children are required to attend school regularly and to make use of healthcare facilities. The programme particularly targets poor women and families. The “Karama” programme envisages unconditional cash transfers to the poor, to older persons (over the age of 65) and to persons with severe disabilities. In 2014/15 a total of 2.5 million families, comprising 9.3 million individuals, benefited from the programmes, at a cost of LE 6.7 billion. By 2024 this had increased to 5.3 million families, comprising 22 million individuals, at a cost of LE 41 billion. Sixty per cent of beneficiaries are in the “Takaful” programme and 40 per cent in “Karama”.

103. In a related context, a database of poor families in Egypt has been developed, which currently includes 11.8 million families, or 42.5 million citizens, while cash assistance is provided on an irregular basis to 4.5 million families facing difficulties, with a monthly average of LE 400. In addition to this, 500,000 families were funded by organizations belonging to the National Alliance for Civil Development in the financial year 2023/24.

104. The State has also rolled out programmes to protect the rights of workers in the informal sector, with the introduction of the “Aman” certificate in 2018, the main aim of which is to provide insurance cover and to ensure family stability in case of death for seasonal and temporary workers, workers who do not have a fixed income and single women. A fund has been established to support irregular workers against risks of various kinds. Its purpose is to provide grants – “income replacement subsidies” – for such persons if their income is interrupted as a result of extraordinary economic conditions or epidemics and to address shortcomings in unemployment insurance for irregular workers and small-scale employers. The fund is also intended to benefit persons for whom the Ministry of Social Solidarity holds detailed data but who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the “Takaful” and “Karama” programmes.

105. The State is increasing the amount of public spending it allocates to social protection, which went up from LE 327.7 billion in the financial year 2019/20 to LE 635.9 billion in the budget for the financial year 2024/25, an increase of 94 per cent. Social protection programmes include food subsidies, social and health insurance, social housing, and cash transfer programmes (“Takaful” and “Karama”).

Right to education and training

106. The Constitution stipulates that education is a right for all citizens. The goal of education is to build the Egyptian character and preserve national identity, to promote rational thinking, develop gifts, encourage innovation, foment civilized and spiritual values and implant concepts of citizenship, tolerance and non-discrimination. Also under the Constitution, the State is required to provide education free of charge until the end of compulsory schooling, for all citizens without discrimination, and it is to seek to promote university education, which it is to provide free of charge in State-run universities and colleges. Furthermore, the State is under an obligation to allocate a portion of government spending, amounting to not less than 7 per cent of the country’s gross national product, to pre-university education, university education and scientific research (arts. 19–23), with pre-university education receiving 4 per cent, university education 2 per cent and scientific research receiving 1 per cent.

107. With a view to reforming the educational system, a strategic plan for the development of pre-university education 2014–2030 has been rolled out, and a national education project was launched in 2018. The strategic plan envisages a body of public policies aimed, notably, at providing the entire school-age population with equal enrolment opportunities, with a particular focus on poor areas, and at improving the quality of education by using modern curricula that are in line with global standards and taught by well-qualified teachers using the latest educational methods. The strategic plan also seeks to strengthen institutional structures, using decentralization as a way of ensuring good governance. The plan, moreover, includes a raft of programmes and subprogrammes including, most importantly, an information technology programme, a school meals programme and a comprehensive curriculum reform programme.

Public spending on education and numbers of schools

108. Spending on pre-university education increased from LE 208.2 billion in the year 2017/18 to LE 565 billion in the budget for the financial year 2024/25. The number of schools increased from 49,400 in 2013/14 to 61,300 in 2023/24; pre-university education classes went up from 466,600 in 2013/14 to 556,888 in 2023/2024; the number of students increased from 18.6 million in 2013/14 to 28 million in 2022/23; and the number of teachers went up from 942,800 in 2013/14 to 958,900 in 2022/23, an increase of 1.7 per cent. The State is taking action to address the teacher shortage by allocating resources to hire an additional 30,000 teachers per year.

109. Over recent years, the State has been working to support teachers and to improve their material conditions and their standard of living. It has also been seeking to make them more effective by training them in the latest teaching methodologies and thus enabling them to perform their role optimally. In all, 315,000 teachers received training in 2022, and the annual cost of the allowances disbursed to teachers went up to LE 1.8 billion, benefiting 1.4 million individuals. At the same time, thanks to cooperation with a number of international bodies, 80,000 teachers in general and technical education received training in the latest teaching methods.

Efforts on the part of the State to promote the right to pre-university education

110. The development of pre-university education is based on moving students away from being merely taught and towards active learning and understanding. In this context, a total of 72,230 new classrooms have been opened, including an additional 20,400 classrooms in villages most in need and in villages that are part of the “Decent life” programme. In addition to this, 629,700 primary school teachers have been given training in the new education system.

111. In order to provide education in areas most in need, a project to establish community schools in such areas has been expanded with the creation of 200 new schools, bringing the total number of schools to 4,943, attended by 139,772 pupils of both sexes. In addition to this, five schools have been opened specializing in applied technology in the following industries: food, pharmaceuticals, woodworking and furniture, building materials and mechanical and electrical engineering.

Technical education

112. More than half of the students in State-run secondary education in Egypt are enrolled in technical education courses. In fact, they account for 55 per cent of the total, as compared to 45 per cent enrolled in general secondary education. Egypt began implementing its comprehensive strategy to develop technical education by adapting study programmes to reflect the needs of the labour market, then developing competency-based curricula for 48 professions in 150 technical schools attended by 55,000 students and ensuring the quality of technical education programmes, duly accredited by an independent body.

Technical and vocational training

113. A comprehensive strategy has been rolled out for the development of centres to deliver vocational training to young people in line with the requirements of the job market. The purpose is to create a system of training and qualifications for young persons that remains linked to the labour market, and thus to create 2 million job opportunities over 5 years. A national “training for employment” plan has been adopted, the implementation of which involves 22 government agencies, and there are 72 vocational training centres across the country, including 38 permanent centres in 25 governorates and 27 mobile training units. The total cost of these facilities amounts to LE 54 million. A total of 36 training curricula have been developed and the training centres have run 334 workshops.

University education

114. The system of university education in Egypt is made up as follows: 28 State-run universities, 35 private universities, 20 charity-run universities, 10 technological universities, 7 branches of foreign universities, 176 public and private institutes of higher education, 11 research centres and 125 university hospitals. The system has almost 3.5 million students, 150,000 foreign students, 122,000 professors, 220,000 graduate students, 321,000 faculty members, teaching assistants and residents, and 13,505 research staff and assistants.

115. In March 2023, the State launched its national strategy for higher education and scientific research, the aim being to consolidate the teaching/research system, to create an environment suitable for investment, to support the diversification of university education and to link academic research to the needs and priorities of the State plan to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The strategy for higher education focuses on ensuring that graduates are qualified and equipped with the skills required by the labour market, which goes hand in hand with national efforts to achieve sustainable development and curb

unemployment. It is clear that technological changes have led to the emergence of new jobs that require non-traditional skills and, in this context, the Ministry has taken action to set up a system of training and qualifications that includes the creation of career development centres, digital platforms to manage career services and training programmes to improve the skills of students and graduates. The Ministry will also provide career guidance services to millions of students via 46 offices to be established in 34 universities by 2026.

Right to participation in cultural activities on a basis of equality

116. The Constitution affirms that the State is under an obligation to preserve the cultural identity of Egypt and its diversity of civilizations. Every citizen, moreover, has a right to culture and it is up to the State to uphold that right and to make cultural commodities of all kinds available to different groups of people, without discrimination. The Constitution further enshrines the State's obligation to protect, preserve, maintain and restore the country's antiquities and the areas in which they are situated. It goes on to stipulate that the Egyptian heritage of civilization and culture, both material and moral, in all its diversity and across all its major stages from Ancient Egypt to Coptic Egypt to Islamic Egypt, is a national and human treasure that the State is required to preserve and maintain (arts. 47–50 of the Constitution). Furthermore, the State is required to develop the cultural capacities of the young and to ensure that local cultural, environmental and community specificities are duly reflected in the formulation of comprehensive economic and urban development plans for border areas and deprived areas (arts. 82 and 236). The Ministry of Culture has an annual budget of around LE 3.541 billion.

117. The National Human Rights Strategy includes cultural rights as one of its areas of focus, with the intention of achieving a number of results, including: the balanced distribution of cultural services throughout the country, particularly in deprived areas, border areas and areas most in need; the advancement of the culture industry and the strengthening of funding mechanisms; the provision of greater support to palaces of culture to enable them to play their mandated role; and increased support for grass-roots cultural activity in order to promote the preservation of cultural identity.

118. A total of 85,000 cultural activities have been set in train with a view to promoting positive social values. Among these activities – which have brought direct benefit to some 2.526 million citizens – were 743 plays, 8,284 cultural seminars and 952 concerts at the Cairo Opera House, including 168 virtual concerts disseminated via the Internet in the first half of 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. These performances were watched by more than 382,000 citizens. As of June 2020, a number of cultural institutions were replaced or developed at a total cost of LE 1.28 billion, and 549 projects were rolled out. Cultural institutions include 18 cultural sites in 11 governorates, including palaces of culture, houses of culture, public libraries and theatres.

119. An online platform has been set up to make cultural resources, materials and content digitally available. It includes some 5,000 books in Arabic translated into several languages, 100 historical manuscripts, documentary and cinematic films, plays, artistic and cultural programmes, rare maps, microfilms and catalogues of major libraries.

120. In order to promote cultural identity and to increase the awareness and enjoyment of cultural heritage, 740 workshops providing training in traditional crafts have been run, attended by 5,622 citizens. Also, 7,129 shows featuring traditional arts have been laid on, benefiting some 62,600 citizens. In addition to this, 262 cultural seminars and 382 art exhibitions and performances have been organized under a programme to utilize the country's heritage, benefiting some 354,000 citizens. Furthermore, the State has acted to have the traditional “*Aragouz*” hand puppets placed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and it is working with other States to have “the palm tree and its associated knowledge, skills, traditions and practices” included on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Egypt has also managed to register seven entries on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. They are: the ceremonies related to the journey of the Holy Family in Egypt, Arabic calligraphy, the *Sirat Bani Hilal*, the “*Tahtib*” martial art, traditional “*Aragouz*” hand puppets, the palm tree and associated practices and hand weaving. As concerns cultural

justice, 1,554 “culture convoys” were sent out between 2019 and 2024, benefiting 649,943 people. The purpose of the convoys is to provide sociocultural support to Egyptian families in remote areas, border governorates, villages in the governorates of the western and central Delta and villages in the governorate of Minya. The Ministry of Culture has revived the ceremonial activities associated with Siwa and introduced new ones in Nubia. These are standing events that aim to record and document the customs, traditions and heritage of Aswan, Nubia and Siwa through figurative works of art. Also, between 2019 and 2024, 32,631 clubs for talented youngsters were set up, which were attended by 397,096 children.

The right to enter any place or facility intended for public use

121. Neither legislation nor daily practice envisages any measures that infringe upon citizens’ right to enter public spaces or use public facilities. This right is guaranteed for all persons without any discriminatory or restrictive provisions. Moreover, in the light of the composition and history of Egypt, national society rejects and condemns any such discriminatory behaviour, be it among citizens or directed against non-Egyptians. For these reasons, such practices are virtually absent from the daily lives of the Egyptian people, and no incidents of this nature have been recorded.

Article 6: Right of recourse to the courts to protect human rights and combat racial discrimination

122. The Egyptian legal system incorporates a comprehensive human rights-protection framework and guarantees the availability and effectiveness of remedies in the case of a violation of any of the rights protected under the Convention. Institutional structures include mechanisms to promote respect for and protection of human rights, including the courts, the National Council for Human Rights, the specialized National Councils and the human rights directorates and human rights units in various ministries, as well as other national mechanisms.

123. An independent and accessible human rights complaints mechanism has been set up, with the power to receive and investigate complaints and take appropriate action. This mechanism is the human rights department in the Office of the Public Prosecutor, which was established pursuant to Decree No. 2034 of 2017. The department receives complaints and reports related to human rights and violations thereof, which it examines, investigates and acts upon. The remaining complaints, having first been submitted to the Public Prosecutor, are then referred to the competent State prosecution offices for them to take the appropriate action under the law. The department also follows up on human rights-related cases being examined and investigated by prosecutors.

124. The human rights section of the Ministry of the Interior works to ensure that police officers and personnel always respect the Constitution, the law and international human rights treaties during the conduct of their duties. In addition, the Ministry receives complaints from individuals – either directly or via email or social media – regarding alleged human rights violations. Human rights offices have been set up inside all police stations, which monitor policework and the treatment accorded to individuals, receive complaints and take the necessary action.

125. Under article 214 of the Constitution, the National Council for Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities have the right to report to the authorities about any violations related to their field of activities. In addition to this, the National Council for Human Rights runs a hotline for receiving reports of violations of human rights, particularly the right to equality and non-discrimination, thereby facilitating access to remedies for victims. Procedures for receiving complaints are set forth in the laws that regulate those Councils. Under article 85 of the Constitution, moreover, any individual has the right to submit a signed and written complaint to the public authorities while, under article 138, any citizen can address a complaint to the House of Representatives for referral to the competent ministers. The latter are required to provide the appropriate clarifications if so requested by the House, while the

party concerned is to be informed of the outcome of the complaint, as detailed in the rules of procedure of the House of Representatives.

Article 7: Promoting understanding and tolerance in the fight against racial discrimination

126. The preamble to the Constitution reiterates the principle of citizenship and equality among all members of the national community, and it stipulates that no group among the Egyptian people is to be considered as a minority, since all groups are an integral part of the fabric of society. For its part, the State is not to discriminate among different groups of Egyptian people in any of the rights it recognizes or services it provides. Over the course of history, the roots of Egyptian society have extended to embrace many different cultures and religions, all of which have contributed to shaping the current national identity wherein any barriers that might lead to a sense of discrimination among people have been dissolved. Egypt has come into contact with many different civilizations and nations, and has seen its inhabitants mingle with peoples and ethnic groups from all corners of the globe.

127. Egypt has always been, and continues to be, a haven for persons who have, for whatever reason, left their own homeland. Peoples from across the Mediterranean basin have come and settled in northern Egypt, where they have engaged in commerce. The State has not sought to prevent these endeavours but has extended a hand to help such people until they too have become an integral part of Egyptian society. During times of conflict in neighbouring countries, Egypt has also taken in citizens of those countries, who have not been confined to specific areas but have lived side by side with the Egyptian people, while the State has provided them with opportunities to coexist and establish businesses and commercial ventures.

128. Egypt wishes to draw attention to the fact that it has never been an aggressor State. This is reflected in the character of its people, who extend a warm and hospitable welcome to everyone who enters the country, be it for tourism, commerce or even permanent residency. In the same way, the national fabric has not been affected by external influences, as encounters and interactions with other peoples of the world have resulted in a population the majority of which embraces Islam. Diversity has not hindered communication nor created division or discord, and there is no place in Egypt that is barred – in law or in practice – to a specific community, sex or ethnicity. Nor is any position barred to a particular group, except for those of a religious nature such as the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar or the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Churches.

Part II: Replies and clarifications concerning the Committee's concluding observations

129. In its concluding observations, the Committee requested the State Party to collect and publish comprehensive statistical data on the ethnic make-up of the population and on the social and economic situation of the various ethnic, minority and ethno-religious groups, disaggregated by region and reflecting the level of enjoyment of economic and social rights of such groups.

130. Egypt does not collect information or statistical data based on ethnicity or race, as all Egyptians are equal under the law. The Government uses evidence-based research to guide policy, and significant efforts and resources are being invested in improving the accessibility and quality of data. In particular, the State supports quantitative research that has clear policy implications, such as research on poverty and incomes. This has led to a reduction in poverty for the first time in 20 years (29.7 per cent in 2020 as compared to 32.5 per cent in 2018).

131. The sustainable development strategy known as the Egypt Vision 2030 includes, as part of its social component, a number of indicators related to poverty reduction. These indicators encompass several metrics, including the following: geographical disparities in the proportion of the population living below the poverty line; quality of education; quality of health services; average gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in dollars; global

gender-gap ranking; geographical disparities in the human development index; geographical disparities in opportunities to complete basic education; geographical disparities in child mortality rates; rate of trust in government; income and consumption distribution; proportion of population living below the extreme poverty line; proportion of female heads of household living below the poverty line; unemployment rate among persons with disabilities; proportion of older persons living below the poverty line; proportion of population living in unsafe informal settlements; proportion of homeless children; and levels of political and civic involvement among young persons and women.

Definition of racial discrimination

132. Reference is made to paragraphs 9–11 of the present report and the comment concerning article 1.

Criminalization of incitement to hatred and racial discrimination

133. Reference is made to paragraphs 19–29 of the present report and the comment concerning article 4.

Bringing the law on the National Human Rights Council into line with the new constitutional provisions and the Paris Principles

134. The Act under which the National Human Rights Council was established, as amended in 2017, defines the mandate and jurisdiction of that institution and stipulates that it is to be independent from government. Moreover, the Council is to have an independent budget, while the House of Representatives is responsible for selecting Council members from among persons nominated by universities, the Supreme Council for Culture, professional associations and other entities. The Council receives complaints, publishes reports, seeks to disseminate a human rights culture, makes recommendations to the Government and the legislature, coordinates and consults with the State, expresses its views on proposed legislation and conducts visits to prisons and places of detention.

135. It is a condition that the Chair, Vice-Chair and members of the Council – all of whom are chosen by the House of Representatives – must not be members of any bodies associated with the executive, the legislature or the judiciary. In the current composition of the Council, 44.5 per cent of members are women while, for the first time in its history, the Chair is also a woman. Fifty Council members come from civil society organizations and the Council as a whole holds regular consultations with both houses of parliament (House of Representatives and Senate). The Council has been granted category A status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).

136. Over the past five years, financial allocations from the State to the Council have amounted to around LE 260 million. The State has also provided the Council with a suitable headquarters as well as 11 branch offices in the governorates, thus facilitating communication with members of the public and the reception of complaints. The Council includes a number of committees, namely: a civil and political rights committee; a cultural rights committee; an international relations committee; a social rights committee; an economic rights committee; a legislative rights committee; a complaints, monitoring and follow-up committee; a training and capacity-building committee; a human rights promotion committee; and a climate justice and sustainable development committee. There are some 140 members on the Council's technical secretariat, many of whom have completed advanced degrees in international law and have undergone specialized training in oversight and protection, delivered in cooperation with United Nations specialized agencies and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Concerns that the lack of complaints and legal actions for racial discrimination may reveal a lack of suitable legislation or poor awareness of the legal remedies available

137. Reference is made to paragraphs 128–131 of the present report and the comment concerning article 6 on access to remedies.

Combating all forms of racial discrimination against persons belonging to minority groups, combating intolerance and promoting cultural diversity

138. Reference is made to paragraphs 19–29 of the present report and the comment concerning article 4. There have been numerous initiatives to promote tolerance and respect for cultural and religious diversity. Al-Azhar has launched a campaign to promote the authentic principles of Islam, especially tolerance and acceptance of others. Videos have been released in various languages to spread a culture of tolerance and respect for religious freedoms and to underscore the sanctity of places of worship of different religions. The “Homeland Unites Us – Love and Peace” initiative trains young persons not to give credence to rumours and to spread tolerance among all segments of society. The Coptic Evangelical Organization has launched initiatives along the same lines. They include: “Our value is in our humanity”, “Our unity is in our diversity”, “Our heritage brings us together” and “A message of brotherhood, dialogue and tolerance”. The Fatwa Council has established the Peace Centre for Studies on Extremism. It has issued an academic manual on anti-extremism, which highlights sound religious texts and aims to use religion to counter extremism. Act No. 190 of 2020 envisaged the creation of endowments authorities for the Catholic Church and the evangelical community. In addition to this, the Ministry of Higher Education launched a strategy to counter extremism and takfiri ideology in Egyptian universities 2019–2023. The strategy involves setting goals and rolling out policies, programmes and plans to monitor the most significant manifestations of takfiri ideology and identify key strengths and weaknesses in how the system responds to this issue.

Steps to promote the enjoyment by minority groups of their rights to education, employment, decent housing and the preservation of their culture

139. For measures concerning the right to education, reference is made to paragraphs 112–121; for measures concerning the right to work, reference is made to paragraphs 80–83; and for measures concerning decent housing, reference is made to paragraphs 88–94.

Economic development of border regions

140. According to the Constitution, the State is to formulate and implement a comprehensive economic and urban development plan for border areas and deprived areas, including Upper Egypt, Sinai, Matruh and the regions of Nubia. The people of those areas are to be involved in, and be the foremost beneficiaries of, development projects, which must take due account of the cultural and environmental specificities of local communities. The State is also working to formulate and implement plans to return Nubian peoples to their regions of origin, in accordance with the law. In order to give force to these constitutional provisions, the State engages in ongoing consultations with grass-roots organizations. In that connection – and in order to strengthen frameworks of community participation, transparency and accountability – the Ministry of Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation is running a plan to provide citizens with detailed information about the investments it makes in each governorate, and how these are distributed across different sectors. In 2019, the Ministry launched its “Sharek 2030” app, which acts as an interactive platform between citizens and government, and which can be used to raise awareness about development programmes and projects. The app serves as a way for citizens to participate and to propose their own priority initiatives according to their local needs.

141. Beginning in the financial year 2021/22, the Ministry of Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation has been using a “financing formula” when proposing investment plans for the governorates. The formula is important in order to ensure an equitable distribution of government investments among the governorates, to promote economic and social equality between different regions and to advance sustainable development at the national level. Distribution is regulated by a body of criteria, including poverty and human development indicators in the various governorates, population and average previous investments. Beginning in the year 2023/24, a “financing formula” has also been adopted for the distribution of investments among districts and boroughs within governorates, although this formula currently includes only a population indicator.

142. As part of this process, more than 650 billion pounds have been disbursed on development projects in Sinai since 2014. Public investments directed towards Sinai have increased by 415 per cent over the past 8 years, reaching LE 10.3 billion in 2021/22, compared to LE 8.3 billion in 2020/21, LE 5.4 billion in 2019/20, LE 3.4 billion in 2018/19, LE 4.2 billion in 2017/18, LE 6.3 billion in 2016/17, LE 2.7 billion in 2015/16 and LE 2 billion in 2014/15.

143. As concerns infrastructure projects, around 2,400 km of roads have been constructed in Sinai, most notably a 342-km dual-lane carriageway from Sharm el-Sheikh to the Ahmad Hamdi Tunnel. A 60-km carriageway between Taba and Nuweiba has also been completed, as have the first and second phases – 50 km in all – of a road between Dahab and Nuweiba. In addition to this, four tunnels have been created under the Suez Canal to connect Sinai to the cities along the Canal, as well as five floating bridges to facilitate the movement of people and goods over the waterway. Lastly, the Ahmad Hamdi Tunnel II has been completed, which also helps to connect Sinai with other parts of the country.

144. Action has been taken to improve ports and land border crossings. Six ports have been upgraded and made more efficient and two land border crossings have been completed, in the cities of Taba and Rafah. In addition to this, five industrial zones have been established and developed within the Sinai Peninsula: Bi'r al-Abd, Central Sinai, Abu Zenima, Masa'id and Al-Qantara East. A new industrial zone is being established in Central Sinai on an area of 78,400 feddan, while a development plan for the industrial zone in Abu Zenima is currently being formulated in cooperation with the governorate of South Sinai.

145. The Suez Canal Economic Zone, which was established to contribute to the development of Sinai, spans five governorates – Port Said, Ismailia, Suez, North Sinai and South Sinai – and it contains six seaports: East Port Said, West Port Said and the ports of Arish, Ayn Sukhnah, Al-Tor and Adabya. It also includes four industrial zones (East Port Said, East Ismailia, West Qantara and Ayn Sukhnah). Investments in the Zone have reached around \$18 billion, and 80,000 direct and indirect job openings have been created.

146. Between October 2015 and March 2021, a total of LE 4.1 billion was disbursed to residents of North Sinai in compensation for anti-terrorism security operations.

147. As concerns the development of northern areas of the country, Presidential Decree No. 108 of 2018 was issued to approve the reallocation of State-owned land in Alamayn for the construction of New Alamayn City, located on the country's north coast. A total area of 48,917 feddan has been allocated for the project which, upon completion, will have space for 3 million people. The project includes 14 residential neighbourhoods of different levels, industrial zones covering 5,000 feddan, logistics zones covering 3,000 feddan and commercial and service zones covering 5,000 feddan. The Egyptian Government has provided compensation to the Nubian people in southern Egypt for the harm they suffered as a result of the construction of the Aswan High Dam and Reservoir, and the Prime Minister has issued a decree aimed at identifying Nubian victims who have yet to receive reparation. A further decree envisaged the creation of a national committee to develop rules and procedures for disbursing compensation to persons who have not yet received redress.

148. The Egyptian State has made over the ownership of the land on which persons affected by the construction of the Aswan High Dam built their homes. In addition, the State has granted long-term usufruct rights to persons who built their homes on land that they cannot legally own or who are unable to benefit from the State's future development plan. Persons who lost their homes as a consequence of the construction of the High Dam were compensated either in kind – granting each of them ownership of a social housing unit in one of 13 governorates – or in cash – at a rate of LE 225,000 per dwelling – or through participation in the State's future development plan.

149. Persons affected by the construction of the Dam who lost agricultural land were also compensated either in kind – by granting ownership of arable land of an area equivalent to the land lost, with fractions of a feddan rounded up to a full feddan for those who owned less than a feddan – or in cash – at a rate of LE 25,000 per feddan, with fractions of a feddan rounded up to a full feddan for those who owned less than a feddan – or through participation in the State's future development plan. Around 11,500 Nubian citizens were identified as being eligible for compensation, of whom 6,171 have submitted claims in that regard. The

total in-kind and cash compensation disbursed to beneficiaries may be summarized as follows: 2,009 plots of land of various sizes on which housing units have been built for recipients of compensation and to whom ownership will be transferred; 187 plots of land of various sizes on which housing units have been built for recipients of compensation and to whom usufruct rights will be granted; 198 social housing units; and 3,354 feddans of arable land in the governorate of Aswan. This is in addition to LE 302 million in cash compensation.

Evaluating the measures taken to improve people’s quality of life and ensuring that such measures do not have a disproportionate negative impact on minorities or their traditional way of life

150. As already stated in the present report, the State has been making efforts to pursue development and to promote the economic, social and cultural rights of citizens in border areas and deprived areas. In addition to this, the State has also focused on supporting young persons in these governorates via a number of cultural, developmental and sporting initiatives. These include an “Olympics” for border governorates, which has already been held five times, and which aims to provide a fair competitive environment, to showcase talent and to forge a generation capable of excellence and creativity in various fields. Young persons from the governorates of North Sinai, South Sinai, Red Sea, New Valley, Aswan, and Matruh have participated in the initiative.

Promoting freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and religious diversity among ethnic and religious minorities by taking the necessary legislative and administrative measures

151. Reference is made to paragraphs 62–66 of the present report.

Discrimination against non-citizens, migrants and asylum-seekers

Rights of non-citizens

152. The Government of Egypt can affirm that, under the country’s constitutional and legal system, foreigners enjoy the fundamental rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on an equal footing with citizens. They have the right to own real estate property, to have recourse to law, enjoy the protection of the courts and engage in commercial activities.

Migrants and refugees

153. Egypt, which is home to 10.7 million foreign nationals, including migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers of 62 nationalities, is determined to ensure that such persons have access to basic services and that they are integrated into society rather than being required to remain in camps or refugee centres. Migrants and refugees who reside in the country, and their minor children, enjoy equal access to the healthcare and education systems. They are fully covered by primary healthcare services, and they are included in nationwide health campaigns and programmes. In response to the constant increase in the number of refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt, a new law – the Foreigners’ Asylum Act No. 164 of 2024 – has been enacted, which is consistent with the international obligations of Egypt and the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and which provides protection for such persons and guarantees their rights and freedoms. The Act also includes provision for the creation of a national committee to oversee matters affecting refugees. The committee is responsible for ruling on asylum applications on a case-by-case basis, within specific time frames and under the oversight of the courts, with priority being given to applications from persons with disabilities, older persons, pregnant women, unaccompanied children and victims of human trafficking, torture or sexual violence. The Act explicitly prohibits the forced deportation or return of refugees to places where their lives might be endangered. At the same time, it guarantees their right to return voluntarily to their country of nationality or residence, to be voluntarily resettled in another country or to obtain Egyptian citizenship.

154. Refugees in Egypt enjoy greater safeguards against deportation or removal than those afforded to foreigners who reside in the country on a regular or temporary basis. The reason for this disparity lies in the humanitarian circumstances of refugees and in the principle of

solidarity, which justify granting them greater care and protection. The Egypt country office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is responsible for determining refugee status, under a memorandum of understanding signed between UNHCR and Egypt in 1954, which led to the enactment of Act No. 172 of 1954.

155. There are no detention centres for refugees and migrants in Egypt, and national policy towards both groups is based on the principle of respecting freedom of movement while also rejecting the establishment of detention centres and ensuring non-discrimination, in accordance with the principle of equality before the law. Egypt upholds all the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers enshrined in the Convention, guarantees them complete freedom of movement and cooperates with UNHCR under the 1954 memorandum of understanding. The Government and UNHCR continue to coordinate to ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers receive protection and support and are able to access UNHCR services.

Concerning the Committee’s recommendation to include minorities in the quota system, so as to ensure that different segments of the Egyptian population are duly represented

156. Reference is made to paragraphs 43–49 of the present report and the comment concerning article 5.

Concerning the Committee’s recommendation to ensure that measures to combat terrorism are undertaken in such a way as to protect fundamental human rights in the interpretation and application of counter-terrorism laws, and to prevent and combat the use of racial profiling by the police

157. With regard to anti-terrorism legislation, the Government of Egypt believes that combating terrorism and protecting human rights are complementary and mutually reinforcing objectives and that its anti-terrorism legislation strikes a balance between security and respect for human rights, especially the right to life, which is directly threatened by terrorist activity. Emergency and anti-terrorism legislation continues to be governed by the principle of the rule of law and legitimacy, and is not applied on discriminatory grounds. Legislation respects the principles of necessity, balance and proportionality; provides for fair trial guarantees during arrest, detention, indictment and trial; and upholds the presumption of innocence. Charges are brought as soon as possible, arbitrary detention without charge is prohibited and detention orders are reviewed by the courts. A lawyer must be present with the accused as well as, when necessary, an interpreter. The accused person has the right to appear before an independent court and may be convicted only in accordance with pre-existing legal provisions. Torture and ill-treatment are prohibited in law and in practice, and imprisonment and enforcement of sentences takes place at officially designated correctional and rehabilitation centres. The Counter-Terrorism Act grants law enforcement powers that apply exclusively to this type of crime, and such powers must be exercised in accordance with specific rules that conform to the framework of procedural law and are subject to judicial oversight and supervision.

Combating trafficking in persons

158. Egypt acceded to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in 2003. In 2014, it also acceded to the Arab Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. These advances were subsequently incorporated into article 89 of the 2014 Constitution, which states: “All forms of slavery, servitude, oppression and forced exploitation of human beings, as well as sex trafficking and other forms of trafficking in persons, are prohibited and criminalized under the law.” In compliance with the country’s international commitments, Anti-Human Trafficking Act No. 64 of 2010 duly outlaws all contemporary forms of slavery. A perpetrator of such an offence is defined as anyone who sells, buys, transports, delivers or harbours a natural person – be it in the country or abroad – by means of force, violence, threats, abduction, deception, abuse of authority or exploitation of a situation of vulnerability or need in order to gain a person’s consent to the trafficking of another person over whom they have control, when the purpose of such actions is exploitation in any form, including sexual exploitation, the exploitation of children in

prostitution, forced labour, forced servitude, slavery or slavery-like practices, begging or the removal of human organs.

159. The Act envisages special protection for victims by stipulating the inadmissibility of “consent” on their part to being exploited in any form of human trafficking. The Act also envisages more robust protection for children and persons who lack legal capacity, for whom none of the means listed above need to be present in order for a human trafficking offence to subsist. Consent on the part of the person responsible for the victim is likewise inadmissible. The Act contains a separate section – entitled “Protection for victims” – on special protection provisions, according to which victims cannot be punished or held criminally or civilly liable for any offence arising from or related to their status as victims. The section also affirms that victims are to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also states that, throughout the evidence-gathering, investigation and trial, efforts must be made to identify and classify victims, to ascertain their identity, nationality and age and to protect them from perpetrators.

160. In addition to the foregoing, the Act also stipulates that victims have a right to physical, psychological and moral integrity; to the protection of their personal dignity and identity; to receive information regarding the relevant administrative, legal and judicial proceedings; to be heard and to have their views and interests taken into account at all stages of criminal proceedings; and to legal assistance and legal representation during both investigation and trial. Courts, for their part, are required to take measures to protect victims and witnesses and to prevent them from being subjected to undue influence. Where necessary, this can entail concealing their identities. Moreover, the Act envisions efforts to create appropriate conditions to assist victims and provide them with healthcare, psychological support, education and social care, as well as to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society within a framework of freedom and human dignity and, if they are foreign nationals or non-permanent residents, to ensure their prompt and safe return to their countries of origin. Lastly, the Act also requires that victims be housed in suitable facilities, separate from those designated for offenders, where they can receive visits from their relatives, lawyers and representatives of the authorities.

161. Under the Act, Egyptian victims of human trafficking are to be provided with every possible assistance via the country’s diplomatic missions abroad, in coordination with the competent national authorities, with a view to their safe and prompt return to Egypt. Similarly, coordination with the relevant authorities in other nations serves to facilitate the safe and prompt return of foreign victims to their own countries of origin. The Act also makes provision for the courts and the police to cooperate with their foreign counterparts in order to combat and prosecute human trafficking offences. This process is regulated in accordance with the bilateral or multilateral agreements in force in Egypt or in accordance with the principle of reciprocity. The Act envisages severe penalties for all parties involved in human trafficking, which can range from a fixed term of imprisonment up to life imprisonment and fines of up to LE 500,000.

162. Prime Ministerial Decree No. 369 of 2023 served to establish the Fund for Combating Irregular Migration and the Protection of Migrants and Witnesses. The purpose of the Fund is to combat irregular migration, assist victims and protect witnesses in migration-related offences. More recently, Presidential Decree No. 349 of 2024 was issued to regulate the Assistance Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking.

163. With a view to protecting physical integrity, article 60 of the 2014 Constitution prohibits trafficking in human organs. Article 61 stipulates that the donation of tissues and organs is a gift to life, and that every person has the right to donate their organs during their lifetime or after their death, subject to consent or a notarized will. The Constitution envisions the creation of a mechanism to regulate organ donation and transplants, in accordance with the law. This goes to reinforce the provisions of Human Organ Transplant Act No. 5 of 2010, which sets forth the regulations governing the practice of organ transplantation, protects the rights of all parties involved and prevents any abuses. Notable provisions of the Act include precise regulations governing the transplant process, according to which human organs may not be transplanted unless the transplant is the only means of preserving the recipient’s life. Moreover, the transplantation of human organs may not lead to the mixing of lineages; the process must be performed on a voluntary basis and with the written consent of the donor;

and no human organ or body part may be transplanted from a deceased to a living person, unless the deceased has made testamentary provision to that effect.

164. The Act imposes strict and rigorous oversight on medical facilities that perform organ transplants, and it includes provision for the creation of a “supreme committee for human organ transplantation” which has the task of licensing facilities to perform transplants, ensuring that they comply with licensing requirements and subjecting them to continuous supervision and oversight. Transplants are to be approved by a medical committee none of whose members may participate in the transplant procedure, and the removal of organs from a body may take place only after death has been conclusively established and any return to life has been deemed impossible by unanimous agreement of the committee members. Act No. 142 of 2017 amended certain provisions of the Human Organ Transplant Act, including the imposition of harsher penalties for violations, which can range, depending on the nature of the offence, from a fixed term of imprisonment up to life imprisonment and fines of between LE 500,000 and LE 2 million.

165. The Government is taking measures to protect the interests of domestic workers and to ensure that no person is subjected to forced or compulsory labour. The most significant of these measures is the introduction of a model contract which aims to foster a well-balanced relationship between the domestic worker and the homeowner. A system of standards for assessing skill levels and professional ability is also being applied to domestic workers, enabling them to obtain a certificate that allows them to register their occupation on their national identity card. Such workers are also being provided with social insurance and being allowed to establish a labour union to defend their rights and protect their interests, in accordance with article 2 of the Trade Unions Act No. 213 of 2017. The Government is in the process of drafting a bill to regulate domestic work, which covers training for domestic workers, working hours, holidays, wages, insurance, home inspection mechanisms and the submission of complaints, in addition to other provisions that take account of the workers’ interests and the specific nature of that form of work.

Combating violence against women

166. The Criminal Code provides legal protection for the right of persons of both sexes to physical integrity against violence in various forms. It also criminalizes rape, for which it prescribes severe penalties. Article 242 of the Code punishes battery that causes injury, irrespective of the gravity of such injury, while article 377 penalizes minor abuse that does not result in injury. There is no legal provision or case law that exempts aggressors from punishment, whatever their relationship to the victim. With regard to article 60 of the Criminal Code, the Supreme Court has ruled that it only permits acts committed in the exercise of a right approved by the law and, therefore, it cannot be invoked to claim exemption from criminal liability for acts that are punishable by law.

167. The national strategy to empower Egyptian women 2030 includes a specific component regarding protection against violence, and it makes provision for an independent body to monitor the progress of national indicators. In addition to this, Egypt has adopted a body of operational measures and policies, including a 2021 Prime Ministerial decree establishing the first joint unit to prevent violence against women, the aim being to accelerate the relevant procedures and provide all services within an integrated unit. The decree clearly defines violence against women as any act, behaviour or omission in violation of the Constitution and the law that results in harm or suffering to women, be it physical, material, moral, psychological, social or economic, or in violation of legally guaranteed rights and freedoms, whether in public or private life. This can include threats, omissions or arbitrary actions inconsistent with international treaties and covenants. Provisions within the Egyptian Criminal Code cover a wide range of sexual offences and crimes of violence against women, which are defined under various legal classifications. The Code thus punishes acts of sexual harassment, indecent exposure, rape, non-consensual sexual intercourse, indecent assault, genital mutilation, abduction of women and acts of indecency. It also punishes acts of violence against women, such as bullying and discrimination. Other national laws address crimes such as denial of inheritance, cybercrimes and forced or early marriage, and include provision for the protection of victims’ data in cases of violence and harassment.

168. One of the functions of the National Council for Women is to receive and review reports of violations against women's rights and freedoms and complaints from female victims of violence, and to refer them to the competent authorities. The Council also seeks to resolve such problems with the parties concerned and to provide the necessary legal assistance free of charge. The complaints office at the National Council for Women can receive reports either in person or via its 15115 hotline or other channels of communication. It then provides counselling as well as legal, psychological and social support to the women concerned and refers the matter to the competent authorities. Between 2018 and 2023, the Council provided services to 182,827 women and handled 255,630 complaints.

169. The complaints office has issued six procedural guides for addressing different instances of violence against women. For its part, the National Council for Women has continued to run awareness-raising campaigns (via both direct and indirect channels) on violence against women in all its forms as well as on cyberviolence, reporting and protection mechanisms and the relevant national laws. The State has conducted a number of studies, including one on the economic cost of violence against women; in fact, Egypt was the first country in the Arab region to undertake such a venture. The Government also undertook a population health survey in 2021 as well as other surveys conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. All of these underscored the importance of eliminating violence against women within the family. Another survey focused on violence against women with disabilities. On a related front, more than 42 anti-harassment and anti-violence units have been set up at universities, as well as a unit to combat violence against women at the Ministry of Justice and similar divisions in directorates of the Ministry of the Interior. There are 12 "safe women" units for female victims of violence at university hospitals, 18 medical response units in primary care facilities run by the Ministry of Health and Population and 3 forensic medicine clinics for victims of violence and sexual assault, as well as online services for families at the State Prosecution Office. At the governorate level, a total of 12 women's shelters take in victims of violence, while the first shelter for victims of human trafficking was opened in November 2020 to assist trafficked persons who are suffering as a result of their ordeal and require specialized care.

170. Using international precedents as a basis, a national questionnaire has been developed to use when reporting cases of violence against women. Training programmes have been put in place for service providers and other relevant authorities. These have benefited 5,405 persons over recent years, including judges, prosecutors, police officers, medical personnel and the staff of anti-violence units. This is in addition to the publication of a number of manuals, including: a forensic manual for doctors; a manual on effective police response to crimes of violence against women; a medical manual for healthcare providers; a manual for prosecutors; a manual on effective judicial response to crimes of violence against women; a manual for case management and psychological support; a manual for judges; a manual for anti-violence units at universities; and a manual for "safe women" units at university hospitals.

171. The National Council for Women has launched an initiative to support the establishment of standing committees at the governorate level to eliminate violence against women. The committees will be responsible for coordinating multidisciplinary efforts across all sectors and for developing local-level policies and protocols to protect women against violence in all its forms.

172. In coordination with the Ministry of Health, the General Secretariat for Mental Health, the National Council for Women and the National Council for Childhood, law enforcement agencies seek to provide psychological care and community support services to female victims of violence. Between November 2019 and October 2023, a total of 1,241 perpetrators of violence against women (sexual harassment and assault) were apprehended.

Concerning the Committee’s recommendation to ensure that education in human rights, including training on the Convention, is made widely available and that mechanisms are set up to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of such measures

173. All ministries and government agencies have added human rights training and education programmes to their action plans. For example, the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the National Council for Women, has held workshops on the protection of women for thousands of staff in judicial bodies.

174. During the period from January 2020 to January 2023, 440 training courses on human rights and international instruments were held for 10,808 judges and prosecutors. Specific topics included the right to a fair trial, crimes against life and physical integrity and crimes entailing unlawful migration. Courses for judges are also held by the National Centre for Judicial Studies of the Ministry of Justice, while the Criminology Research and Training Institute of the State Prosecution Office organized specialized courses for staff covering the same topics as well as courses on due process rights for suspects.

175. During the period 2019–2023, the Ministry of the Interior, in coordination with international organizations and OHCHR, held 47 staff training courses in the fields of human rights, violence against women and healthcare in reform and rehabilitation centres. Additional training courses on the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) were held, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

176. Various human rights training activities have been conducted in cooperation with OHCHR and international partners, most notably a train-the-trainer course for law enforcement officials (at the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice and the State Prosecution Office). Work is ongoing with a number of partners and United Nations agencies to prepare a programme to incorporate human rights into school curricula.

A new law on NGOs

177. Reference is made to paragraphs 77–79 of the present report and the comment concerning the right of association.

Ratifying treaties, making the optional declaration provided for in article 14 of the Convention and ratifying the amendments to article 8 (6) of the Convention

178. In Egypt, regular reviews of positions on treaties are conducted in the light of national priorities. Using the Constitution as its guide and thus ensuring a harmonized approach to its international commitments, the Government reviews its position on the international instruments to which it has not acceded or the provisions to which it has entered reservations. It is important to note that the question of accession to an international treaty pertains to the sovereign right of each State to determine its own position based on its own specificities. In the context of these periodic reviews of reservations in the light of the Constitution, and in order to ensure consistency and harmony with international obligations, reservations to a number of international treaties and covenants have been withdrawn. The reservation to article 9 (2) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women – granting women equal rights with men to acquire, retain or change their nationality and to transmit their nationality to their children – was withdrawn with effect from 4 January 2008. The reservation to articles 20 and 21 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was withdrawn in June 2003. The reservation to article 21 (2) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child – prohibiting marriage for children under the age of 18 – was withdrawn with effect from 13 March 2015.

Consulting and expanding dialogue with civil society organizations working in the area of human rights protection; making State Party reports readily available and accessible to the public at the time of their submission and publishing the Committee’s concluding observations

179. The Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights consults with NGOs when drafting reports for international and regional human rights mechanisms and when following up on the implementation of observations and recommendations emerging from such reports.

The Committee undertakes to disseminate national reports and concluding observations as widely as possible, sharing them with relevant ministries and other government bodies and posting them on its own website.

180. With reference to the recommendation to update the common core document, the Government of Egypt has completed the process and plans to submit the updated document to the United Nations before the end of September 2025.
