



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

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

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

Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of States parties

Egypt*

* The present report is being issued without formal editing.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ADDITIONAL SOURCES

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEDPA	Centre for Development and Population Activities
CGA	Country Gender Assessment
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for South East Asia
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Disease
FHH	Female-Headed Household
NCW	National Council for Women
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics ¹
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
GALAE	General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education

¹ The official Egyptian Government source of information and statistics.

Introduction

This report covers progress of the Arab Republic of Egypt in promoting women in the framework of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women [hereinafter, "the Convention"] during 2001-2006.

This report was prepared by the National Council for Women, a national mechanism established under Republican Decree No. 90 of 2000 to promote women, enable them to participate actively in development, and affirm women's constitutional equality in practice (Annex 1).

The following participated in preparing this report:

- Experts in various fields.
- Representatives of the concerned ministries and government agencies and several specialized national councils, e.g., the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood.
- Representatives of many civil-society organizations, including private associations, unions, political parties, the National Council on Human Rights, etc. (Annex 2)

Report Preparation Process:

This report was prepared taking into account the following:

- The guidelines established by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
- The general remarks and guiding principles of the Committee.
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
- The United Nations Millennium Development Goals, particularly the third goal, which concerns gender equality.
- The remarks of experts on the third periodic report and the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports.²
- The indicators appearing in the periodic Human Development Report issued by the UNDP, the Human Development Reports on Egypt, and the 2003 Country Gender Assessment for Egypt issued in cooperation with the World Bank.

As part of the preparation of this report, all UN instruments to which Egypt has committed were reviewed to take into account the recommendations thereof, particularly those on gender equality. The review led to the formulation of a strategy for the NCW covering up to the year 2015. The strategy is practical in its orientation and designed to empower women comprehensively. It stresses achievement of the third millennial goal, to which Egypt has committed.

² CEDAW/C/EGY/4-5 and CECAW/C/EGYPT/3, which were examined by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its twenty-fourth session of 15 January-2 February 2001, meetings 492 and 493 of 19 January 2001 (CEDAW/C/SR/492 and CEDAW/C/SR.493).

During the period covered by this report, cooperation between the NCW, government entities, and NGOs (including civil-society organizations and information and research organizations) was strengthened at the national level through the signing of cooperation protocols and joint activities designed to achieve gender equality. The NCW cooperated with international and regional organizations, e.g., the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Gender Advisory Board/UNCTD, and many other UN organizations. The NCW also cooperated with the European Union, friendly governments, and the World Bank in the context of the Development Assistance Group-Egypt, which includes bilateral and multilateral donors.

The NCW adopted a new, non-traditional approach to formulating this report and to treating the articles of the Convention. The report is largely analytical. It treats each article of the Convention separately, covering in detail each paragraph of each article and occasionally a sentence within a given paragraph. In this way, the report facilitates the work of the Committee by providing well-defined, clear, unambiguous responses. The NCW also saw fit to treat each article under four distinct headings:

1. “The Current Situation” concerning each specific article.
2. “Efforts Made” to implement the concerned article.
3. “Challenges”.
4. “Future Efforts”.

This approach in formulating the report required an extraordinary effort, which was made according to a defined working programme that was constantly adjusted and refined. Annex 3 presents the steps taken to prepare this report.

The Current Report

Egypt’s Constitution guarantees absolute, unconditional equality among citizens regardless of sex, creed, origin, or ethnicity (Annex 4, Article 40). Egyptian women enjoy the rights of constitutional equality and a political will that is well supported by:

- Frequent recommendations by the President of the Republic in his presidential election programme and official speeches before Parliament on the need to eliminate discrimination against women and to empower women to participate actively in all fields of development at all levels (Annex 5).
- Monitoring by the Office of the Prime Minister of the efforts of all ministries to ensure non-discrimination against women (Annex 6).
- The election of the President’s wife, Ms. Suzanne Mubarak, as the president of the NCW, which has been an enormous boost to the NCW’s progress and activities. Suzanne Mubarak has sponsored numerous activities to promote women in Egypt and is an effective NCW president.

The Constitution and the laws supplementing the Constitution provide for absolute equality between men and women. However, constitutional and legal provisions concerning gender equality are in some cases violated in practice, posing

challenges that are stated clearly in the treatment of the relevant articles in this report.

This report highlights the tangible progress made in promoting women since Egypt submitted its combined fourth and fifth report in 2000. This progress reflects the enforcement of constitutional and legal rights and compliance with the Convention's provisions. In this regard, the gender gap at various levels of education has steadily narrowed. Moreover, in secondary education and some areas of higher education, the education gap now favours females regarding enrollees and, increasingly, the percentage of women on some university and college faculties, particularly among junior faculty (see article 10 of this report). The percentages of women in all employment fields and sectors and in leadership posts have also increased, including women appointed to the judiciary (see article 11 of this report). The only post still closed to women is that of governor. This report includes information relating to all fields of development mentioned in the articles of the Convention.

Among the many achievements recorded during 2001-2006, perhaps the most important concerns the development of the national planning method. This method provides for the inclusion of women's affairs and the integration of gender in the two five-year plans for socioeconomic development covering 2002- 2007 and 2007-2012 with the NCW's active participation. The 2002-2007 five-year plan doubles appropriations for projects and programmes targeting women compared to the previous national plan. The government has begun to adopt planning and general budget concepts that integrate gender. Based on its mandates, the NCW monitors the implementation of these programmes, annually evaluates their impact on the situation of women in Egypt, and submits its remarks to the concerned agencies. The NCW adopted a new approach for preparing the draft plan for promoting women in the sixth national plan covering 2007-2012. The new approach for arriving at a comprehensive national plan entails participatory planning. The planning process incorporates the participation of the grassroots level in neighbourhoods, villages, administrative districts, cities, and governorates, and, for the first time in Egypt, the grassroots participation of women along with NGOs, local councils, etc. This has had a major effect in changing government planning methods. Consequently, the Government has adopted decentralized planning and gender concepts that take into account the needs of both sexes equally. The new approach has been applied not only to planning stages, but also to approval of the general government budget and monitoring/evaluation activities, which also integrate gender. In the ceremony marking Egypt's Women's Day in March 2007, the Prime Minister expressed praise for this work and promised to support the plan by ensuring that all governors of the Republic implement it (Annex 8), as is indeed happening now.

Despite the successes achieved, collection of complete sex-disaggregated data remains deficient in some areas. The NCW has mounted a major effort to remedy this deficiency through cooperation with CAPMAS and the Information and Decision-Making Support Centre under the Council of Ministers.

An NCW experts committee has undertaken to revise the traditional indicators currently used to monitor and evaluate the national plan. In a number of cases, these indicators do not accurately measure gender equality. New, typological indicators have been introduced to measure gender equality in future monitoring and

evaluation activities commencing at end-2007, the first year of the 2007-2012 national plan.

A Woman's Skill Development Centre has been established in the NCW with branches in 16 of the Republic's 27 governorates. Branches are currently being established in the other governorates with support from USAID. The centre's goal is to economically empower, and reduce unemployment among, women by providing the necessary skills to women wishing to enter the labour market and by encouraging women to establish small and micro projects. The centre also has an electronic training division (www.Afkargadida.com) and an Internet site dedicated to electronic marketing (www.cleostore.com). The NCW's technical advisor won the international Anita Borg Prize³ for 2007 on behalf of the centre's programmes for the best use of information technology to empower women economically. Within a relatively short period, the centre has attracted a large number of women who have begun small projects. It has also attracted small project owners, enabling them to expand and develop their projects and export their products abroad.

To address the limited participation of Egyptian women in political life, the NCW has established the Centre for the Political Empowerment of Women. The centre provides an intensive training programme for women wishing to participate in political life with assistance from the UNDP and the Government of the Netherlands. It also cooperates with a number of NGOs in ongoing campaigns to educate Egyptian society in general. The NCW holds an ongoing dialogue with the political parties and women's committees in the labour unions and federations to encourage the participation of women in public life. Women are still not well represented in Parliament, which is considered the weakest link in women's political participation. However, a noticeably high number of women voted in elections in 2005, surpassing the number of men in many areas.

To support the capacities and strengthen and illuminate the performance of the small number of women who do serve as Parliament members, the NCW implemented a programme entitled "Toward Outstanding Parliamentary Performance for Egyptian Women" in cooperation with UNIFEM and UNDP. This programme has done much to promote the role of female Parliament members and coordination among them and between them and the NCW to raise awareness of, and stress, the need for a constitutional amendment to guarantee a minimum quota of female representatives in Parliament. These efforts provided the legislature with an opportunity to promulgate a law that permits such a quota that is constitutional and not subject to repeal, as happened previously.⁴ Thus, article 62 of the Constitution was amended to include a paragraph providing for the guarantee of a minimum quota of women in Parliament 's two chambers, the People's Assembly and Advisory Council (Annex 4, article 62). The recent constitutional amendments

³ The Anita Borg Institute for Women and Technology aims to provide a better life for women and society. It cooperates with all individuals, both men and women, to achieve this goal. It organizes the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing conference every two years. Many computer scientists and researchers attend this conference, which awards prizes to female agents of change in the use of computers.

⁴ Law No. 22 of 1979 allocated a number of seats to women. The law was applied in the 1979 and 1984 parliamentary sessions. The law's constitutionality was challenged on the grounds that the seats were allocated exclusively for women, thus barring men from standing for election, which contradicts the constitutional principle of equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

are expected to increase women's representation through the enactment of legislation supportive of women now being drafted (article 6 of this report).

To counteract discrimination against women, the NCW has undertaken the following:

- Establishment of a CEDAW unit in the NCW's headquarters in 2001 through a cooperation programme with a number of UN organizations to monitor the application of the articles of the Convention. After the project ended in 2003, the NCW was able to permanently establish and sustain the unit within its administrative structure. Education and training regarding the Convention is constantly being intensified with the support of UN organizations. These efforts are focused on governmental and nongovernmental organizations, the media, and other organizations. In 2005, the NCW hosted and participated in a regional workshop on the final recommendations of the Convention and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination at the NCW's headquarters.⁵
- The establishment of equal opportunity units in the ministries to affirm women's exercise of their right to constitutional equality and to challenge any discriminatory practices against women in the work place. Thirty-two units were established in 29 ministries and three were established in the administrative apparatus. These units deal with any problems concerning discrimination against women in the work place.
- The establishment of women's committees in 20 of the 23 professional unions to counteract discrimination against women in the concerned professional fields. This function has also been performed for a long time by the Secretariat for Women and Children in the Labour Unions.
- The establishment in 2001 of an Ombudsman Office to receive and monitor women's complaints and to handle problems impeding women's effective participation. The office was established initially at the NCW's headquarters in Cairo. Thanks to an EU grant, the office was able to establish branches throughout Egypt. It has also received assistance from the British Government. The Ombudsman Office figures prominently in the NCW's work. It is the official channel through which any Egyptian woman may report any discriminatory practice to which she is subject. A team of specialized attorneys and technicians handles the executive work of the office. They respond to inquiries, provide legal advice, refer complaints to the competent agencies, and monitor the treatment of complaints.

⁵ The Egyptian Government hosted the regional workshop—which included Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia—in collaboration with the UN Women in Development Unit and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The workshop was designed to more widely disseminate information on the Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and to spread awareness of women's issues. The workshop's key recommendations included: the creation of national mechanisms that are fully supported, including financially, to monitor the enforcement of the aforesaid conventions and to prepare reports; the exchange of expertise and success stories among countries; and the implementation of programmes to support human rights and change stereotypes of women.

- The NCW is entitled to review legislation before it is passed and to recommend draft laws concerning women's affairs. It has therefore played an active, pivotal role in the promulgation of a number of Egyptian laws and decrees, e.g., the amendment of the Labour Law, Nationality Law, and Tax Law and the promulgation of the Law on the Establishment of Family Courts, the Family Insurance Fund Law, etc. These legislative acts are key measures that protect women's rights (see article 3 of this report.)
- Multiple agencies undertake intensive efforts to improve the image of women in the media. The NCW is a member of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union. The NCW's secretary-general chairs that union's women's committee. Through this involvement with the union, the NCW helped formulate a media strategy. Work on this strategy, which started last year at the state level, has brought about a noticeable change in media content. The NCW's efforts in this field are based on the results of the Media Watch Unit. This unit began as a UNICEF-supported programme, which ran from 2004 to 2006. It is now a permanent part of the organizational structure of the NCW's media department.
- The NCW's recent educational efforts have resonated in society in the form of an unprecedented spontaneous response by many famous writers and public personalities. The latter have strongly criticized the political parties, including the ruling party, expressing their regret over the parties' indifference and lassitude regarding the representation of women on their electoral lists in the 2005 parliamentary elections.
- A national coordinating committee to combat and prevent trafficking in persons was established and recently commenced its activity. NGOs also monitor issues relating to the trafficking of women.
- The NCW has initiated an ambitious national project to address the roots of violence against women by surveying and supplementing previous research and surveys and conducting additional research to complete an analysis of violence against women with a view toward presenting specific recommendations to policymakers (see the section on violence below).
- The NCW implemented an ambitious programme to educate society about the role of women in collaboration with the Centre for Development and Population Activities in Egypt (CEDPA). CEDPA is an international NGO. It has spawned the establishment of local coalitions and strategic action networks among different sectors of society, including the grassroots base, academicians, businessmen, government employees, representatives of private organizations, etc. in six rural governorates to spread concepts concerning gender equality and the importance of women's role and participation in developing their communities. These very successful efforts have had a noticeably positive effect. However, the NCW implemented this programme in only six governorates and was unable to implement it in the other governorates due to limited support.
- Regarding efforts to support the most impoverished women and female-headed households, the NCW has undertaken a programme covering several projects with the support of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. The Italian Government is also participating in the

Multifaceted Development Programme in Mina Governorate. This programme uses a holistic approach involving integrated, mutually supportive economic, social, and political empowerment activities. In order for female-headed households to participate in the programme, the children of the households—both boys and girls—must regularly attend school. Programme outcomes are constantly monitored and evaluated, with the documentation of positive aspects and limitations. The main factor limiting the replication of projects that have proven successful is a lack of material resources (see article 14 of this report).

- The NCW's mother and child efforts contributed to the implementation of a national plan to support the Girls Education Initiative in 2003, which began in seven governorates. Girl-friendly schools are being built successively in the other governorates of the Republic.
- We are proud of our successes and are working to sustain and expand them. Nonetheless, many challenges remain, as detailed below regarding each article of the Convention. However, we would like to mention several such general challenges:
 - The cultural legacy and misunderstanding of religious concepts. This challenge is faced continually. It concerns a number of erroneous cultural legacies and misunderstanding of religious concepts. Government entities and NGOs must redouble their efforts to deal with this challenge through ongoing, intensive campaigns and programmes that convey a positive image of women using all educational means in educational and cultural institutions and the various media (print, visual, and audio), particularly through television and radio drama shows that attract a broad audience.
 - National sex-disaggregated statistics. Despite the major progress achieved in the 2006 census, national statistics require additional improvement. The NCW has experience in this area stemming from a UNIFEM-supported regional project involving Egypt, Jordan, and Syria to train workers to use, monitor, and evaluate statistics. The training clearly enhanced data-collection methods in the 2006 census.
 - Some women lack awareness of their rights. They are insufficiently aware of their religious and legal rights, particularly in rural areas, where illiteracy is high. Research and behaviour indicate that even women with some education are deficient in their awareness of the personal status laws. In this regard, the NWC has cooperated with legal experts and Muslim and Christian clerics in a project to explain women's religious and legal rights. A reference kit with a cartoon format was created on women's legal rights. It includes booklets, a compact disk, and tapes with the recorded voices of highly popular artists explaining the laws in a simple, semi-colloquial question/answer format. The kit is distributed free of charge to private organizations and individuals through the culture palaces by natural leaders in rural and remote areas.

Mandatory Responses to the Committee's Remarks on Egypt's Previous Report

Remarks 326 and 327

The Committee urges the Egyptian Government to take the steps necessary for the withdrawal of the reservations it had to the articles of the Convention upon ratification of the Convention.

In this regard, a committee comprising the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NCW, and relevant agencies was formed to study the withdrawal of Egypt's reservations to articles 2, 9, and 16 (see articles 2, 9, and 16 of this report).

- Egypt lodged an instrument of ratification regarding the withdrawal of its reservation to article 9(2) of the Convention, which concerns gender equality regarding the nationality of a woman's children. It did so after the promulgation of Law No. 54 of 2004, which establishes such equality.
- The concerned national agencies are currently coordinating to formulate a uniform national vision for arriving at a suitable formula for withdrawing the Government's reservation to article 2.
- Regarding article 16 of the Convention, see article 16 of this report.

Remarks 328 and 329

The Committee urges The Egyptian Government to revise Law No. 1 of 2000 to eliminate discrimination against women.

Since the issuance of Law No. 1 of 2000, a woman is entitled to seek divorce by unilateral termination of her marriage contract (khula) without having to prove damage in exchange for her return of her dower or any real-estate or property which the man gave her as his wife during the marriage. If she can prove damage before the judiciary, she is entitled to, and foregoes none of, her full rights under the law.

Remarks 332 and 333

The Committee is concerned with stereotypical attitudes and perceptions that focus on the role of the woman as a homemaker. It urges the Government to change these perceptions.

The Government responds to these remarks in article 11 of this report. It has also responded by intensifying its educational efforts through curricula and media programmes aimed at both men and women to change stereotypical attitudes and perceptions regarding the role and responsibilities of men and women. These efforts are still ongoing.

Remark 335

The Committee expresses its concern regarding the negative media treatment of women and urges the Government and NCW to portray a positive image of women through cooperation with the media agencies.

Cooperation between NCW and the media has increased greatly. The Minister of Information appointed the NCW secretary-general to the board of directors of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union and assigned the NCW to chair the union's women's committee. A media strategy has been formulated taking into account all

negative and positive aspects. A model has been created for monitoring new indicators for optimal, scientific measurement of change in the image of women and relevant awareness-raising programmes. This model has been officially implemented, resulting in a noticeable effect on media content.

Remarks 336 and 337

The Committee is concerned about the spread of AIDS and urges the Government to address this multifaceted problem.

The Ministry of Health and several other concerned agencies are making many efforts to combat AIDS, including establishing a National Programme to Combat AIDS, a Higher Committee to Combat AIDS, a Unit to Combat Infectious Diseases, an AIDS Counselling Centre And Hotline, and a communications system for periodically supplying updated information to physicians, information workers, and others concerned with combating AIDS.

Remarks 338 and 339

The Committee is concerned with the high level of illiteracy and dropout rate in education. It urges the Government to strengthen efforts in this regard.

The education gap narrowed noticeably at all levels between 2000 and 2006 due to government initiatives such as: the Girl-Friendly Schools Initiative, which was started in 2003 to reduce the primary education gap; and the initiative to build one-class schools and community schools to enable female dropouts to complete their education in the regular educational system (see article 10 of this report).

Remarks 340 and 341

The Committee expresses its concern that no woman has been appointed to the post of judge. It urges the Government to increase the representation of women at decision-making levels.

Egyptian woman have been appointed to the post of judge in the courts and in the Supreme Constitutional Court. The share of women in leadership and decision-making posts in the government, public sector, and the business sector has increased. Women also hold public positions, are the heads of authorities, corporations, and universities, and serve as judges, etc. (see articles 7 and 11 of this report).

Remark 342

The Committee expresses its concern at the unavailability of information on women in the labour market, including in the private, formal, and informal sectors.

Precise information is available on all state sectors. The percentage of women working in the public sector—the main employer of women—has increased. The NCW's efforts have resulted in the establishment of equal opportunity units in the various ministries to ensure that women enjoy their constitutional rights. These units also counteract discrimination against women in the workplace. Improvements are needed regarding information on women working in the private formal and informal sectors, though significant progress has been made in recent years in this regard (see article 11 of this report).

Remarks 344 and 345

The Committee expresses its concern that no comprehensive programme has been applied to eliminate violence against women. It urges the Government to conduct a national survey to determine the extent of violence and to take measures to counter this phenomenon.

The government—through the NCW and National Council for Childhood and Motherhood in cooperation with USAID—has initiated an ambitious programme to combat violence against women. In addition, the Ministry of Interior has made efforts to investigate reported incidents of violence and to execute judgments issued in this regard. The Ministry of Justice plays a supervision and judicial investigation role in cases examined by the courts and in the review and amendment of relevant laws (see the section on violence below).

Remarks 346 and 347

The Committee expresses its concern about discrimination against women in the Penal Code, specifically with respect to prostitution.

A number of articles of the Egyptian Penal Code still discriminate between men and women in crimes of prostitution. The NCW, in cooperation with a number of private associations, formulated a draft law amending the relevant Penal Code articles and submitted it to the Ministry of Justice, which is currently studying it.

Remark 348

The Committee expresses its concern at the lack of information on the implementation of the Minister of Health's decree banning female circumcision.

There is a national campaign to counter female circumcision, which is an African tribal custom handed down in society for some 3000 years. The Ministry of Health issued a decree that prohibits female circumcision and holds accountable physicians and nurses who perform this operation. Efforts are currently underway to issue a law prohibiting such practices. Many of the concerned agencies and educational institutions in the state are participating in these efforts based on the draft law submitted by the NCW to the Ministry of Justice. These efforts have started to have a clear effect, as reflected in the number of rural villages that have been declared circumcision-free.

Remarks 350 and 351

The Committee expresses its concern about rural women in the labour force, particularly regarding education, health, and labour.

The Egyptian Government is concerned with providing integrated educational services and health services to rural women at little or no charge. Female Rural Pioneers⁶ play a major role in educating rural women about the importance of

⁶ Each village in Egypt has four Female Rural Pioneers. They are concerned with raising awareness in an ongoing manner in the areas of health, agricultural extension services, social aspects, and development efforts in the village. They are appointed from among women who are natural leaders in the village by the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Social Solidarity, and Local Development respectively.

enrolling in education and literacy programmes and visiting health units. The NCW runs an ongoing programme to train Female Rural Pioneers in methods for raising rural women's awareness to ensure the success of education efforts (see articles 12 and 14 of this report).

Remarks 352 and 353

The Committee expresses its concern about the high number of early marriages of girls, especially in rural areas.

Early marriage (before age 16) is prohibited by law and considered a form of violence against women given its health risks for girls. Efforts have been ongoing for some time to educate families about the risks and adverse health effects of early marriage. The positive impact of these efforts is reflected in the increase in the average age at which girls married during 2001-2006. However, this does not mean that early marriage does not occur in some rural areas.

Remarks 354 and 355

The Committee expresses its concern regarding polygamy and urges the Government to take measures to limit this practice.

Islam permits polygamy but only if certain difficult-to-fulfil conditions are met. The problem is defined in the multiple interpretations surrounding the relevant verse of the Koran. The key condition is absolute fairness in the treatment of multiple wives. The Koranic verse in which this condition appears [4:129] emphasizes the impossibility of absolute fairness. Thus, a sound understanding of this verse would prohibit polygamy, though we must acknowledge it is still practiced.

Remark 356

The Committee urges the Government to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to deposit its instrument of acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention.

Constitutional measures were taken to ratify the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1 of the Convention upon the issuance of a Republican decree passed by Parliament on 2 July 2000. Our permanent delegation delivered the Arab Republic of Egypt's instrument of ratification of the amendment, which was recorded in the United Nations on 2 August 2001.

Egypt has yet to sign the Additional Protocol, because the special committee studying the additional protocol has yet to complete its report thereon, though it is on the verge of doing so.

Concluding Remark

The NCW submits this report in the framework of the Egyptian Government's obligation to submit periodic reports. The Committee not only monitors but also helps strengthen efforts to promote women. We look forward with the utmost earnestness to hearing the opinions of the Committee and its experts with a view toward developing and improving future plans to promote women to thereby achieve the Convention's primary goal of absolute equality.

Egypt's Situation with Respect to Implementation of the Convention

Part I

Article 2 - Political Measures

2. States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

Egypt has a reservation to this article. However, intensive efforts are now underway to withdraw the reservation given that the article 2 of the Convention is not incompatible with Egypt's Constitution, laws, and procedures in general as shown below.

2.1. Current Situation

Article 8 of the Egyptian Constitution provides for equal opportunity, stating, "The State shall guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens". Article 40 states, "All citizens are equal before the law. They have equal public rights and duties without discrimination between them due to race, ethnic origin, language, religion or creed". Under article 10 of the Constitution, the State guarantees the protection of motherhood and childhood. (Annex 4).

Egyptian legislation is generally promulgated to implement the aforesaid constitutional principles and to guarantee legal protection for women on a par with men, without any discrimination against women.

The Constitution prohibits any discriminatory practices against women. Any laws suspected of discriminating against women are ruled unconstitutional.

Any organization or individual may contest the constitutionality of any practice suspected of discriminating against women.

Measures are constantly being taken to purge any procedures, laws, rules, or regulations of any form of discrimination against women.

Several articles of the Egyptian Penal Code are marred by discrimination against women.

2.2. Efforts Made

The Government is working to eliminate any form of discrimination against women in implementation of the Constitution, the law, and the President of the Republic's repeated directives based on which the Prime Minister issues a periodic letter to all government agencies alerting them to remedy any form of discrimination against women (Annex 6).

The Nationality Law has been amended to establish equality between Egyptian women married to non-Egyptian men and Egyptian men married to non-Egyptian women regarding their children's right to Egyptian nationality (Law No. 154 of 2004). Egyptian women lacked this right previously. Thousands of children of Egyptian women have obtained Egyptian nationality since this law was issued (see Annex 7).

The NCW and many civil-society organizations oppose Penal Code articles that discriminate against women. Action is underway to amend these articles (see article 15 and the part on violence in this report).

The ministries have responded favourably to the NCW's recommendation to establish equal opportunity units tasked with affirming the principle of constitutional equality and challenging any procedures or practices characterized by discrimination against women in the workplace.

An Ombudsman Office has been established in the NCW, with branches in the governorates, to receive and follow up on complaints of discrimination against women in any field.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry has formed a high-level committee to study the withdrawal of Egypt's reservation to this article, as this article does not conflict with Egypt's Constitution and legislation.

2.3. Challenges

The Constitution guarantees absolute equality. However, a number of practices preclude such equality and must be counteracted to guarantee the fulfilment of this principle in practice.

Certain Penal Code articles are still suspected of discriminating against women. The NCW has submitted a recommendation to amend these articles based on its authority to express its opinion on, and review and recommend, laws and legislation with a view toward purging laws and legislation of any suspected discrimination against women.

2.4. Future Efforts

- Strengthening of the efforts of the Government and civil-society organizations in calling for the withdrawal of Egypt's reservation to this article, particularly as this article of the Convention is not incompatible with Egypt's Constitution and legislation.
- Continued support of efforts, especially those of NGOs, to monitor the entrenchment of the principle of absolute equality, which opposes any form of discrimination against women.
- Clarification of the actual meaning of article 11 of the Constitution, which states, "The State shall guarantee the proper coordination between the duties of the woman towards the family and her work in society, considering her equal with man in the fields of political, social, cultural and economic life without violation of the rules of Islamic jurisprudence". Such clarification is needed to eliminate any misconstrual, as some believe that the State's guarantee of coordination between a woman's duties toward the family and her work in society entrenches discrimination against women. However, this belief is erroneous, because the article does not state that the woman alone is responsible for the family. This article was formulated 36 years ago in response to women's demands at that time. It was designed to enable women to participate in public life while protecting their reproductive functions. It is a constitutional support entitling women to a number of benefits under labour laws relating to maternity leave, childcare, accompanying their husbands on travel, and retention of their jobs and promotion rights, all of which help maintain family life (see article 11 of this report). This constitutional provision is not supplemented by any law stipulating that family duties are the woman's responsibility alone. Over a long period following the issuance of the Labour Law, a number of men brought actions to challenge the benefits obtained by women under the Labour Law. However all such actions were denied and proven unconstitutional.

Article 3 - Human Rights and Political Freedoms

3. States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

3.1. The Current Situation

Egypt's democratic system is based on citizenship. The Constitution states, "All citizens are equal before the law. They have equal public rights and duties without discrimination between them due to race, ethnic origin, language, religion or creed" (article 40, Annex 4 of this report).

The Constitution underscores principles relating to human rights, political freedoms, and the rule of law as the basis for the legitimacy of authority. It further provides for special guarantees in the event such rights are infringed, including

punishment of the parties responsible for such infringement and the state's guarantee of compensation for the victims of such infringement.

Egypt's Constitution also guarantees: equal opportunity (article 8, Annex 4); the equal right to work (article 13, Annex 4); equality regarding cultural, social, and health services (article 16, Annex 4); equality regarding social and health insurance services and the right to a pension in cases of incapacity, unemployment and old age (article 17 of the Constitution); and equality regarding the various levels of education (article 18, Annex 4).

Laws supplementing the Constitution have been promulgated to entrench the aforesaid principles and to affirm the right of women to own real estate, assume debt independently of their husbands, dispose of property, establish projects, and conduct business on a par with men.

Multiple amendments were recently introduced to Egypt's Constitution to increase women's contribution to political life.

Amendments were made to article 62 of the Constitution to provide constitutional support for the allocation of a percentage of Parliament seats to women. The Election Law is being amended to codify this provision. Egypt adopted the quota system in 1979, issuing Law No. 22 of 1979, which allocates 30 seats in Parliament to women. However, this law was repealed in 1986 after its constitutionality was challenged. Currently, the constitutional amendment provides constitutional backing for a quota. Women participated directly in drafting the amendment through their membership in Parliament and on the preparatory committees tasked with formulating constitutional articles. The NCW and NGOs played an active role in calling for this amendment (Annex 4).

Egypt is particularly concerned about human rights issues. A National Council for Human Rights was established in 2004 as an NGO subordinate to Egypt's second parliamentary chamber, the Advisory Council. Egypt has made important contributions to the formulation of international conventions on human rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Egypt is also a party to 18 international human rights conventions, the International Labour Organization conventions, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Arab Charter on Human Rights. Egypt was elected to serve as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2007.

Many private national associations, branches of several associations, and international NGOs are concerned with human rights issues, especially women's issues. They freely engage in their activities in Egypt.

Major federations of nongovernmental women's associations in each Egyptian governorate provides services to women, help them obtain their rights, cooperate in handling and solving their problems, and conduct seminal studies on women's development within their respective geographical ambits.

3.2. Efforts Made

International conventions ratified or joined by the Government are an inseparable part of national legislation and must be enforced according to the letter of the law. In January 2004, Egypt established the National Council for Human

Rights, which is chaired by former UN Secretary-General Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. One third of the council's members are women.

The NCW holds joint meetings with private associations concerned with women's affairs, human rights, and community development. During these meetings, joint approaches are crystallized with a view toward entrenching the principles of equality and human rights for both men and women.

Since being established in 2000, the NCW has discharged its functions, the key one being to monitor the entrenchment of equality in all governmental and non-governmental entities. The NCW has achieved this by:

- Establishing equal opportunity units in all ministries. These units function to counter any practices suspected of discriminating against women in the workplace.
- Establishing women's committees in the professional unions, supporting the Woman and Child Secretariat in the Trade Union Federation to ensure that women obtain their human rights and exercise their basic freedoms, and ascertaining whether women enjoy constitutional equality with men.
- Holding training meetings with UNIFEM support to educate women about their human rights in all fields.
- Establishing committees for women in local federations of NGOs at the governorate level to promote the role of private associations in the governorates and to support programmes to educate women, specifically rural women, about their human rights in all fields.

Civil-society organizations undertake significant activity to correct misconceptions and traditions regarding women in society, especially in rural areas, and to educate women about their rights.

State awareness-raising agencies (education, media, and culture agencies) act through intensive programmes covering all fields to guarantee that women enjoy their full human rights.

3.3. Challenges

Progress has been made, but a number of problems, social obstacles, and inherited customs prevent women from enjoying and exercising their full rights in rural communities.

3.4. Future Efforts

- Monitoring and support of efforts, development of methods to improve the performance of the various efforts, and the boosting of the role of civil-society organizations in this field.
- Continued awareness-raising efforts and the combating of negative traditions that prevent women from enjoying human rights and freedoms.

Article 4 - Special Measures

4.1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered

discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

4.1.1. Current Situation

Egypt took temporary measures in 1979 under Law No. 22 of 1979, which allocated parliamentary seats to women to strengthen their participation in the legislative chambers. This measure remained in effect until 1986, when it was repealed after its constitutionality was challenged on the grounds it constituted gender discrimination. Under recent constitutional amendments, article 62 of the Constitution incorporates a paragraph providing for the allocation of a percentage of Parliament seats to women. This amendment provides legislators with constitutional support for guaranteeing a percentage of seats under the new elections law currently being drafted, thereby establishing a permanent—not a temporary—provision that achieves the goals of equal opportunity.

4.1.2. Efforts Made

The NCW and a number of NGOs concerned with the political participation of women support an electoral system based on party lists. Such a system has proven to be more appropriate than one in which candidates run as individuals.

The NCW holds meetings and roundtables with a view toward producing a draft law designed to affirm the establishment of a reasonable percentage of Parliament seats for women in the new election law now being drafted. The NCW was previously successful in ensuring a minimum quota of women Parliament members in the recent constitutional amendments.

4.1.3. Challenges

In some areas, society still believes that politics is a man's game, not a women's game, and prefers to be represented by men in Parliament.

4.1.4. Future Efforts

- Serious action to arrive at an electoral system that allots women an effective percentage of Parliament seats.
- Continued efforts to raise the awareness of, and convince, society that the active participation of women in Parliament serves the interests of the family and society, and that the achievement of equality in this regard strengthens and entrenches democracy.

4.2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

4.2.1. The Current Situation

The Egyptian Constitution guarantees protection of childhood and maternity.

There are many laws designed to protect maternity and grant women special rights not considered discriminatory. Such laws supplement the Constitution. All

parties have complied with them for some time. Under article 10 of Egypt's Constitution, "The State shall guarantee the protection of motherhood and childhood, take care of children and youth and provide the suitable conditions for the development of their talents". Article 11 states, "The State shall guarantee the proper coordination between the duties of the woman towards the family and her work in society, considering her equal with man in the fields of political, social, cultural and economic life without violation of the rules of Islamic jurisprudence" (Annex 4).

4.2.2. Efforts made

- The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood monitors and challenges any unconstitutional practices in this regard.
- Many government institutions and NGOs monitor such special measures.

4.2.3. Challenges

Currently, there are no challenges regarding the protection of maternity. On the contrary, all members of society are vouchsafed the sanctity and protection of maternity. Measures enacted to this end are viewed as non-discriminatory and supportive of everyone.

4.2.4. Future Efforts

- Continued monitoring of the effectiveness of measures taken in this regard.

Article 5 - Social Patterns

5. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

5.a. To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

5.a.1. The Current Situation

State policies affirm the need to eliminate negative cultural patterns and the discriminatory effects thereof through various awareness-raising channels, which primarily include the Ministry of Education's educational programmes, the Ministry of Culture's cultural programmes undertaken through the culture palaces in all Egyptian governorates, the Ministry of Information's programmes undertaken through the Nile Information Centres located throughout Egypt, and various media.

Many governmental and nongovernmental organizations work to counteract negative cultural baggage and to eliminate practices and customs that marginalize women's role in society.

5.a.2. Efforts Made:

- Governmental and nongovernmental agencies cooperate closely in multiple efforts to change the social behaviour patterns of men and women, e.g., through media channels that broadcast numerous programmes designed to eliminate negative practices involving gender chauvinism.

- With UNICEF support, the NCW has established a media watch unit to monitor programmes on all central, local, and satellite television and radio channels as well as a number of newspapers and magazines. The monitoring results are submitted to NCW experts and committees. The latter make recommendations that are implemented by the concerned agencies.
- A media strategy has been prepared with a focus on creating a conceptual programming system. This system is intended to facilitate coordination of efforts by various Egyptian media efforts to devise a positive approach for treating women's issues in the media. The goal is to dissolve obstacles to women's constructive participation.
- The Ministry of Culture undertakes, through the activities of the culture palaces located throughout Egypt, diverse programmes intended to change negative social and cultural patterns.
- Effective mechanisms are deployed in urban and rural settings in Egypt to counter customs, traditions, and practices that reflect negatively on the image of women. These mechanisms include: social-cultural clubs for both sexes under the Ministry of Social Solidarity; women's clubs, most of which are under the Ministry of Social Solidarity, although some are under the Ministry of Health and Population; and rural women development centres managed by private associations—all of which are implemented with government financing.
- "Enlightenment convoys" organized and implemented by the Ministry of Local Development are a key effort that uses direct persuasion. These convoys support positive—and combat negative—social values, practices, and customs.
- Media workers are trained at the NCW's training centre based on the centre's programmes and publications in methods for counteracting negative perceptions based on gender chauvinism. The centre has run this ambitious training programme over the past five years in all Egyptian governorates. The programme works to correct erroneous perceptions of women. It also targets Female Rural Pioneers and health workers, i.e., natural leaders who exercise a direct, positive influence on women in their local urban and rural communities.
- Intensive media campaigns are carried out to change negative stereotypes of women and highlight as models women who have been successful in both their careers and families. For this purpose, programmes are broadcast at times and seasons of the year when television and radio audiences are larger. The programmes include drama segments designed to change stereotypes. These campaigns have had a noticeable impact in recent years.

5.a.3. Challenges

Despite all the efforts made and the steady increase in the national education rate, cultural patterns and practices informed by male chauvinism persist in some communities, particularly in rural and remote communities.

5.a.4. Future Efforts

- Greater determination to confront this problem by developing training programmes for employees in the various awareness-raising organizations (media, educational, and cultural organizations). This training will focus on advanced concepts for countering social and cultural patterns and negative practices bearing on the image of women in society.
- Intensification of the efforts of NGOs and the NCW to monitor media programmes, educational curricula, and cultural programmes directed at society; and the counteracting of anything conducive to gender chauvinism or the entrenchment of negative stereotypes of women in the family and society.

5.b. To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

5.b.1. The Current Situation

Protection of maternity and childhood is a right guaranteed by the Constitution (Annex 4). The preservation of family values is emphasized as a key principle.

In Egyptian families, both parents are committed to educating and raising children based on correct principles and lofty values. The family is the first social school for the child. It shapes the child's personality and guides the child toward proper behaviour.

Educational curricula include sound concepts in the interest of the family and children. These concepts are reinforced through media and cultural programmes in society.

In some communities, meaningful programmes in which NGOs participate are directed at families to help men and women understand their joint responsibility for raising their children.

The Ministry of Social Solidarity has a specialized department, the General Department for the Family and Child, which is tasked primarily with disseminating sound concepts concerning the role of the mother and father in raising their children in a healthy way.

5.b.2. Efforts Made

- The Ministry of Social Solidarity implements an early childhood development project to train mothers in providing a healthy, holistic environment and to propagate healthy child-rearing practices.
- The Ministry of Social Solidarity has established shelters for children deprived of family care to ensure they are reared soundly.

5.b.3. Challenges

- Some Egyptian families still do not understand the notion of joint responsibility for childrearing. In such families, the responsibility for rearing children is cast primarily upon the woman.
- There is also the problem of the approximately 1/5 of Egyptian families supported by women. These families require more programmes to help females heading households bear their responsibilities. The Government, civil-society organizations, and donor organizations collaborate in several efforts in this regard, but these efforts are inadequate.
- Discrimination in childrearing is a primary element of discrimination against women. Egypt's early childhood policies, programmes, and projects are inadequate and fall short of the desired goals.

5.b.4. Future Efforts

Educational and training programmes must cover the importance of understanding the parents' shared social responsibility for child-rearing.

Article 6 - Traffic in Women

6. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

6.1. The Current Situation

Egypt is greatly concerned about traffic in persons and has criminalized it. It is a party to relevant regional and international conventions that criminalize traffic in women and the exploitation of women for prostitution.

Egypt joined the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others signed at Lake Success, New York on 21 March 1950. It then promulgated Law No. 68 of 1951, which was amended by Law No. 10 of 1961 on the Combating of Prostitution and Related Crimes in the Arab Republic of Egypt. Law No. 10 also covers crimes committed using such modern communication devices as computers and the Internet. It makes it a crime to incite a person to engage in debauchery or prostitution, aid, or facilitate debauchery or prostitution, or employ or entice a person to engage in debauchery or prostitution. It further makes it a crime to incite, employ, facilitate, or escort a person in or out of the country to work in debauchery or prostitution. It also criminalizes the exploitation of the prostitution of another person, the aiding of a female to engage in prostitution, the opening or running of a place of debauchery or prostitution, and the leasing or provision of a place for engagement in debauchery or prostitution or the frequent practice thereof.

Egypt is a transit country for subjects of African and Southeast Asian countries, the former Soviet Republics, and eastern European countries, most of them women. In particular, the Suez Canal is a main transit route for human trafficking and smuggling.

Egypt has joined the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Decree Number 294 of 2003 of the President of the Republic). It

also joined the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Decree No. 295 of 2003 of the President of the Republic), and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Decree No. 297 of 2004 of the President of the Republic).

Some families in poor, rural areas marry off their daughters to wealthy persons from the wealthy oil countries. These marriages are largely driven by materialism and generally fail. They constitute a new type of trafficking in girls under the cover of marriage.

6.2. Efforts Made

A number of laws have been issued to combat this phenomenon, including Law 103 of 1976, Law 371 of 1956 on Public Stores, and Law No. 12 of 1996 on the Child (see Annex 7). The Prime Minister issued Decree No. 1584 of 2007 on the Formation of a National Coordinating Committee to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Persons. This decree concerns the formulation of a national action plan to combat trafficking in persons and the preparation of an annual report on national efforts to counter this problem and to monitor Egypt's fulfilment of its international obligations under the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The aforesaid committee also recommends the necessary legislative and enforcement measures and procedures and promotes cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings (GPAT), and other organizations to facilitate implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

The Egyptian Government is making efforts to counter these practices in Egypt through tight control of all border crossings. In addition, a specialized police agency is tasked with combating these practices in Egypt. It cooperates with Interpol in foreign cases when necessary. The Egyptian authorities also cooperate closely with the concerned foreign tourism companies and a number of other countries to exchange information on these practices.

The Ministry of Manpower and Immigration regulates and protects Egyptian female workers abroad, especially in the oil-producing countries, through protocols with other countries that address what is ostensibly employment, but is in fact an indirect type of human trafficking.

The Ministry of Social Solidarity is increasingly concerned with the welfare and advancement of single mothers in special institutions and in institutions that provide follow-up care for women released from prison after serving sentences for prostitution to reduce recidivism.

Law No. 103 of 1976 (Annex 7) was issued to protect the rights of young Egyptian women who wish to marry alien men. It requires documentation of the marriage contract at the notary office at which a civil marriages are registered. The documentation procedure requires the man to submit a certificate from his country's embassy stating that there are no impediments to the execution of the marriage. The

man must also deposit a specific sum in a bank in the bride's name as a security for her.

The Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement has undertaken a number of initiatives in this regard, including the organization of the Athens roundtable to end trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, in Greece on 23 January 2006.

6.3. Challenges

- Lack of a database integrated at the national level for the collection, analysis, and exchange of accurate information on the magnitude and seriousness of this phenomenon.
- Lack of precise control of the problem, which began to appear when Egypt became a region of transit from other countries.
- Inability of institutions to limit the marriage of poor girls to wealthy men in the oil countries. Such marriages are always executed without documentation even though they fulfil the legal elements of marriage, which further complicates the problem.
- Fraudulence in the origination of certificates of age in the absence of an official, authorized birth certificate, which contributes to traffic in young girls under the cover of marriage.

6.4. Future Efforts

- Revision of the Law on the Combating of Prostitution in view of societal changes and current communications technology and other technologies.
- Promotion of civil-society organizations' role in educating girls and women about the danger of these practices.
- Boosting of poor families' awareness of the danger of marrying their daughters to wealthy men from the oil countries, and action to improve the economic situation of these families to limit this problem.

Part II

Article 7 - Political and Public Life

7. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

7.a. To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

7.a.1. The Current Situation

The Egyptian Constitution guarantees Egyptian women political rights equal to those of men, including the right to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be nominated to any entity whose members are elected by public ballot (articles 1, 8, 11, and 40) (Annex four).

Egyptian women represented 39.8% of the electorate in Egypt in 2006, compared to 35% in 2000, as indicated in Table 7.1, which shows that the percentage of women on voter lists approaches 50% in some governorates.

Egyptian women vote in large numbers in elections and referenda, exceeding the percentage of men in some regions.

Women exercise their right to stand for election in all entities elected by public ballot, although the percentage of women doing so is less than the percentage of women who vote.

7.a.3. Challenges

- Political parties play only a weak role in forming political cadres of women capable of standing for elections, choosing to instead focus on registering voters to gain votes.
- Women are disinclined to participate in politics in some communities, especially rural communities.
- Certain segments of women are unaware of the importance of their political role.

7.a.4. Future Efforts

- Continued efforts by the concerned civil-society organizations to educate women about their political rights and the importance of their participation in political life.
- Strengthened efforts to develop women's political capabilities to enable them to participate in programmes that prepare them to be political cadres.

7.b. States Parties ... shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: ... To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

7.b.1. The Current Situation

Egyptian women participated for the first time in formulating the Government's five-year socioeconomic development plan (2002-2007). They largely succeeded in ensuring the inclusion of women's affairs in the plan through programmes targeting women in particular. As a result, appropriations for women's programmes in the general government budget were doubled compared to the previous plan.

Since 2004, Egyptian women have participated—through an ambitious NCW programme supported by the United Nations Population Fund—in formulating the state's five-year socioeconomic development plan for 2007-2012. The plan incorporates women's affairs in all areas of development at the local level in all of Egypt's governorates, which is an unprecedented success story. The NCW adopted decentralized planning integrating gender at all levels, from the village and neighbourhood to the administrative district, city, and governorate. For the first time in Egypt, gender has largely been integrated in the national plan and the general government budget.

Women participate in formulating government policy as government ministers, members of Parliament, and members and chairpersons of a legislative committee in the People's Assembly tasked with studying and formulating state laws on divorce. A woman also chairs the Human Development and Local Administration Committee in the Advisory Council. Women participate in all committees in the People's Assembly and Advisory Council.

Women participate in the implementation of policies and hold public positions at all levels of government, where the percentage of women has been growing steadily (see Tables 11.1 and 11.2 in article 11 of this report).

Women participate on the executive councils of local administrations in the governorates at all levels, chairing the councils of some villages, neighbourhoods, administrative districts, and cities. These are local administration positions with the exception of positions on the governorates' councils.

In 2003, an Egyptian woman was appointed to serve as justice on the Supreme Constitutional Court for the first time in the court's history. This was followed by the appointment of three female judges, which opened the door to the appointment of women to serve as judges on a par with men. There are now more than 30 female judges in Egypt's courts.

Women have begun to be promoted without discrimination. They serve as the head and deputy head of the Administrative Prosecutorial Authority. Female members of the authority and the State Lawsuits Authority exercise judicial supervision in parliamentary elections and participate as members of the reconciliation and conflict resolution committees in government entities.

7.b.2. Efforts Made

- Intensive, ongoing training programmes are made available to women in all government entities. These programmes are held in the Ministry of Manpower and the Centre For the Preparation of Government Leaders to enhance women's job capabilities at all levels and qualify them for promotions and senior posts.
- The equal opportunity units in the ministries seek to ensure that women participate in implementing government policy and that they experience no discrimination in the selection of personnel to hold public positions and special leadership posts.

7.b.3. Challenges

- A woman has yet to be appointed to the post of governor, the only post still closed to women.
- Individual practices in some workplaces may prevent women from being appointed to senior posts.

7.b.4. Future Efforts

- Continued efforts to counter any practices conducive to discrimination against women in this area.

- Continued exertion of pressure through women's associations, NGOs, unions, parties, etc., until a woman is appointed governor.

7.c. States Parties ... shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: [...] To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

7.c.1. The Current Situation

Egyptian women account for a high percentage of members of NGOs working in social and economic spheres and in organizations active in public and political life. Women face no obstacles in this area. On the contrary, they have become more active in establishing private associations to serve women in communities requiring assistance.

Women participate in political parties, and most political parties have significant female memberships (Table 7.2).

Women participate heavily in the memberships of professional unions (Table 7.3) and to a lesser extent as members of the boards of directors of labour unions (Table 7.4). Women head the Social Professions Union and the Nursing Union.

7.c.2. Efforts Made

- Ongoing raising of women's awareness of the importance of their participation in NGOs through various educational and media programmes undertaken by governmental and nongovernmental entities concerned with women's affairs.

7.c.3. Challenges

- The percentage of women participating in civil-society organizations has risen, but their percentage in decisionmaking positions is still low.
- The new generation is averse to volunteer work.

7.c.4. The Future Efforts

- There is a need for greater efforts to raise women's awareness and encourage them to stand for election to the boards of directors of private associations and unions to enable them to reach leadership positions.
- Volunteer work activities need to be developed to attract a new generation to this field.

Table 7.1
Percentage of Female Relative to Total Registered Voters in 2000 and 2006

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>
	<i>Percentage of Females</i>	<i>Percentage of Females</i>
Cairo	33.4	24.1
Giza	37.1	31.5
Al-Qalyubiyah	41.3	26.6
Alexandria	37.8	20.1
Al-Buhayrah	39.1	30.1
Al-Gharbiyah	41.1	38.0
Al-Minufiyah	41.6	42.1
Al-Daqhaliyah	45.2	43.4
Al-Sharqiyah	43.2	39.4
Damietta	42.3	40.6
Kufr al-Shaykh	43.7	36.2
Matruh	47.5	38.3
Suez	30.4	33.3
Al-Ismailiyah	37.1	16.3
Port Said	34.7	4.1
North Sinai	46.3	37.6
South Sinai	27.2	34.6
Al-Fayyum	40.3	3.5
Bani Suwayf	41.5	31.8
Al-Minya	39.5	34.6
Asyut	35.0	34.3
Sawhaj	37.0	37.1
Qina	40.4	46.2
Shurtah al-Uqsur	39.7	5.3
Aswan	41.9	34.3
Wadi Jadid	43.0	46.0
Red Sea	35.3	22.7
Total	39.8	34.2

Source: Ministry of Interior.

Table 7.2
Percentage of Women Relative to Total Members of Political Parties in 2004

<i>Party</i>	<i>Percentage of women</i>
Wafd Party	9.00
Egypt 2000 Party	15.20
Democratic Generation Party	12.00
Al-Ummah Party	10.0
National Democratic Party	12.92
Egyptian Greens	10.00
National Progressive Unionist Grouping*	- 35 women in the secretariat-general of the Women's Union - 18 women members of the central committee - 2 women members of the central secretariat

Source: Egyptian parties.

* We were unable to obtain the precise number of members of the NPUG.

Table 7.3
Percentages of Female Relative to Total Members of Professional Unions in 2003 and 004

<i>Professional Union</i>	<i>Percentage of females in 2003</i>	<i>Percentage of females in 2004</i>
Dermatologists	34.2	34.5
Dentists	42.3	42.6
Veterinarians	34.1	34.9
Pharmacists	45.6	48.2
Agricultural Professions	24.0	24.0
Educational Professions	-	39.1
Engineering Professions	13.7	14.3
Merchants	-	44.5
Attorneys	-	-
Scientific Professions	32.3	29.4
Journalism Professions	26.3	26.2
Acting Professions	41.7	41.9
Cinema Professions	28.5	28.7
Musical Professions	23.8	24.0
Nursing Profession	93.7	91.7
Applied Arts	5.2	5.1
Plastic Arts	31.1	49.8
Social Professions	57.2	55.3
Tour Guides	40.9	39.7
Sports Professions	-	25.7
General Medical Treatment	43.2	44.6

Source: CAPMAS.

Table 7.4
Ratio of Female to Total Members of the Boards of Directors of Union
Committees during 2001-2006

<i>Name of Union</i>	<i>Percentage of females</i>
Agriculture and Irrigation	5.5
Textiles	2.8
Commerce	5.4
Banks and Insurance	4.8
Railway	0.5
Communications	5.3
Public Utilities	3.4
Education and Scientific Research	6.2
Health Services	5.9
Food Industries	2.1
Engineering Industries	1.0
Construction and Lumber	2.7
Ground Transport	0.5
Maritime Transport	4.1
Air Transport	6.4
Chemicals	3.4
Journalism, Printing, and Media	7.6
Tourism and Hotels	4.4
Administrative Services	6.8
Defence Production	3.5
Mines and Quarries	0.5
Post	3.4
Petroleum	4.0

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Immigration.

Article 8 – International Representation

8. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

8.1. The Current Situation

Egyptian women have represented their government effectively for a number of decades in international and regional policy, social, scientific, economic, etc. conferences and meetings. Nothing impedes their participation in the activities of international governmental or nongovernmental organizations that invite their participation.

Law No. 45 of 1982 (Annex 7), which regulates the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, does not discriminate between men and women regarding employment with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Government offers equal opportunities to men and women for employment in diplomacy with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. New appointees are selected based solely on their competence.

The Government uses uniform criteria to evaluate the performance of all diplomats and with respect to promotions and foreign postings. Females and males are equal in this respect. All diplomats are given equal opportunities to head diplomatic missions and consulates abroad. Job performance and competence alone are considered. Many female diplomats have proven their worthiness in diplomacy, becoming qualified for appointment to senior posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The law does not distinguish between men and women regarding promotions to various employment grades, including the grade of first-class ambassador. Women comprise 30% of all first-class ambassadors and 23% of all ambassadors (2006).

Competence is the basic criterion for appointment to supervisory posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Female diplomats currently hold 30% of all the supervisory posts, e.g., the post of deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Female diplomats also head 16% of the diplomatic missions abroad.

Female diplomats comprise 20.8% of the diplomats in the general administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic missions abroad.

Women constitute a growing percentage (21%) of personnel at junior grades in the diplomatic corps. This augurs well for a steady increase in women at senior levels.

A number of Egyptian women hold high-level posts in international and regional entities, though precise statistics are lacking in this respect.

Egypt's representation in the Economic Commission for Africa and in the African Union includes women.

Egypt is the co-chair of the Gender Advisory Board of United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

Egyptian women are members of regional and international entities that engage in various political, economic, etc. activities, e.g., the New Partnership for Africa's Development, Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, Pan-African Parliament, Arab Parliament, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parliamentary Network on the World Bank, Rolex Awards for Enterprise judging committee, and Scientists without Borders/New York Academy of Sciences.

8.2. Efforts Made

Female diplomats are determined to participate and gain their full rights through activities organized on an ongoing basis.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs spares no effort in promoting competent women to represent Egypt in regional and international organizations.

8.3. Challenges

There are no challenges regarding official aspects. However, some women face obstacles from their families, which do not approve of young women going abroad alone to work. This attitude, which somewhat limits the participation of women in this field, is however changing quickly.

8.4. Future Efforts

- Monitoring of compliance with non-discrimination of women in this field, and the countering of any practices conducive to discrimination against women.
- Awareness-raising programmes, encouragement of women to join the Diplomatic Corps, and the surmounting of obstacles posed by the family.

Article 9 (1) and (2) - Nationality

9.1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

An Egyptian woman enjoys, on a par with Egyptian men, the right to acquire, retain, or change her nationality under articles 6, 8, and 40 of the Constitution (Annex 4). Neither a woman's marriage to an alien nor her husband's change of nationality during marriage automatically changes her nationality unless she so requests officially. Nor does it render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of her husband.

9.2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

9.2.1. The Current Situation

The NCW has thoroughly studied this issue with members of the concerned agencies, ministries, and civil-society organizations in response to Remarks 330 and 331 in the *Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, Fifty-sixth Session of 20 April 2001(A/56/38). It has determined that Egypt's Constitution provides for absolute, unconditional gender equality; hence, the denial of Egyptian nationality to the children of an Egyptian woman married to an alien is unconstitutional, as the children of an Egyptian man married to an alien woman enjoy Egyptian nationality. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the NCW's position on this issue, and the Government was requested to amend the Nationality Law to ensure gender equality in this matter. The NCW succeeded in bringing about the amendment of the Nationality Law under Law No. 154 of 2004, which grants gender equality regarding the transfer of Egyptian nationality to the children of a man or woman who marries an alien. Thousands of children of Egyptian women married to aliens obtained Egyptian nationality as soon as the law was issued (Annex 7).

Egypt lodged an instrument withdrawing its reservation to article 9 (2) of the Convention after promulgating Law No. 154 of 2004, which establishes gender equality in this regard.

9.2.2. Challenges

The children of Palestinian fathers may still not obtain Egyptian nationality, because the League of Arab States has barred any Arab country from granting citizenship to Palestinians. This was done to protect the Palestinians' original identity in the hopes they will be able to return to their state, Palestine, to realize their right to reclaim their homeland as agreed by international society.

Part III

Article 10 - Education

10. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

10.a. The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;

10.a.1. The Current Situation

Egypt's Constitution guarantees all Egyptians in both rural and urban areas the right to all types and levels of education regardless of sex. Article 18 of the Constitution stipulates, "Education is a right guaranteed by the State. It is obligatory in the primary stage". Article 8 of the Constitution stipulates, "The State shall guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens" (See Annex 4).

The gender gap in education narrowed quickly and noticeably between 2000 and 2006 at all levels—preschool, primary, preparatory, secondary, and university (Table 10.1).

Table 10.2 shows the pass rate of females compared to males at the pre-university education levels.

Table 10.3 shows a gender gap favouring females among university graduates in 2003/2004 for the class that entered in 2000/2001.

The data indicate that the gender gap favouring females among university graduates females has been growing steadily, reaching 10.3% in 2006.

Table 10.4 shows a gender gap favouring females among recipients of advanced degrees (bachelors, masters, PhD) at Egyptian universities in 2001 and 2006.

The aforesaid tables demonstrate the superiority of females at all pre-university and university educational levels, indicating the capacity and seriousness of Egyptian girls.

Table 10.5 shows a gender gap favouring females regarding the number of female students relative to total students registered in a number of university colleges.

There is no distinction between females and males regarding career and vocational guidance, access to studies, or achievement of academic diplomas.

Educational systems in rural and urban areas do not differ.

10.a.2. Efforts Made

The Government is committed to a policy of providing the best educational opportunities for girls in Egypt by boosting the school enrolment of girls, which has been a primary objective of the National Programme to Develop Education since 2000. The Girl-Friendly Schools Initiative, which started in 2003 to reduce the gender gap in primary education, has had a clear impact recently.

One-class schools have been established to enable female dropouts to complete their regular education. This programme has proven to be effective in solving this problem. During 2000-2005, the number of one-class schools increased by 24%, and the number of girls enrolled in these classes rose by 25% according to the Ministry of Education.

10.a.3. Challenges

- The average number of females and males enrolling in primary education has generally declined in a number of rural and remote villages with small populations.
- A gender gap favouring males continues to exist in some areas.
- Some rural families are averse to sending their daughters to coeducational schools.

10.a.4. Future Efforts

- More efforts to raise rural communities' awareness of the importance of educating girls and its effect on elevating the family's socioeconomic level.
- Action to increase the number of exclusively girls schools in rural areas.
- The introduction of a better method for solving the problem of villages with small populations.

10.b. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: ... (b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

10.b.1. The Current Situation

There is no difference in the curricula or subjects studied by girls and boys in all schools in Egypt. Rural and urban students throughout Egypt who complete a given educational level must take a standardized test.

Male and females must meet the same requirements and have the same qualifications for appointment to teaching staffs. Table 10.6 shows the percentages of male and female teachers at the various pre-university education levels.

Table 10.7 shows the percentages of males and females on university faculties. The number of female junior faculty members has increased significantly, indicating the faculty gender gap will favour females in the future.

There is no difference regarding school buildings and equipment. All are subject to the same requirements.

10.b.2. Efforts Made

The Centre for Curriculum and Educational Materials Development has undertaken to develop curricula in general. The curricula are distributed to all schools in Egypt with no distinctions made between males and females.

10.b.3. Challenges

There are no challenges concerning this article, as there is full equality in this area.

10.b.4. Future Efforts

- Continued monitoring of compliance with equality at all levels of education.

10.c. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: ... (c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

10.c.1. The Current Situation

School curricula have been reviewed and revised periodically. Nonetheless, they still contain several negative stereotypes of males and females.

Coeducation is available at all stages and levels in most areas of Egypt, and the Government is attempting to universalize it because of its economic benefit. However, it may be incompatible with traditions in rural communities at present.

10.c.2. Efforts Made

The Government is undertaking major efforts to eliminate any discriminatory instructional material content and to ensure that educational curricula include concepts concerning women's rights and that they present positive female role models.

Egypt's National Council for Human Rights has prepared a study analyzing school textbooks and the cultural legacies therein for submission to the executive agencies.

The NCW is currently coordinating with the Ministry of Education to monitor the ministry's plans to eliminate a number of negative features mentioned in the report of the National Council for Human Rights.

Civil-society organizations participate in monitoring and pressuring the Government to change any negative aspects in this regard.

10.c.3. Challenges

- School textbooks have yet to be completely purged of images that entrench stereotypical male and female roles and negative perceptions of women.
- Some families in rural and Bedouin areas are averse to enrolling their daughters in coeducational schools.

10.c.4. Future Efforts

- Review of the suitability of coeducation for several communities, especially rural and Bedouin communities. It may be necessary to expand the construction of girls schools to accommodate the traditions and special nature of rural society.
- Complete purging of curricula of the residue of traditional, negative perceptions of women.

10.d. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: ... (d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

10.d.1. The Current Situation

No gender distinction is made in Egypt in the awarding of scholarships and foreign-study scholarships. The selection process in this regard is based on academic merit alone.

The last five years have seen a significant rise in the percentage of female recipients of scholarship and foreign-study scholarships in view of the increase in the number of females who excel relative to males.

10.e. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: ... (e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

10.e.1. The Current Situation

There is no difference between females and males regarding the criteria and rules for admission to continuing education, adult education, and functional literacy programmes.

Females have benefited increasingly from continuing training and functional literacy classes in recent years. The rate of improvement was 22% during 2000-2005 (source: CAPMAS).

10.e.2. Efforts Made

Many governmental and nongovernmental entities and agencies provide opportunities for continuing education and the acquisition of functional literacy. Private associations undertake major efforts in this area.

The Illiteracy Eradication Law defines the roles of the General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education, Ministry of Education, and other government agencies engaged in this field.

The efforts of the General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education are developed constantly by incorporating training and development programmes in literacy programmes. The training and development programmes offer rural women in particular skills for economic empowerment, thus encouraging them to enrol in literacy classes.

Techniques have been developed for planning training and literacy programmes to encourage rural females who missed an opportunity to receive an education to enrol in literacy programmes.

Intensive efforts are made to support the eradication of illiteracy among women, especially in rural areas, through cooperation and coordination with the concerned agencies.

10.e.3. Challenges

- Reduction of the illiteracy rate among women, which is still higher than that among men.
- The authorities and responsibilities for continuing education are scattered among multiple agencies, which has an adverse effect despite the intensive efforts made in this area.

10.e.4. Future Efforts

- A new illiteracy eradication strategy is currently being prepared. It will assign the governorates a greater role in implementing illiteracy eradication plans and programmes.
- More awareness-raising programmes and action to increase women's benefit from training and functional literacy opportunities and their access to continuing education programmes in all fields.
- The removal of obstacles preventing women from participating in literacy programmes, including economic and social obstacles and obstacles stemming from the multiplicity of responsible agencies.
- A national campaign to address this problem is in the planning and implementation phase and is expected to succeed.

10.f. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: ... (f) The reduction of female student dropout rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

10.f.1. The Current Situation

Dropout rates have been declining steadily due to various measures, which differ from one community to another.

More females than males remain in school at the basic education level, which includes the primary and preparatory levels [ages 6-15] (Table 10.8).

The one-class schools for girls report steadily increasing rates of enrolment of female student dropouts (see article 10.a.2).

10.f.2. Efforts Made

Efforts to reduce dropout rates are constantly being intensified through various programmes undertaken by governmental and nongovernmental agencies, especially in rural areas.

Female graduates of one-class schools are urged to continue studying at higher levels of education.

The state is adopting new initiatives that provide support to families financially eligible for welfare on the condition that their children complete basic education.

10.f.3. Challenges

There are still female dropouts in rural and remote areas.

10.f.4. Future Efforts

- Development of efforts to reduce female student dropout rates.
- Enforcement of compliance with the law and the strengthening of penalties for dropping out.
- Continued action to raise the economic level of poor families through special programmes conditioned on the enrolment of girls in school, which has proven to be effective in many projects.
- The establishment of additional girls schools in rural areas to encourage families to enrol their daughters in school.

10.g. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: ... (g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

10.g.1. The Current Situation

Schools provide opportunities for participation in numerous activities, athletic games, and physical education with no gender discrimination whatsoever.

Egyptian girls participate in many athletic activities and have won many national, regional, and international championships.

10.g.2. Efforts Made

The concerned agencies in the state encourage and support the participation of girls in athletic activities and games. In particular, the National Council for Youth,

which was upgraded in 2006 to an independent entity, has initiated an ambitious strategy that has started to show signs of having a positive impact.

To encourage both sexes to participate in athletic activities in the schools, 5% is added to the overall grade of secondary-school boys and girls upon graduation if they win athletic championships. This measure provides greater opportunities for college admission.

10.g.3. Challenges

- Girls are averse to participating in athletic activities in some rural areas.
- Some schools lack the necessary resources.

10.g.4. Future Efforts

- Greater encouragement of females to engage in athletic activities and to participate in championships at all levels.
- Greater raising of families' awareness of the importance of engaging in physical sports for general health through the media, education, and cultural centres.
- Boosting of resources available to schools to enable both males and females to engage in athletic activities.

10.h. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: ... (h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

10.h.1. The Current Situation

The educational programmes at the various levels include family-health and well-being curricula covering the concept of the small family in an age-appropriate manner.

10.h.2. Efforts Made

Direct and indirect health education components are constantly being developed and updated in specialized or science/biology curricula to raise awareness of the importance of ensuring the family's health through nutrition, prevention, etc., including small family planning.

10.h.3. Challenges

The curricula are weak. Greater attention and concern must be devoted to the multiple components of the relevant curricula. .

10.h.4. Future Efforts

- Ongoing development of health, science, and biology curricula to increase awareness of the importance of maintaining the family's health in all respects.

Table 10.1
The Gender Gap in Education (All Levels) in 2001 and 2006

<i>Education level</i>	<i>Gender gap (%)</i>	
	<i>2001</i>	<i>2006</i>
Pre-primary	9.30	9.90
Primary	10.80	7.30
Preparatory	11.30	7.40
General secondary*	-1.80	-7.80
Technical	14.30	11.80
University	16.53	8.20

Source: CAPMAS.

* At the secondary level, the gender gap favours females.

Table 10.2
Pass Rate of Females at Different Levels of Education in 2001 and 2006

I. Primary School

<i>Grade</i>	<i>2001 (%)</i>		<i>2006 (%)</i>	
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
1st	98.9	99.1	99.4	99.4
2nd	94.3	96.4	96.1	97.5
3rd	92.6	95.6	94.1	96.7
4th	88.3	92.9	90.5	94.7
5th	84.3	90.9	90.5	94.5
6th			81.3	88.9

II. Preparatory School

<i>Grade</i>	<i>2001 (%)</i>		<i>2006 (%)</i>	
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
1st	81.2	86.0	85.3	80.8
2nd	90.7	93.6	66.1	67.6
3rd	80.5	86.4	76.4	82.9

III. Final Grade of Secondary Education

<i>Grade</i>	<i>2001 (%)</i>		<i>2006 (%)</i>	
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
General secondary	92.0	96.4	90.5	94.6
Industrial secondary	84.8	98.0	87.1	97.3
Agricultural secondary	78.6	94.8	89.9	97.1
Commercial secondary	65.5	86.5	83.5	94.0

Table 10.3
The Gender Gap among Registrants in 2001 and Graduates of the Same Class in 2004 in Four-Year Universities

<i>Gender gap (%)</i>	
<i>Registrants in 2001</i>	<i>Graduates in 2004</i>
16.5	-7.5*

Source: CAPMAS.

* The gender gap favours females.

Table 10.4
The Gender Gap among Recipients of Higher Education Degrees (Diploma, Masters, Doctorate) in 2001 and 2006

<i>Education level</i>	<i>Gender gap (%)</i>	
	<i>2001</i>	<i>2006</i>
Higher diploma	-7.7*	-8.5
Master's degree	32.5	22.1
Doctorate	34.6	36.8

Source: CAPMAS.

* The gender gap favours females.

Table 10.5
Percentage of Female Students Relative to Total Registrants in Some University Colleges in 2001 and 2006

<i>College</i>	<i>2004 (%)</i>	<i>2001 (%)</i>
College of economics and political science	78	72
College of technical education	75	72
College of literature	66	58
College of mass media	84	77
College of commerce	39	38
College of languages	78	79
College of Law	38	46
College of fine arts	70	66
College of dentistry	60	58
College of pharmacology	61	62
College of human medicine	49	45
College of sciences	51	46
College of agriculture	48	20
College of veterinary medicine	45	55
College of engineering	24	24

Source: Higher University Council.

Table 10.6
Percentage of Females Relative to Total Number of Teachers at Pre-University Education Levels in 2006 and 2001

<i>Education level</i>	<i>2006</i>		<i>2001</i>	
	<i>Percentage of males</i>	<i>Percentage of females</i>	<i>Percentage of males</i>	<i>Percentage of females</i>
Primary	44.2	55.8	47.1	52.9
Preparatory	54.4	45.6	56.4	43.6
General secondary	64.3	35.7	65.1	34.9
Industrial secondary	61.2	38.8	65.1	34.9
Agricultural secondary	67.5	32.5	71.3	28.7
Commercial secondary	49.4	50.6	50.9	49.1

Table 10.7
Percentage of Female Faculty Relative to Total Faculty Members at Egyptian Universities According to Employment Grade in 2001 and 2005

<i>Faculty members</i>	<i>Percentage of Females</i>	
	<i>2001</i>	<i>2005</i>
Professor	24	25
Assistant Professor	26	29
Instructor	34	38
Assistant instructor	40	43
Drill instructor	52	55

Source: Higher University Council.

Table 10.8
Percentage of Dropouts from Primary and Preparatory Education (Basic Education) Relative to Total Registrants According to Gender in 2001 and 2005

<i>Education level</i>	<i>2001</i>		<i>2005</i>	
	<i>Percentage of males</i>	<i>Percentage of females</i>	<i>Percentage of males</i>	<i>Percentage of females</i>
Primary	1.07	0.63	0.5	0.3
Preparatory	3.58	2.63	2.9	2.6

Source: Ministry of Education.

Article 11 – Labour

11.1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

11.1.a. The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;

11.1.a.1. The Current Situation

Egyptian women enjoy the absolute right to work on a basis of complete equality with men under Egypt's Constitution. Article 13 of the Constitution states, "Work is a right, a duty and an honour ensured by the State". Article 8 provides for absolute equality of opportunity for all citizens (Annex 4).

Labour in Egypt is regulated by: Law No. 47 of 1978 on State Civil Servants; and Law No. 12 of 2003, which regulates the conditions of employees of the public sector, public business sector, and private sector. None of these laws discriminate against women. Rather, they guarantee women specific rights—e.g., maternity leave and child-care leave—while protecting their employment-related material rights and promotion and seniority rights (see article 11.2.a of this report).

Article 11 of Egypt's Constitution states, "The State shall guarantee the proper coordination between the duties of the woman towards the family and her work in society, considering her equal with man in the fields of political, social, cultural and economic life without violation of the rules of Islamic jurisprudence". This provision provides constitutional backing for the granting of additional rights to women under various labour laws relating to women's reproductive functions. Such backing resulted in the failure of many attempts to challenge the constitutionality of laws granting women these privileges.

Egypt joined the International Labour Organization in 1936. Since then, it has complied with all labour conventions that have been issued, including Convention 89 of 1948 concerning Night Work of Women and Convention 100 of 1951 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value. In Egypt, these conventions have the same legislative status as laws.

Women now hold 26.75% of all government positions. Table 11.1 shows the percentage of women employed in a number of agencies and authorities.

The percentage of women in senior positions in the Government has steadily increased to 36.60% (Table 11.2).

In the education sector, a woman is the president of a private university, women serve as deans of colleges and heads of research centres, a woman heads the Sadat Academy for Management Sciences, and a woman serves as the secretary-general of the Higher University Council.

In the media sector, a woman has headed Egyptian Television for consecutive tenures. Women head the local and satellite channels, Egyptian Broadcasting, and numerous radio channels. Seventeen women work in media offices abroad.

Women have been appointed to high-level leadership positions as the mayors and heads of cities and villages.

In the private sector, the percentage of women in senior positions remains limited, though the percentage of women in junior positions has increased greatly (Table 11.3).

11.1.a.2. Efforts Made

Thirty-two equal opportunity units have been established, including 29 in the ministries and three in the Government administrative apparatus, based on the NCW's recommendation. These units ensure that women obtain their constitutional rights. They also counter discrimination against women in the work place.

Women's committees were established in the professional unions in 2003 with the NCW's assistance to counter employment discrimination against women.

There has existed for some time a Secretariat for Working Women and the Child in Egypt's General Federation of Trade Unions to look after the constitutional rights of women with respect to labour and at all levels of the labour unions. Women have distinguished themselves by their significant activity in this area.

An Ombudsman Office was established in the NCW with branches in the governorates to receive and monitor women's complaints. It serves as a legal channel for the monitoring of discrimination against women in the workplace.

Numerous NGOs are active in monitoring and countering any discrimination against women regarding employment at all levels.

11.1.a.3. Challenges

The private sector is averse to employing women, because the additional rights granted to women under the Labour Law make it more costly to employ women.

11.1.a.4. Future Efforts

The private sector must be given incentives not to discriminate against women, inasmuch as private employers increasingly control a higher percentage of the production sector since Egypt moved to a free market economy.

11.1.b. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women ... (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;

11.1.b.1. The Current Situation

All laws regulating employment in Egypt do not discriminate between males and females with respect to employment opportunities and selection criteria for new hires. Workers are hired according to their academic qualifications and practical experience relevant to the concerned job, not on the basis of sex. The Government sector has the best record of compliance with these laws, as reflected in the growing percentage of women working in the government.

11.1.b.2. Efforts Made

An administrative circular has been issued prohibiting the publication of any job announcements targeting men to the exclusion of women, as some private enterprises have published job announcements aimed at men alone.

The equal opportunity units in the ministries, the women's committees in the unions and parties, and numerous NGOs monitor and challenge discrimination against women in the work place.

See also 11.1.a.2 of this report.

11.1.b.3. Challenges

- In some cases, the private sector is averse to complying with, and moreover circumvents, women's rights.
- The professional unions play only a weak role in supporting women and countering discrimination against women in the private sector, unlike the labour unions, which are active in this area.

11.1.b.4. Future Efforts

- Ongoing efforts to monitor establishments' compliance with laws; and the adoption of measures to enforce the law and protect the rights of women.
- Raising of women's awareness of the damage to, and adverse effect on, their professional status caused by the abuse of the benefits they are granted under Egypt's Labour Law.

11.1.c. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women ... (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;

11.1.c.1. The Current Situation

Egypt's constitution and the labour laws supplementing it guarantee all rights to male and female workers equally without discrimination. Law No. 12 of 2003 (article 131, Annex 7) regulates guidance for both male and female job seekers in general. Women are equal to men regarding the selection of occupations most suited to their capabilities, disposition, and inclinations. Female employees of the Government administrative apparatus enjoy, on a par with males, a high degree of employment stability. There is no executive procedure or decree conducive to discrimination between males and females regarding promotions or job security (see article 11.1.a.1 of this report).

Article 61 of Law No. 47 of 1978 on State Civil Servants (Annex 7) stipulates, "There shall be established—in each ministry, governorate, and public authority—a training centre, to be subordinate to the competent authority. The training centre shall be responsible for formulating training plans and programmes to develop workers' capabilities and prepare them to hold new positions. The period an employee spends in training shall be considered a work period, during which the employee shall enjoy all employment benefits." Law No. 12 of 2003 (Annex 7) regulates vocational training to enable individuals to acquire and develop the knowledge, skills, and capabilities needed to prepare them for suitable work. It applies to both males and females based on the same criteria.

11.1.c.2. Efforts Made

Measures to ensure the right of women to freely choose an occupation, work, receive a promotion, and enjoy job security, and women's rights regarding all benefits and employment terms, are monitored continuously.

Women receive available training in the workplace just as men do. They also receive retraining, including advanced vocational training and recurrent training.

In addition to these general training programmes, many institutions and some NGOs—e.g., unions, cooperatives, etc.—offer other programmes and projects that support and strengthen the role of females in the labour market in all vocations, especially those previously monopolized by men.

11.1.c.3. Challenges

- Private-sector employers do not comply fully with the law.
- Some women are averse to enrolling in training programmes, which is sometimes due to the holding of training after official work hours.

11.1.c.4. Future Efforts

- Continued monitoring of efforts to ensure that women obtain all their legal rights in the workplace.
- Urging of employers to arrange training programmes during official work hours to better suit women's circumstances.
- Urging of women to enrol in the various types of training programmes, and the raising of women's awareness about how important training is to elevate their job status.

11.1.d. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women ... (d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

11.1.d.1. The Current Situation

Egyptian laws prohibit gender discrimination with respect to remuneration. Egypt implements ILO Convention 100 of 1951 Concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value. Workers are evaluated according to defined criteria that apply to both men and women without discrimination.

11.1.d.2. Efforts Made

The equal opportunity units in the ministries, the women's committees in the professional unions, civil-society organizations, and other monitoring and supervisory agencies constantly monitor illegal discrimination against women.

11.1.d.3. Challenges

Some private-sector establishments do not comply with laws guaranteeing gender equality with respect to remuneration and entitlements. These establishments fulfil the requirements of such laws as they deem fit in formal contracts they conclude with workers. Some field research shows that female workers in some private-sector establishments earn wages equal to 70% of the wages received by men (source: Institute of National Planning, 2003).

11.1.d.4. Future Efforts

- Continued efforts to monitor the sound enforcement of laws and regulations and compliance with international labour standards, and the countering of any form of discrimination against women.
- Provision of incentives for the private sector to comply with laws and legislation.

11.1.e. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ... ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women ... (e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;

11.1.e.1 The Current Situation

Social Security in Egypt is regulated by a number of laws, none of which discriminate between men and women with respect to benefits.

The social security rules provide for insurance benefits in the event of retirement, invalidity, and death without gender discrimination.

Women and men are equally entitled to obtain paid leave and sick leave on the same terms.

11.1.e.2. Efforts Made

In addition to complying with social security laws, the ministries and government authorities are striving to establish social solidarity funds for their employees. These funds provide benefits in the event of retirement, death, and total or partial disability without distinguishing between males and females. In addition, several such funds provide additional assistance to women in the event of pregnancy and birth.

11.1.e.3. Challenges

- There are no gender equality challenges regarding the right to obtain pensions and insurance in the Government sector.
- Some private-sector establishments are out of compliance.

11.1.e.4. Future Efforts

- Intensification of awareness-raising programmes for female workers regarding protection and safety principles.
- Continued action to support the efforts of the equal opportunity units and women's committees in the unions to ensure that all establishments comply with occupational health and safety requirements and maintain a safe work environment.

11.2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

11.2.a. To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;

11.2.a.1. The Current Situation

Egypt's labour laws (see Annex 7) entitle female government employees to maternity leave for three months with full pay three times during their employment career.

A female government employee is entitled to up to two years of child-care leave three times during her employment career. The Government agency pays the social security owed to the female employee or to the employer or grants the female employee one-quarter of her salary, based on her choice. She retains her position, employment seniority, periodic social increments, and her right to a promotion until she returns from leave.

Law No. 47 of 1978 on State Civil Servants does not discriminate between men and women with respect to unlimited unpaid leave to accompany a spouse.

Article 91 of Law No. 12 of 2003 (Annex 7) entitles a female who has been employed in the public sector, business sector, or private-sector for 10 months or more to up to two 90-day maternity leaves—including the period before and after birth—during her employment career with full pay. A female may not be employed within 45 days of giving birth.

Article 92 of the same law prohibits an employer from dismissing or terminating the service of a female employee during her maternity leave.

If a female employee desires to work only part-time to care for her family, article 72 of Law No. 47 of 1978 on State Civil Servants entitles her to work half time for half pay (see Annex 7).

11.2.a.2. Efforts Made

The administrative units of the Government, local authorities, public economic authorities, public business sector, and private sector monitor enforcement of the aforesaid laws to ensure that women receive their full rights during pregnancy and birth.

See also 11.1.a.2 of this report.

11.2.a.3. Challenges

Several private-sector establishments refrain from granting females unpaid leave to care for children or accompany a spouse and do not comply with Labour Law No. 12 of 2003. They thus limit the employment opportunities available to women in this sector.

Several professional unions do not play their full role in supporting their members and in monitoring the private sector's compliance with the relevant laws.

11.2.a .4. Future Efforts

- Continued monitoring by the equal opportunity units in the ministries, the women's committees in the professional unions, civil-society

organizations, and other monitoring and supervisory agencies of illegal discrimination against women.

- Strengthening of the supervisory role of professional unions in protecting these rights, especially in the private business sector.

11.2.b. ... States Parties shall take appropriate measures: ... (b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

11.2.b.1. The Current Situation

See the current situation with respect to article 11.2.a.1 of this report.

11.2.b.2. Efforts Made

In addition to the benefits granted to women under the laws mentioned above, the Ministry of Social Solidarity grants monthly assistance to low-paid pregnant women, starting in the third month of pregnancy, for up to three children.

The ministry also grants one-time maternity assistance under Ministerial Decree No. 36 of 2002. This decree provides for the payment, by decision of the social unit chairman, of one-time maternity assistance to a lactating mother within one week of the submission of a request for such assistance, for up to three children." (Annex 9).

11.2.b.3. Challenges

Some employers refrain from hiring women to avoid having to pay for the maternity and child-care benefits granted to women under labour laws.

Private-sector entities do not comply with these laws. Rather, they adhere to contracts which they conclude with employees as they deem fit.

Some women abuse the benefits granted to them, which adversely affects their job status.

11.2 .b.4. Future Efforts

- Urging of females not to abuse the rights granted to them, lest employers become averse to hiring females.
- Provision of sufficient training to women after they return from leave to enhance their effectiveness in the interest of work and thereby offset their absence.
- Promotion of the role of unions and employment offices in monitoring the private sector's compliance with laws on women's rights.

11.2.c. ... States Parties shall take appropriate measures: ... (c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

11.2.c.1. The Current Situation

Article 69 (2) of Law No. 47 of 1978 permits males and females to take leave to care for elderly or sick family members (see Annex 7).

Decree No. 1537 of 2005 of the Prime Minister permits any male or female employee at the various levels of state administrative units (including senior administrators) to work part time in exchange for a percentage of their salaries to care for their families (Annex 9).

Article 11 of the Constitution guarantees women entitlement to supporting social services to enable them to coordinate their family responsibilities with their work responsibilities (see Annex 4).

Law No. 12 of 1996 guarantees, for working women, the provision of childcare centres (nurseries) in work places employing 100 or more women (Annex 7).

Most governmental and nongovernmental employers provide numerous supporting social services to enable men and women equally to perform their work, e.g., transportation for employees, care centres for children, the elderly, and the infirm, prepared or semi-prepared meals at economic prices, etc.

Many private associations and unions provide social services to enable workers to combine their family obligations with their work responsibilities.

11.2.c.2. Efforts Made

- Supporting social services are continually being developed.
- The equal opportunity units in the ministries monitor the level and quality of social services provided to employees and ascertain that women obtain their rights in this regard.
- The Ministry of Social Solidarity establishes numerous centres that provide the above-mentioned services throughout the Republic in collaboration with private associations.

11.2.c.3. Challenges

- The quality of social services provided by employers is still sub par.
- Some employers provide these services deficiently or incompletely.
- Social services outsourced by employers to private providers by employers are offered at prices incompatible with the incomes of state workers.

11.2.c.4. Future Efforts

- Action to amend article 73 of Law No. 12 of 1996 (the Child Law), which stipulates setting up nurseries for children, to ensure that this provisions serves the children of both male and female workers, not just female workers.
- Action to create more supporting social services in all state institutions to enable both parents to combine their family obligations with their work responsibilities.

11.2.d. ... States Parties shall take appropriate measures: ... (d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

11.2.d.1. The Current Situation

Article 90 of labour Law No. 12 of 2003 prohibits the employment of women in jobs damaging to their health or morals, hard labour, and other jobs specified by decree of the Ministry of Manpower (see Annex 7).

The public sector, business sector, and formal private sector are committed to protecting women during pregnancy by not exposing them to hard labour that may harm the embryo or foetus according to Law No. 12 of 2003 (Annex 7).

See also article 11.1.f.1 of this report.

11.2.d.2. Efforts Made

The equal opportunity units, women's committees in the unions, and several civil-society organizations constantly monitor to ensure employers' compliance with the relevant laws.

See also 11.1a.2 of this report.

11.2.d.3. Challenges

- Some employers do not provide the necessary protection for women.
- Some professional unions are ineffective in monitoring, following up on, and challenging adverse practices.

11.2.d.4. Future Efforts

- Action to intensify penalties for non-compliance with laws.
- Requiring of private-sector employers to conduct periodic medical examinations of female employees during pregnancy and at other times.
- Urging of civil-society organizations to focus their efforts on monitoring protection of pregnant women who engage in jobs and practices proven to be harmful.

11.3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

11.3.1. The Current Situation

The NCW plays a key role in reviewing protective legislation relating to work performed by women and in monitoring the adverse effects of any new technological developments potentially harmful to women or any member of society. The NCW submits appropriate amendments to such legislation. It also recommends draft laws in this regard and refers them to the responsible agencies for further action.

11.3.2. Efforts Made

Several NGOs cooperate with the NCW in reviewing labour laws in the light of new developments, particularly in the uses of technology, to ensure protection of women and their family members from any harm.

The NCW cooperates with several research centres and a private association, the Scientific Association of Egyptian Women, to identify the adverse effects of the use of technology and to disseminate information in this regard.

11.3.3. Challenges

Occasionally, the adverse effects of some uses of technology are not determined in a timely manner.

11.3.4. Future Efforts

- Ongoing review of protective legislation in the light of technological developments.
- Advocacy of cooperation among science and technology specialists and legislators to ensure that sound decrees and laws will continue to be issued.

Table 11.1
Percentage of Female Employees in the Government Sector According to Ministry, Governorate, and Agency (2006)

<i>Ministry</i>	<i>% of females relative to total</i>	<i>Governorate</i>	<i>% of females relative to total</i>
Ministry of Local Development	33.59	Cairo	41.62
Sovereign Agencies	29.01	Alexandria	46.01
Ministry of International Cooperation	47.83	Port Said	56.12
Agencies subordinate to the Prime Minister	15.13	Suez	52.85
Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation	23.02	Damietta	50.54
Ministry of Information	34.43	Al-Daqhaliyah	31.59
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	24.36	Al-Sharqiyah	35.67
Ministry of Culture	37.64	Al-Qalyubiyah	36.57
Ministry of Education	34.34	Kufr al-Shaykh	38.21
Ministry of Trade and Industry	27.61	Al-Gharbiyah	36.81
Ministry of State for Legal Affairs and Parliamentary Councils	11.94	Al-Minufiyah	31.83
Ministry of Tourism	42.69	Al-Buhayrah	33.03
Ministry of State for Administrative Development	39.57	Al-Ismailiyah	45.17
Ministry of Housing, Utilities, and Urban Development	16.38	Giza	44.06
Ministry of Manpower and Immigration	42.97	Bani Suwayf	35.07
Ministry of Health and Population	64.97	Al-Fayyum	32.29
Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of State for Scientific Research	39.86	Al-Mina	30.19
Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation	11.30	Asyut	29.36

<i>Ministry</i>	<i>% of females relative to total</i>	<i>Governorate</i>	<i>% of females relative to total</i>
Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs	21.84	Sawhaj	24.06
Ministry of Electricity and Energy	29.57	Qina	23.82
Ministry of State for Military Production	9.86	Aswan	33.21
Ministry of Transportation	5.18	Red Sea	34.13
Ministry of Social Solidarity	42.52	Al-Wadi al-Jadid	35.33
Ministry of State for Economic Development	51.15	Matruh	34.93
Ministry of Investment	29.13	North Sinai	34.47
Ministry of Finance and Insurance	39.24	South Sinai	23.70
Ministry of Communications and Information Technology	31.15	City of Luxor	27.68
Ministry of Petroleum	14.86		
Ministry of Civil Aviation	24.62		

Source: Central Agency for Organization and Administration.

Table 11.2
Percentage of Females Relative to Total Number of Senior Government Officials in 2006

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of Females in 2006</i>
Special-class	15.29
First-class	22.34
Director-general	36.77
Overall total	36.60

Table 11.3
Percentage of Female Employees Relative to Total Employees in the Formal and Informal Private Sector in 2000 and 2005

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of females</i>	
	<i>2005</i>	<i>2000</i>
Formal private sector	18.7	18.8
Informal private sector	20.1	18.9

Source: Central Agency for Organization and Administration.

Article 12 – Health

12.1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

12.1.1. The Current Situation

Under the Constitution and law, women enjoy equal rights with men with respect to all healthcare services (Annex 4).

Healthcare units are present in all villages and administrative centres in the Republic. They provide health services to women through physicians and trained nurses according to the protocol adopted by the Ministry of Health and Population. In addition, advanced health centres designated “Women's Health Centres,” are present in most of the governorates. They are constantly upgraded to provide bundled social and economic services in addition to health services.

Female Health Pioneers are present in Egypt's rural and urban governorates. They provide health education services to women of all ages and guide rural women to benefit from primary and treatment health services.

The rate of medically assisted births (by a physician) in rural areas increased from 48% in 2000 to 65.8% in 2005 (source: DHS 2005).

The neonatal mortality rate (death at less than one month) fell from 24/1000 in 2000 to 20/1000 live births in 2005. The neonatal mortality rate (death at less than one year) fell from 44/1000 in 2000 to 33/1000 live births in 2005. The child mortality rate (under five) fell from 54/1000 in 2000 to 41/1000 live births in 2005 (source: DHS 2005).

Health care programmes for women in Egypt include a national programme to protect against sexually or blood-transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, infectious hepatitis C virus (HCV), and other diseases. Twenty-seven youth-friendly clinics have been established throughout Egypt to inform youth of the dangers and socio-economic dimensions of these diseases and methods for protecting against them. The centres protect confidentiality and privacy. A hotline has also been established in the Ministry of Health and its departments to receive inquiries and provide advice.

The Ministry of Health and Population applies a system for monitoring the deaths of mothers in all Egyptian governorates to determine, and take appropriate measures to avoid, the causes and factors leading to death.

Health programmes in Egypt include programmes for the early detection of breast, cervical, and uterine cancer in addition to a national cancer registration programme in cooperation with the international CARE organization in many areas of Egypt.

In implementation of Law No. 12 of 1996 (the Child Law), the Ministry of Health and Population trains female nurses in a 4.5-month natural childbirth programme.

All components of reproductive health services are provided at the aforesaid centres and units. Due to the importance of the family-planning component, family-planning services are also provided in several separate units and hospitals spread throughout Egypt and by mobile clinics in remote areas.

All primary healthcare services are provided at no or nominal cost to women at government units and centres.

12.1.2. Efforts Made

The incorporation of family-planning services within the Comprehensive Medical Insurance Programme is now being studied.

The Government is making intensive efforts to inform women of available health services, including general means of disease protection and family-planning services provided by state institutions.

The rate of contraception use rose from 56.1% in 2000 to 59.2% in 2005 (DHS 2005).

The Ministry of Health and Population constantly monitors the quality and effectiveness of all imported or domestically produced means of contraception.

The number of units providing maternity and child care services increased by 19.4% from 2000 to 2005 (source: CAPMAS).

Egypt's Ministry of Health trains Female Health Pioneers and Female Rural Pioneers to raise awareness of, and develop ways of providing, access to health services for women in rural and remote areas.

Civil-society organizations play a major, effective role in raising women's health awareness, especially in rural areas.

The method for managing health insurance institutions is currently being changed to improve the quality of services provided to both women and men, with consideration given to the material resources of the neediest people.

The Ministry of Education has incorporated reproductive health in educational curricula, especially at the secondary level.

The print and audiovisual media undertake intensive efforts to provide health education for women through specialized radio and television programmes. A television channel has been specifically established to raise awareness and provide medical advice.

The Suzanne Mubarak Regional Centre for Women's Health, established in Alexandria in 2006, conducts scientific and medical research on women, develops treatment methods, and trains physicians in the latest techniques to bring them to highest level.

12.1.3. Challenges

It is necessary to further develop women's health care units that provide free services, particularly in rural and remote areas.

The cost of health care in private hospitals has increased, placing them beyond the reach of a broad segment of citizens in Egypt.

Women interrupt the use of contraception due to side effects, which frequently results in unwanted pregnancies.

12.1.4. Future Efforts

- Greater efforts to raise the awareness of women regarding health, nutrition, and family planning, especially in rural and remote areas.

- Continued efforts to improve the effectiveness and quality of health services provided to women in government health-care institutions.
- Assurance of access to health services for poor women.
- Expansion of the establishment of the women's clubs attached to rural units. These clubs provide development services to women, including family planning as a way to enhance the social level of women.
- Efforts to change Egyptian society's prevailing view of AIDS as a mark of shame.

12.2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph I of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

12.2.1. The Current Situation

Mother and child care units, centres, and hospitals are located in all Egyptian villages, administrative districts, and cities. They provide prenatal and postnatal services to mothers and children.

See article 12.1.1 of this report for an explanation of the relevant services.

12.2.2. Efforts Made

The mortality rate of mothers fell from 80/1000 live births in 2002 to 59/1000 Live Births in 2006 (source: Ministry of Health and Population).

The rate of obstetric service provision in rural areas rose from 40% in 2000 to 65.8% in 2005 (source: DHS 2005).

The NCW has undertaken an initiative to develop and improve the services provided to women at El-Galaa Maternity Teaching Hospital, an obstetrics and gynaecology hospital in Cairo. This hospital was established in 1932. It is the most advanced, specialized government hospital. The NCW's initiative enables the hospital to keep pace with new methods used in obstetrics/gynaecology hospitals that combine health, social, and cultural services.

See article 12.1.2 of this report in addition to the preceding.

12.2.3. Challenges

See article 12.1.3 of this report (same challenges).

See article 14 of this report regarding rural women.

12.2.4. Future Efforts

See article 12.1.4 of this report, which also applies to this article.

Article 13 - Economic and Social Life

13. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

13.a. (a) The right to family benefits;

13.a.1. The Current Situation

Women working in the Government sector, public sector, and public business sector enjoy full equality with men with respect to wages, periodic and promotional increments, special allowances, the marriage allowance, and pensions and the method for obtaining these benefits.

Women working in the Government sector, public sector, and public business sector and their children receive health and social services just as men do.

The financial treatment of women varies in the private sector, as it is not subject to the same rules in effect in the Government sector. Private establishments engage in practices that run counter to the interests of women working in them.

Egyptian women enjoy, on a par with men, the same tax exemptions for family burdens after Tax Law No. 91 of 2005 (see Annex 7) was promulgated to eliminate the discrimination that existed in the previous tax law.

13.a.2. Efforts Made

The NCW is currently preparing a draft law to amend Law No. 118 of 1981 to affirm the need for working women to receive the social allowance for children that male government workers receive.

13.a.3. Challenges

Law No. 118 of 1981 grants a child-support social allowance to state workers. The relevant provision does not distinguish between men and women regarding the granting of this allowance. However, in practice, the allowance is granted only to male workers based on Islamic law and the custom followed in Egyptian society, which require a father to make expenditures on his children but exempts the mother from doing so.

13.a.4. Future Efforts

The private sector's practices will continue to be monitored to counter any entrenched discrimination against women that denies them their family entitlements.

13.b. States Parties shall ... ensure ... (b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;

13.b.1. The Current Situation

Women are completely equal to men with respect to the right to obtain bank loans and real-estate mortgages as long as they meet the necessary requirements. The consent of the husband or guardian is not required as long as the woman is an adult.

13.b.2. Efforts Made

The Social Fund for Development finances small enterprises, provides soft loans, and supports marketing and export capacities by holding exhibitions and arranging collective marketing for enterprises without distinguishing between females and males.

The Government—i.e., the Ministry of Finance and concerned agencies—has prepared a charter to strengthen the competitiveness of small, medium, and micro enterprises. Men and women benefit equally from this charter.

Ombudsman offices subordinate to the NCW in the governorates of the Republic receive and handle women's complaints about any practices that discriminate against women.

The equal opportunity units in the ministries, women's committees in the unions, and private volunteer associations monitor compliance with these rights and challenge any discrimination against women.

13.b.3. Challenges

Some women, especially in rural areas, lack a personal identity card, which denies them the right to obtain bank loans and any form of financial credit.

Some individual workers in banks and loan and mortgage granting institutions to which men and women apply for these services still engage in gender-discrimination behaviours.

13.b.4. Future Efforts

- Continued, strengthened efforts by NGOs and the NCW to monitor and emphasize women's obtainment of their rights and challenge any discrimination against women.
- Support of the NCW's ombudsman offices to enable them to continue to serve as a legal channel offering women recourse for obtaining their rights.
- Greater efforts to issue personal ID number cards to all women in Egypt.

13.c. States Parties shall ... ensure ... (c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

13.c.1. The Current Situation

There is no distinction between men and women regarding the right to participate in social and recreational activities, sports, and cultural life. Women participate in many sports, social, and cultural clubs on a par with men. Moreover, in some cases, women participate actively on the boards of directors of these clubs.

Egyptian women participate in athletic championships at the national, regional, and international level, winning many international championships.

Women participate effectively in cultural life, heading many civil-society organizations active in this area.

Women in some rural villages do not participate in sports activities in the same way as urban women due to rural traditions and customs.

Decree No. 1122 of 2002 of the Ministry of Youth (now the National Sports Council) introduces private management to women's sports. A budget that integrates gender was drafted to support women's sports activities in athletic federations and clubs throughout Egypt's governorates.

13.c.2. Efforts Made

A number of amendments were made to the regulations of the National Sports Council, athletic organizations, and athletic and social clubs to permit women to participate actively in the management of these clubs.

Women's clubs in the villages of the governorates have been developed to provide greater opportunities for women to participate in sports and recreational social activities in rural communities.

Many youth centres and clubs in the villages have designated specific days on which women and girls have an opportunity to engage in these activities. There are also recreational and athletic clubs and centres for women in rural villages called "Women's Clubs" and "Rural Women Development Centres".

13.c.3. Challenges

- Customs and traditions continue to hold sway in some rural areas, limiting the freedom of women to engage in some sports activities.
- There is little awareness among women and girls in some rural areas of the importance of participating in athletic and cultural activities for their physical and psychological health.

13.c.4. Future Efforts

- The urging of civil-society organizations to intensify their efforts to educate rural women in the importance of participating in athletic and cultural activities.
- Upgrading and development of existing athletic and recreational centres and clubs in rural areas, and the establishment of additional centres and clubs.
- Encouragement of the private sector to undertake its social responsibilities in helping to build and develop sports centres and social and recreational clubs suited to the female employees of private establishments.
- Activation of the cooperation protocol between the NCW and the Egyptian Olympic Committee to further spread the culture of sports and urge women to participate in athletic activity, especially in international and regional championships.

Article 14 - Rural Women

14.1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.

14.1.1. The Current Situation

The Government is very concerned with the development of Egypt's rural women, as they form the foundation for generating agricultural development, a key economic activity in Egypt.

The activity of rural women is concentrated in a certain economic sectors. However, most of the rural female labour force (70% of the total female labour force in 2005) is concentrated in the agriculture sector.

Agriculture in Egypt is characterized by the participation of women in most stages of agricultural production, with a focus on certain tasks, e.g., storage, marketing, etc., though women also participate in other agricultural tasks.

The Ministry of State for Local Development supports rural women through a comprehensive national development programme called the "The Sunrise Programme". This programme provides soft loans, training, and technical assistance to small and micro economic and handicraft enterprises. It also provides new opportunities for women to market their products by holding exhibitions and establishing permanent and temporary local and foreign markets.

The Ministry of Agriculture runs a programme to develop rural women through a special department established for this purpose.

14.1.2. Efforts Made

Rural women's affairs have been integrated comprehensively in Egypt's development system. The development of rural women is a key action pivot in Egypt's five-year national development plans, as clearly seen in the 2002-2007 and 2007-2012 plans.

The Ministry of State for Local Development has concluded a protocol of cooperation with the NCW. The protocol specifies areas of joint activity to develop rural women. It permits the NCW to use all operating mechanisms subordinate to the ministry to implement rural women development policies.

The NCW has formulated an ambitious plan to develop rural women and support their participation in development. The plan was formulated in collaboration with the concerned ministries and agencies, e.g., the Village Development Agency, Sunrise Programme, Ministry of Social Solidarity, women's clubs subordinate to the ministry, and a number of NGOs. The programme aims to promote rural women in various spheres of life. It focuses on a number of primary pivots, including the creation of micro enterprises that generate income for poor women, especially women who head households. The programme also raises rural women's awareness of their political and social rights in an ongoing manner.

Many civil-society organizations undertake projects throughout Egypt to promote rural women.

The NCW and a number of NGOs help rural women obtain ID number cards to enable them to obtain government services, including loans and credit.

14.1.3. Challenges

Rural women are not homogenous. There are clear differences among them with respect to education, environment, available resources, and types of economic activity in which they engage. They thus have different needs and different daily living requirements.

The illiteracy rate among rural Egyptian women remains high.

The economic level in rural Egypt is generally low. A high percentage of women are heads of households and constitute the poorest segment in society.

Most rural women lack national personal ID number cards. This limits their chances of obtaining work and state services.

14.1.4. Future Efforts

- Rural women do not comprise a homogenous group. Varying, non-traditional approaches are therefore needed to address each segment or group, depending on its circumstances and nature, to improve rural women's productivity and standard of living.
- Evaluation of all rural development programmes and previous and current development projects targeting rural women to replicate successful experiments and identify and remedy shortcomings.
- Development of traditional rural food industries and methods and techniques used by women based on the use of simple and advanced technology (e.g., olive oil presses, corn grinding, processing of milk products, etc.).
- Strengthening of efforts by government organizations, NGOs, and private associations to eliminate illiteracy among rural women to improve their educational level.
- Additional efforts to issue national ID number cards to rural women.

14.2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

14.2.a. To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;

14.2.a.1. The Current Situation

Rural women participate in the Ministry of Local Development's "Sunrise Programme", which targets sustainable rural development in the context of drafting local community development plans for implementation in several areas.

Rural Egyptian women participate—as appointed members of local executive councils and elected members of local popular councils—in formulating development plans at the local level.

Women participate increasingly as members of private associations, particularly the community development associations present in each Egyptian village, each of which has a women's affairs committee.

14.2.a.2. Efforts Made

Government and civil-society organizations are united in their efforts to raise women's awareness of their role, and right to participate, in formulating and implementing development plans.

Rural women participated for the first time in efforts to plan the five-year national socioeconomic development plan for 2007-2012. This plan takes into account the actual needs of women through a pioneering project being implemented by the NCW in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund. Under this project, a five-year plan was formulated at the level of each governorate for each, separate administrative district covering a number of villages. These plans comprise the draft national plan to promote women.

The NCW is undertaking an ongoing programme to train Female Rural Pioneers in methods for raising women's awareness of their rights to participate in developing their communities. The Female Rural Pioneers and female agricultural extension advisors play a positive, effective role in comprehensive development programs.

Women's committees have been established in each regional federation of private associations and foundations. These committees, which operate at the governorate level, are concerned with emphasizing consideration of women's affairs in local development planning. Major federations of women's associations in each governorate monitor all these efforts.

14.2.a.3. Challenges

- Rural women are sometimes unaware of, or averse to participating in, community development efforts, which remain weak in some areas.
- The efforts made to reach all segments of rural women are inadequate.
- Farmers are under economic pressure, and their living conditions are changing.

14.2.a.4. Future Efforts

- There is a need to develop the local administration system to achieve greater participation of women at all levels of planning, execution, and monitoring. The NCW and several concerned private associations are working to this end.
- The new constitutional amendments concerning local administration, which will provide the basis for amending the Local Administration Law, provide an opportunity to push for the greater participation of women in development planning for their communities.

14.2.b. States Parties ... in particular, shall ensure to such women the right ... (b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;

14.2.b.1. The Current Situation

The Egyptian Government is concerned with providing integrated health services to rural women at no or nominal charge at the village and hamlet level through health units, family-planning centres, and public hospitals.

Rural women receive special care during their pregnancy through the mother and child care centres located in all of Egypt's villages.

Contraception use has spread throughout rural areas, resulting in a drop in fertility rates. An estimated 59% of women use contraception. The rate is highest in the rural areas of lower Egypt (66%), followed by urban areas (64%), and rural areas in southern Egypt (50%) (Table 14.1).

The rate of rural women under prenatal medical supervision by a physician or a trained nurse rose to 55.6% in 2003 from 15.9% in 1991. The rate of births under a midwife's supervision fell from 7.7% to 5.6% in the same period (Table 14.2).

Statistics indicate an increase in the percentage of births that occurred under medical supervision from 48% in 2000 to 65.8% in 2005 (source: DHS 2005).

14.2.b.2. Efforts Made

The Female Health Pioneers educate rural women in villages and hamlets on the importance of visiting and using the services of health clinics units. These units provide advice and education in general health principles.

Governmental and nongovernmental medical convoys make periodic circuits in the villages and hamlets to provide health services to rural women free of charge.

The Ministry of Health prepares and broadcasts intensive media programmes through the various media to raise health awareness and urge rural women to visit health units periodically to maintain their general health.

14.2.b.3. Challenges

- Male physicians are employed in health units and family planning centres in rural areas, which in many cases makes rural women averse to frequenting these units.
- The level of health services in some rural health units is low.

14.2.b.4. Future Efforts

- Continued provision and development of integrated health care for rural women; and performance improvements in this area.
- Urging of the Ministry of Health to assign female physicians to work in health units and family-planning centres in rural areas to encourage rural women to frequent these units.
- Continued efforts to raise the health awareness of rural women through various media and awareness-raising programmes provided by agencies concerned with women's affairs.

14.2.c. States Parties ... in particular, shall ensure to such women the right ... (c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;

14.2.c.1. The Current Situation

For a number of decades now, rural women have benefited on a par with men from the various social security regimes under the laws and rules regulating social security. Moreover, there are more female social security beneficiaries than male beneficiaries.

14.2.c.2. Efforts Made

The concerned Government agencies (Bank Nasir, Ministry of Social Solidarity, Social Solidarity Fund, Ministry of Local Development, and NCW) work jointly to promote and improve the economic and social conditions of rural women.

Private associations located throughout Egypt provide services and assistance to poor women. In addition, local community development associations are present in each Egyptian village.

The NCW works with the executive agencies in the governorates and in collaboration with private associations to promote the issuance of personal identity cards to women who have so far been unable to obtain them to enable these women to obtain government-provided credit and social-security services.

14.2.c.3. Challenges

- Actual needs still exceed available resources and capacities.
- Only a small percentage of rural women have personal ID cards, which are needed to obtain essential services.

14.2.c.4. Future Efforts

- Strengthening of the role of the NCW, private associations, and concerned agencies to promote the issuance of personal ID cards to all women in Egypt to enable them to obtain services.
- Additional awareness-raising efforts by private associations in rural communities.

14.2.d. States Parties ... in particular, shall ensure to such women the right ... (d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;

14.2.d.1. The Current Situation

There is no discrimination against women regarding access to all types of training and education available in the state at all levels.

There are special programmes for developing rural women in Egypt that revolve around several main pivots, the most important being the training of rural women in the skills and capabilities need to assimilate and participate in the rural communities.

There is a focus on programmes that promote functional literacy (see article 10 of this report).

The number of single-class schools designed to incorporate female dropouts in the formal educational process is increasing (see article 10 of this report).

14.2.d.2. Efforts Made

Many governmental and nongovernmental organizations seek to ensure that rural girls obtain their constitutional right to education and are provided with

training and programmes in reading, writing, and key technologies suited to them (see article 10 of this report).

Women's development centres and women's clubs in the villages seek to provide social services, educate rural women, and encourage them to participate in the community and to benefit from available services.

Ambitious programmes link activities relating to economic empowerment, education, and literacy to encourage rural women to elevate their social and economic level.

The NCW recently established centres in more than half of Egypt's governorates to train women to manage small projects and to develop their skills. The centres provide training programmes in managing small projects based on the prevailing circumstances, with consideration to human capabilities and available environmental and material resources, with an emphasis on the use of technologies suited to the local community.

14.2.d.3. Challenges

- Lack of schools for girls throughout Egypt's villages; and rural families' aversion to sending their daughters to coeducational schools (see article 10 of this report).
- Rural women are averse, for economic and social reasons, to enrolling in training and literacy programmes.

14.2.d.4. Future Efforts

- More training and literacy programmes linked to projects designed to economically empower women and uplift their families to thereby encourage women to enrol in the literacy and training programmes.
- Continued development of training programmes that develop women's skills and enhance their capabilities in rural manufacturing fields based on appropriate technology to improve their financial position. For this purpose, the Women's Skills Development Centres, Producing Family Centres, and other training centres will be exploited.
- More programmes to educate women in the economic advantage of enrolling in training programmes and education.

14.2.e. States Parties ... in particular, shall ensure to such women the right ... (e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self employment;

14.2.e.1. The Current Situation

Since antiquity, the customs, traditions, and legacies characterizing Egyptian society have ensured solidarity and cooperation. Such values permeate rural communities and facilitate the organization of informal self-help associations in which rural women participate. This has been occurring with strong equality over the course of years.

A limited percentage of women participate in official cooperative associations. Women also have opportunities for employment or self-employment, depending on the circumstances.

14.2.e.2. Efforts Made

Private associations play a major role in organizing self-help groups to assist rural women in obtaining the necessary jobs and services.

14.2.e.3. Challenges

Only a few women participate in official cooperative associations.

14.2.e.4. Future Efforts

The cooperatives' efforts will be strengthened. Action will be taken to establish cooperatives in all rural areas and to encourage women to participate in them.

14.2.f. States Parties ... in particular, shall ensure to such women the right ... (f) To participate in all community activities;

14.2.f.1. The Current Situation

Because of their family and tribal links to the candidates, rural women participate in elections more so than urban women.

Rural women join private associations and the women's secretariats in political parties.

Rural women are members of local popular and executive councils, albeit in limited numbers.

Rural women participate in the women's clubs run by the Ministry of Social Solidarity in each village.

14.2.f.2. Efforts Made

The concerned government institutions participate through the Sunrise Programme, Ministry of Social Solidarity, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, and NGOs in encouraging rural women to participate in community activities (See article 13 of this report).

14.2.f.3. Challenges

A percentage of rural women, especially the poorest, are still quite removed from participating in community activities.

14.2.f.4. Future Actions

Efforts will be made to elevate the economic level of rural women to enable them to participate in community activities, as a poor financial situation impedes participation.

14.2.g. States Parties ... in particular, shall ensure to such women the right ... (g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate

technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;

14.2.g.1. The Current Situation

The laws and regulations provide equal opportunities for men and women in rural Egypt to obtain agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology, and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform projects according to the terms of the concerned institutions, which make no gender distinctions.

In the resettlement experiments that have been carried out in Egypt (resettlement of the Nubian population), there has been no gender discrimination.

The NCW works to support voluntary associations involved in implementing income-generating projects managed by female heads of households, who make up that segment of society most in need of economic empowerment efforts.

14.2.g.2. Efforts Made

The concerned governmental and non-governmental entities cooperate to ensure the issuance of national number cards to women who are otherwise unable to obtain them to enable these women to obtain credit, loans, and facilities on a par with men.

See article 14.2.d.2 of this report.

14.2.g.3. Challenges

Rural women are not provided with the necessary information to qualify them to deal with loan-granting institutions and entities, which prevents them from obtaining services.

Rural women are financially dependent on their husbands or male providers, who are responsible for support them under Egyptian law and Islamic law. This requires women to attempt to obtain credit or loans.

Rural women often lack ID cards, which prevents them from obtaining the aforesaid services.

14.2.g.4. Future Efforts

- Education of women regarding the advantageous effect of financial independence on their lives and situations.
- Strengthening of the role of Female Rural Pioneers in educating rural women in the procedures for obtaining credit, agricultural loans, etc.; and encouragement of rural women to be economically self-reliant.
- Efforts to educate and help women to obtain ID cards.

14.2.h. States Parties ... in particular, shall ensure to such women the right ... (h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

14.2.h.1. The Current Situation

The Egyptian Government provides an extensive electricity, transportation, communications, etc. infrastructure in rural areas in Egypt. Rural women enjoy these services on a par with men. These services do not, however, cover all rural areas and may be below par in some areas.

Potable water is provided to 4617 villages (98% coverage rate).

Electricity lines reach more than 90% of Egypt's villages.

14.2.h.2. Efforts Made

The concerned government agencies are jointly establishing a number of infrastructure projects to improve the living conditions of families in Egypt's countryside.

The inhabitants of villages participate in providing these services in their communities through their own efforts.

A national project is now underway to provide drinking water to small population centres near villages that lack water service (small villages, hamlets, and agricultural settlements).

14.2.h.3. Challenges

Funding is unavailable to provide these services to all rural areas. Several villages and hamlets with small populations still suffer from a shortage of services, especially sewerage.

14.2.h.4. Future Efforts

- Action to provide the financial resources needed to complete infrastructure projects in rural areas in general.
- In 2007/08, 1395 villages are scheduled to be hooked up to sewer service.

Table 14.1
Rate of Contraception Use Among Women in 2000 and 2005

<i>Region</i>	<i>2000 (%)</i>	<i>2005 (%)</i>
Urban governorates	62.7	64.0
Lower Egypt	62.4	66.0
Upper Egypt	45.1	50.0

Source: CAPMAS.

Table 14.2
Rate of Births Under Midwife Supervision, and Rate of Women Who Receive Obstetrics Care in Rural Areas in 1991 and 2003

	<i>1991 (%)</i>	<i>2003 (%)</i>
Rate of births under midwife supervision	7.7	5.6
Rate of women who receive obstetrics care	15.9	55.6

Source: Egyptian State Information Service.

Part IV

Article 15 – Legislation

15.1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.

15.1.1. The Current Situation

Article 40 of Egypt's Constitution establishes the principle of absolute, unconditional equality between men and women before the law. All legislation guaranteeing the principle of equality is promulgated pursuant to this article. Any law that violates this principle may be challenged and amended or repealed (Annex 4).

Egyptian women serve as judges and sit on Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court.

Egyptian laws are devoid of provisions that apply to men or women exclusively. They apply to everyone alike.

15.1.2. Efforts Made

Based on its authorities (see Annex 1 of this report), the NCW reviews draft laws and promulgated laws to ascertain the constitutionality thereof. Such laws are amended if found unconstitutional. The NCW also reviews previously amended laws, e.g., the amended Nationality Law (Law No. 154 of 2004), which establishes equality between Egyptian women married to non-Egyptian men and Egyptian men married to non-Egyptian women regarding their children's right to Egyptian nationality. Under this amendment, Egyptian nationality was granted to thousands of children of Egyptian women (Annex 7) (see the introduction of this report for Egypt's response to the Committee's remarks (326 and 327) on Egypt's reservations).

The Tax Law (Law No. 91 of 2005) was amended to eliminate any gender discrimination regarding limits on exemptions for household burdens. The previous law denied women several tax exemptions on the basis that the man is the family's provider (Annex 7).

Using information and communications technology, a joint NCW-UNDFP programme with EU funding has created and distributed widely at no charge throughout Egypt an easy-to-use printed/audio-visual guide to women's legal rights. The information in the guide is presented through simple, colloquial conversations with popular Egyptian artists.

Women may obtain free legal advice to ascertain their rights through the branches of the NCW's ombudsman offices set up throughout Egypt to receive and follow up on women's complaints.

The NCW works jointly with civil-society organizations (private associations, unions, federations, etc.) to raise women's awareness of their legal rights.

15.1.3. Challenges

- Some Egyptian Penal Code articles on prostitution still discriminate between men and women. The NCW has recommended amendments to

these articles. The Ministry of Justice is currently studying these amendments.

- Women, particularly in rural areas, are not aware of their legal rights.
- Law enforcement officials in some communities are influenced by the culture of the community, which affects their responsiveness.

15.1.4. Future Efforts

- Continued NCW efforts to educate women about their legal rights.
- Support of efforts by civil-society organizations to raise women's awareness of their legal rights.
- Continued monitoring and review of laws and legislation to ensure the achievement and application of the principle of constitutional equality.

15.2. States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.

15.2.1. The Current Situation

Egyptian women enjoy a legal capacity identical to that of men. They have the same opportunities to exercise the same rights enjoyed by men regarding the conclusion of contracts, administration of property, and all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals. All laws regulating these matters make no distinction between males and females.

Egyptian women have independent financial liability and may dispose of their property with full freedom independent of any guardian when they reach legal age.

Women may take action in the courts on a par with men. They benefit from the same legal opportunities and services as men, and there is no discrimination against women in this regard.

15.3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.

There are no contracts or instruments with legal effect in Egypt that are intended to restrict the legal capacity of women.

15.4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

Women and men in Egypt have the same rights under laws relating to the movement of persons. Previously a decree issued by the Minister of Interior required a wife to obtain her husband's consent to travel. The Supreme Constitutional Court ruled on 4 November 2000 to repeal this decree.

No laws or procedures restrict the freedom to choose a residence or domicile. However, Egyptian society, with its strong family cohesion, adheres to the tradition

of not permitting male or female children to live far from the family except for purposes of work or education.

Article 16 - Marriage and Family Life

16.1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

16.1. The Current Situation

Egypt has a reservation to article 16 of the Convention, inasmuch as the rights and duties of both the husband and wife in Egypt, while not identical, are equal. Moreover, implementing equality in the way stated in several paragraphs of article 16 would diminish the rights women currently enjoy.

A number of facts should be mentioned in this regard:

- Paragraph (a) of article 16 of the Convention provides for the same right to enter into a marriage, and paragraph (b) provides for the same right to freedom to choose a spouse and to enter into a marriage only with free and full consent. A woman is entitled to accept or reject a prospective husband. A marriage may not be contracted without her consent. Otherwise, it is considered void and dissolved by a court. Various [contravening] practices of a tribal nature⁷ exist in local communities. However, if a woman resorts to the court, the marriage will definitely be dissolved.
- Paragraph (c) s of article 16 of the Convention provides for the same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution.
 - Under Islamic law and Egyptian law, the man is required to provide a dower and gift of gold (engagement present) to his fiancé upon contracting the marriage. The woman is not required to do so. The man is also required to prepare and furnish a matrimonial home as a residence, and the woman is not required to do so.
 - Under Islamic law and Egyptian law, a husband must make expenditures for his wife throughout the marriage, but the wife is not required to do so for her husband, even if she works or has income, regardless of the amount.
 - In a divorce, the man must pay the woman a deferred dower and alimony based on the duration of the marriage. He pays the alimony for one year. This requirement is incumbent upon the man. There is no corresponding requirement for the woman.
 - Since the issuance of Law No. 1 of 2000, a woman is entitled to seek divorce by unilateral termination of her marriage contract (khula) without having to prove damage in exchange for her return of her dower or any real-estate or property which the man gave her as his wife during the marriage. If she can prove damage before the judiciary, she is entitled to her full rights as provided under the law.

⁷ [Read *عينة القبائل ذات الطبي* instead of *الطبيبة القبيصة ذات*].

- Paragraph 16 (d) of the Convention provides for the same rights and responsibilities of the parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children. According to Egyptian law:
 - The mother is entitled to raise the children until they reach age 15. Then, the concerned child may choose [which parent to live with]. In this case, the law is primarily concerned with the interest of the children.
 - The man is required to provide a suitable dwelling for his divorced ex-wife and their children as long as she raises the children.
 - The man must fully pay the children's expenses.
 - The man must pay the woman child-support in exchange for her rearing of the children.
 - Under Egyptian law, a woman has no obligation in any of the aforesaid matters.

We do not wish to withdraw Egypt's reservation to these provisions, as doing so would diminish the rights of women under Islamic law and Egyptian law, which provide rights for woman and relieve women of responsibilities which men alone are required to bear.

- Paragraph 16 (e) of the Convention provides for both parents to have the same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights. The father and mother both accord special importance to the welfare of their children, who are generally the greatest concern of their lives. Generally, the two agree on the number of children they will raise based on what they believe best serves childrearing. Their considerations in this regard are particularly influenced by the rise in the level of education. However, some mothers and fathers persist in several undesirable practices in this regard, and it is difficult for the Government to intervene with measures or legislation to regulate this matter.
- Paragraph 16 (f) of the Convention provides for the same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, and trusteeship of children. The concept of guardianship, wardship, and trusteeship concerns full funding of financial and material obligations. These obligations are the father's responsibility alone. The father assumes guardianship and wardship whenever necessary. If the father dies, the mother or the father's father becomes the guardian, depending on the special circumstances of the family and the ability to assume the costs and care of the concerned child or children.

However, there are still many problems that deny the mother guardianship of her children in divorce cases involving animosity and ill will. In many cases, the father assigns guardianship to the mother based on his belief in her ability to bear responsibility for the children and also to relieve himself of such responsibility.

16.2. Efforts Made

Negotiations are currently underway among a number of parties over a request to allow transfer of guardianship and wardship to the mother directly if the father dies and to withdraw Egypt's reservation to several paragraphs of article 16 of the Convention without violating the rights currently enjoyed by women.

Violence Against Women

As a member of the United Nations, Egypt has adopted the definition of violence against women approved by the General Assembly in December 1993 in article 1 the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, namely, "Violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".

The relevant articles of this report treat violence in the form of psychological harm or arbitrary denial of human rights and in the context of other legal and human rights and freedoms. For example, articles 10 and 12 treat denial of a woman's right to education and healthcare respectively. The following is limited to violence that causes physical harm.

The Current Situation

The Constitution provides for equality among all citizens before the law without discrimination due to sex, creed, colour, religion, etc. (Annex 4). The laws supplementing the Constitution guarantee these rights.

The Penal Code contains provisions protecting women from all forms of violence, which is punishable by imprisonment of one month. Abduction and rape are punishable by harsher terms of imprisonment or execution. Previously, Article 291 of the Penal Code exempted from punishment a rapist married to the victim. That provision has been repealed. The current code does not exempt a rapist from punishment.

A National Council of Human Rights was established in 2004 as an NGO under the Advisory Council to monitor the enforcement of human rights legislation in Egypt and to challenge any practices that contravene human rights, including women's rights. Many other NGOs have also been active in this field for some time.

The NCW monitors the commitment of governmental and nongovernmental agencies concerned with countering violence of all forms against women. It monitors complaints submitted by women to the Ombudsman Office established in 2001 at the NCW's Cairo headquarters to receive and follow up on women's complaints. Branches of this office were subsequently established in all governorates, and free telephone hotlines were set up to receive complaints from women victims of violence. Based on these complaints, the NCW submits recommended draft amendments to laws to the concerned agencies.

Efforts Made

Many governmental and nongovernmental research institutions in Egypt conduct studies, research, and surveys on violence against women, which have proven highly useful in efforts to counter violence against women in society.

The Ministry of Interior investigates reported incidents of violence and executes judgments issued in this regard.

The Ministry of Justice supervises and conducts judicial investigations in cases heard by the courts. It also periodically reviews and amends laws relating to violence against women.

Training courses are held periodically for law enforcement personnel to educate them in methods for handling cases of violence against women in all of its forms. These training programmes are held at the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Solidarity, Ministry of Interior, and the National Centre for Social and Criminal Research.

In 2003, the NCW, in cooperation with the UNIFEM, issued a report on sex-disaggregated statistics that includes a full chapter on violence against women. The report, which figured prominently in planning to counter violence against women in society, was updated in 2006.

The NCW prepared an amendment to establish harsher penalties in laws concerning violence against women for submission to the Ministry of Justice (see article 6 of this report).

Many government institutions and civil-society organizations undertake substantial efforts to counter violence against women through education and by demanding the amendment of relevant laws.

The NCW has played a primary role in urging the Ministry of Social Solidarity to establish hospitality houses for women victims of violence in several governorates.

The results of research conducted by the Ministry of Health at the national level in 2005 show a drop in the practice of female circumcision in the 10-18 age group to 50.3% (43% in urban schools, 62.7% in rural schools, and 9.2% in urban private schools).

There is a national campaign to counter female circumcision, which constitutes violence against, and a violation of the bodies of, female children. The Ministry of Health has issued a decree prohibiting physicians and nurses from performing the circumcision operation. A law prohibiting and criminalizing female circumcision is being drafted (Annex 9).

The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, which is directly subordinate to the Prime Minister, counters female circumcision by implementing a national programme designed to create public opinion opposed to female circumcision and to limit social and cultural pressures to practice female circumcision. The council has declared 120 villages free of female circumcision in the governorates of lower and upper Egypt in cooperation with Islamic and Christian clerics and private associations.

The NCW and National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, in cooperation with USAID, have started a major project to counter violence against women and children in all its forms.

Challenges

- Many Women refrain from speaking openly about family violence or reporting it to the police, as they consider it a family matter.
- Women's self-image. Some women, especially in rural areas where education levels are low, still accept certain practices and would not think about complaining about them.
- Reactionary ideas, individual practices, and negative customs persist in society.
- Violent incidents have increased due to behavioural changes attributed to the influence of violence in foreign films and media, which the Egyptian cinema has begun to imitate.

Future Efforts

- Intensification of programmes to educate women regarding their human rights.
- Countering of behavioural changes influenced by violence in foreign films.
- Expansion of studies and sex-disaggregated statistics treating violence against women.
- Expansion of the establishment and development of hospitality houses for women victims of violence.
- Institution of new methods for combating rape crimes. The fact that crimes of rape are in some cases punishable by death does not pose an adequate deterrent.
- Monitoring of the performance of police personnel to ensure non-discrimination against women when the police receive complaints and conduct questioning in detention centres.