



Answers to the Q&A during Egypt's Presentation at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Major Groups and other Stakeholders



1. What are the government future plans to eradicate all sorts of violence against women in Egypt?

The Government of Egypt (GoE) is dedicated to eradicating all sorts of violence against women (VAW) and has stipulated future plans to achieve this goal. It is fully committed to article 11 in the constitution, which ensures protecting women from all forms of violence.

At the center of such efforts, the National Council for Women's (NCW) strategy is based on measuring the effectiveness of government policies and the advancement of women's status, as well as the development of social, cultural, and legal frameworks in order to fulfil needs and gaps, and integrate a gender perspective into the country's strategy for Sustainable Development, Egypt Vision 2030, in accordance with the Women Empowerment Strategy 2030. More specifically, the NCW is dedicated to ending violence against women through promoting the enactment and ensuring the enforcement of legislation addressing sexual and gender based violence to protect women.

Moreover, the women legislative agenda proposes increasing penalties on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and sexual harassment. In addition, legislation is designed to protect the privacy of victims of sexual harassment and rape and ensure the adherence to inheritance laws in order to protect the rights of women.

The future plans to eradicate all sorts of VAW in Egypt are as follows:

Enact comprehensive legislation:

1. Enact comprehensive legislation, law, or code that defines, addresses and criminalizes all forms of VAW and tackles domestic violence. This will provide a holistic legal framework for dealing with VAW.
2. Such legislation will be accompanied with strong enforcement mechanisms;
3. Conduct a tailored awareness-raising campaign about the legislation and its benefits to Egyptian women and girls, and the society as a whole.



Enhance integrated and sustainable services:

Providing integrated and sustainable services to women and girls subjected to violence is crucial. As VAW crimes are of a particular nature, this can be realized through taking several steps:

4. Activate the recently established one stop shop/center to receive and protect women subjected to violence. This will bring together services of all relevant authorities and facilitate the provision of and accessibility to such services.
5. Upscale the anti-violence units and women safety units in all universities and national entities.
6. Upscale the institutionalization of training programs for government officials and law enforcement authorities.
7. Expand the implementation of family counseling programs to those who are intending to get married, as well as psychological support programs for women who are subjected to violence.

Strengthen referral pathway and coordination:

8. Ensure the continuity and sustainability of efforts exerted to build a national coordinated referral pathway between the various essential services needed by women subjected to violence -on both the central and local levels- and to establish a multispectral network of service providers from the legal, health, psychosocial and social realms;
9. Enhance coordination at the local level to ensure effective and sustainable services provided for women subjected to violence across all governorates.

Promote institutional mechanisms and safe working environment:

10. Enhance institutional mechanisms through upscaling the development of innovative policy tools (e.g., code of conduct) which are tailored to different sectors, with the purpose of addressing VAW within the working environment. Such innovative tools will work on assuring the commitment of decision makers as well as personnel working within those sectors to a zero-tolerance policy against VAW.



Produce and enhance data and knowledge:

Data and information can better address prevention and protection efforts to eliminate VAW. The huge availability of data and raw materials related to VAW in Egypt should be utilized and translated into communication products to enhance dissemination of knowledge. More specifically we are looking to:

11. Conduct a second survey on violence against women to measure cost of services and compare results and publish the results of 2020 Demographic Health Survey (DHS).

Continue to raise awareness:

Raising awareness and sensitization for rooting out VAW paves the way for change.

12. Upscale behavioral change and awareness-raising programs targeting both men and women on gender equality and women's empowerment. This will shed light on VAW issues, foster safer societies, and combat the root causes of VAW.

Media platforms addressing vaw:

Media platforms are game changers and have great potential in promoting women's empowerment and the elimination of violence against them.

13. Conduct capacity building programs for personnel in different media platforms on VAW issues and legal measures to protect women. This will enhance the promotion of good practices and limit the dissemination of erroneous concepts about issues related to VAW.

Enhance and expand the use of technology and information and communication technologies:

In the advanced and increasingly digitized world we live in today, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a critical role in accelerating the progress towards eliminating VAW. ICT helps organizations in furthering their initiatives, reaching out to women and community members, and sharing information about available resources. It's important to:



14. Enhance and capitalize on the use of ICT as an indispensable means to protect women and girls and prevent violence.

Promote women's economic empowerment:

Several studies suggest a strong positive link between women's economic empowerment and their protection from violence.

15. Implement innovative and transformative programs that empower women economically, expand their financial independence and strengthen their economic position within their families. This will act as a preventive and protective tool against violence.

For further reference, below is a link to a full reporting on the National Strategy to Eliminate Violence Against Women 2015-2020 including what has been achieved, what the challenges were, and future plans:

<http://ncw.gov.eg/Pdf/493/REPORT-ON-THE-NATIONAL-STRATEGY-TO-ELIMINATE-VIOLENCE-AGAINST-WOMEN>

2. Including the Decent Life (Hayah Karima) project, how does the Government ensure that such initiatives address gender gaps, and root causes of poverty. What are the key measures used for reporting progress, the scheme of follow-ups post implementation and data availability?

Egypt is committed to streamlining gender equality efforts in its national agendas. For the first time, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development launched the “Manual for Gender-Responsive Sustainable Development Plan (2021-2022).” The guide aims to integrate vulnerable social groups, such as women and children in development plans. This was demonstrated by ensuring women's engagement in all programs implemented in targeted villages, as part of the Decent Life Initiative (DLI), which aims to eradicate multidimensional poverty.



To elaborate:

- First, the DLI criteria for selecting targeted villages are based on a set of indicators, one of which is the percentage of female breadwinners.
- DLI aims to improve the quality of life for rural women by addressing fundamental needs such as water and sanitation services, health and education services, roads paving, telecommunication services to improve connectivity indicators, natural gas connections and many other necessities.
- Increasing women's participation in the labor force is emphasized in the DLI through a variety of interventions, including the establishment and development of 3000 nurseries, as well as capacity building programs for rural women entrepreneurs and expanding the role of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (MSMEDA) in providing loans for them.
- Moreover, the initiative is fully integrated with other social protection programs, such as the 'Takaful and Karama' (Solidarity and Dignity), which provides direct cash transfers to low-income families. This program benefits around 3.5 million Egyptian families, with women accounting for 80 percent of the overall beneficiaries. The database of 31 million applicants for Takaful and Karama program (TKP) has birthed multiple “Cash Plus” interventions, and the DLI was able to leverage the TKP databases.
- The initiative adopts a participatory approach with the National Council for Women (NCW) that plays a central role in promoting gender equality in Egypt. Between January and July 2021, NCW reached 1.4 million women with the awareness campaign "Protect Her from FGM," and about 49000 women received assistance in acquiring national ID cards. The Council started the "Entrepreneurship for Rural Women" initiative, which helped around a quarter a million women.
- A multitude of other government initiatives, such as "Family Development for Controlling Population Growth," "Women's Health for Early Detection of Breast Cancer," "Protect Her from Female Genital Mutiliation (FGM)," "Eliminating Early Child Marriage," and "Mawadda for Family Consultancies," will also be heavily emphasized in rural communities.

In order to first understand and secondly address the root causes of poverty, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) undertook a comprehensive mapping of local communities. This enabled the GoE to identify on-



ground realities in rural areas, i.e., state of infrastructure, economic activities and accordingly needed interventions and services.

With regards to monitoring and reporting progress, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development is executing a multi-faceted strategy to integrate specific key performance indicators in order to track the initiative's progress and assess its impact. The monitoring and evaluation process is further enriched by the following:

1. Calculating the “quality of life index,” which is a composite index that aims to create a quantitative tool that helps measure the impact of the initiative. The methodology depends on comparing performance indicators before and after implementing the interventions.
2. Analyzing income, expenditure, consumption and poverty-related surveys (CAPMAS).
3. Conducting public opinion polls to measure the strides made regarding improving citizen satisfaction in collaboration with independent institutions (civil society).
4. Ensure that all of the projects that have been implemented reach the operational phase through field visits and observations.

3. What steps are taken to ensure resilient recovery from a global pandemic while focusing on engaging different stakeholders - including youth?

- There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic dealt a blow to our economies and societies, yet it also brings a distinctive opportunity to forge a path towards empowering everyone and achieving long-term prosperity. The crisis has established a sense of urgency to formulate inclusive policies geared towards enhancing resilience, especially in the design of short- and long-term development plans. Central to building resilience is the protection of vulnerable groups, shifting towards a green economy, extending employment opportunities for lower-income citizens, and reconciling disparities among governorates and various social groups.
- From this perspective, the Egyptian government considered resilience a core theme in its response to the crisis. This was evident by a rearrangement of



development priorities, focused on injecting more public investment in indispensable and resilient sectors, aligning with post-pandemic needs while ensuring the active engagement of all stakeholders:

Hence, the key elements of our development plans include:

1. Expanding investment in human capital and ensuring equal access to basic services, notably education and health. With respect to the latter, the government prioritizes the development of an inclusive and efficient healthcare system, capable of withstanding public health crises. In this regard, we increased the health budget in FY 2020/2021 by over 100%, particularly aimed at expanding capacities in hospitals through increased Intensive Care Beds by 17%, with a target increase of 55% by next year, as well as an increase in childcare beds, establishing a digital infrastructure, and developing human resource capabilities.
2. Increasing investment in the Infrastructure and Digitization sectors by 300%, improving accessibility to digital technologies and efficiency of service provision.
3. Among our prioritized sectors is the logistics sector, in which we strive to support the development of supply chains, hedging against disruptions especially for strategic commodities such as food and pharmaceuticals enabling us to achieve security which is deemed critical during the pandemic and similar crises. The government also lays emphasis on the localization of manufacturing, satisfying local demand and providing export opportunities.
4. Extending effective social safety nets and tackling multidimensional poverty through ensuring equitable geographic growth. The most notable of such is the launch of the “Decent life” initiative to assist underprivileged villages with a total amount of more than \$50 billion Egyptian pounds benefitting 57 million citizens. The project, implemented in collaboration with the private sector, civil society and local communities, entails the provision of housing support, adequate utilities, and medical assistance to people in need as well as supporting microenterprises and economic empowerment specifically for women and youth.
5. Accelerating momentum towards the Green Economy through aligning public investment with Green and circular economy principles. Additionally, reforming fuel pricing and subsidies, investing in renewable energy tertiary



treatment sewage projects and implementing projects to convert gasoline-powered vehicles to natural gas over and above shifting towards electricity-driven public transport aim to promote sustainable growth and create more decent jobs for youth.

6. Encouraging MSME development given its pivotal role in promoting decent work and innovation especially amongst Egyptian youth. This was demonstrated by the introduction of a new law this year, offering financial and non-financial incentives for MSMEs and rising entrepreneurs to provide credit facilities and training programs. Moreover, through the **UNDP-MSMEDA** (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Development Agency) partnership, MSMEDA's loans for financing MSMEs reached 500,000 micro and small-sized enterprises and created around 800,000 job opportunities. As a matter of fact, 48% of the beneficiaries of the project were women while benefits were also directed to youth as 45% of beneficiaries were in the age group 20 to 35 years old.

- Furthermore, as the first phase of the economic reform program contributed to macroeconomic stability and enhanced the economy's resilience against recent shocks, we pursued the second phase of reforms to reinforce such resilience and achieve sustainable and inclusive economic development. The second phase of the program involves implementing structural reforms targeting the real sector with bold and constructive structural measures. The main pillars are 1) diversifying and developing production patterns, 2) promoting the role of the private sector through improving the business climate, 3) enhancing the flexibility of the labour market through advanced technical education and training, 4) transform human capital, 5) promoting financial inclusion, 6) improving governance and institutional efficiency. The last pillar is particularly vital in building long-term resilience as good governance means stronger recoveries underpinned by trust and transparency, providing the framework to deliver on all the aforementioned priorities.
- The government of Egypt adopts a participatory approach in designing policies and in implementing the SDGs. This has been reflected by the capitalization of domestic and global partnerships to support development efforts in many sectors and build long-term resilience. Central to this is the paramount role of the youth in stimulating groundbreaking innovation and



institutionalizing active citizenship. Hence, the government strives to encourage young people to contribute to their communities and spread fundamental skills which support wider economic and social development. On this basis, we recently launched two related programs. The first being “Rowad 2030, which aims at qualifying 1 million entrepreneurs by 2030 with the main objective of stimulating and enriching the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. Secondly, the launch of the “Sustainable Development Ambassadors” initiative in November 2020, mainly targeting university students and scouts in order to expand their knowledge regarding SDGs. The initiative entails a comprehensive and interactive training program, introducing sustainability notions and outlining mechanisms to achieve SDGs. Trainees will then be accredited to become ambassadors in their communities, spreading the culture of sustainable and inclusive development. We plan to extend this initiative to African Youth in order to align them with SDGs.

- The government has also established various channels of communication to encourage two-way conversations with the youth. This is mainly illustrated by the national and international youth forums held throughout the year, engaging the world’s youth and discussing their notable achievements and challenges as well as their significant role in implementing the SDGs. In this regard, Egypt’s World Youth Forum, under the auspices of President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi has been recognized by the UN as an international platform fostering youth participation.