



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

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

**Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh  
periodic reports of Egypt**

**Addendum**

**Information provided by Egypt on the follow-up to the concluding  
observations of the Committee\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## **Initial report**

### **Response to the recommendations on women's issues for inclusion in the periodic national report on human rights (2014)**

The report is divided into three sections:

#### **Section 1. Follow-up to recommendations Nos. 1 and 2**

1. Continue to adopt strategies to combat discrimination against women.
2. Continue to implement effective programmes to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

#### **Follow-up**

The decision to establish the National Council for Women (NCW) was taken basically to promote women in all economic, social and political fields, in addition to combating all forms of discrimination against women. Furthermore, the projected programmes which NCW seeks to implement are all designed to achieve the principle of equality and equal opportunity and ensure the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Programmes include:

- Gender mainstreaming in the national socio-economic development plan (2007-2012)
- Women business development centre
- Female heads of household programme
- Working women programme
- Equal opportunities in the State general budget project
- Gender-sensitive economic policies project
- Gender equality measured through disaggregated statistics
- Gender mainstreaming in water resource management
- Small grants project
- Gender mainstreaming in development plans
- Institutional support programme.

Equal opportunity units in the ministries have an important role to play in monitoring and preventing all forms of discrimination against women. NCW continues to cooperate with the 32 equal opportunity units in 29 ministries and the three units in the State administrative apparatus. Their principal goal consists in affirming the exercise by women of their constitutional right to equality and challenging discriminatory practices to which women are subjected in the workplace. They seek to achieve this in a number of ways, for example: designing databases on employees of ministries and agencies attached thereto, categorized by gender; identifying, studying and resolving problems experienced by female employees of ministries as a result of gender-based discrimination; documenting

data, information, studies and research that reflect the situation of female ministerial employees and determining their needs; working to ensure that women obtain their rights in respect of promotion, social programmes, training, leisure and education.

The Ombudsman's Office monitors and resolves all sorts of problems pertaining to issues of discrimination against women.

## **Section 2. Follow-up to recommendations Nos. 3-6**

### **Recommendations**

3. Continue to intensify efforts to foster gender equality, combat violence against women and girls, sexual harassment and sexual assault and recognize the important role played by non-governmental organizations in this field.
4. Give consideration to formulating an integrated national strategy to challenge all forms of violence against women.
5. Take concrete steps to increase protection for women by ensuring that complaints of domestic violence are registered and investigated immediately by the police and the perpetrators brought to trial and convicted.
6. Give consideration to subsidizing the NCW Ombudsman's Office and NCW telephone helpline for children, building on previous experience to support the role and effectiveness of these institutions throughout the country.

### **Follow-up**

- I. NCW efforts in the area to combat violence against women prior to the revolution of 25 January 2011:
  1. Creation of an office to receive complaints from women in the provinces and provision of a hotline for women and girls subjected to any sort of violence, including harassment;
  2. Participation in the implementation of a project to combat violence against women that aims to put an end to this phenomenon and improve the performance level of the support services for women victims of violence (from 2004 to 2009).
- II. NCW prepared a national strategy for combating violence against women (several Government bodies and non-governmental organizations took part in preparing this strategy). The strategy seeks to:
  1. Strengthen laws and regulations to prevent and combat violence against women;
  2. Protect and support battered women and their families;
  3. Prevent all forms of violence through awareness-raising and education.
- III. NCW strove to have legislation — Law No. 11 (2011) — promulgated, amending certain provisions of the Penal Code by providing harsher penalties for the crime of harassment in all its forms, including online harassment.
- IV. NCW efforts to combat violence against women after being reformed in 2012:

1. NCW set out an action plan, approved by the Prime Minister on 16 March 2012, to be implemented in coordination with the executive agencies of State and NCW branches in the governorates. NCW has implemented a number of activities to combat violence against women, particularly the sexual harassment of women and girls, and has held a number of meetings with the Prime Minister, as well as the relevant ministries, resulting in agreement on the following:

- The support of the Ministry of Interior and the ministry's Department of Public Morals in the area of security, in addition to the presence of female officers in ministerial departments;
- To support the Ministry of Social Affairs to achieve its goals of providing adequate protection for women victims of violence;
- The Ministry of Interior shall be responsible for providing information, statistics and reports on crimes of violence and the measures it is taking to combat harassment of and violence against women;
- The Ministry of Interior shall organize ongoing training and awareness-raising courses on human rights standards and correct treatment of the public by ministry employees (officers, lower ranks and civilian staff). In addition, special female officers shall be appointed in the Department of Public Morals, Department of Juvenile Welfare and the Tourism and Antiquities Police to assist in investigating incidents involving women, in order to provide the proper psychological climate during reporting and questioning. Furthermore, there are female social researchers in the human rights section;
- The creation of a Ministry of Interior unit to combat violence against women, pursuant to the joint recommendations and efforts of NCW and Ministry of Interior on combating violence against women.

2. NCW cooperates with civil society to raise the awareness of society, particularly families of girl victims of violence and rape, on the need to continue the procedures necessary to obtain their rights, in view of the fact that many give up this right in the face of custom and tradition and in order to protect the girl's reputation, thereby preventing the Ministry of Interior from completing the process and punishing the perpetrators.

3. The results of an NCW survey of 13,500 women were as follows:

- Approximately 85 per cent of women consider that sexual harassment is one of the main issues affecting women;
- 82 per cent of the women surveyed had been subjected to verbal or physical harassment in the street or on the telephone;
- 95 per cent of women believe that a lack of morals is the principal cause of societal violence, followed by the absence of security;
- 91 per cent of women believe that the way a woman dresses or walks in the street is not the reason behind the phenomenon.

4. NCW launched an awareness-raising campaign in all governorates of the country entitled "Towards a Safe Environment for the Egyptian Woman", designed to raise awareness of the need to change societal behaviour and the

cultural inheritance which has led to the spread of the phenomenon of violence against women.

5. NCW media efforts to combat harassment of and violence against women took the form of press, television and radio campaigns lasting for 10 days and coinciding with Eid al-Adha, 2012. Short jingles and slogans were broadcast to increase girls' awareness of how to confront the phenomena.

6. In collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, representatives of civil society, experts and specialists, NCW formulated a proposal for a law to combat violence against women. It has been submitted to the Prime Minister for review by the Ministry of Justice and put before the legislature for adoption.

### **Civil society efforts to address harassment**

Several national initiatives and campaigns on social networking sites have been initiated by civil society organizations, popular movements and non-governmental organizations. These include:

- “Enough backwardness” — a call to make a stand to end harassment of girls in Egypt;
- Fouada watch initiative;
- “Nefsi” campaign;
- “Egypt’s girls are a red line” — making a stand against sexual harassment.

### **Hotlines to report harassment**

- Fouada watch initiative: 01150118822;
- Operations room of the Egyptian Company for Metro Management and Operation: 25747295 (a police number);
- NCW Ombudsman’s Office: 08008883888.

I would like to clarify the following with regard to recommendation No. 6 on the NCW Ombudsman’s Office:

The Ombudsman’s Office of NCW seeks to monitor, analyse and categorize the problems and complaints of women and girls and forward these to the competent bodies, as well as to monitor the steps taken to solve them, particularly those linked to any sort of discrimination against women. Furthermore, the Ombudsman’s Office may raise certain problems as a public issue, if they have been established to occur repeatedly or are incompatible with the constitutional right of equality.

The Ombudsman’s Office has 27 branches in the country’s 27 governorates, with offices situated in the NCW branch in each governorate. The Ombudsman’s Office cooperates with all relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies, such as non-governmental organizations (20 NGOs), equal opportunity units in the ministries, al-Azhar University and Council of State, to monitor and resolve problems about which complaints have been made. The Office has a hotline (08008883888) to receive complaints from women and girls.

**Section 3. Follow-up to recommendations Nos. 7-9**

7. Increase cooperation between Government institutions and NCW as the optimum framework for ensuring the consolidation of women's rights and the advancement of women.

8. Maintain efforts to improve the situation of women and empower them.

9. Maintain efforts to ensure that the situation of women is improved, including by intensifying implementation of programmes and activities for women's empowerment and advancement through participation of women in politics.

Achieving sustainable social and economic development is a major undertaking to which the Government of Egypt is committed within the context of its endeavour to provide for the well-being of all the Egyptian people – men and women. As women are a fundamental element for achieving development, this undertaking includes the empowerment of Egyptian women through participation in all types of development activity at all levels.

NCW made an effective and successful contribution to having women's affairs included in the fifth (2002-2007) and sixth (2007-2012) national plans for social and economic development and to ensuring that these plans took the concept of gender into account. The most significant results of this were that the fifth plan saw a doubling of appropriations for projects and programmes targeting women, while the sixth plan was based on gender-responsive planning and, for the first time in Egypt, the concept of gender-responsive State budgets was introduced. Furthermore, notions of monitoring and assessment have changed and are now based on concepts of gender. This has had an enormous impact on changing methods of State planning. Moreover new, non-typological indicators have been introduced to measure equality in the fields of health, education and political rights with the aim of monitoring the gains women have made as a result of the implementation of these plans and developing the methodologies currently being followed in order to produce practical systems for the monitoring and approval of gender-responsive budgets at all stages of planning and follow-up.

**1. Economic empowerment of women, particularly female heads of household and non-competent women****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 incentive bonuses, special allowances, marriage allowances and pensions and are subject to the same system 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.
- In the private sector, the financial treatment of women varies and is not subject to the same rules in effect in the Government sector. Practices exist that are not in the interests of women in this sector.

- Egyptian women now enjoy the same tax exemptions for family burdens as men after the discrimination that existed under the old tax law was removed with the promulgation of Tax Law No. 91 (2005).
- Helping poor women to join the small enterprise scheme: this requires coordination with finance institutions, such as the Social Fund for Development, Nasser Bank, Zakat Foundation etc. Women are also being helped by extending the activities of these institutions to villages and marginalized areas in cities and attempting to remove obstacles and impediments that women may face in this regard.
- Supporting productivity training: this is designed to improve women's economic situation and includes productive family centres, encouraging new initiatives in this area and obtaining maximum benefit from the local resources of non-governmental organizations interested in development.
- Women's skills development: this activity is designed to achieve the goal of integrating women into the labour market by enabling them to acquire new skills and by providing school and university graduates with training in manufacturing. This may be achieved by continuing previous efforts of the Women's Business Development Centre and its branches in governorates, while taking into account local market needs in each governorate.
- Supporting social service cooperatives by creating and supporting cooperative associations to provide services (crèche, education, health) or set up manufacturing training centres.
- Utilization of women's productive energy by increasing women's participation in the labour market, creating a culture of equality in the labour market and ensuring the provision of job opportunities and training on the basis of equality so that women are not excluded from certain jobs.

#### **Efforts made**

- NCW is currently preparing a draft law to amend Law No. 118 (1981), affirming the need for working women to receive the social allowance for children that male workers in the Government sector receive.

#### **Future vision**

- Private sector practices will continue to be monitored and any entrenched discrimination found to exist against women that denies them the right to family entitlements will be challenged.

#### **Role of NCW in supporting the economic empowerment of women following the revolution of 25 January 2011**

NCW is implementing a number of programmes designed to advance women economically and increase their participation in the labour market. These include ongoing programmes and programmes created after the reformation of NCW.

- Most needy villages programme

NCW began work after its reformation by signing a number of protocols enabling it to establish projects in the neediest villages in the governorates, as follows:

**1. Protocol of cooperation signed with the governorate of Qena to develop the village of Hajr al-Dahsah**

On 1 and 2 April 2012, NCW held a meeting with the governor of Qena, representatives of several non-governmental organizations and public figures in the governorate to choose one village to turn into a model village and to identify its needs. The village of Hajr al-Dahsah, a very poor village in the governorate, was chosen. The village was visited, a full survey carried out and real needs of the inhabitants identified. It was agreed to establish the following projects: a water pumping station; a service complex to provide health, education and training services for inhabitants of the village, particularly young people; the introduction of industrial activity and the establishment of small-scale enterprises and craft industries for women to provide them with job opportunities and improve the standard of living of female-supported households. A protocol on implementing these projects was signed with the governor of Qena, including the following points:

- The governorate undertakes to implement the projects determined by NCW and shall provide the NCW with regular monthly progress reports.
- The governorate shall form a project oversight committee in which members from the NCW branch in the governorate shall participate.

**2. Protocol of cooperation signed with the governorate of Minya to develop the village of Abu Aziz**

At a meeting held with the Governor of Minya on 13 May 2012, NCW agreed to contribute to a scheme to provide services to the village, which suffers from harsh living conditions. This is the village where the problem of medical convoys performing circumcisions free of charge arose. A protocol was signed between NCW and the Minya governorate that included the following points:

- The governorate undertakes to implement the projects determined by NCW and shall provide NCW with regular monthly progress reports.
- The governorate shall form a project oversight committee in which members from the NCW branch in the governorate shall participate.

**3. Supporting the role of women as the custodians and practitioners of traditional crafts**

On 12 July 2012, NCW held a meeting with a number of non-governmental organizations from various governorates, concerned with the preservation of traditional crafts practised by women in these governorates. The goal of the meeting was to revive the project for women as custodians and practitioners of traditional crafts and investigate how to preserve traditional crafts. A working group was formed to advise workers in this field about legal, administrative and marketing aspects of project management and how to establish marketing centres inside Egypt and abroad to enable products to be marketed and distributed globally.



**Ongoing projects monitored and upgraded by the NCW include:**

- Female heads of household support programme

This programme is designed to raise the economic level of female heads of household and their families in villages by enabling them to set up productive development projects using resources from the local environment in a manner consistent with the capacities of the women and the needs of the village:

1. To date, 8,324 female heads of household have benefited from the project, which has covered 73 villages in 21 governorates, in collaboration with 74 local community development associations.

2. The associations are currently implementing new projects with money collected from instalments.

3. NCW undertakes regular field visits to monitor the project's social and economic return for female heads of household and their families. A study has been published evaluating the female heads of household support programme in the governorates of Beheira and Asyut.

Furthermore, a protocol of cooperation was signed between the NCW branch in Beni Suef, Nahda University and the Rotary Club, under which it was agreed to implement projects for female heads of household. The number of women benefiting from soft loans under this protocol has reached 323.

**Supplementary efforts of NCW in the field of economic empowerment**

- Designating centres for women's small-scale and micro enterprises;
- Establishing a small-scale finishing industries training centre for women;
- Using environmental resources to prepare ready-made meals;
- Designating windows for the sale and marketing of environmental products;
- Equipping fish drying and canning factories (in coastal governorates);
- Establishing a rare traditional crafts training centre for women;
- Training and qualifying women to manufacture ready-to-wear garments;
- Setting up showrooms to sell products made by female heads of household;
- Designating kilim factories for the employment of girls;
- Setting up factories to process, preserve and pack agricultural products;
- Designating craft centres for women;
- Setting up factories for dairy products;
- Setting up permanent showrooms to market products typical of the governorate;
- Setting up fish processing units;
- Upgrading and subsidizing vocational training centres to enable women and girls to acquire the skills to set up small, non-traditional projects;

- Expanding the small loans scheme for female heads of household and in impoverished regions;
- Training and qualifying women in industrial schools to work in the manufacture of dairy, agricultural and medical products and in the manufacture of silk from silkworms;
- Training women to make traditional crafts for boats passing through the Suez Canal;
- Setting up embroidery workshops for girls;
- Setting up units to manufacture juices and papyrus;
- Setting up vocational training centres for women.

## **2. Social empowerment**

NCW activity in the area of social empowerment

### **• National identity card programme**

Through its branches in the governorates and in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, NCW assists disadvantaged women who do not possess national identity cards to obtain them. It also obtains birth certificates for women who have not been registered. Some 2,700,000 national identity cards have been obtained. NCW is currently working in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Administrative Development, Ministry of Health and several non-governmental organizations to obtain further national identification cards.

### **• Literacy**

Aware of its vital importance, NCW has in recent years devoted particular attention to literacy. In collaboration with relevant bodies, NCW has gone to great lengths to eradicate illiteracy in order to provide women with a decent education. Its efforts include:

- Participation in the events of the second conference (15 May 2012) of the National Campaign for Adult Education and the Renaissance of Egypt under the slogan “Together we can”, organized by the Ministry of Education, the General Authority for Adult Education and the offices of UNESCO in Cairo and Beirut;
- Creation of an NCW plan or scheme to eradicate illiteracy, distributed to all NCW branches in the governorates;
- Instructing branch officials to implement the literacy scheme in one or two villages initially then extend it subsequently;
- Incorporation of women’s component in the seventh five-year National Plan for Economic and Social Development (2012-2017).

The NCW planning department proposed the seventh five-year plan for the advancement of women at governorate level (2012-2017), based on the inclusion of projects not completed in the sixth five-year plan, as well as new projects seeking to serve women. The projects were sent to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation for comment.

- Assistance for female debtors

In collaboration with the Department of Prisons, NCW launched a campaign for the release of female debtors imprisoned for non-payment of debts due to poverty, in order to alleviate their suffering and that of their families. NCW has formed a committee to coordinate with representatives of both female prisoners and creditors and to set priorities in urgent cases.

**Health care for women, highlighting efforts relating to older women and women with disabilities**

- Designating and equipping departments for treating non-working women;
- Upgrading and equipping addiction sections in specialist centres in female psychiatric hospitals;
- Upgrading and expanding the scope of medical service provided to women to enable early detection of cancer;
- Providing reproductive health services for women, either by means of mobile clinics or by upgrading departments or wards in certain hospitals and clinics;
- Developing women's clubs within health units;
- Training female rural pioneers to work in the field of family planning and reproductive health;
- Supporting preventive action against diseases of the breast and brittle bone disease;
- Providing safe residential spaces for female doctors working away from home;
- Improving the environmental and health situation in deprived villages by installing hygienic toilets for poor families;
- Providing a hospital specializing in liver and kidney diseases;
- Setting up specialist centres for persons proposing to marry;
- Designating a number of family health units;
- Providing mobile reproductive health clinics to serve women;
- Setting up departments in health insurance hospitals to treat working women;
- Sewage recycling in villages;
- Putting in place training and qualification programmes for women with special needs;
- Setting up and equipping clubs for the elderly and training carers to look after them;
- Establishing homes for the care of the mentally handicapped;
- Health and social insurance: seeking to extend insurance cover to female heads of household, women working in the unofficial sector, rural women and women engaged in full-time domestic employment.

**The current situation**

- Under the Constitution and law, women enjoy equal rights with men with respect to all health-care services.
- Health-care units exist in all villages and administrative centres in the Republic, providing health services to women by means of physicians and trained nurses in accordance with the protocol adopted by the Ministry of Health and Population. In addition, advanced health centres designated “Women's Health Centres” exist in most governorates. These are constantly upgraded to provide bundled social and economic services alongside 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 provide guidance to rural women in how to benefit from primary and treatment health services.
- The rate of medically assisted (by a physician) births in rural areas has increased.
- The rate of newborn infant mortality has fallen.
- Health-care programmes for women in Egypt include a national programme to protect against sexually or blood-transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, the infectious hepatitis C virus (HCV) and other diseases. Twenty-seven youth-friendly clinics have been established throughout Egypt to raise youth awareness of the dangers and socio-economic dimensions of these diseases and methods of protecting against them. The centres protect confidentiality and privacy. Furthermore, a hotline has been set up in Ministry of Health 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 and cervical cancer in addition to a national cancer registration programme in cooperation with CARE International in many areas of the country.
- In implementation of Law No. 12 (1996) – the child law – the Ministry of Health and Population trains female nurses in a 4.5-month natural childbirth programme.
- All the elements of reproductive health services are provided at the aforesaid centres and units. Due to the importance of the family-planning element, family-planning services are also provided in several separate units and hospitals throughout Egypt and by mobile clinics in remote areas.
- All primary health-care services at Government units and centres are provided to women free of charge or at nominal cost.

### **State efforts**

- Incorporation of family-planning services within the comprehensive medical insurance programme is now being studied.
- The State is making intensive efforts to inform women of available health services, including disease protection and prevention and the family-planning services provided by State institutions.
- The Ministry of Health and Population constantly monitors the quality and effectiveness of all imported or domestically produced means of contraception.
- The Egyptian 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 have a significant and influential role in raising women's health awareness, especially in rural areas.
- The method of 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 strata of society.
- The Ministry of Education has incorporated elements of reproductive health in the educational curricula, especially at secondary level.
- Print and audio-visual media are making intensive efforts to provide health awareness and education for women through specialized radio and television programmes. A television channel has been established specifically to raise awareness and provide medical advice.

### **Political empowerment of women**

NCW activity in raising political awareness consists in holding conferences and seminars, implementing programmes to spread awareness and producing certain printed materials. The most significant of these activities include the following:

- Convening of the first NCW post-revolution conference, entitled "Egyptian women and the President", with 3,200 participants taking part and the involvement of all governorates, governmental and non-governmental associations and institutions and representatives of foreign agencies. The goal of the conference was to raise the voice of women at this critical stage and question presidential candidates about their attitudes towards women and the elements of their electoral platforms pertaining specifically to women. The conference issued a set of recommendations in the form of a letter to the President. Recommendations included:
  1. The importance of amending election laws to ensure proper representation of women and oblige the parties to allocate a quota for women in their electoral lists;
  2. The importance of affirming the rights of women in the Constitution;
  3. The Constitution must stipulate commitment to all international agreements ratified by Egypt.

4. Women's rights must not be diminished and laws promulgated previously must not be eviscerated; indeed, women's rights must be strengthened.

5. The necessary budget must be made available for programmes to raise women's standard of living.

Furthermore, NCW exerted conspicuous efforts with regard to the new Constitution during the period of the report.

#### **NCW activities concerned with raising awareness and training in the area of women's political participation**

NCW implemented a series of training programmes designed to prepare female cadres capable of competing and achieving positive results in decision-making situations, particularly in the forthcoming municipal council elections.

The training programmes targeted women seeking nomination to the boards of unions, political parties, non-governmental organizations and youth alliances in all governorates. A total of 16 courses were held between February and September 2012 in the following governorates: Cairo, Giza, Dakahlia, Sharqia, Red Sea, Qena, Sohag, Minya, Asyut, Matruh, Beheira, Alexandria, Luxor and Aswan. There were 406 female trainees.

Promoting the political participation of women consists of four stages, as follows:

- **Stage 1** provides a foundation for women's political education. It consists of two training courses held in parallel in the governorates. The target group of the first, entitled, "Women and political participation", is women members of political parties, unions and non-governmental organizations. The second course targets rural women employed by the Ministry of Social Solidarity, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Administrative Development; it is entitled, "Female rural pioneers and political participation".
- **Stage 2** consists of training courses on how to organize an election campaign, how to produce election propaganda and how to ensure the success of an election campaign; it is implemented in collaboration with UN-Women.
- **Stage 3** includes setting up a communications centre in each region to provide telephone guidance to women during election campaigns on how to address the difficulties they encounter.
- **Stage 4** consists of courses for women who have been successful in elections to provide them with training in the use of oversight and legislative tools and how to deal with the bylaws regulating the conduct of their oversight and legislative work in the elected council.

#### **The final part (recommendations Nos. 10 and 11) deals with the areas of competence of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)**

10. Support NCCM policy on the rights of the child, according attention to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

11. Implement programmes to combat child labour.