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National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21*

Egypt

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I. Introduction

1. Egypt underwent its first review under the universal periodic review mechanism on 17 February 2010 during the seventh session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, receiving 165 recommendations of which it accepted 119, rejected 21 and responded to 25 (A/HRC/14/17/Add.1). Egypt has made it clear that recommendations Nos. 85–119 are in the process of being implemented at the national level as reflected in paragraph 96 of the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (A/HRC/14/17).

2. Sections 4 to 15 of the present report provide an overview of progress made in implementing the recommendations Egypt accepted at the time of the first review, as well as developments that have taken place in the period between February 2010 and June 2014. They cover 112 recommendations which have already been implemented, and 14 which are being examined or are still in the course of being implemented. As a result of the important political and social changes Egypt has witnessed since the revolutions of 25 January 2011 and 30 June 2013, the demands of Egyptian society have exceeded the bounds of the recommendations contained in the universal periodic review, far outstripping the minimal reforms occasionally implemented by the previous regime and extending directly to the very core of human rights principles such as freedom, justice, equality and human dignity.

II. General background

3. On 25 January 2011 Egypt witnessed a peaceful popular revolution against the ruling regime, which was accused of using the concept of the State to create a web of political and financial corruption. Under the banner of freedom, dignity and social justice, Egyptians called for an end to the regime and for respect for their rights and liberties. It was therefore, first and foremost, a revolution to safeguard and conserve human rights in Egypt. After the fall of the regime political developments continued until, in June 2012, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood was elected as President of the Republic having won 51.7 per cent of the ballot in an election in which 51.8 per cent of eligible voters participated. The Egyptian people wanted to see the goals of their revolution achieved but were shocked instead to see the new President implement a series of despotic measures which threatened the rule of law and aimed to secure power for his party alone. He unilaterally issued a constitutional declaration protecting his own decrees from judicial scrutiny and attacked the independence of the judiciary by dismissing the Public Prosecutor and forbidding the implementation of judicial provisions not in keeping with the political aims of his regime, while his supporters besieged the headquarters of the Supreme Constitutional Court to prevent it from carrying out its work. The President and his party made political declarations which incited hatred and violence among citizens, discriminating between them on the basis of political views and religion. A constitutional committee created to formulate a new Constitution and composed exclusively of the President's political allies was ruled invalid because it contravened democratic standards. Nonetheless, on 25 December 2012, a distinctly isolationist Constitution was adopted without national agreement containing blatant constitutional and legislative abuses and dismissing a number of judges from the Supreme Constitutional Court.

4. Witnessing these developments, people came to feel that the President was undermining the rule of law and that he had deviated from the goals of the revolution. A popular protest movement came into being and a signature campaign was organized to call for early president elections: around 22 million citizens participated and a number of peaceful demonstrations took place to this end, but the President refused.

5. In the face of that refusal, on 30 June 2013 the Egyptian people rose up in their second revolution when around 30 million people called for a change of course and an end to the regime which had been in power for a year. The regime fell and the political and popular forces agreed on a national road map to reconstruct constitutional institutions and establish a democratic regime, beginning with changes to the Constitution to be followed by presidential and parliamentary elections. The Committee of 50 was formed to amend the Constitution, with participants taken from all sectors of Egyptian society, and their draft amended Constitution enjoyed great popular support as was clear from the level of participation in the referendum in which it was approved with a majority of 98.1 per cent and in which women participated to an unprecedented degree.

6. Immediately after the 30 June revolution, the Government responsible for implementing the road map created a new Ministry of Transitional Justice. This new institution is basically concerned with human rights and freedoms, opening the way to transitional justice with the aim of consolidating those rights and freedoms as part of institutional reform and sound administration. This intention is clearly reflected in the fact that the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs has been placed under the Ministry of Transitional Justice, reflecting the fact that the first step in institutional reform is the reform of legislative institutions.

7. The adoption of the amended Constitution on 18 January 2014 represented a victory for the revolution, a qualitative transformation towards improving the human rights situation in Egypt. The Constitution makes respect and protection of rights and freedoms part of the national political system, devoting an entire chapter to them and codifying rights which previous constitutional provisions in Egypt had failed to contemplate such as the right to strike peacefully, dignity as a right of all citizens and the State's obligation to safeguard it, as well as freedom of belief, thought, opinion, scientific research, and artistic and literary creativity. The Constitution also guarantees the right to form civil associations and institutions by notification, establishes equality among all citizens and ensures their enjoyment of rights and freedoms without discrimination on any grounds. It obliges the State to eliminate all forms of discrimination, to establish an independent commission for that purpose and to ensure genuine participation between the State and civil society organizations.

8. As the second stage of the road map presidential elections took place in mid-May 2014. They were held in full respect for standards of transparency and neutrality, and in the presence of numerous civil society associations, international organizations and foreign agencies. Egyptians at home and abroad participated in the ballot, representing 47.45 per cent of eligible voters and including a large number of women exercising their political rights. The current president emerged victorious with a majority of 96.91 per cent.

9. In order to complete the third stage of the democratic journey a committee has been established under the chairmanship of the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Transitional Justice. The committee, which has the vital task of institutional reform, is preparing the draft legislation necessary to hold parliamentary elections, pursuant to the Constitution which states that women, Christians, young people, persons with disabilities and Egyptians residing abroad must all be represented in the future parliament. This move is an assurance by the State that overall institutional reform and sound administration must begin with the reform of political institutions. In this context Acts No. 45 and No. 46 of 2014 have been issued which concern, respectively, political rights and the People's Assembly. Egypt is making serious progress on its democratic journey, completing the transitional phase and achieving economic and social stability while taking account of the rights and freedoms of Egyptians of which the most important is to live in safety, universally considered to be the most basic of human rights. Despite the wave of terrorism Egypt is facing, which seeks to undermine the State and intimidate citizens, the

Government and the people have come together to complete the national road map and the parliamentary elections, and the Government confirms its obligation to respect and protect human rights and freedoms while continuing to combat terrorism.

III. Methodology of preparation for the second review (recommendation No. 27)

10. As part of preparations for the second universal periodic review the Prime Minister of Egypt issued Decision No. 1100 of 2013 establishing a national committee to draft the country's second report under the universal review mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The committee was chaired by the Minister of Transitional Justice and National Reconciliation and included representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, national security agencies, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, the National Council for Women, the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics.

11. The national committee was careful to ensure that the drafting of this report involved comprehensive discussions with all governmental and non-governmental bodies. This included:

(a) A series of inter-governmental consultations among members of the committee and with all the national agencies involved in discussing implementation of the recommendations Egypt accepted in 2010, which will be covered in detail in later sections of the report;

(b) Coordination and consultation with the National Council for Human Rights and other national councils represented on the committee in order to sound their opinions on the recommendations accepted following the first periodic review and so present a realistic national report reflecting effective progress in human rights and freedoms in Egypt;

(c) Consultation with a large number of representatives of Egyptian civil society and non-governmental organizations, through meetings held at the National Council for Human Rights, in order to learn their views on the status of human rights in Egypt, discuss challenges and achievements in the field of human rights and freedoms, and consider the issue of women, children and persons with disabilities. Various opinions were expressed which were taken into account during the preparation of the present report. This is also a reflection of the Government's concern to support and develop cooperation with Egyptian civil society in the field of human rights, and those opinions will be discussed in the next parliament in order to see how they can be adopted into human rights legislation.

12. The present report thus reflects the results of national dialogue and consultations in which the State and the committee have been involved since December 2013. These results are divided into 13 sections dealing with the following issues: the country's obligations under international human rights instruments and treaties; economic, social and cultural rights; civil and political rights; empowerment of women and respect and protection of their human rights; children's rights; rights of persons with disabilities; refugee rights and issues involving emigration and migrants; opposing torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; combating human trafficking; respecting human rights while combating terrorism; cooperation with international human rights bodies.

IV. Obligations of Egypt under international human rights instruments and treaties, and its reservations thereto (recommendations 1–5, 7, 10, 15, 17–27, 32, 34, 37, 44–47, 78)

13. The Egyptian Government is currently examining and evaluating all its reservations to international human rights instruments and treaties in the light of the amended Constitution of January 2014. These will then be presented to the Egyptian parliament which will determine whether to withdraw reservations to provisions which accord with the foundations of Egyptian legislation as laid down in the Constitution, first and foremost the principles of Islamic law (art. 2). Some of the most important reservations currently being scrutinized concern the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (arts. 2 and 16).

14. Egypt will continue to maintain certain reservations to international human rights instruments, for example article 17 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Egyptian legislation, based as it is on the principles of Islamic law, accords rights and duties to both husband and wife which, although not identical, are complementary. Implementing equality as it is envisaged in certain clauses of that article would impair the rights that women currently enjoy.¹

15. Egypt bases its reservation to international human rights instruments relating to arbitration on article 19 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties which allows States to formulate reservations when signing, ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to a treaty, and on the principle of consent to arbitration concerning different interpretations of international instruments by States parties. This principle is set down in general international law.

16. In order for national laws to keep to international standards and to continue the process of democratic reform, the 2014 Constitution contains provision (especially Chapter II on the basic components of society and Chapter III on public rights, freedoms and duties) to ensure that Egypt abides by all its obligations under the international human rights instruments it has ratified. The Constitution also contains many other provisions in this regard,² particularly article 92 which states that the rights and freedoms of citizens cannot be suspended or diminished and that no law regulating the exercise of rights and freedoms may restrict them in a manner which prejudices their substance, and article 93 according to which “the State shall be bound by the international human rights agreements, covenants and charters ratified by Egypt, which shall have force of law after publication in accordance with prescribed conditions”. The 2014 Constitution also guarantees respect and protection for all basic human rights and freedoms including civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development. Articles 80, 81 and 83 guarantee the rights of certain groups in society: children, persons with disabilities and the elderly, as well as obligating the State for the first time to guarantee the rights of dwarves.

17. During the period of transition Egypt has been experiencing since 2011, a number of laws and decrees have been issued to fulfil the country’s international obligations under human rights instruments. The most important of these are:

- (a) Act No. 10 of 2011 which qualifies intimidation and disturbance of the peace as offences;
- (b) Acts No. 11 of 2011 and No. 50 of 2014 which impose harsher penalties for violence against women and amend the Criminal Code (art. 306 bis (a) and (b));³
- (c) Act No. 34 of 2011 which qualifies impeding the right to work and sabotaging public facilities as offences;

- (d) Act No. 111 of 2011 which amends the Press Act by establishing the right to exchange information;
- (e) Act No. 130 of 2011 which establishes a voting system allowing Egyptians abroad to participate in general elections and referendums;
- (f) Act No. 14 of 2012 which concerns integrated development for the Sinai Peninsula;
- (g) Act No. 23 of 2012 which introduces a health insurance system for single women;
- (h) Act No. 86 of 2012 which regulates health insurance for children under school age;
- (i) Act No. 106 of 2013 which outlaws conflict of interests among state officials as an anti-corruption measure;
- (j) Act No. 107 of 2013 which regulates the right of public assembly and the right to hold peaceful processions and demonstrations.

Following the entry into force of the amended Constitution of 2014, and once parliamentary elections have been held, parliament will begin amending national legislation in a manner consistent with the new constitutional provisions.

V. Civil and political rights (recommendations 10, 34, 35, 39, 40, 47, 48, 83–84)

18. Egyptian law fully respects the country's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and regulates those rights within the context of the general principles of international human rights law. As part of this, Act No. 40 of 1977 on political parties was amended in 2011 allowing parties to be formed merely by notification, something also confirmed in article 74 of the 2014 Constitution. Membership of the committee charged with examining notifications of the establishment of political parties has been limited to judges and does not include members of the executive as had been the case under previous regimes. Furthermore, it is now unlawful to dissolve a political party except by a judicial ruling. Thanks to these measures the number of political parties has increased to 84. A number of referendums and elections have taken place since 2011, all of them were marked by transparency and impartiality and their outcomes were a true expression of the voters' will. Electoral rules and procedures have been reformulated by Acts No. 85 and No. 86 of 2014 which directly regulate political rights and parliament, thus guaranteeing greater transparency and impartiality in keeping with international standards.

19. The Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of thought, opinion, expression and artistic and literary creativity. This is an absolute right which cannot be circumscribed except in cases where its exercise could foment hatred, violence, and discrimination among citizens, and then only by the judiciary acting in accordance with national laws (arts. 65 and 67). Article 68 of the Constitution also safeguards the right to exchange and publish information.

20. Articles 70, 71 and 72 of the Constitution obligate Egypt to respect and safeguard the freedom and independence of the press and printing, and of print, video, audio and electronic media. Those articles also make it possible to establish media outlets merely by notification. Due to their particular nature, video, audio and electronic media outlets are regulated by special laws concerning how they can be established and owned, the most important being the Telecommunications Act No. 10 of 2003. Neither the Egyptian Constitution nor the country's laws place any restrictions on access to Internet for bloggers

or the public. Freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of the press and publication have seen great progress recently. Directors of national newspapers are now chosen by a process whereby the papers themselves nominate candidates whose names are then forwarded to the Supreme Press Council with no intervention on the part of the executive or legislative authorities of State. The Supreme Press Council is an independent body made up of journalists from national and independent newspapers; it is separate from the Shura Council, unlike in previous times, and has the task of overseeing the publication of national and independent newspapers. As part of the same process the Ministry of Information has given way to a new ministry and steps are being taken to set up the Supreme Council for the Regulation of Media pursuant to article 211 of the 2014 Constitution.

21. The Egyptian Government lifted the state of emergency on 14 November 2013. Successive Egyptian Constitutions and constitutional declarations, as well as article 154 of the 2014 Constitution, lay down rules and conditions to guarantee that any declaration of a state of emergency will be of as limited a scope as possible. The declaration of a state of emergency must be presented to the People's Assembly, and it is limited to a maximum of three months renewable for a similar period with the agreement of the People's Assembly. In the judgement it handed down in case No. 17, year 15, the Supreme Constitutional Court ruled that article 3 (1) of Act No. 163 of 1958 regarding the state of emergency was unconstitutional in that it authorized the arrest and detention of persons suspected of endangering public order and security, and the search of persons and premises.

22. As regards respecting minimum standards in the effective application of the death penalty, Egyptian legislation requires observation of all the standards contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (arts. 6 and 14) and in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (art. 37). This matter is explained in more detail in Annex 2.

23. The Constitution guarantees complete freedom of religion and belief, allowing the personal status of followers of different religions to be regulated according to their own laws, and ensuring their freedom to undertake and regulate their own religious affairs and choose their own religious leaders (art. 3). Freedom of belief is greater than in the 2012 Constitution which stated only that "freedom of belief is safeguarded". The right to hold religious services and establish places of worship is likewise guaranteed (arts. 64 and 235) and the People's Assembly is required, within the first nine months of its activities, to issue a law regulating the construction and renovation of churches.

24. In order to promote dialogue among religions and to spread tolerance and understanding, in January 2011 Al-Azhar University and the Coptic Orthodox Church launched the "Home of the Egyptian Family" initiative which both institutions had called for in order to strengthen the values of citizenship throughout society, to combat any incitement to violence and discrimination on religious grounds, and to spread a culture of tolerance among Egyptians. The "Home of the Egyptian Family", which is composed of leading religious figures, thinkers and experts in Islam and Christianity, is headed in rotation by the Sheikh of Al-Azhar and the Pope of the Coptic Church and meets periodically to address any tensions that may arise among citizens and to propose solutions which it presents to Government. Moreover, in cooperation with the private sector and Egyptian civil society organizations, the "Home of the Egyptian Family" has launched a campaign to repair and rebuild places of worship which were damaged in events following the revolution of 30 June 2013, especially in Upper Egypt where, with the assistance of the Egyptian armed forces and contributions and assistance from the private sector, it is seeking to gather 300 million Egyptian pounds (LE) to restore 46 damaged churches.

25. Egyptian law guarantees the right of immediate notification of the reasons for arrest or detention,⁴ the right to legal assistance,⁵ and the rights of persons held in pretrial custody.⁶ Article 134 of the Code of Criminal Procedure determines the element of risk (which is the parameter used in circumscribing the freedom of the accused) and lays down

an objective standard which depends upon the nature of the offence and the penalty it attracts, and limits the use of pretrial detention to offences which attract more than one year's imprisonment.

VI. Economic, social and cultural rights (recommendations 7, 21, 46, 50–54, 56–59, 61–64, 74, 77)

26. Chapters II and III of the 2014 Constitution respect and safeguard the economic, social and cultural rights of Egyptian citizens. These include the right to housing, the right to health and the right to education. The rest of those rights are protected under articles 92 and 93 of the Constitution.

27. Over recent years the Egyptian Government has sought to eradicate illiteracy. It has undertaken field studies focusing on the educational needs of illiterate persons in various fields and in all Egyptian governorates. It has been active in the area of information technology, preparing “student and teacher databases” as a way to monitor performance. It has adopted the principle of decentralization, creating executive plans for the eradication of illiteracy in all the country's governorates, each plan tailored to the specific conditions of the governorate in question, and making the regional governor the head of the executive committee for eradicating illiteracy. It has expanded the methodologies applied in illiteracy eradication programmes. It has adopted a plurality of methods to respond to all the educational needs of targeted groups, depending on the conditions in each governorate. It has established partnerships with civil society, increasing the number of civil society associations working to eradicate illiteracy throughout Egypt in order to provide diversified modularized services and incentives to the poor. It has augmented training programmes for educators to create a professional teaching body as per the mechanism established by the General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education in coordination with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It has facilitated citizen's access to literacy certificates in the shortest time possible enabling them to receive them at their places of residence in the various governorates, and it has provided post-illiteracy ongoing education programmes.

28. The Government has been careful to ensure comprehensive development for all groups and regions, first and foremost by ensuring psychological, social and economic stability through a number of programmes and policies which have focused on meeting the needs of different sectors of society, especially the poor. It has supported civil society development associations through a special budget provision for the implementation of a number of small and microenterprises aimed at guaranteeing job opportunities and improving social conditions and standards of living for the poorer sectors of society.

29. Through its social insurance programmes, the Government has set a minimum standard of living for the most poverty-stricken groups and provided assistance to people affected by catastrophes. Around 6 million citizens have benefited from this. The social insurance pension for families has been increased by 50 per cent and the Government has issued decrees setting a minimum wage for state employees.

30. The Government has established a housing strategy for 2012–2027 to provide suitable housing for specific groups including limited-income families, single women, persons with disabilities and young people. The strategy is being developed in coordination with representatives of Egyptian civil society who are participating in its formulation and implementation. The Government has also issued the Social Housing Act No. 33 of 2014 which aims to provide housing units for persons with limited income and plots on which to build for those on middle-income. The Act also establishes a social housing fund to be financed by a special provision within the national budget.

31. The fund has participated in the financing of numerous housing projects, offering low interest mortgages to low- and middle-income groups, broadening the base of citizens who benefit from the Fund's programmes by launching a website, and establishing a hotline to handle requests for financing.

32. Unemployment is one of the fundamental obstacles preventing citizens from enjoying their economic, social and cultural rights. Figures from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics for 2012 indicate that the rate of unemployment in Egypt reached around 12 per cent of the workforce on the labour market (8.87 per cent among men, 22.73 per cent among women). This compares with 8.9 per cent in 2011 and points to a risk which could threaten social stability in Egypt in the future.

33. Young people under the age of 25, who account for more than half of the population of Egypt, face serious challenges especially that of unemployment. They are one of the groups most affected by inequality and poverty and very few of them possess the skills, knowledge and self-confidence necessary to find work in rapidly changing labour markets. For this reason the ability to learn and adapt remains a vital issue.

34. Unemployment is considered to be a national priority requiring carefully coordinated policies. Over recent years the Government has been implementing a comprehensive national strategy to combat short- and long-term unemployment. The strategy — which has seen the involvement of relevant government departments, the Union of Egyptian Businessmen and civil society — is based on the principle of shared responsibility and aims to attract foreign and local capital in order to open new markets and kick start manufacturing and the national economy, launch micro projects and encourage small-scale investment, undertake research on the basis of which to determine levels of supply and demand, and formulate a national training policy. This, along with other elements mentioned above, will then act as a base from which to tackle unemployment.⁷

VII. Empowerment of women and respect and protection of their human rights (recommendations 1, 7, 11–13, 16, 28–33, 40–43, 46, 58, 60, 63)

35. The Constitution guarantees equality before the law, equality of rights, freedoms and public responsibilities, and equality of opportunity for all citizens without distinction between men and women. It requires the State to ensure that women are adequately represented in national and local government, to abide by the international treaties Egypt has ratified which protect the rights of women, children and human rights in general, to take measures to ensure fair treatment for women at all levels and to ensure that women can be appointed to any post in the legislative, executive or judicial authorities of State. In the light of the 22 constitutional articles covering the protection of women's rights and their political, economic and social empowerment, the most important of which is article 11, parliament will be reviewing a number of relevant laws to guarantee equality and non-discrimination.

36. The People's Assembly Act No. 46 of 2014 allocates women an unprecedented number of seats in the People's Assembly. In order to ensure adequate representation of women in parliament it requires that at least half of candidates on electoral lists and at least half of those appointed by the President of the Republic be women.

37. Egypt has introduced new typological indicators to measure gender equality in the fields of work, health, education and political rights with the aim of monitoring the benefits accruing to women as a result of these policies, and of improving the methodological practices currently in use. This will lead to the development of tracking systems and budgets responsive to the special needs of women at a practical level in all stages of

planning and follow-up, and will help to achieve Millennium Development Goals Nos. 4 and 5 concerning the reduction of infant mortality and the improvement of maternal health by 2015. For example:

(a) *Economic rights and economic empowerment.* Women, especially single women and indigent women, working in the Government sector, the public sector and public works enjoy full equality with men with respect to wages, periodic and promotional increments, special allowances, marriage allowance and pensions, and the method for obtaining these benefits. They also enjoy health and social services for themselves and their children and tax exemptions for dependent family members in exactly the same way as men. This has come about following the removal of discriminatory provisions contained in the old tax legislation with the issue of Tax Act No. 91 of 2005. A number of national projects⁸ have been launched in cooperation between Government, civil society and the private sector in order to help poor women integrate into the small enterprise scheme. These projects have been implemented by Egyptian financial institutions such as the Social Fund for Development, the Nasser Bank, Egyptian Zakat foundations and other government agencies, civil society associations and national councils (Annex 3: projects of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood). The projects have benefited thousands of women in villages and marginalized areas, and have also been supported by the productive activities of the women themselves which have contributed to improving their economic condition;

(b) *Social rights and social empowerment.* In coordination with the National Council for Women the Egyptian Government has assisted poor women to obtain a national identity card if they do not have one, and has issued birth certificates to unregistered women. Around 2.7 million identity cards have been issued so far. The Egyptian Government is also cooperating with national councils and civil society organizations to implement certain national projects that aim to support social rights⁹ for women, such as the right to education and health.

38. The Government has successfully established health-care units in every village and population centre throughout the country, offering health care to women through doctors and nurses trained according to protocols laid down by the Ministry of Health and Population. In addition to this, advanced centres known as “Women’s health centres” exist in most governorates. These are constantly upgraded and provide social and economic services alongside health care. Moreover, Female Health Pioneers are active at a national level providing health education to women of all ages and showing rural women how to make full use of health services both for emergency care and for treatment.

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

40. The Ministry of Health and Population monitors maternal mortality at a national level in order to discover its causes and take appropriate preventative measures. Health programmes include schemes for the early detection of breast, cervical, and uterine cancer in addition to a national cancer registration programme in cooperation with the CARE International organization in many areas of Egypt. The Ministry also monitors the quality of family planning methods, both foreign and domestic, and trains Female Health Pioneers and Female Rural Pioneers in awareness-raising and in improving ways to deliver health services to women in remote and rural areas, in coordination with civil society organizations.

41. Studies are under way on the integration of family planning services into a comprehensive health insurance programme. The State is making great efforts to draw women's attention to disease prevention and family planning services, and to modify the ways health insurance associations are administered in order to improve the quality of service while bearing in mind the means of needier sectors of the population. The Ministry of Education has included elements of reproductive health in school curricula especially at the secondary level, while print, audio and visual media are also active in the health education of women through special radio and television programmes. There is also an Egyptian television channel which specializes in raising awareness to health issues and providing advice.

42. The Egyptian Government has taken various steps and implemented a number of measures to empower women politically. These include:

(a) Provisions in Egyptian legislation and in the 2014 Constitution guaranteeing women the right to form major federations of non-governmental women's associations in order to help women obtain their rights, cooperate in handling and solving their problems, and conduct studies on women's development within the federation's geographical region;

(b) Establishing equal opportunity units within ministries to counter any practices suspected of discriminating against women in the workplace;

(c) Establishing women's committees in trade unions to support the rights of women and children in the Trade Union Federation, ensuring that women obtain their human rights and exercise their basic freedoms, and ascertaining whether women enjoy constitutional equality with men;

(d) Holding training courses with the support of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to educate women about their human rights in all fields;

(e) Facilitating non-governmental organizations in the creation of women's committees within local federations at the governorate level in order to promote the role of civil society associations and to support programmes to educate women, specifically rural women, about their human rights in all fields;

(f) The conclusion of a protocol in August 2013 between the National Council for Women and the Ministry of the Interior (section for human rights and community liaison) in order to improve cooperation between the two sides and to devise new mechanisms to protect women and offer them legal and security assistance;

(g) The Ministry of Social Solidarity has organized 717 seminars to educate women about human trafficking, human rights, violence against women, early marriage, female circumcision, the legal and political rights of women, as well as other issues touching on the social and economic conditions of society. The initiative is directed at people who attend rural development centres for women, women's clubs and women's residential and guidance centres.¹⁰

43. The National Council for Women, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Netherlands Government, has set up a political education centre offering intensive training to women hoping to enter political life. Working with non-governmental organizations, it has also launched awareness-raising campaigns in society at a national level. Despite the low level of female representation in the last parliament the number of women who voted in elections has appreciably increased, surpassing that of men in many regions in the elections of 2010, 2012 and 2014. Furthermore the president of the Council was a member of the Committee of 50 which drafted the 2014 Constitution.

44. In order to support female parliamentarians an integrated package of training programmes has been launched dealing with such issues as women and political participation, Female Rural Pioneers and political participation, candidate selection, managing election campaigns to promote the role of female parliamentarians, as well as a series of training programmes which aim to prepare a female political class capable of competing and achieving positive results in decision-making forums, particularly in forthcoming local council elections. The training programmes target women hoping to become candidates for trade union councils, political parties, civil society organizations and people's coalitions at the governorate level.¹¹

45. In order to combat all forms of discrimination against women, the National Council for Women has set up an Ombudsman's Office to tackle the problems hindering women from participating effectively in society. This Office, which is the official channel allowing women to denounce any discriminatory practices they encounter, includes a team of lawyers and experts to answer queries, give legal advice and forward complaints to the relevant authorities. The Office cooperates with all relevant governmental and non-governmental agencies, equal opportunities units within ministries, Al-Azhar, and the Council of State in order to monitor and resolve problems.

46. Pursuant to Ministerial Decree No. 261 of 25 September 2012, an equal opportunities unit was established in the Ministry of Social Solidarity to receive complaints from the Ombudsman's Office in the National Council for Women, study them and forward them to the relevant offices for appropriate action, thus helping the groups concerned to remedy the causes behind their complaints. This helps to preserve the family unit and to limit discrimination against women.

47. The Ministry of the Interior has established telephone hotlines for reporting episodes of violence, rape and indecent assault against women, and has set up care centres for victims. It has also trained female police officers to deal with female victims of violence, harassment or rape. This is in addition to the measures to combat violence against women laid out in paragraph 17 (a) above.

48. The Ministry of the Interior has set up a special anti-violence unit under the office of the Minister of the Interior and the section for human rights and community liaison in order to ensure that human rights and liaison with society receive greater attention and to promote the rights of women and children and handle issues which concern them. The unit, which is made up of 10 officers including 4 female officers specializing in different fields, is considered a cornerstone for the advancement of police work and will be extended to other levels.

VIII. Children's rights (recommendations 6, 14, 37, 49)

49. Article 80 of the 2014 Constitution defines persons under the age of 18 as children and protects their rights, in particular their right to a name, identity documents, free compulsory vaccination, health care, family or alternative care, basic nutrition, safe shelter, emotional and cognitive development and education, also for children with disabilities. It contains provisions for the care and protection of children from all forms of violence, abuse, mistreatment and commercial and sexual exploitation, and establishes a special judicial regime for child victims. These rights and freedoms were absent from earlier Egyptian constitutions.

50. Pursuant to Act No. 12 of 1996 as amended by Act No. 126 of 2008, the Government offers fully integrated care to children (social, educational, health, cultural and developmental) through a national network of service units including nurseries, children's clubs, a host family project, a care initiative for working children, a project for rural

children, residential nurseries, foster families and children's villages. These efforts are complemented by the work of non-governmental organizations and of the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood (Annex 3: Work of the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood).

51. Comprehensive national strategies and programmes have been put in place to guarantee the best interests of children, especially as regards alternative child care. These include, for example, the foster family system,¹² residential associations,¹³ residential nurseries,¹⁴ children's villages,¹⁵ associations providing social care to children at risk of delinquency,¹⁶ supervision centres¹⁷ and social surveillance offices.¹⁸ A strategy proposed by the Ministry of Social Solidarity to improve quality standards in orphanages is currently being rolled out. Its main elements are: firstly, reviewing and modernizing the rules and regulations applied in orphanages; secondly, formulating quality standards within residential associations as a guide for administrators thus enabling them to offer integrated care to orphans in cooperation with specialized civil society associations and experts in the field, and thirdly, improving the competence and efficiency of workers in residence associations, training service providers and issuing them with certificates.

52. As one of its social care and development mechanisms to combat child labour the Government has set up centres for working children. These function through a social association which provides developmental care to children between the ages 6 and 18 in order to limit the negative effects of child labour, and follows up on implementation of articles 123 to 137 of the Child Act and its implementing regulations.

53. The Government is examining a number of measures to improve and extend the care available to children, including changes to relevant regulations and decisions in order to bring them into line with developments in society. This also involves amending articles 85 and 87 of the implementing regulations of the Child Act to make it possible for children to receive care in foster families from birth rather than from the age of 2, or extending the guesthouse project for follow-up care to children in residential associations who do not have a family of their own and who have reached the age of 18, as per the Child Act No. 12 of 1996. Other moves involve increasing the number of psychological guidance centres available at a national level for children in residential associations who do not have a family of their own, providing appropriate mechanisms to find timely solutions to the social and psychological problems this sector of society has to face and helping them achieve a better mental and social equilibrium.¹⁹

54. Article 80 of the Constitution guarantees respect and protection for the rights of children within the criminal justice system, in accordance with relevant international standards. Egyptian legislation, particularly the Child Act and the Criminal Code, also ensure implementation of the care and rights laid down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in United Nations standards (Annex 5: Treatment of children in the criminal justice system).

IX. Rights of persons with disabilities (recommendations 15, 65)

55. Articles 55, 80, 81, 93, 180, and 244 of the Constitution contain provisions guaranteeing the rights of persons with disabilities to political, social and economic empowerment, and to consideration for their special needs as part of the obligations Egypt has under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Egyptian Government, in cooperation with the National Council for Disability and civil society, has drafted an integrated law to protect their rights. Article 244 of the Constitution stipulates that persons with disabilities shall be appropriately represented in the first People's Assembly to be elected after the Constitution is approved. To this end the People's

Assembly Act No. 46 of 2014 makes it a requirement for electoral shortlists to include the name of at least one person with a disability and long lists to include at least three.

56. With Decision No. 410 of the President of the People's Assembly of 17 April 2012, the Government set up the National Council for Disability which is under the authority of the Prime Minister and has its headquarters in Cairo. The Council has the faculty to establish branches at a national level and has numerous coordinating, advisory and supervisory functions. It expresses views on draft legislation, decisions and international agreements, and oversees the implementation of laws and regulations affecting persons with disabilities in all the offices of State.

57. The National Council for Disability includes legal experts and advisors to review regulations and laws and to follow up on coordination and monitoring. It has created 16 subcommittees to develop policies and strategies for disability in Egypt, and in 2013 it participated in the Committee of 50 which drafted the 2014 Constitution.

58. The Government coordinates with civil society organizations and the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood to implement national policies aimed at protecting children with disabilities and integrating them into society. These cover a number of aspects such as offering training to service providers on how to protect children with and without disabilities and how to ensure they can access the basic information and skills they require to become productive members of society; putting in place a system to guard against violations of children's rights, recognize potential violations, deal with them through the subcommittees and build the capacities of the members of those subcommittees, and supporting the creation of centralized units within ministries and national councils to safeguard children and to follow up on the implementation of protection policies at various levels (Annex 6: National programmes to protect the rights of children with disabilities).

59. The Egyptian Government is continuing to implement policies which provide effective guarantees for the rights of persons with disabilities, pursuant to relevant international treaties. These include a proposal to amend the Rehabilitation Act No. 39 of 1975 as amended by Act No. 49 of 1982 in order to improve the rights of persons with disabilities and make them equal with the rights of others, and proposals on anti-discrimination, equal opportunity and respect for abilities and freedoms, as well as confirmation of the right of persons with disabilities to education, health, rehabilitation and integration into society, freedom of opinion and expression, to live in security and safety and not to be subjected to torture or coercion, and other rights. These proposals are being discussed in a comprehensive community context via a series of seminars, conferences and workshops in which civil society, the National Council for Disability and relevant government departments all participate. Attention is currently being given to amending the majority of regulations and ministerial decisions on rehabilitation, in order to bring them into line with modern developments, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2014 Constitution.

60. The Ministry has formed a committee made up of experts in social rehabilitation and specialists from the Ministry itself to monitor the current level of social integration among persons with disabilities, to evaluate available services and develop mechanisms in the field of disability in order to provide higher quality services. Work on a disability database has been completed with the input of 13,000 cases and the listing of around 400,000 more. This information has been distributed to directorates and departments for them to complete their own data and to help them identify the nature of the disability and facilitate the provision of assistance to the people concerned.

61. The National Council for Disability is currently studying examples of educational integration of persons with disabilities in other countries and formulating an educational policy to ensure such integration in schools and universities. It is also offering alternatives

to people who missed out on an education due to disability, such as single classroom schools or distance learning, and organizing a poll on employment trends and requirements in private companies to ensure that persons with disabilities are trained in a manner consonant with the needs of the Egyptian labour market.

X. Refugee rights and issues involving emigration and migrants (recommendations 7, 8, 76)

62. Egypt respects all its obligations under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and all relevant international treaties it has ratified. Article 62 of the 2014 Constitution guarantees freedom of movement, of place of residence and of emigration, and states that no citizen may be expelled from State territory. Article 63 prohibits any form of forced arbitrary displacement of citizens, which it designates as an offence that does not lapse by prescription. According to article 88 the State shall safeguard the interests of Egyptians living abroad, protect them and their rights and freedoms, enable them to perform their public duties and ensure their participation in elections and referendums, as regulated by law. Article 244 guarantees that they shall be appropriately represented in the first People's Assembly to be elected following approval of the Constitution. To this end the People's Assembly Act No. 46 of 2014 makes it a requirement for electoral shortlists to include the name of at least one citizen resident abroad and long lists to include at least three.

63. The Government cooperates closely with the OHCHR office in Cairo, supporting and facilitating its work in registering refugees and political asylum seekers. This cooperation has increased since the beginning of the crisis in Syria in 2011 as Egypt strives to guarantee that Syrian citizens on Egyptian soil can enjoy all their rights. The Office's limited financial resources have impeded a number of cooperation programmes; nonetheless Egypt has earmarked a part of national resources to ensure that Syrian citizens have access to the same educational, health and social services as Egyptian citizens.

64. Coordination of all matters concerning migration is in the hands of a national committee called the "National Coordinating Committee for Illegal Migration" which came into being pursuant to Prime Ministerial Decree No. 380 of 2014. The Committee is responsible for coordinating national efforts to regulate questions involving immigrants in Egypt and Egyptian emigrants abroad, and it coordinates government policies on awareness raising about migration and combating the phenomenon of illegal migration.

65. The Egyptian Government has taken a number of steps to ensure that Egyptians abroad can exercise their rights to the full. The most significant of these was Act No. 130 of 2011 which, for the first time in the country's history, gave them the right to vote in general elections and referendums. Furthermore, the Supreme Electoral Supervisory Committee has created a website enabling eligible Egyptian voters who reside abroad to register using their national ID number. Via Egyptian Foreign Ministry delegations overseas they can then obtain an electoral number and all the documentation they require in order to cast their vote, either by registered post or by coming in person to the electoral commission headquarters in the foreign country. These procedures were streamlined in the General Elections Act No. 22 of 2014, and in Act No. 45 of 2014 which directly regulates political rights, allowing Egyptians resident abroad to vote without prior registration as long as they are in the voter database.

66. In order to limit the phenomenon of illegal emigration, the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration has established a pre-travel centre to train emigrants or others hoping to work abroad (either in the European Union or in other Arab States), helping them acquire

vital knowledge about the language, customs and traditions of the society to which they are hoping to travel, in order to facilitate their integration. The Ministry currently has six emigration advice offices in various governorates, and others are being opened elsewhere in the country with the goal of limiting illegal emigration and raising awareness to its dangers.

XI. Opposing torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (recommendations 9, 35, 36, 39, 84)

67. According to article 93 of the 2014 Constitution international treaties ratified by Egypt become an integral part of national legislation. Consequently Egypt respects the definition of torture contained in the Convention against Torture and all it needs to do is change national laws following the general elections.

68. Egypt responded to the recommendation concerning a review of the definition of torture in articles 126 and 129 of the Egyptian Criminal Code during its first review (A/HRC/14/17/Add.1), and did in fact prepare a bill for their amendment which was presented before parliament. However, the revolution of January 2011 and June 2013 and the transitional period the country has been going through without a People's Assembly have prevented ratification of that amendment which would make the definition of torture in Egyptian legislation consistent with the Convention against Torture.

69. With reference to recommendations to investigate and resolve cases of torture and of other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Annex 7 contains a detailed presentation of the legislative and executive framework for investigations in this area.

XII. Combating human trafficking (recommendations 44, 45)

70. Egypt takes the phenomenon of human trafficking very seriously and has taken steps to qualify it as an offence. It has also ratified the relevant international and regional treaties which outlaw trafficking in women and children and oppose all forms of exploitation. The most important of these are International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 of 1999 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, which came into force pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 69 of 2002, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women And Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted by the Palermo Conference in 2000 and ratified without reservation on 5 March 2004, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, ratified on 12 July 2002. The definition of human trafficking Egypt uses is that contained in article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women And Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, and Egyptian legislation penalizes all forms of trafficking described in that Protocol.

71. Pursuant to Prime Ministerial Decree No. 1584 of 2007 the Egyptian Government has established the National Coordinating Committee to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Persons. This body has the task of formulating a national action plan to combat human trafficking, preparing an annual report on national efforts to counter this problem and monitoring Egypt's fulfilment of its international obligations under the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The Committee also proposes the necessary legislative measures 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 in order to facilitate implementation of the Protocol.

72. Egypt is one of the first countries to have enacted a law to combat human trafficking (Act No. 64 of 2010). The Act defines the offences, imposes harsher penalties, establishes a framework for the application of the law and for international judicial cooperation, protects victims, and sets up the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons under the authority of the Prime Minister. The Committee coordinates anti-human trafficking policies, plans (for 2011–2012 and 2013–2015) and programmes at the national level, provides protection and services for victims and safeguards witnesses.

73. Pursuant to Act No. 11 of 2011 amendments have been made to certain provisions in the Criminal Code and to the executive measures used by the Ministry of the Interior to address this issue, and harsher penalties have been imposed for rape, sexual assault, instigating a woman to immorality by gestures or words, abduction and exploitation of minors, indecency and harassment (arts. 267, 268, 269, 269 bis, 288, 289, 306 bis and 306 bis (b)).

74. The Ministry of the Interior has established a plan to improve security aspects of the fight against human trafficking. This includes creating specialized police units, developing training programmes to enhance the skills of police officers, and cooperating and exchanging information with foreign security agencies and international human rights organizations.

75. By means of protocols with host States the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration is endeavouring to regulate and protect Egyptian women working abroad as a way to combat the exploitation of women.

76. The activities of the anti-human trafficking unit of the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood are progressing on three parallel axes: executive, legislative and promotional (Annex 8: Activities of the anti-human trafficking unit of the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood).

77. The Public Prosecution Office and the judicial authorities deal with cases of human trafficking under Act No. 64 of 2010. Egypt has put in place a basic framework of human rights for the relevant authorities to follow when dealing with victims, as well as measures to protect their rights and interests²⁰ such as establishing an immediate bond of trust with victims, ensuring they are not viewed as suspects, respecting their human dignity, helping them with translation if they do not speak Arabic, taking the necessary measures to conceal their names and identities, impeding media access, banning photographers and ensuring suspects cannot mix with victims to threaten or harm them.

78. In the measures they take to protect victims of trafficking, the authorities show particular concern for the needs of children. Investigations are completed as quickly as possible, taking account of children's best interests and avoiding direct contact between child victims and offenders during trial. Moreover, child victims have the right to be fully informed about security implications and criminal proceedings before it is decided whether or not they will testify at a trial. Particular weight is given to statements and complaints concerning child trafficking and exploitation presented by child protection committees and the National Child Protection Agency, and all measures necessary to protect child victims and witnesses are undertaken in coordination with these bodies. Children, whether victims, witnesses or accused, are treated with compassion and respect when they appear before the Public Prosecution, and no bodily, mental or moral harm may be inflicted upon them. They can only be held in the offices of the Public Prosecution for the purposes of the investigation or recording statements, and then for as short a time as possible. Provisions exist to ensure that child victim or witness are not frightened, and to enable them to give their evidence in complete freedom without pressure or influence, or physical or mental coercion. Their cases must also be presented to the special child protection committees to

take all necessary steps, pursuant to article 96 of the Child Act, to protect and assist them, especially if they are in danger.

79. Despite all its efforts, Egypt is still facing a number of challenges in this field. One of the most serious is the lack of a nationally integrated database for the collection, analysis, and exchange of accurate information on the magnitude and seriousness of this phenomenon, and the lack of precise control over the problem given that Egypt is a region of transit from other countries.

80. Egypt believes in the importance of international cooperation to combat human trafficking because no country, whatever its means, is capable of facing the problem alone. It has sought to tackle the issue by working with the international community and coordinating with source and host countries, and it cooperates fully in exchanging information on human trafficking with other States, United Nations agencies and special rapporteurs, especially the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons.

81. Egypt is happy to cooperate with other States and relevant international organizations to combat this problem through the exchange of information, training, technical and financial support and logistics, and in particular through training for immigration, law-enforcement and justice officials, and cooperation in the field of travel surveillance and the security and control of documents. It has responded to requests for international cooperation to combat human trafficking on the basis of the international and bilateral treaties it has ratified, in order to fulfil its duty to fight against crime, achieve justice, protect victims, arrest offenders and ensure they do not escape punishment merely for having crossed national borders. In the absence of a bilateral or multilateral treaty, the Public Prosecution Office undertakes to respond to requests for international cooperation on the basis of the principle of reciprocity or of friendly relations between States, so long as this does not conflict with State sovereignty, national security, public order, or the rule of law.²¹

82. The Government has included the subject of transnational organized crime (especially human trafficking and the protection of victims) as part of the training offered to people who work in the legal, legislative and judicial fields in Egypt. For example the Egyptian Public Prosecution Office has worked with UNODC and UNDP to organize a number of seminars, workshops and training courses for its staff on transnational organized crime.

XIII. Respecting human rights while combating terrorism (recommendations 35, 79, 80)

83. According to article 237 of the 2014 Constitution the State shall, within a specific time frame and while guaranteeing public rights and freedoms, combat all forms of terrorism and track its funding sources, being a threat to the nation and its citizens. The law shall regulate the provisions and procedures of the fight against terrorism, and determine fair compensation for the damages resulting therefrom.

84. The Government has completed the drafting of a bill on terrorism which states that “the State shall combat all forms of terrorism in accordance with United Nations standards, seeking to drain its intellectual, social and material resources because it is a threat to the nation and to society. This shall be done without prejudice to public rights and freedoms. The law shall regulate the provisions and procedures of the fight against terrorism, and determine fair compensation for the damages resulting therefrom”. The bill was going to be presented to the People’s Assembly in 2011; however the political and social changes Egypt has witnessed with the revolutions of January 2011 and June 2013 prevented this.

85. In light of the constitutional obligation to combat terrorism, lawmakers will now determine what legislative measures are necessary to counter that phenomenon and ensure fair compensation for the damages resulting therefrom, within the framework of the new Constitution.

XIV. Respecting and protecting human rights at the national level (recommendations 6, 11, 12, 18, 20, 26, 32, 35, 38, 42–45, 47, 48, 66–75, 78)

86. The Government is developing educational programmes through family advice and counselling bureaux under the Ministry of Social Solidarity. The intention is to raise standards of living by helping families take full advantage of the various services available in society and so promote family stability. The Government is implementing these programmes through meetings and seminars with various groups in society, offering educational, psychological and social guidance services to lessen the negative effects of parents' lack of knowledge about scientific child-rearing techniques and the effect they have on family stability. It is also developing educational programmes on the rights and duties of parents.

87. The Egyptian Government has developed curricula for primary and secondary schools which include information on human rights and general freedoms as well as on reproductive and sexual health, and are calibrated to take account of pupils' gender and their level of mental development. Courses on the same subjects are also taught at university level. It has also created adult education programmes on citizens' rights and duties and the responsibility of the State to protect and respect human rights and general freedoms. Furthermore, international human rights law is a basic part of university curricula in a number of institutions such as the faculty of law and the police academy.²²

88. The Government gives financial and technical support to associations working in the field of human rights which educate citizens about their legal and constitutional rights.

89. A number of programmes are being implemented to educate Government employees in how to interact with persons with disabilities. Other activities in this field include a training workshop with non-governmental organizations and awareness-raising campaigns for school and university students on the rights of persons with disabilities. An educational project has been launched to raise awareness among parents and pupils through textbooks and wall paintings in schools, with the participation of pupils and graduates with disabilities from faculties of fine and applied arts in all Egyptian governorates. Offices for disability affairs have been set up in the Ministries of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, of Electricity and Energy, of Local Development, of Housing and Utilities and of Communications and Information Technology in order to facilitate access to ministry services for disabled persons. Agreement has also been reached on training a number of employees of those offices in sign language to facilitate their interaction with deaf persons. Similar offices are being established in other ministries and government agencies.

90. Mechanisms have been developed within the Ministry of the Interior to ensure follow up on measures to respect and protect the human rights of citizens in their dealings with State security organizations. Information about human rights concepts has been disseminated among police officers (Annex 1: Models of relevant mechanisms in the Ministry of the Interior).

91. A system has been created for receiving complaints and petitions from citizens, which they can now present more easily through multiple channels including the website of the Ministry of the Interior, the website of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and a

telephone service advertised daily in the media. Complaints are examined and receive a reply within a set period of time.

92. A monitoring and follow-up service has been created within the Ministry of the Interior to ensure that officials respect human rights during the course of their work, and to take all necessary disciplinary and legal measures in the case of any violation. Prerequisites for protecting human rights principles in police stations have been put in place, including interview rooms where detainees can meet their lawyers, separate cells for accused persons without previous criminal convictions, and special centres for juveniles and women.

93. Since 2011 the Government has been reviewing amendments to Act No. 84 of 2002 which regulates the activities of non-governmental organizations and civil society associations in Egypt. In coordination with representatives of civil society the Ministry of Social Solidarity organized meetings and workshops in which different views on the amendment of the Act were put forward and discussed, and in fact the proposals of civil society associations have been incorporated into the amendment bill. The bill responds to current requests for change and accords with the present Constitution, article 75 of which states: "All citizens shall have the right to form civil society groups and associations on a democratic basis, which acquire legal personality merely upon notification. Such groups and associations shall have the right to practice their activities freely, and government agencies may not interfere in their affairs or dissolve them, or dissolve their boards of directors or of trustees except by a judicial ruling". The number of civil society associations registered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity has risen to 47,000, as compared with 26,000 when the last report was presented to the periodic review mechanism in 2010.

94. The Government's general goal is to draft a law which supports the participation of civil society associations in development issues, promotes their activities, smoothes the way for civil society organizations especially those active in the field of human rights and basic freedoms, and enables them to create strong and effective partnerships. This will prepare the way for the subsequent presentation of the bill before the Egyptian parliament following the elections.

95. In the implementation of many of its policies, the Government has adopted methods to promote and strengthen the relationship between governmental institutions and civil society organizations which are registered and operate in Egypt, as explained in the various sections of this report.

XV. Cooperation with international human rights bodies (recommendations 22–27, 82)

96. Over the last four years Egypt has received four visits by OHCHR delegations (in April 2011, May 2012, February 2014 and May 2014) for official consultations on a host agreement for the OHCHR North Africa Regional Office which is located in Cairo, and on technical cooperation. Further consultations are expected to be held on the draft agreement before it is presented to the Egyptian parliament following elections. In addition to the foregoing, as part of capacity-building and awareness-raising on human rights at the national level, Egypt and OHCHR are in constant contact over the implementation of technical cooperation programmes in three important sectors: security, the judiciary, and parliament.

97. After completing its first review in February 2010, Egypt welcomed the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons in April 2010. Visits were expected from other special rapporteurs however internal political developments and two popular revolutions in January 2011 and June 2013 meant the Egyptian Government was unable to receive any special rapporteurs or mandate holders.

98. Following the revolution of June 2013 and the Government's commitment to the implementation of its "road map", and with the transitional period was nearing an end, in March 2014 the Egyptian Government sent invitations to four special rapporteurs and mandate holders: the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence (in light of the creation of the Ministry of Transitional Justice and National Reconciliation in 2014), the Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women. Once the outcome of this round of invitations is known, the Government is considering issuing further invitations to other special rapporteurs and mandate holders of the Human Rights Council.

99. Egypt is keen to cooperate with the Human Rights Council and attaches great importance to its work. It has presented and adopted many important initiatives since the Council began its activities in 2006 and during its own presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) from 2009 to 2012. The most important of these were NAM resolutions on the right to development, on the right to freedom of opinion and expression (in cooperation with the United States of America), on the return of capital lost through illegal capital flight and on protection for the family. Egypt has also organized seminars with representatives of civil society and the National Council for Human Rights to discuss current developments in Egypt and other topics such as development in Africa, reform of the working methods of the National Council for Human Rights, and the rights of victims of terrorism and their families. It has also organized a number of special courses and seminars in the Council on such topics as the global financial crisis, the protection of journalists in armed conflicts and cultural pluralism and human rights.

100. Egypt cooperates closely with United Nations agencies and programmes especially as regards respect for and protection of human rights. These include the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) which has a regional office in Cairo, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNDP and others.

101. Between 2010 and 2014 Egypt presented a number of periodical reports to treaty bodies, such as the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (the Combined second, third and fourth periodic reports of May 2010 which were discussed in November 2013, and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Combined seventeenth to twenty-second periodic reports of March 2014). Egypt had intended to present its fifth and sixth periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2012 and 2017 respectively; however a delay in the Committee's discussions on the country's fourth periodic report, presented in 2007 but discussed in 2011, led to a change in the scheduling for the presentation of the other two reports to 2016. Thus the fifth and sixth reports will be presented together as a combined report.

102. At a regional level Egypt presented its periodical reports to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights up to 2004. The Egyptian Government intends to present a combined report to the Commission for the period 2005–2013 before the end of the current year and undertakes to respond to all individual complaints brought before the Commission.

Notes

¹ According to Islamic and Egyptian law the man is required to provide a dowry and a gift (the *shabka*) to his wife when the marriage contract is concluded, whereas she has no such obligation. He is also required to prepare and furnish a home for them to live in whereas she is not. Moreover, according to Islamic and Egyptian law the man is required to provide for his wife for as long as the marriage lasts, whereas she is not even if she works or has a private income however large it may be. In the case of a divorce the man is required to give his wife the deferred dowry and to pay her compensation and

maintenance for at least two years depending on the length of the marriage. This is an obligation upon the husband whereas the wife has no corresponding obligation.

² Annex 1: The Egyptian Constitution of 2014.

³ Article 306 bis (a), as amended, states “Harassment is considered to have taken place if someone, whether in public or in private, accosts a third party, following or pursuing them with gestures, words, the use of modern communication devices or any other means to suggest or insinuate acts of a sexual or licentious nature. This offence is punishable by imprisonment of not less than 1 year and/or by a fine of between 10,000 and 20,000 Egyptian pounds (LE). If the act described in the preceding paragraph is committed against a woman and the perpetrator is her employer or someone in a position of authority over the victim due to work or study or any other cause, the offence is punishable by imprisonment of between 3 and 7 years and by a fine of between 10,000 and 20,000 LE. Imprisonment shall not exceed 5 years if the harassment against the woman is perpetrated by two or more persons, or through coercion or violence by one person carrying a weapon or tool. If, within a year of completion of sentence, the perpetrator repeats the offence in the terms set down in paragraphs 2 and 3 of this article, the prison sentence is increased and the convicted party is then placed under police supervision for a period equivalent to the length of the sentence.”

⁴ Article 37 of the Egyptian Code of Criminal Procedure states that: “Law-enforcement officers shall make an immediate official record of the detained suspect’s statement. If nothing emerges to exonerate the suspect he shall be transferred within 24 hours to the relevant office of the Public Prosecutor. The Public Prosecutor shall then question the suspect within 24 hours and either order his arrest or release him.” Thus the accused has to be informed of the charges against him in order to be able to respond and perhaps exonerate himself before the law-enforcement officer or before the Public Prosecutor who orders his arrest or release. Article 139 of the Egyptian Code of Criminal Procedure states that: “If a person is arrested he shall immediately be informed of the reasons for the arrest.” Article 373 of the General Directives for Offices of Public Prosecutions (Judicial Directives) confirms the foregoing, stating that “The Office of the Public Prosecutor shall immediately inform a person arrested of the reasons for the arrest.” Article 375 obligates the Office of the Public Prosecutor to state the charges against an accused who has absconded in any arrest warrant it issues. This means that, even if the warrant is not implemented, the accused has the possibility of knowing why such an order was issued and what charges are laid against him.

⁵ Act No. 145 of 15 July 2006 amending certain provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Act No. 150 of 1950) aims to provide this guarantee by broadening the circumstances in which a defence counsel must be present and ensuring a lawyer is appointed for an accused who has not appointed one himself. Article 125 of the Act stipulates that anyone accused of a major or serious offence punishable by imprisonment must be provided with a lawyer during the investigation, and it obligates the investigative authorities, of their own initiative, to appoint a lawyer to attend the accused throughout the proceedings if the accused has not done so himself.

⁶ Article 381 of the Judicial Directives for Offices of Public Prosecutions, in referring to the reasons for pretrial imprisonment, states: “to protect the accused from the possibility of vendetta and to assuage public feelings aroused by the impact of the offence”. Article 134 of the Code of Criminal Procedure enumerates cases in which acts by the offender may undermine investigations or the possibility of discovering the truth. Among the reasons for pretrial imprisonment it mentions: “concerns [that the accused] may impair the investigation, either by influencing victims or witnesses, tampering with physical evidence, or agreeing with other offenders to alter their accounts or remove traces of their acts, or concerns that the accused may abscond”. This is also confirmed in article 381 of the Judicial Directives which gives as further reasons for pretrial imprisonment: “... to prevent the possibility of [the accused] tampering with the evidence in the case or of influencing or threatening the victim ...”. Pursuant to article 206 bis, legislators have transferred the authority of the investigating judge in certain offences to a member of the Office of Public Prosecutions holding a minimum rank of senior prosecutor. The reason for this lies in the broad powers the law gives investigating judges, and transferring those powers to the Office of Public Prosecutions means that the member of the Office who exercises them must have the same degree of experience as an investigating judge. Therefore legislators have decreed that only members of the Office of Public Prosecutions holding a minimum rank of senior prosecutor can exercise this function. Article 382 of the Judicial Directives for Offices of Public Prosecutions states that “members of the Office of Public Prosecutions shall consider the circumstances of the cases presented before them and determine the length of pretrial imprisonment

necessary. Specifically, they shall consider the accused's social, family and economic circumstances and the seriousness of the offence ...”.

- ⁷ Annex 3: Section concerning projects being implemented to empower young people.
- ⁸ More than 100 projects have been launched in cooperation with the National Council for Women and other state agencies. These include, among others, earmarking resources to finance small and microenterprises for women, establishing small-scale industrial training centres for women, designating outlets for the sale and marketing of environmental products made by women, supplying machinery to dry and can fish (in coastal areas), creating centres for training women in rare traditional crafts, training women in the production of ready-to-wear clothing, setting up fairs where single women can sell their products, providing machinery for weaving kilim rugs in order to give employment to girls, providing machinery for the production, storage and packaging of agricultural products (in rural areas), providing professional centres for women, setting up dairies, developing and enhancing professional formation centres to give women and girls the skills to set up non-traditional small enterprises, providing small loans to single women in deprived areas, training women in traditional crafts to serve vessels transiting the Suez Canal, creating workshops for girls and female manual workers, setting up industrial units to produce juices and papyrus.
- ⁹ In cooperation with the prison administration authorities the National Council for Women has launched an initiative for the release of “imprisoned female debtors” (i.e., women who, because of poverty, are unable to meet their debts) with the aim of alleviating their suffering and that of their families. To this end the Council has set up a committee to coordinate with representatives of imprisoned women and their creditors and to establish priorities for urgent cases. In cooperation with the Government the Council has also implemented a number of health-care programmes for women, especially the elderly and those with disabilities. It has created departments for the treatment of non-working women. It has set up departments to deal with cases of addiction in special centres within women's mental health hospitals. It has increased the range of cancer screening services offered to women. It has provided reproductive health services for women, either in mobile clinics or in specific hospitals, clinics or neighbourhoods. It has created clubs for women inside health-care units. It has trained Female Rural Pioneers to work in family planning and reproductive health. It has improved breast cancer and osteoporosis prevention. It has provided secure dwellings for female doctors who emigrate from distant areas. It has improved environmental and health conditions in deprived villages by supplying families with healthy sanitation facilities. It has founded a specialized hospital for liver and kidney diseases. It has created test centres for people planning to marry. It has established a number of special family health units. It has provided mobile reproductive health clinics for women. It has set up departments at health insurance hospitals for the treatment of working women. It has implemented sewage recycling projects in villages. It has created training programmes for women with disabilities. It has founded a club for elderly women and provided training for their caregivers. It has set up centres for the care of women with mental disabilities.
- ¹⁰ This is one of the mechanisms adopted by the Ministry of Social Solidarity to protect women and ensure they enjoy social care, education and development. It is motivated by a concern to support the rights of women, prevent discrimination, combat negative traditions, create a social awareness which rejects those traditions and offer protection and assistance to battered women. The women's residential and guidance project is a pioneering initiative in the Arab world, and it was set up by the Ministry to help battered women, protecting them from delinquency and helping them overcome the difficulties they have to face. Through clubs set up in different economic, social, religious and legal milieus, the Ministry also provides social, health and psychological care, rehabilitation for professional and cultural integration into society, and training in certain professions and skills to ensure suitable work opportunities. There are currently nine centres in eight governorates: Cairo, Giza, Alexandria (two centres), Minya, Beni Suef, Faiyum, Dakahlia and Qalyubia.
- ¹¹ Sixteen training courses have been organized in Cairo, Giza, Dakahlia, Al Sharqia, Red Sea, Qena, Sohag, Minya, Asyut, Matrouh, Beheira, Alexandria, Luxor and Aswan.
- ¹² This provides complementary social, psychological, health and vocational care, with the aim of offering a sound upbringing to children whose circumstances mean that they cannot be raised in their natural families. There are currently 8,040 foster families caring for 8,040 boys and girls.
- ¹³ These are homes offering shelter to children between the ages of 6 and 18 who are not cared for in families because they have been orphaned or because their families have broken up or are unable to

- give them a sound upbringing. There are currently 345 residential associations caring for 9,082 boys and girls.
- ¹⁴ These offer shelter to children between the ages of 2 and 6. There are currently 145 residential nurseries caring for 3,584 boys and girls.
- ¹⁵ These children's villages and homes for young people are part of the Egyptian branch of SOS Children's Villages and offer care to orphans and children of unknown parentage of both sexes from the cradle until they are old enough to look after themselves.
- ¹⁶ Pursuant to the Child Act No. 12 of 1996 and its implementing regulations as amended by Act 126 of 2008, these associations provide care for children aged between 6 and 18 who are at real risk of delinquency. They remain in the associations until they reach the age of 21. There are currently 36 such associations throughout the country, 11 for girls including one for those with mental difficulties, and 26 for boys. They offer comprehensive social, psychological, educational and vocational rehabilitation and re-education to children who have been arrested for committing offences, children at risk of delinquency, children transferred from other units because of risk of delinquency, children brought in by their parents who seek these services of their own will, children in danger and those ordered by the courts or the Public Prosecutor to be given in custody to the associations.
- ¹⁷ These are holding centres for children under 15 whom the Public Prosecutor or judiciary leave temporarily in their care for supervision pending a decision on their case. In this way the boy or girl concerned is not held in police stations or in pretrial custody in prison. The centres offer comprehensive medical, social and psychological care services.
- ¹⁸ They are responsible for studying the social, psychological and medical aspects of cases referred to them by the Public Prosecution Office, the police or the supervision centres, in order to understand the reasons for delinquency and to draw up adequate treatment plans for each case. They also care for children within their own families, offering financial support so that economic circumstances do not become a cause for abandoning school and falling into antisocial behaviour. There are currently 256 social surveillance offices throughout the country.
- ¹⁹ These services include psychological and social treatment and guidance especially in individual cases where behavioural disorders prevent a person from functioning psychologically and professionally; providing comprehensive psychological assistance through mental clinics; providing the tests and standards necessary for psychological and vocational counselling in coordination with specialized agencies; undertaking applied field studies in therapeutic, educational, vocational and family counselling; designing counselling programmes responsive to the needs of young people in order to protect them from extremist ideas and delinquent behaviour, and organizing training courses in vocational and psychological rehabilitation for workers in social care centres. The services also include extending the "childminding" project by supporting non-governmental organizations operating in this field (such as the Egyptian Family Support Association) to educate graduates of both sexes in the provision of optimal home-based care to children, especially children with special needs or other issues. This will help to solve the problem of working mothers and to provide work opportunities for recent graduates.
- ²⁰ The Public Prosecution Office has an unequivocal legal obligation to treat the victims of human trafficking in a manner consistent with their basic rights, first and foremost by ensuring their safety and that of their families, constantly evaluating possible risks and caring for them and their families throughout the initial investigation. The Public Prosecution Office must also respect victims' suffering and show understanding for their concerns, and all decisions and measures it takes must be inspired by victims' best interests. The investigator has a duty to be honest and forthright with victims at all times, making them aware of the responsibilities, possible consequences and hidden risks in any decisions they may have to take. Furthermore, the Public Prosecution Office must inform victims of all available support services and ensure they can contact the relevant agencies on hand to help them overcome their ordeal.
- ²¹ The Public Prosecutor issued Decision No. 1884 of 1999 establishing the Office for International Cooperation, Judgement Enforcement and Prisoners' Welfare. The Office, which is dependent on the Office of the Public Prosecutor, works in the field of judicial cooperation the most important aspects of which are: extradition of offenders, mutual cooperation in criminal matters, transportation of convicted felons, confiscating and conserving the illicit proceeds of crime, recognizing criminal judgements passed abroad and the transfer of criminal proceedings.

²² The Ministry of Higher Education and its associated institutions are cooperating with UNDP to implement a number of programmes, the most significant of which is a project to integrate human rights into higher education. The aim of this is to instil human rights principles into higher education courses, to establish a national committee for education in human rights principles and concepts, and to train teaching staff in this field. The Ministry of Higher Education has also set up units to process complaints, petitions and requests from teachers, students, employees of higher educational institutions and human rights organizations, in order to promote human rights principles in educational curricula and address relevant issues.
