

**Universal Periodic Review
(20th session, Oct–Nov 2014)
Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information
(to Part I. A. and to Part III - F, J, K, and P)**

Egypt (the Arab Republic of)

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

Scope of international obligations: Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO

I.1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Acceptance 28/03/1962	<i>Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted</i>		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989)	Not state party to this Convention			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	07/02/1974 Ratification			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	03/08/2005 Ratification			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)	23/08/2007 Ratification			Right to take part in cultural life

II. Input to Part III. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law to items F, J, K, and P **Right to education**

Constitutional Framework:

2. “The **2012 Constitution** was suspended temporarily according to Armed Forces Statement on Wednesday 3/7/2013”¹. On **July 8th 2013**, “the Interim President Counselor Adly Mansour approved the **Constitutional Declaration**² which consists of 33 Articles” for the transitional period³.

3. The Constitutional Declaration provides that a Committee tasked with amending “the suspended 2012 Constitution” shall be formed by a Presidential decree (article 28). This Committee “shall submit proposals of constitutional amendments” to another committee, composed of 50 members “representing all categories of society and demographic diversities” (article 29). The latter Committee “shall wrap up the final draft of the constitutional amendments”, after what “the President of the Republic shall submit the draft of the constitutional amendments to public referendum”. “Amendments shall be effective as of the date of announcing the people's approval in the referendum” (article 30).

4. Beginning of November 2013, “a joint committee of the Committee of Experts and the 50-member Committee has been formed to set a panel for drafting the final constitution”.⁴

5. The 2013 Constitutional Declaration doesn't contain any reference to Education.

Legislative Framework:

6. The basic legislative framework for education in Egypt is made up of:

- **Law No. 139/1981**, modified by Law No. 233/1988, Law No. 2/1994 and Law No. 23/1999 **regarding pre-university education**. “Article 3 of the Law No. 23 stipulates that **pre-university education is a right to all citizens** and is provided **free of charge** in the state schools Article 4 indicates that pre-university education includes **nine years of compulsory basic education**, divided into a six-year primary stage and a three-year preparatory stage, and three years of secondary education.”⁵
- **Law No. 103/1961 on the re-organization of *Al-Azhar* and its bodies**.⁶
- “**Law No. 49/1972** and subsequent amendments provide for the **organization of public universities**.”⁷

¹ Egypt State Information Service, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?CatID=2595>, Accessed on 04/11/2013

² <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/db23fe4ab2537f9d9a56a9976b521b72760200d8.docx>, Accessed on 04/11/2013

³ Egypt State Information Service, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticles.aspx?CatID=2666>, Accessed on 04/11/2013

⁴ Egypt State Information Service, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticleNews.aspx?ArtID=70944>, Accessed on 04/11/2013

⁵ IBE, World Data on Education, 7th ed., 2010-2011, Egypt, p. 2, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Egypt.pdf, Accessed on 04/11/2013

⁶ Ibid, p. 3

⁷ Ibid, p. 3

- **Law No. 8/1991 on the eradication of illiteracy and adult education.** This law “considers literacy and adult education as a national duty and stipulated the establishment of a general authority for eradicating illiteracy [...], defining its functions and responsibilities.”⁸
- **Law No. 12/1996 on child protection,** bylaw Decree No. 3452 of 1997 and its Amendment No. 151 of 2000.⁹
- **Law No. 82/2006 regarding the Establishment of the National Authority for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (NAQAAE)**¹⁰

Policy Framework:

> Curriculum

7. “In terms of content, **recent efforts for changing the curriculum** included: modernizing the scientific knowledge presented in school curricula in a way that it keeps in line with the most recent scientific and technological developments; reducing the quantity of information and emphasizing the acquisition of basic scientific concepts; including contemporary issues within the school curricula in a way that develops students’ feelings of citizenship. Within the framework of the *National Strategic Plan for Pre-university Education Reform 2007-2012*, a set of challenges relates to the production of a standards-based curriculum framework from the early childhood level to grade 12 that reflects recent research and best global practices. Currently, not all curriculum documents for grades 1-12 and/or subjects are standards-based; for the early childhood level, national standards and the curriculum still need to be set. Furthermore, all curriculum documents must be revised to integrate new theories of learning, ICT, and comprehensive assessment. Another set of challenges relates to revamping the entire process by which textbooks are designed, produced, delivered, and used by teachers. The new approach to learning and teaching must also be reflected in the authoring and production of textbooks.”¹¹

8. In November 2010, the Egyptian government ordered the removal of content related to male and female anatomy, reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) from the school curriculum.¹²

> Gifted children

9. Regarding the case of **gifted children**, Egypt has put forward the fact that it took “action to prepare **special tests** designed to identify them, design a monitoring system to track children in kindergarten and during the first three grades of primary school for the purpose of detecting talents, provide **significant incentives for teachers** who identify particularly gifted children and give them appropriate attention, particularly as regards distinction in mathematics, and establish a forum where gifted children can meet with a view to benefiting from each others’ opinions and forging links among them”.¹³

⁸ Ibid, p. 3

⁹ Ibid, p. 3

¹⁰ Egypt National Report on the Development of Education submitted for the 48th ICE, 2008, op. cit., pp. 15-16

¹¹ IBE, World Data on Education, 7th ed., 2010-2011, Egypt, p. 9,

http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Egypt.pdf, Accessed on 04/11/2013

¹² <http://www.ipsnews.net/2010/11/no-sex-education-please-were-arab/> (Accessed 04/11/2013)

¹³ Egypt National’s report submitted for the combined 2nd, 3rd and 4th periodic reviews of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2011, E/C.12/EGY/2-4, p. 70,

➤ **Teachers**

10. Egypt has underlined how useful technology can be for teachers training: “Expansion of the use of technology and electronic learning: the electronic teaching system represents a great qualitative shift, thanks to the way it provides access to outstanding educational Internet sites, thereby contributing to the task of training leaders, in accordance with global educational management standards, and the task of training teachers and enabling them to acquire basic skills and professional skills, thus enhancing their performance in the classroom. Electronic learning also provides training is the use of advanced technology and its various applications. The “**personal computer for every teacher**” project will be useful in this connection”.¹⁴

➤ **Quality**

11. “Observation has revealed that the **education system is unsatisfactory** in some respects. Theory rather than practice tends to predominate. Competence levels among personnel in charge of monitoring and assessment are low. There is no integrated assessment system based on clearly defined criteria for the evaluation of teaching outcomes. Learner assessment methods and tools are inadequate, the institutional working environment is unsatisfactory, and administrative performance at the school level is weak. Furthermore, there is little community involvement in the sphere of education. A variety of measures have been adopted in an effort to address these deficiencies at the various levels of the school system.

12. At the basic education level, a **comprehensive assessment system** has been adopted for all classes, while **modern teaching methods** (“active teaching”) are now in use. The **various curricula, including the textbooks used, have been overhauled** in an effort to help pupils acquire the necessary skills and awareness to enable them to adapt to an age of change and deal with its problems. **Training courses are organized for teaching and guidance personnel**, covering all cultural and professional aspects in various fields of specialization. In addition, the principle of decentralization, comprehensive quality standards and future-oriented planning have been introduced.

13. The right to education is supported by the **audio-visual media**, which broadcast educational programming. There are seven dedicated educational channels for all levels, besides literacy programmes.

14. At the present time, the **general secondary system is being overhauled** in order to enable it to keep pace with an age of change. A **comprehensive assessment system for each student** throughout his time in school is being applied. Concurrently, the State is encouraging community participation with a view to establishing private schools in order to ease the burden on State-run schools. Curricula are being revised to taken scientific and technological progress into account, and particular attention is being devoted to foreign language learning.”¹⁵

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fEGY%2f2-4&Lang=en, Accessed on 05/11/2013

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 70

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 71

Cooperation:

15. Egypt is **party** to the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education since 28/03/1962.

16. Egypt **did not report** to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education within the framework of the **Sixth Consultation** of Member States (covering the periods 1994-1999). However, Egypt **submitted reports** in the framework of the:

- **Seventh Consultation** of Member States, 2007 (covering the periods 2000-2005)
- **Eighth Consultation** of Member States, 2013 (covering the period 2006-2011).

17. Egypt **reported** to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the framework of the **Fourth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2005-2008). However, Egypt **did not report** within the framework of the **Fifth Consultation** of Members States (2013) (covering the period 2009-2012).

18. Egypt **did not report** to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education within the framework of the **First Consultation** of Member States (1993). However, Egypt **reported** to UNESCO within the framework of the **Second Consultation** of Member States (2011).

19. Egypt is **not party** to the 1989 UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education.

Freedom of opinion and expression

Constitutional and Legislative Framework:

20. Freedoms of expression and the press are protected under Articles 45 and 48 of the Egyptian Constitution (2012).

21. Under Article 4 of the Press Law (1996), the State has the right to impose limited control on the press in the time of emergency or war. Article 22 imposes up to one year of imprisonment for “attacking the private life of citizens”, “attacking religious faith”, or “dealing with the conduct or functionary of a public person”. The Press Authority Law (1980) includes a number of conditions and restrictions such as the necessity of obtaining a license from the government-controlled Supreme Press Council in order to issue a newspaper.

22. The Journalists Syndicate Law (1970), states that no one is allowed to work in the press unless his/her name is registered in the Syndicate’s list, and in order for a journalist to register in the Syndicate, he/she has to be a professional journalist, have a university degree, and have spent at least one year of training in an Egyptian newspaper for graduates of journalism departments,

and two years of training for other graduates. The owners of newspapers are also not allowed to employ persons who are not members of the Syndicate.¹⁶

23. Blasphemy is a criminal offence under Article 98(f) of the Penal Code (1937), amended by Law 147/2006, which can be punished by confinement for a period of not less than six months and not exceeding five years, or a monetary fine for using “religion in propagating, either by words, in writing, or in any other means, extreme ideas for the purpose of inciting strife, ridiculing or insulting a heavenly religion or a sect following it, or damaging national unity.”

24. Under Articles 184-186, insults to the People's Assembly, the Shura Council, the Army, the tribunals, the authorities, public departments, public representatives and judges is punishable with a maximum detention of one year and/or a maximum fine of 10,000 EGP. Furthermore, Article 303 imposes a punishment of a maximum detention of two years for slander offences and Article 307 states that the penalties of any insult and slander shall be raised twofold if the offence is committed in printed publications.

25. A freedom of information law does not currently exist in the country.

Media Self-Regulation:

26. Media self-regulatory mechanisms are nonexistent in the country.

Safety of Journalists:

27. UNESCO has recorded the killing of seven journalists.¹⁷ The Director-General of UNESCO condemned these killings and called on the country to inform UNESCO, on a voluntary basis, of the actions taken to prevent the impunity of the perpetrators and to notify the Director-General of the status of the judicial inquiries conducted on each of the killings condemned by UNESCO.¹⁸ By November 2013, Egypt has not submitted information concerning the judicial follow up of these cases.

28. Starting from January 2011 when the Egyptian Revolution began, journalists have been working in unsafe settings. Journalists are reportedly harassed, intimidated and violently attacked by various agents. Female journalists have been sexually assaulted while reporting in the country. Journalists are discouraged from reporting critically against the political parties and of the armed forces.

¹⁶ <http://www.law-democracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Law.Journalist-Syndicate.pdf>

¹⁷ In 2011: Ahmed Mohammed Mahmoud, Ahmed Assem el-Senousy, Ahmad Abdel Gawad, Mosab el-Shami, Habiba Ahmed Abd Elaziz, Michael Deane; in 2013, Tamer Abdel Raouf. For more information, please see: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/press-freedom/unesco-condemns-killing-of-journalists/countries/egypt/>

¹⁸ Decision on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. Adopted by the IPDC Intergovernmental Council at its 27th Session (available at http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/ipdc2010_safety_decision_final.pdf)

Freedom of scientific research and the right to benefit from scientific progress and its applications

29. The new Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt which entered into force on 18 January 2014, in its Chapter Two: Basic Components of Society, Section One: Social Components contains the following provisions related to freedom of scientific research:

- Article 21. Academic Independence: The state guarantees the independence of universities, scientific and linguistic academies;
- Article 23: Scientific research: The state grants the freedom of scientific research and encourages its institutions as a means to achieving national sovereignty, and building a knowledge economy¹⁹.

30. In 2012, Egypt submitted its report to UNESCO within the framework of the on-going consultations with Member States on the monitoring of the implementation and supported the proposed revision of the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers. Egypt noted that, on the national level, it recently supported the upgrading of the status of researchers within the country and at present individuals with expertise in research domains often occupy leading positions in ministries, scientific big institutions. It was also stated that all scientific institutes currently apply the recommended principles through national bioethical committees. In addition, the majority of national scientific journals do not authorize publication of papers without relevant opinion from bioethics authorities.

31. In 2005, UNESCO, in cooperation with CODESRIA (Council for Development of social Science Research in Africa), the Arab and African Research Centre in Cairo, the Swedish Institute in Alexandria organized the “Academic Freedom Conference: Problems and Challenges in Arab and African Countries”, hosted by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Alexandria, Egypt²⁰. UNESCO also provided support for the study on “Research in Egyptian Universities: The role of research in higher education” undertaken by Ahmed Belal and Irina Springuel from the UNESCO Cousteau Ecotechnie Chair and the Unit of Environmental Studies and Development of South Valley University of Egypt.

32. UNESCO assists Egypt in science policy review and provides the necessary expertise and policy advice to accompany Egypt in the reform process of its national Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) system in order to establish links between science, decision-making and society and to integrate economic, social and environmental issues for sustainable development, including the formulation of the Policy of Scientific Research & Technology of Egypt²¹.

¹⁹ http://www.constitutionnet.org/files/final_constitution_idea_english-2_dec_2013-signed.pdf.

²⁰ For more information, please see: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001494/149491e.pdf>.

²¹ For more information, please see:
<http://www.uis.unesco.org/StatisticalCapacityBuilding/Workshop%20Documents/ST%20Workshop%20dox/Mombasa%202009/Egypt-Policy%20of%20Scientific%20Research%20and%20Technology.pdf>.

UNESCO also assisted Egypt in formulating a National strategy for the Development of Science Parks²².

33. Egypt and its scientific institutions are actively involved in various UNESCO's programmes on scientific research and co-operation. The country hosts the Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States region, located in Cairo, which is also the Cluster Office to Egypt, Sudan and Yemen. The Regional Centre for Training and Water Studies of Arid and Semi-arid Zones in Sixth of October City is operating under the auspices of UNESCO. It is dedicated to the scientific study of arid and semi-arid zones and promotes policies for integrated and sustainable water resources management at all levels.

34. Egypt is involved in the Sustainable Management of Marginal Drylands project (SUMAMAD). The project aims to provide improved and alternative livelihoods to dryland dwellers and reduce these areas' vulnerability to land degradation. One of the fields investigated is the use of alternative and non-conventional sources of water²³.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

35. In the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of 17 February 2010,²⁴ various recommendations were made to Egypt.

36. The following concerned education and were accepted by Egypt:

- *7. Keep up the positive momentum in upgrading its laws and institutions while ensuring their effective implementation, in particular in the areas of education of all and the rights of women (Indonesia);*
- *56. Continue efforts in eradicating illiteracy and adult education and share its pioneering experience in this field (Qatar);*
- *57. Continue its efforts aimed at eradication of illiteracy in rural areas (Kuwait);*
- *58. Continue implementing the National Illiteracy Eradication Project, giving priority to girls and women (Bolivia);*
- *59. Continue to strengthen policies that have led to a decrease of the illiteracy rates (Angola);*

²² http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6271&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

²³ For the projects that are currently being implemented in Egypt within the framework of UNESCO's Natural Sciences Sector, please see: http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=5594&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

²⁴ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G10/125/48/PDF/G1012548.pdf?OpenElement>

- 64. *In the spirit of a constructive dialogue and with the cooperation of the international community, continue efforts to enhance the quality of its educational and health system with a special focus on combating illiteracy (Philippines);*
- 65. *Share with other countries its experience in the education of persons with disabilities and in providing them with employment (Qatar);*
- 67. *Continue efforts on human rights education in order to guarantee enjoyment of all people of their rights (Morocco);*
- 68. *Strengthen education in the field of human rights (Jordan);*
- 69. *Include the study of human rights in the curriculum of the various stages of free education provided in state institutions (Bolivia);*
- 70. *Strengthen public education, awareness and capacity building programmes on human rights (Malaysia);*
- 72. *Enhance human rights education and training programs for the general public and government officials (Philippines);*
- 73. *Increase public awareness on human rights and promote human rights education and training (Greece);*
- 99. *Promote inter-religious dialogue and other educational measures to increase the understanding and tolerance in society among all religious communities (Austria);*
- 108. *Provide human rights education and training to members of the police, security services, prison and detention staff and judiciary with specific focus on protection of human rights of women, children, national and other minorities, refugees and persons with disabilities and to ensure accountability of security and other state personnel for possible violations of human rights (Czech Republic);*

37. Analysis: Two main points were addressed in the recommendations pertaining to education in 2010: the continuation of the efforts in eradicating illiteracy and the continuation of the efforts on human rights education. Egypt has not reported, within the framework of the eighth consultation on the implementation of the UNESCO Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (and did not report for the 5th consultation on the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms), on new measures adopted in those fields. However, it did seem to adopt serious measures to improve the quality of teaching.

Specific Recommendations on the right to education for the 2nd UPR:

38. Egypt is encouraged to continue to submit regular state reports for the periodic consultations of UNESCO's education related standard-setting instruments, especially for the Convention against Discrimination in Education.

39. Egypt is encouraged to raise awareness of the importance of education as a human right and as the basis for the empowerment of women, and to promote the equal access of girls and women to all levels and fields of education, take steps to overcome traditional attitudes that in some rural areas may constitute obstacles to the education of women and girls and to keep girls in school.

40. Egypt is encouraged to ensure quality education, and to elaborate special policies to increase enrollment rates, leave school early, or tracked to majors that have second-rate learning and labor market outcomes.

Freedom of opinion and expression

41. Egypt is encouraged to have a full revision of freedom of expression and media related laws to bring them in line with current international standards. This includes repealing the requirement to license newspapers, as licensing of newspapers is not in alignment with international standards, and broadcast licensing needs to be independent if it is to meet international standards.

42. In accordance with international standards, Egypt is encouraged to decriminalize defamation, as well as blasphemy, and to place defamation within the civil code.

43. Egypt is encouraged to introduce a freedom of information law that is in accordance with international standards.

44. Egypt is encouraged to allow the unhindered development of self-regulatory mechanisms. The Journalists Syndicate Law should be revised to align with international standards which do not place prior conditions on who may exercise freedom of expression in the press.

45. Egypt must ensure that both female and male journalists and media workers are able to practice the profession in a free and safe environment as part of their fundamental human rights and must investigate all attacks on journalists and media workers in accordance with the full application of the rule of law.