

# **Contribution by Egypt**

## **Egypt's Achievements in Fulfilling the MDGs**

### **United Nations High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

**New York, 25 September 2008**

Some highlights of what Egypt has accomplished in reaching the “Eight Millennium Development Goals”. To begin with, and as a prerequisite to achieving these goals, the economic growth rate increased to reach 6.9%, the poverty rate decreased by 20% and the full enrollment of students in schools in primary education reached 99%. As for gender equality issues and women empowerment, the percentage of girls enrolled in schools comes close to 100%, while child mortality decreased by 28.2% and infants by 35.4%. In addition, the empowerment of maternal and reproductive health medical services and increased awareness resulted in confining the numbers of those infected with HIV/AIDS and Malaria to a limited number of people. Access of households to fresh drinking water reached 100% in urban areas and 95% in rural areas. In environmental sustainability, Egypt exerts diligent efforts to improve the levels of environmental conservation and preservation and to mainstream environmental dimension in national policies and programs. As for the Global Partnership for Development, Egypt succeeded, in cooperation with its development partners, in converting part of its outstanding debt finance development programs to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in Health, Environment and in many other areas.

The real success of Egypt's experience lies not only in successful planning and correct implementation, but in its multidimensional development orientation, founded on a clear vision and deep understanding that economic and social reform cannot be realized without being linked to comprehensive political reform. Out of that conviction, Egypt accomplished a lot on its path to ambitious political reform, side by side to executing an economic and social reform plan that is not confined to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, but aims to attaining long term sustainable development to enhance the living standards of Egyptian citizens.

To achieve this goal, Egypt took steady steps on the path to political reform based on a multi-party system, enhanced public participation in political life, and ensuring full freedoms, including freedom of expression and free press, emphasizing respect for human rights, enhancing empowerment of women and their ability to contribute to the political, parliamentary and executive branches, in addition to other political reforms in different fields, which we take pride in. This political reform will continue at the same momentum, through ambitious constitutional and legislative reforms announced by the President of Egypt, that will be submitted to the parliament during its current session, aimed at upholding the fundamental principles which constitute the back bone of Egypt's society, prominent among these are equality, justice and national unity, while we also aim at securing the people's participation in taking and implementing all crucial decisions pertaining to the future.

On the road to achieving economic development, guided by the ultimate goals of raising the living standards of the Egyptian citizen, and inspired by the spirit of the MDGs, Egypt succeeded in the implementation of an ambitious economic reform plan aimed at

dealing effectively with the problems facing the Egyptian society, especially the creation of productive employment which enables the youth to achieve a better life, while inducing an enabling atmosphere for investments. Thus, the tax law was reformed to provide incentives, not only for foreign investors but for Egyptian investors as well. The customs law was also reformed in a manner to generate an increase in exports. At the same time, Egypt continues its diligent endeavors to achieve full integration in the world economy, through its membership as a founding member of the WTO, concluding the partnership agreement with the EU, paving the way for concluding agreements to establish free trade zones with the United States, Russia, Turkey and China, in addition to seeking regional integration, through the enhanced implementation of the Greater Arab Free Trade Zone, and within the African framework through enhancing the implementation of the NEPAD, COMESA, and extending the sphere of cooperation to include other regional sub-regional communities and organizations in the African Continent.

On the path to social reform, Egypt took long strides aimed at creating new health insurance which will gradually provide coverage to all citizens, together with upgrading the medical services to meet international standards. Additionally, Egypt upgraded its educational system and entered a new phase focused on the equality of education, and aligning the national standards with those at the international level, in order to provide our youth with a more competitive edge in labor markets of different countries. Egypt also developed its basic infrastructure and directed part of its investments to provide housing for the youth and poor, and to conduct vocational training and to widen its social security networks. Together with this, our focus remains in preserving the national unity of Egypt's society, while dealing with the diverse impacts of the reform plans, through close monitoring and swift and effective handling of emergencies.