**A Report on Disability-Inclusive International Cooperation**

**Submitted to:** Special Rapporteur on the rights of Persons with Disabilities

**Submitted by:** Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights (an organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council).

**Submitted on:** Egypt.

**Submitted in:** April 2020

* **Please describe how your country’s international cooperation efforts, including international development aid, are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities; and how is funding tracked and reported.**

People with disabilities in Egypt make about 10.67 per cent of the total population. Therefore the Egyptian government works to provide social, psychological, medical, educational and professional services to them in cooperation with various international agencies in a way that preserves their rights[[1]](#footnote-1). The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is one of the international agencies that the Egyptian government cooperates with in order to

Among the international bodies that the Egyptian government cooperates with to address the needs of people with disabilities not only at the national level, but the international one as well. ITU has signed a joint protocol with the Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to launch the Regional Center for Communications and Information Technology for Persons with Disabilities in Egypt, which will promote the accessibility of communication and information technology for people with disabilities in the Arab region and serve about 55 million people with disabilities in the Arab world. In this regard, the website application has been launched to help people with disabilities access the different places and identify them.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In this framework, the Egyptian Minister of Communications and Information Technology signed a cooperation protocol with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), with the aim of providing persons with disabilities with a set of educational and cultural programs, thereby contributing to raising their social and educational capabilities in Egyptian society[[3]](#footnote-3), while the Egyptian government signed a memorandum of understanding with the British Council with the aim of upgrading and developing the efficiency and capabilities of people working in developing creative economy and projects with social return at the National Academy of Information Technology for Persons with Disabilities. Hereby, joint training programs and workshops will be organized to serve the academy employees. It is worth noting that 1900 persons with disabilities have received training in various technological fields[[4]](#footnote-4), while the Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity has signed a memorandum of understanding with the British Council to prepare persons with disabilities to deal with the labor market by offering them trainings on entrepreneurship and creative economy.[[5]](#footnote-5)

In this context, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Technology Development Organization in Japan to provide persons with disabilities with electronic services, including easy access to information while using technology to provide various social services.[[6]](#footnote-6) In this context, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supports Egypt for inclusion of Persons With Disabilities through its Project that will be conducted in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology. The project aims to provide people with print-related disabilities with an accessible form of printed material, by converting the contents of books, and different printed material, into a special digital format that they can recognize[[7]](#footnote-7). In the meanwhile, the Ministry of Social Solidarity signed a Cooperation Protocol with Attijariwafa Bank Egypt to improve the service offices for persons with disabilities.[[8]](#footnote-8)

The Egyptian government has also cooperated with the Finland in order to develop new curricula and provide adequate and effective training for teachers so that they are able to teach persons from different backgrounds. And in accordance with this Cooperation, the Ministry has trained 23,000 teachers to deal with people with disabilities and provided support to 593,909 students with special needs in around 1,2006 schools.[[9]](#footnote-9) Moreover, the Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity established an investment fund of 100 million Egyptian pounds, aimed at empowering people with special needs in cooperation with international companies and private banks. The fund provided training for 400 people with disabilities in a range of different tourism jobs,[[10]](#footnote-10) and in 2017 Egypt was selected among the ten most innovative countries in the field of employing persons with disabilities because the ministry has provided training for 500 persons with visual and hearing impairments on telephone marketing, data entry, and the basics of the computer, creating employment opportunities for about 60 percent of them[[11]](#footnote-11).

In this context, the Egyptian government has established a technical center for providing services for persons with disabilities, which is the first of its kind in Africa. The center is intended to enable persons with hearing or speech disabilities to use technology in order to communicate via mobile phones, while Egypt's ICT Trust Fund has provided a set of educational and training programs that benefited persons with disabilities in 112 slum areas in Cairo. This Fund was jointly established by MCIT and the United Nations Development Program UNDP.[[12]](#footnote-12)

In this framework, the Ministry of Social Solidarity signed an agreement with the UNDP to implement the project of integrated program to support the rights of persons with disabilities at a total cost of one million US dollars, of which the UNDP affords 200 thousand dollars and the ministry affords 800 thousand dollars[[13]](#footnote-13). The Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity sponsors the initiatives launched by different private institutions, which aim to help people with disabilities, such as the government and the ministry’s support for the Majidah project, which is the first online platform for the disabled in Egypt that links people with disabilities with business owners, companies, training centers and institutions. This platform was established by Ebtessama Foundation in collaboration with Vodafone Egypt for Community Development.[[14]](#footnote-14) The Egyptian government is holding a number of different training programs with international agencies to support people with disabilities. In November 2019, the Disabled Women Committee held a workshop to train members of the National Council for Women on the rights of persons with disabilities in cooperation with the International Labor Organization.[[15]](#footnote-15)

* **Please describe how South-South and triangular cooperation support your country’s efforts to implement the rights of persons with disabilities, including by facilitating the exchange of innovative knowledge, skills and successful initiatives.**

Within the framework of international cooperation between Egypt and the countries of the South, the Egyptian government signed the Valletta Declaration for Arab-European Cooperation to support the rights of persons with disabilities. The declaration stresses the need for cooperation in order to engage persons with disabilities in decision-making processes that affect their lives and future and encourage the continuation of the efforts of Arab governments and the European Union for the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and affirming the right of all persons with disabilities to live independently, be included and integrated in society and have the required opportunities to make their own choices.[[16]](#footnote-16)

In the context of technology transfer and the development of innovation-based industrial growth among African countries, the Egyptian government launched a center for industrial cooperation among the countries of the South. Disability issues was at the top of the center’s priorities.[[17]](#footnote-17) More than 250 short-term and long-term meaning mechanisms and solutions were submitted by Egypt for about 30 African countries to provide training and facilitate knowledge exchange in a variety of sectors for developing society and supporting persons with disabilities.[[18]](#footnote-18)

* **Please describe how your country coordinates, prioritizes and manages aid received from international cooperation in order to ensure that national development programs are inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities.**

The Egyptian government coordinates the international aid it receives for promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, as it provides direct cash support to persons with disabilities who are unable to work at an annual cost of 4.2 billion pounds and funds 150 projects to develop technology to deal with persons with disabilities,[[19]](#footnote-19) and the Egyptian Ministry of Solidarity provides inclusive rehabilitation programs for persons with disabilities of all categories. It also provides various social, psychological and health services for persons with disabilities, and there are specialized care units for children with disabilities to provide health and social services and various cultural, arts and sports programs, let alone the services provided for the blind, deaf, dumb and many other categories.[[20]](#footnote-20)

* **Please explain whether the Sustainable Development Goals resulted in increased international development aid benefitting persons with disabilities in your country and how.**

Empowering persons with disabilities and promoting their rights is considered one of the most fundamental principles of the national sustainable development strategy in Egypt. The Egyptian authorities also pay remarkable attention to persons with disabilities, and this was evident by declaring 2018 as the Year of Persons with Disabilities. A key result of this declaration was the promulgation of Law No. 10 of 2018 on the rights of persons with disabilities, which is the first Egyptian law to specifically address the rights of persons with disabilities and allocates 5 per cent of vacancies to them, whether in the private or public sector, on the basis of their qualifications and capabilities in order to enhance their rights and in line with the general principles of the strategy.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Among the most important aspects of the sustainable development strategy in Egypt's Vision 2030 is the status of people with disabilities. People with special needs have been taken into account in the various dimensions of the strategy in a way that is commensurate with the goal achieved in 2030. For example, the main goals of the education and training axis included making education accessible to all without discrimination. This main goal generated another sub-goal aims at providing an inclusive environment supportive of the process of integrating people with simple disabilities into pre-university schools and improving the quality of special education schools for learners with severe and multiple disabilities and educational institutions for people with disabilities are being provided in the strategy through the National Council on Disability and other relevant agencies[[22]](#footnote-22).

The Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity participated with the Arab Organization for Persons with Disabilities, the International Disability Organization, the League of Arab States, the Asian Disability Forum, the African Disability Forum and the Latin American Network of NGOs with Disabilities and their Families in organizing the international conference on advancing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities within the framework of the development agenda 2030, in order to link the implementation of the 2030 development goals to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, while including the various groups with disabilities in the various development projects and programs that pertain to the 2030 sustainable development vision.

* **Please describe to what extent and how are persons with disabilities and their organizations involved and consulted in decisions related to international cooperation in your country, and how they can access international cooperation funds and grants (including legal requirements, procedures and challenges).**

Persons with disabilities are included in the various international decisions regarding coordination of aid and grants received by the government to assist them through the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, which is responsible for overseeing the institutions and associations working on the issue of different disabilities, which institutions obtain external international grants to assist persons with disabilities, along with sending the reports of the disability-related associations and institutions to the United Nations and other international organizations under his existing terms of reference.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The Council works, in this framework, to coordinate with all ministries and relevant authorities to implement the provisions of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in addition to submitting proposals for amendments in the policies, methods and programs concerned with persons with disabilities, while expressing opinion on any other international agreements that the state accedes to or wishes to join, which has anything to do with persons with disabilities in addition to representing persons with disabilities in international events, forums, conferences and organizations concerned with disability issues, so as to facilitate the process of participation in decisions related to international cooperation in matters of international cooperation. The Council also participates in national policies and strategic plans developed to integrate people with disabilities in the Egyptian society.[[24]](#footnote-24) It is worth mentioning that the Egyptian parliament includes 9 deputies with special needs with broad competences with respect to the conventions and international grants provided to support people with disabilities in Egypt.[[25]](#footnote-25)

* **Please provide any information and statistical data available on disability-inclusive international cooperation in your country, including information related to the challenges and limitations of the international aid system to promote the rights of persons with disabilities.**

Despite the Egyptian government efforts to achieve the maximum benefit from international grants and funding that are allocated to support persons with disabilities in a way that protects their basic rights, there are a set of obstacles to achieving full benefit from these grants, the most important of which is the absence of the Egyptian government’s support in directing international grants and funding towards supporting the rights of disability in basic sectors such as providing suitable transportation for people with disabilities in Egypt while improving the infrastructure of roads and public transportation to facilitate dealing with them, as this sector is completely ignored in the efforts of the state and international institutions.[[26]](#footnote-26) In this context, Financial and moral are not oriented to change the stereotypical image of people with disabilities in Egyptian and Arab society in a way that achieves their social and psychological status in societies, where some of them are being bullied and ridiculed as a result of the lack of a strong framework for combating the phenomenon through a set of programs. Therefore, **Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights recommends** the following: -

* The Egyptian Ministry of Transport has to direct part of the international institutions funds for persons with disabilities in establishing appropriate means of transportation.
* The Egyptian government needs to allocate a portion of educational scholarships for people with disabilities in a set of programs that support changing the stereotypical image of persons with disabilities and show distinct patterns from them.
* The Egyptian government has to impose a fine on bullies in a manner that guarantees its subsequent use to support persons them.
* The Egyptian government must enhance cooperation among the countries of the South better, while exchanging different experiences in a manner that guarantees the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities.

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3. بروتوكول تعاون بين الاتصالات و"يونيسف" لتمكين الأطفال المعاقين، الوطن ، أغسطس 2018، <https://bit.ly/2VcW0i7> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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5. التضامن الاجتماعى تبرم اتفاقا مع الثقافي البريطاني لدعم ذوي الاحتياجات، جريدة المال، أكتوبر 2019، <https://bit.ly/3bWNpaf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. مذكرة تفاهم بين الاتصالات ومنظمة يابانية للتعاون في مجال الدمج الرقمي لذوي الإعاقة، حابي ، ديسمبر 2019 ، <https://bit.ly/2y0MrLe> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. JICA supports Egypt for inclusion of persons with disabilities . dailynewssegypt . October 7, 2018 . <https://bit.ly/2x2WAHe> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ministry of Social Solidarity and Attijariwafa bank Egypt Sign Cooperation Protocol to develop 70 service offices for Persons with Disability in 6 Governorates. . Attijariwafa bank . 16 December 2018 . <https://bit.ly/2UTS873> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. جهود مصر لدمج ذوي الإعاقة بالتعليم القومي للإعاقة يدرس التجربة الفنلندية أشرف مرعي لابد من تطوير شامل بجميع المراحل الدراسية، صدي البلد ، أكتوبر 2019 ، <https://bit.ly/2wZSIad> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. EGYPT LAUNCHES NEW EGP 100 MILLION FUND FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES . cairoscene. 2018 . <https://bit.ly/39XjHRf> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
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12. Egypt: New Technical Center for Persons with Disabilities . the global initiative for inclusive . July 30, 2018 . <https://bit.ly/2wjpvqa> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. وزارة التضامن والمجلس القومي لشئون الإعاقة، الهيئة العامة للاستعلامات، أبريل 2017، <https://bit.ly/3c0HbGu> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. إطلاق أول منصة إلكترونية لتوظيف ذوي الإعاقة بمصر، الهيئة العامة للاستعلامات ، يونيو 2019 ، <https://bit.ly/3aSzpOI> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. المساواة للأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة، المجلس القومي للمرأة ، أكتوبر 2019 ، <https://bit.ly/2wnRbKL> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. مصر توقع مع 20دولة إعلان فاليتا للتعاون العربي الأوربي لدعم حقوق الاشخاص ذوى الإعاقة، المجلس القومي للمرأة ، يونيو 2019 ، <https://bit.ly/3aRUuJ7> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Meaning Mechanisms and Solutions South-South Cooperationin theArab States . Global South-South Development Academy Series . 2014. https://bit.ly/2yIa0Jm [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
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19. غادة والي تعرض بمؤتمر دولي إنجازات مصر لحماية ذوي الإعاقة وتنتقد إسرائيل، جريدة المال، يونيو 2019 ، <https://bit.ly/2Riz8ww> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
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22. موقع ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة باستراتيجية التنمية المستدامة: رؤية مصر 2030، موقع الاستدامة والتمويل، سبتمبر 2019 ، <https://bit.ly/3e5tzLW> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. نص قانون المجلس القومي للأشخاص لذوي الإعاقة ، أخبار مصر ، ديسمبر 2018، <https://bit.ly/2JPJgc1> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. ننشر نص المسودة النهائية لمشروع قانون حقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة ، بوابة أخبار اليوم، أغسطس 2016 ، <https://bit.ly/2Ris434> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
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