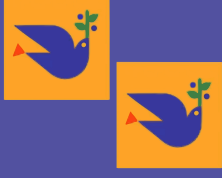




مؤسسة المرأة الجديدة  
New Woman Foundation

Organization in Special Consultative  
Status with ECOSOC since 2023

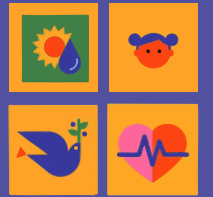


# National report of The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Analysis and Recommendations

By  
New Woman Foundation

2020 - 2025

BEIJING  
+30





# **The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action National report: analysis and recommendations on Beijing+30**

**CSW69**

**Issued by the New Woman Foundation**

**2020 – 2025**

## **Introduction**

This report is part of the ongoing follow-up on the Beijing Platform for Action, marking 30 years since its adoption as a framework for achieving gender equality and addressing discrimination gaps. In this context, the New Woman Foundation presents its specialized report, tracking progress on the Beijing commitments across key areas: women and the economy, violence against women, girls' rights, women and media, human rights, the environment, decision-making, and national institutions and mechanisms.

The report follows a structured approach, analyzing the current landscape in these areas and outlining priority actions for the next five years, leading up to the Beijing+30 review. That review will assess progress on gender equality within the broader framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030.

This report also aims to provide relevant resources and evidence to support discussions on these issues while fostering dialogue with key stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental. The research team ensured a thorough review process, refining multiple drafts and coordinating follow-ups before arriving at this final, expanded version.





## The Ever-Growing Burden of Poverty on Women

### Women, Poverty, and the Economy

#### Current Landscape

- Rising inflation rates, driven by economic policies, have placed additional financial strain on women. According to Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the annual inflation rate reached 31.9%<sup>1</sup> in February 2024. This underscores the urgent need to reassess the current social protection systems, which rely on indirect resource assessment and the social registry to determine eligibility. These methods estimate household income based on assets and family characteristics. However, in practice, this approach has proven to be inaccurate, with an estimated 70% exclusion rate among the poorest 10% of the population. As a result, the majority of Egypt's poorest citizens have been left out of the *Takaful*<sup>2</sup> program, unlike more comprehensive social protection schemes.
- Despite the fact that 76% of *Takaful* and *Karama* cardholders are women—amounting to 2.7 million beneficiaries—official statistics estimate that Egypt has around 12 million female breadwinners, with 26.3% of them living below the poverty line. This high percentage reflects the exclusion of women from the labor market, underscoring their economic vulnerability. Instead of being integrated into a formal social security system based on contributions, many women are left dependent on conditional cash transfers.
- The integration of women into small and micro-enterprises has not led to a significant improvement in their economic and social conditions. These projects are often built on unstructured competition and individual-based attempts to create solutions for poverty rather than sustainable alternatives such as cooperatives and collective approaches that promote social justice. The World Bank's annual *Women, Business, and the Law* report, which tracks barriers to women's participation in the labor market and economy worldwide, ranked Egypt 175th out of 190 countries.

<sup>1</sup> "How the Poor Survive in Times of Inflation: The Impact of Rising Prices and Currency Devaluation on Egyptians' Rights" – Mai Qabil & Wael Gamal, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> "A Social Security System in Egypt: Toward a Break from the 19th-Century Model" – Stephen Kidd, Alternative Policy Solutions, 2019.





- According to the World Bank, as of 2021, private insurance coverage for irregular workers reached only 0.4 million beneficiaries, representing less than 2.5% of the estimated 60% of the workforce engaged in informal employment, of which women make up nearly half.
- Women work unpaid within their families, particularly in agriculture and trade, and remain excluded from social security benefits. There is also a lack of updated data on the scale and economic impact of this labor. The failure to recognize unpaid care work continues to exacerbate forms of economic violence against women. The COVID-19 pandemic further increased women's care burdens unfairly, yet the government has continued to ignore calls for implementing paternity leave, a policy adopted in many countries, allowing fathers to take seven days off within the first six months after childbirth. This ongoing neglect reflects a lack of political will to challenge gendered divisions of labor.
- Rural women face multiple challenges, including the absence of social protection mechanisms, exclusion from labor laws, and exposure to violence, discrimination, and unsafe working conditions—particularly for seasonal and migrant agricultural workers. Additionally, women's land ownership in Egypt has declined, now standing at just 3%, largely due to deeply entrenched social norms governing inheritance and land tenure.

### Women and Work

- The Unified Labor Law has been stalled in discussions for more than 10 years, yet the proposed draft remains deeply flawed, as it excludes agricultural and domestic workers from labor protections. Although the government has claimed to be preparing a standardized employment contract for domestic workers, it remains in development and is not legally binding. Meanwhile, Egypt has yet to ratify ILO Convention No. 189 on the rights of domestic workers.
- The government has also taken no steps toward ratifying ILO Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work, despite sustained advocacy efforts and campaigns by feminist civil society organizations. Additionally, authorities have ignored demands from these organizations to include a provision in the Unified Labor Law addressing protection from workplace sexual violence.
- In 2023, the government carried out a blatant act of discrimination against 14,000 teachers, disqualifying them from the competition for hiring 30,000 new teachers based on pregnancy, childbirth, or weight—clear cases of gender-based discrimination.





- In 2024, the Egyptian government escalated its crackdown on labor rights by arresting and intimidating workers at Samannoud Textiles, following their peaceful strike demanding the implementation of the presidential decree raising the minimum wage to EGP 6,000—a policy the company refused to apply. Instead, the company, which operates under the direct authority of the
- The Ministry of Planning, withheld wages and terminated seven temporary workers as a pressure tactic to break the strike and force employees to return to work without any wage increases.

## Recommendations

- Revise current economic policies and review the economic reform program, which has contributed to rising poverty rates.
- Establish binding guarantees requiring both the public and private sectors to implement the minimum wage without loopholes or evasions.
- Expedite the passage of the new labor law, eliminate existing exemptions, uphold the principles of equality and non-discrimination based on gender, and ensure fair employment opportunities for women.
- Reform social protection programs to be inclusive rather than based on exclusion and selective targeting.
- Recognize care work, which is primarily carried out by women, and work toward its redistribution, reduction, and reframing within a care economy model.
- Develop adequate programs to improve the economic conditions of rural women and address the social norms that prevent them from accessing resources, assets, and economic opportunities.

## Violence Against Women

### Freedom from Violence, Stigma, and Stereotypes

#### Current Landscape

- The official report highlights online violence as a priority over the past five years. However, there are no official statistics demonstrating government efforts to combat online violence against women. Additionally, the Women's Complaints Office has not released any reports or studies documenting and analyzing cases of online blackmail. Despite five years of work on this issue, progress on passing a unified law against violence remains stalled, including provisions that define cybercrime and address impunity.





- Although the report mentions the establishment of the National Committee to Combat FGM, which brings together relevant stakeholders to end the practice, the committee has yet to issue any follow-up reports on its interventions. The government has also failed to provide progress updates on the committee's executive plan to combat FGM, particularly regarding work with medical professionals and efforts to curb the practice in the black market.
- While the penalty for FGM was hardened in 2012, this measure alone has not been an effective intervention to improve or accelerate reporting mechanisms. There are still no official statistics on reporting rates, nor clear data on how frequently the law has been enforced.
- There is no clarity on the national data collection methodology, including how survey questions are formulated and structured, leading to figures that may lack neutrality. At the same time, restrictions on academic freedom continue to pose challenges, particularly for independent research institutions.
- The overwhelming focus of official efforts on awareness campaigns alone is insufficient and lacks a comprehensive approach. These efforts fail to address policy reform or introduce alternative policies that are more effective and systematically measurable.
- Protection services remain inadequate, and access to them remains difficult due to procedural and structural barriers. Service providers require capacity-building and must adopt a clearer survivor-centered approach while eliminating cultural biases. Additionally, the national referral system, as referenced in the official report, requires further evaluation to assess its effectiveness in ensuring protection from violence.

## Recommendations

- Prioritize expanding and improving violence prevention and response services, ensuring that service providers receive proper training over the next five years.
- Expedite the passage of a unified law against violence as an urgent measure to reduce impunity.
- Create an enabling environment for independent and active civil society organizations, allowing them to propose and advocate for alternative policies to combat violence, as well as facilitating feminist organizations' efforts in providing protection services.
- Guarantee academic freedom and access to information, enabling civil society and independent research centers to conduct field studies on violence against women, particularly emerging and evolving forms of gender-based violence.



## Women in Leadership and Decision-Making

### Current Landscape

- Despite the constitutional provisions for women's political representation in the 2014 Constitution and the 2019 constitutional amendments, which allocated 30% of parliamentary seats to women, the increase in women's representation has failed to reflect two key indicators of political empowerment. The first is the political diversity of female MPs, and the second is the adoption of a legislative agenda focused on women's rights, backed by a broad parliamentary pressure group composed primarily of female MPs alongside male allies.
- Although Law No. 140 of 2020 on the Exercise of Political Rights established a closed-list electoral system, this system has hindered diverse female participation in candidate lists. The process has been overseen by government entities, leading to political loyalties that align with official state positions rather than fostering the independence of women MPs.
- Women running for individual parliamentary seats have struggled to make significant gains. Only two female candidates won through individual seats, both from urban centers in Cairo and Alexandria.
- While the percentage of women in ministerial positions has increased, their appointments have remained largely confined to ministries with a history of female leadership, particularly in economic and social sectors—most notably the Ministry of Social Solidarity. Women have yet to break into key political and sovereign ministries such as foreign affairs, interior, defense, and aviation, which have historically remained exclusively male-dominated.
- Women's appointment to the judiciary, a constitutional right secured in the 2014 Constitution after decades of advocacy—particularly for their inclusion in the State Council—remains limited. Currently, only one female judge is included in each formation of the Supreme Constitutional Court. Additionally, judicial appointments are often inherited, with the daughters and sons of judges being favored for positions across judicial bodies, undermining equal opportunity in the legal profession.
- Regarding women's appointments to presidential advisory positions, they are typically limited to a single female representative among an overwhelming majority of men. Additionally, the advisory role itself holds limited influence under the constitution and within the structure of the executive authority.





- Although women have been appointed to leadership positions in religious institutions, such as an advisor to the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in 2020 and the head of the Extremism Combat Observatory, their representation remains minimal and unsustainable. These appointments have not led to a meaningful shift in religious discourse regarding women's status in society or in promoting values of equality and citizenship.

## Recommendations

- Expand civic space, ensure freedom of coalition-based and party political participation, uphold freedom of expression, close the pretrial detention file, and release all political activists of both genders who have not received final convictions.
- Amend the Political Rights Law and the electoral system to create a framework that guarantees political pluralism for both men and women, strengthens women's representation on electoral lists, and introduces alternating seat arrangements within proportional representation lists.
- Reform parliamentary regulations to establish a women-led parliamentary pressure group that adopts a broad legislative agenda on women's rights and enhances the use of parliamentary oversight mechanisms.
- Ensure the separation of powers and guarantee an independent legislative authority with full oversight over executive and security institutions.
- Integrate diverse political parties into legislative work and facilitate parliamentary representation through a quota system, ensuring a wider range of parties—including opposition parties—are effectively represented.
- Strengthen women's access to leadership positions by establishing measurable indicators within national strategies to assess the effectiveness and diversity of their representation across various sectors.
- Activate Equal Opportunity Units and enhance mechanisms for promoting women into leadership positions that have historically been dominated by men for decades.

## Institutional Mechanisms for Advancing Women's Rights

### Current Landscape

Egypt established specialized national councils as the official mechanisms responsible for advancing women's rights. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood was founded in 1988 under Presidential Decree No. 54 of 1988, with the primary objective of promoting the well-being of children and mothers. The council was tasked with policymaking, planning, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation in areas related to child







and maternal protection and development in Egypt. However, its focus has largely remained on children's rights, without prioritizing the rights of mothers. Additionally, the council's approach to women has been largely restricted to their reproductive roles, rather than addressing broader women's rights issues.

The National Council for Women (NCW) was later established under Presidential Decree No. 90 of 2000 as an independent national mechanism under the direct authority of the President of the Republic. Its mandate includes proposing national policies to advance women's roles in society and strengthen their social, cultural, economic, and political empowerment. The council is also responsible for proposing legislation and policies that support women's rights.

Despite the existence of these institutional mechanisms and their stated commitment to creating policies for women's empowerment, several challenges prevent them from fully carrying out their role in improving women's realities. These challenges arise from multiple factors, limiting their effectiveness.

- These institutions are largely confined to an advisory role, and their recommendations are rarely taken seriously. Even during the post-2011 revolution period, when there was momentum for legislative reform, key initiatives remained stalled. The National Council for Women (NCW), for instance, drafted a unified law against violence and worked extensively to amend personal status laws, yet these efforts never materialized into legislation. Draft bills remained shelved, and in 2022, when a Personal Status Law committee was formed, the NCW was entirely excluded from the process, which was led solely by the Ministry of Justice.
- The NCW has become preoccupied with tasks traditionally carried out by civil society organizations (CSOs), such as providing legal consultations for women through its complaints office, conducting training sessions for NGOs, and organizing awareness seminars. Meanwhile, independent civil society organizations, which have decades of experience in these areas, continue to be excluded from meaningful participation in the council's work, particularly in policy planning, implementation, and follow-up.
- Resources allocated to national councils remain limited, with most funding directed toward administrative expenses and staff salaries rather than effective programs. For example, in the 2022/2023 fiscal year, the House of Representatives' Solidarity Committee, led by MP Abdel Hadi El-Kasaby, approved a budget increase for the NCW, raising its allocation to EGP 419.96 million, up from EGP 191.42 million in 2021/2022.





- Key budget allocations for the NCW in 2022/2023:
  1. Employee wages and compensation: EGP 36.8 million, up from EGP 33.7 million the previous year.
  2. Goods and services procurement: EGP 12 million.
  3. Grants, subsidies, and social benefits: EGP 4.45 million, up from EGP 4 million in 2021/2022.
  4. Other expenditures: EGP 200,000.
  5. Non-financial asset purchases (investments): EGP 366.5 million.

### **Anti-Discrimination Commission**

Despite the 2014 Egyptian Constitution mandating the establishment of an Anti-Discrimination Commission, and despite persistent efforts by civil society organizations to push for legislation that would create such a body to protect all citizens—particularly women—from discrimination, no progress has been made. Several draft laws have been proposed, including one that was formally submitted to the Parliament's Legislative Committee, yet all attempts to secure this constitutional right have failed thus far.

### **Recommendations**

- Grant greater independence to specialized national councils to enable them to monitor and ensure that state institutions fulfill their role in protecting women from violence and discrimination.
- Allow these councils to take the lead in reviewing and eliminating discriminatory laws and proposing legislative amendments in consultation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with a clear timeline for implementation.
- Establish an independent commission dedicated to combating discrimination against women.

## **Women's Human Rights**

### **Women in the Criminal Justice System**

- Laws and prison regulations fail to address women's health needs. Prisons officially recognize pregnant women only from the third month of pregnancy, but there are no provisions for menstrual health, including access to free sanitary products. This issue is exacerbated by the high cost of sanitary pads, which are





even more expensive when purchased inside prisons, worsening women's health conditions due to period poverty.<sup>3</sup>

- Detention conditions remain dire, from prison infrastructure and hygiene standards to ventilation and overcrowding. These conditions pose health and safety risks for all detainees but fail to take into account the specific needs of women, particularly mothers and pregnant detainees.<sup>4</sup>
- There are no designated detention facilities for transgender women, putting them at even greater risk. The absence of safe housing leaves them vulnerable to violence, stigma, and discrimination if detained with other inmates. A lawsuit was previously filed demanding that The Ministry of Interior established separate detention facilities for transgender detainees, but the Supreme Administrative Court rejected the case.
- Female detainees are subjected to harassment and sexual violence by female prison guards under the pretense of security searches. Prison regulations do not include any explicit provisions criminalizing sexual violence, nor do they outline reporting mechanisms, complaint procedures, or penalties for such violations.
- Women human rights defenders face security crackdowns and arrests for organizing protests against the war on Gaza and criticizing the stance of international organizations, particularly the UN Women regional office.
- The Egyptian Public Prosecution has charged survivors and witnesses in sexual violence cases, as seen in the Fairmont gang rape case and the case of Menna Abdel Aziz, a rape survivor. In other instances, authorities have leaked the personal information of survivors, exposing them to harassment and defamation, as in the case of the Mit Ghamr gang sexual assault.
- Article 25 of the Cybercrime Law, which criminalizes "violating Egyptian family values," has been used since 2020 to arrest a large number of female content creators on TikTok under vague and overly broad charges. Those prosecuted include Mawada El-Adham, Haneen Hossam, Menna Abdel Aziz, Renad Emad, Basant Mohamed, Manar Samy, and Sozy Ayman. Additionally, a video of the moment of Hedier Abdel Razek's arrest was publicly circulated despite her right to privacy and protection as an accused individual.

<sup>3</sup> Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, March 2019. Menstruation in Prisons <https://shorturl.at/qHUjm><https://shorturl.at/qHUjm>

<sup>4</sup> Egyptian Front for Human Rights, December 2019. Forgotten in Qanate. <https://shorturl.at/XrMB2>





- Between 2019 and mid-2021, 47 women were sentenced to death, with 10 executions carried out against women convicted of murder. Beyond the incompatibility of capital punishment with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Egyptian law does not specifically recognize domestic and family violence as mitigating circumstances, making it difficult for women to argue self-defense or coercion as a legal defense in homicide cases.
- Pretrial detention periods for women activists have far exceeded legal limits, with Marwa Arafa detained for over four years and lawyer Hoda Abdel Moneim held for more than 2,000 days. Additionally, pretrial detention hearings have increasingly been conducted online, with defendants appearing remotely from inside prisons—effectively under the control of the executive authority. This practice undermines fair trial guarantees, as it was originally introduced as an exceptional measure during the pandemic but has continued beyond that period.
- In response to civil society demands to end the excessive extension of pretrial detention, Parliament introduced a draft Criminal Procedure Law. However, the proposal contains serious flaws, most notably granting the Public Prosecution the authority to conduct investigations in the absence of the defendant or the victim and restricting defense lawyers from speaking without prior permission from the prosecutor. The proposal also institutionalizes virtual hearings and expands judges' authority to restrict media coverage of trials under the vague justification that “external influences” could impact court proceedings.

## Recommendations

- Publish prison regulations and make them accessible to detainees, ensuring they are informed of their rights, complaint mechanisms, and reporting procedures. Serious measures must be taken to end sexual violence as a punitive practice in prisons.
- Ensure that prison infrastructure and living conditions meet the specific health and physical needs of women, including improvements to facilities, medical care, and sanitation services.
- The Public Prosecution must fulfill its responsibility to conduct judicial oversight of prisons, ensuring that female detainees are held in humane conditions and are not subjected to mistreatment or rights violations.
- Uphold constitutional rights by ensuring that freedom of association, expression, protest, and peaceful assembly are protected and not criminalized.
- End the unlawful practice of arresting survivors of sexual violence and charging victims and witnesses with unrelated offenses.



- Stop the misuse of the Cybercrime Law, particularly the “Egyptian family values” clause, to target and prosecute women. This provision should be reviewed by the legislative authorities.
- Reconsider the use and enforcement of the death penalty, particularly in cases where women have committed homicide in response to domestic violence, as current legislation fails to adequately recognize self-defense and coercion as mitigating factors.

## Women and Media

### Current Landscape

- Despite the Beijing Platform for Action encouraging the representation of women in a balanced and non-stereotypical manner, the Egyptian state’s intervention in this area has been extremely limited. Media continues to reinforce gender stereotypes, portraying submissive and obedient women as the socially acceptable norm. Many TV programs and advertisements perpetuate stereotypical and entertainment-driven portrayals of women rather than diverse or empowering representations.
- Television programs rarely address women’s rights issues. Instead, topics such as fashion, makeup, and domestic work dominate women-focused programming, reinforcing traditional gender roles. Meanwhile, discussions on women’s political, social, economic, and cultural rights remain largely absent from mainstream media.

### Safety of Women Journalists and Digital Content Creators

- Women journalists and media professionals face serious risks in their work, including violence, harassment, and workplace discrimination. They are also exposed to dangers while covering public events, with multiple reports documenting incidents of harassment and violence against female journalists in the field.
- Several women journalists and media professionals have been arrested and subjected to mistreatment due to their work. In 2023, three media professionals—Hala Fahmy, Safaa El-Korbeigi, and Manal Agirma—were detained and charged with publishing on social media, incitement, spreading false news and rumors, and misusing digital platforms. They were later released through presidential pardons, yet they received no compensation for reputational damage, nor were they formally acquitted of the charges.



- Security authorities have targeted journalists from Mada Masr, including its editor-in-chief, under broad accusations such as publishing false information, incitement, and deception—vague charges commonly used to prosecute activists and media professionals working to raise awareness and document violations.
- Female content creators on social media have been prosecuted under the Cybercrime Law, accused of violating Egyptian family values—a term that remains undefined in legislation. Complaints have been filed against them by individuals with no direct legal standing, such as lawyers and social media users, leading to convictions with sentences exceeding ten years in some cases.

### Recommendations

- Ensure press freedom and release all detained journalists, both men and women, who are held in connection with their work.
- Protect women journalists and online content creators from harassment and prosecution under the pretext of defending family values.
- The state should actively address women's issues through its official and semi-official media channels, especially considering that some media outlets are state-owned or aligned with government institutions. These platforms should reflect and advocate for real women's rights issues.
- Enforce professional codes of ethics within relevant journalist and media unions.

### Women and the Environment

#### Current Landscape

- The official report overlooks women's diverse environmental protection needs and their varying roles in environmental initiatives and the green economy. It fails to acknowledge the different environmental conditions faced by women in rural and urban areas, as well as in industrial zones, border regions, and areas near armed conflict zones.





## Women Agricultural Workers in Egypt

- Agriculture is one of the sectors most affected by climate change, and Egypt is considered among the most climate-vulnerable countries<sup>5</sup>. Women are disproportionately impacted, as they make up the majority of agricultural workers and face multiple consequences of climate change. These include declining crop yields, which reduce their income and ability to provide for their families, as well as increased violence due to resource conflicts caused by water scarcity and economic instability. Women agricultural workers also suffer from severe health consequences, as rising temperatures and long hours of outdoor labor expose them to extreme heat stress.
- Gender is largely absent from state environmental policies, despite the fact that climate change deeply affects the agricultural sector, in which women represent 45% of the workforce—a highly vulnerable demographic. By 2050<sup>6</sup>, Egypt's agricultural output is expected to decline by 10%, further exacerbating these challenges. While the national report claims that a safe environment has been secured for women in all sectors, in reality, 94% of agricultural workers are in informal employment, with women making up the majority due to their low wages and seasonal work status. These workers lack legal protections under labor laws and health insurance, even as they bear the brunt of climate change's impact—from heat exhaustion and sunstroke to economic hardship. Their wages remain extremely low, averaging no more than \$6 per day.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Impact of Climate Change on the Agricultural Sector in Egypt

[https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-90-481-4811-4#text=By%202060%2C%20the%20estimated%20decrease,pounds%20\(EGP\)%20in%202060](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-90-481-4811-4#text=By%202060%2C%20the%20estimated%20decrease,pounds%20(EGP)%20in%202060).

<sup>6</sup> Women Agricultural Workers in Egypt: Between the Hardship of Poverty and Their Long-Awaited Rights

<https://www.ctuws.com/content/%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%82%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82%D9%87%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%B1%D8%A9>

<sup>7</sup> The Impact of Climate Change on Women Agricultural Workers

<https://www.hcsr-eg.org/%D8%AA%D8%A3%D8%AB%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%B1/#:~:text=%D9%88%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%8B%D8%A7%D8%8C%20%D9%8A%D8%A4%D8%AF%D9%8A%20%D8%B1%D9%8A%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B6%D9%8A%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9,%D8%A5%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%20%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1%20%D9%81%D9%8A%20%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1>



- Some impoverished families resort to sending young girls to work on farms, exposing them to road accidents caused primarily by poor infrastructure and inadequate services in rural areas, as well as the exploitation of child labor. Women also represent 79% of unpaid labor in rural areas, as land ownership is typically held by husbands or fathers. While the state claims to mainstream gender perspectives across all sectors<sup>8</sup> women own less than 5% of agricultural land. As a result, they cannot access agricultural bank loans like men<sup>9</sup>, despite being the primary agricultural workforce. Since they do not own the land they work on, they are also excluded from decision-making processes.
- While the state separates environmental policies from agricultural labor, its approach remains focused on environmental conservation in isolation, failing to protect the groups most vulnerable to climate change. State policies continue to overlook the rights of women agricultural workers, who are directly affected by these environmental changes. One example is the Abo Ghaleb ferry tragedy in Monshaat Al-Qanater, where 17 girls lost their lives while commuting to work harvesting fruit. This incident highlights systemic state bias against women, starting with the exploitation of young girls in labor. According to eyewitnesses, the accident began with a case of harassment inside the microbus, which then plunged into the water from a deteriorating ferry. Notably, Egypt has not ratified ILO Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment, which includes protections against harassment during work commutes<sup>10</sup>. Additionally, there are no policies in place to protect women and children from labor exploitation, despite the fact that they form the backbone of the agricultural workforce.

<sup>8</sup> Training Guide for Integrating a Gender Perspective Across All Sectors

<https://ncw.gov.eg/Images/PdfRelease/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%84%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A%20%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%20%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%88%D8%B1%20%D8%A7%D9%84-5202021495999.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Women Agricultural Workers in Egypt: Between the Hardship of Poverty and Their Long-Awaited Rights

<https://www.ctuws.com/content/%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%82%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82%D9%87%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%B1%D8%A9>

<sup>10</sup>

[https://www.masrawy.com/news/news\\_regions/details/2024/5/24/2587819/%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AC%D8%AB%D8%A9-%D8%A2%D8%AE%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B6%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A7-20-%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%B5%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-](https://www.masrawy.com/news/news_regions/details/2024/5/24/2587819/%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AC%D8%AB%D8%A9-%D8%A2%D8%AE%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B6%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A7-20-%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%B5%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-)







## Recommendations

- Implement a quota system to ensure women's inclusion in climate change<sup>11</sup> committees and projects, protecting those most vulnerable to environmental and climate-related risks. Provide financial support to women contributing to environmental conservation efforts.
- Introduce legal protections for women agricultural workers by enacting laws that recognize them as formal workers with wages and access to health insurance.
- Establish gender-sensitive units staffed by female officers and social workers to receive complaints from women farmers regarding violence and sexual harassment at police stations in rural areas.
- Remove bureaucratic barriers to allow the formation of unions for agricultural workers.
- Provide financial support to women engaged in environmental preservation efforts and implement a quota system to integrate them into climate change-related committees and projects<sup>12</sup>.

## Girls

### Current Landscape

#### Forced Child Marriage

Egypt has established a legal framework to promote child protection and gender equality, defining childhood as up to 18 years old in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which it ratified in 2002. The country also adopted the Optional Protocol to the CRC, officially publishing it in the Official Gazette in 2005. In 2008, Egypt introduced the Child Law, incorporating various legal provisions aimed at safeguarding children's rights. However, gaps in the law have hindered its effective implementation, particularly in ensuring gender equality and protecting the rights of girls.

---

<sup>11</sup>Gender: The Missing Dimension in Climate Change Response

<https://aps.aucegypt.edu/ar/articles/770/gender-the-missing-dimension-in-the-response-to-climate-change>

<sup>12</sup>Gender: The Missing Dimension in Climate Change Response

<https://aps.aucegypt.edu/ar/articles/770/gender-the-missing-dimension-in-the-response-to-climate-change>





## Child Marriage

- While the law prohibits the official registration of marriages involving children under 18 years old, it leaves room for loopholes, allowing marriages to take place using unofficial (customary) marriage contracts. Additionally, the law permits the recognition of marital relationships at 16 years old for girls and 18 years old for boys, stating that legal claims arising from marriage contracts are not accepted if the wife is under 16 or the husband under 18 at the time of filing the claim.
- Despite the National Strategy to Eliminate Child Marriage (2014-2020) identifying these gaps, no legislative changes have been made, and no significant progress has been achieved in preventing child marriage. According to the 2021 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 16% of women aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18.
- The Egyptian Cabinet has repeatedly submitted draft laws to prohibit child marriage, with three different proposals put forward—the most recent in 2022. However, none of these bills have been passed or added to the parliamentary discussion agenda.
- Despite civil society demands for criminalizing child marriage and including it in the Unified Anti-Violence Law, Parliament has yet to debate the bill, even though it was formally introduced and signed by over 60 MPs since 2018.

## The Impact of Child Marriage on Gender Gaps in Education

- The 2021 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) found a strong correlation between child marriage (under 18) and educational attainment among girls. The percentage of pregnant teenagers and young mothers (ages 15-19) is 6.5% lower among those who have completed at least secondary education but rises to 18.2% among those who never attended school.
- Child marriage is also a significant driver of school dropouts. According to the Ministry of Education's 2022 statistical report, 11,775 girls dropped out of primary school, representing 0.18% of female students at this level. At the preparatory level, 49,507 girls dropped out, accounting for 1.87% of students. This data highlights a sharp increase in dropout rates as girls reach puberty and early adolescence, underscoring the impact of child marriage on education.





## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- In Egypt, 92% of women and girls aged 15-49 have undergone some form of FGM, with 72% of procedures performed by medical professionals. Despite shifting attitudes among women, there remains widespread societal support for the continuation of FGM.
- In 2021, Egypt introduced harsher penalties for FGM. Non-medical practitioners involved in the procedure now face a minimum of seven years in prison if the act results in permanent disability, and at least 10 years if it leads to death. However, there are no recent statistics confirming a decline in the number of FGM procedures performed by medical professionals.
- While the penalties for FGM have been toughened, there is no available data on the rate of reporting such cases. The practice remains socially silenced, and feminist organizations have repeatedly highlighted that the criminalization of parents acts as a deterrent to family members coming forward to report or document cases of FGM.
- Several factors contribute to the continued prevalence of FGM in parts of Egypt. Religious and community leaders actively encourage the practice, falsely framing it as a religious necessity. Families often perceive FGM as a means of preserving a girl's chastity and believe it is essential for a successful marriage.

## Recommendations

- Amend legislation to explicitly criminalize forced child marriage, holding all parties involved—including those who promote or encourage it—legally accountable.
- Establish a collaborative, time-bound plan between the government and civil society organizations to eliminate forced child marriage, ensuring that civil society participates not only in implementation but also in evaluation, monitoring, and oversight mechanisms.
- Raise awareness and train professionals in educational and cultural institutions on the dangers of child marriage, ensuring that those in influential roles oppose the practice and do not reinforce harmful cultural norms that perpetuate child marriage.
- Enforce anti-FGM laws, encourage reporting, and provide protection for whistleblowers and witnesses.



مؤسسة المرأة الجديدة  
New Woman Foundation

Organization in Special Consultative  
Status with ECOSOC since 2023

- Expand awareness efforts in rural areas and border regions, where FGM and child marriage remain prevalent.
- Require state institutions- particularly religious authorities, cultural centers, and media platforms- to adopt stronger anti-FGM messaging and actively work to combat the normalization of the practice.

