

Egypt nominates Moushira Khattab for UNESCO director-general



Egypt has recently nominated Ambassador Moushira Khattab, former minister of family and population, for the post of director-general of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Khattab has a longstanding record of social, diplomatic and ministerial work as an active, leading woman and a world-renowned expert in the areas of development and human rights. The decision came after current director-general Irina Bokova announced candidacy for the UN secretary-general position.

In the open air at the Egyptian Museum, Prime Minister Sherif Ismail announced Egypt's official nomination of Ambassador Moushira Khattab to the post of director-general of the UNESCO. The announcement was made in an event entitled "Egypt, UNESCO and International Cultural Issues" attended by ministers, ambassadors,

MPs and several public figures. The dialogue which was about the importance of Egypt's cultural role in the world as well as its impact was followed by Ismail's address who said Egypt was the world's origin of culture since the creation of ancient Egyptian civilization. "Accordingly, it was essential for Egypt to be nominated to such a

post due to its cultural standing in the world,” Ismail said. “I believe that Khattab will win as she is the most qualified figure to such a post due to her previous experience in the field,” he added.

The premier announced the nomination of Ambassador Khattab, saying she can represent the culture in Egypt, the Arab World, Africa and the Mediterranean Sea area. Earlier, the 27th African Union summit accepted Egypt’s request to support Ambassador Khattab for the post. Sherif said that Egypt’s decision to field Khattab came after approaching several countries which he termed as “friendly and having weight” inside the UNESCO. “Responses were very positive in view of the diplo-

matic and field history of the Egyptian nominee whose experience is consistent with the UNESCO mission,” he added.

In 1999, Moushira Khattab shifted to the sphere of defending women and children’s rights as Secretary General of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM). The success of NCCM was crowned by its transformation into the Ministry of Family and Population and the appointment of Moushira Khattab as Minister. Since 1999, she has engineered a paradigm shift in the respect, protection, promotion and monitoring the implementation of the rights of women and children in Egypt. Ambassador Khattab coordinated national efforts targeting



the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against children with special emphasis on girls. Combating gender based violence including female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage are some of the achievements engineered by Moushira Khattab with heavy involvement of civil society. This was brought about through a number of interventions including the Girl's Education Initiative, providing quality active learning to poorer and marginalized girls; adolescents' reproductive rights and combating child labor and child abuse and neglect. She initiated, led and coordinated a national movement to support the most comprehensive rights based on legal reform for children; crowned by the adoption of Law 126 in 2008 bringing Child Law in closer harmony with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The amended law criminalized trafficking of children, FGM, and most forms of violence and discrimination. It raised the minimum age for criminal responsibility from 7 to 12 years establishing a new system of child protection including a restorative juvenile justice system. Khattab coordinated, in close collaboration with civil society, the formulation of key national policy documents including national strategies for the protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of street children, the elimination of Child Labor, and combating vio-

lence against children. Key action plans were formulated including that on Girls' Education, and Combating Violence against Children, an "Egypt Fit for Children", Rights Based Tracking of Public Budgeting for Children (for the first time ever in Egypt), and the National Survey on Street Children.

The nomination of Ambassador Khattab to the top UNESCO post is a living testimony of women's gains in the Egyptian Constitution of 2014. The rights approved by the new Egyptian Constitution for women are unprecedented compared to those in previous Egyptian constitutions. Article 11 of the Constitution adopted in 2014 includes the following provisions on violence against women, stipulating that "The state shall seek to take necessary measures to guarantee adequate women representation in parliamentary bodies, along the lines identified by the law". The Egyptian Constitution also assigned a quota of "one quarter of the seats" for women in the elected local councils. This was considered a positive step on the road to achieving women representation in parliament, and changing the stereotypes about women in society.

Women's participation in grassroots Egyptian politics dates back at least to the 1919 revolution, when Egyptian women protested against the British occupation and

demonstrated in the streets alongside male members of their families. Groups of 'gentlewomen' began a social revolution when they rejected the "harem" and began organizing Egypt's social services. After World War I, a movement to emancipate women was organized and led by women from some of Egypt's most prominent families. They argued that the improvement of women's condition would contribute to the general welfare. Certainly, the ideas of women's emancipation had earlier roots in Egypt, but in the mid-1940s they began to take on more concrete and controversial dimensions. The issues embraced then spanned the social, economic and political realms: the right of all women to vote; the responsibility of the State to set up children's nurseries and guarantee social insurance and security; and equal pay for equal work. After the war, there was a continuous female presence in the student and nationalist movements. In the 1946 nationalist demonstrations which momentarily unhinged the Egyptian authorities, women not only participated, but some became leaders.

After 2015, parliamentary elections saw voters elect 75 women out of a possible 568 seats in the new House of Representatives, women's representation increased after President Abdel Fattah El-Si-

si had appointed an additional 14 female members. The 89 female members in parliament make up 14.9 percent of available seats, which is considered a giant leap in women's representation. Women's representation in the new parliament is considered the highest ever, followed by 12.7 percent in 2010, after 2012 only saw 2 percent of seats won by women, which is even less than their representation in 1975.

State institutions support Egypt's 1st female nominee

Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry expressed full support for the nomination of Ambassador Moushira Khattab for UNESCO's director general post as elections will be held in early 2017. Shoukry said that a panel of advisors was formed to support nomination of Khattab, adding that the panel includes a group of experienced figures who have long experience in the field of education, sciences and culture. The panel includes Founding Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Ismail Serageldin, former culture minister Gaber Asfour, former antiquities minister and Egyptologist Zahi Hawass and prominent scientist Farouk el Baz, former MP and diplomat Mustafa Al-Fiqi, columnist Abdel-Moneim Said, a leading authority in information and knowledge Society in

Egypt Dr. Hisham Al-Sherif and former head of the Egyptian Writers' Union Mohamed Salmawy, Dr. Malak Zaalouk, Dr. Nadia Makram Ebeid, Mr. Nasser Abdel Latif, Mr. Hisham al-Khazendar, Mr. Amr Badr, Ambassador Fatima al-Zahraa Othman and Mr. Mohamed Farid Khamis.

The House of Representatives also supports the nomination of Ambassador Moshira Khattab for the post of the director general of the UNESCO, Speaker Ali Abdel-Aal said. During a parliamentary session, Abdel-Aal noted the House of Representatives will support Khattab's nomination with all its capabilities.

Welcoming reactions to Khattab's nomination

Ambassador Khattab's nomination was strongly promoted by the National Council for Women (NCW) which announced its support following the announcement that Irina Bokova had been nominated by her country to become the next UN Secretary General. The president of NCW, Maya Morsy, said that Khattab's nomination is a milestone in the history of Egyptian women in highly influential international positions, and is a testament to her honorable career. The nomination should be held up as an example, she added, proving that Egyptian women have the qualities

to compete for the highest national and international positions. In a statement, NCW asserted its full support of Khattab in continuation of its policy to back Egyptian women to assume leading positions. Morsi said Khattab's nomination is an important achievement in the history of Egyptian women who are qualified to assume top international positions.

"We support women in all political fields, and Khattab's nomination signifies an achievement for an Egyptian woman who has succeeded in politics," said Ghada Sakr, secretary of the parliament's Culture and Media Committee, saying Khattab has had a prolific career, holding various positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sakr indicated that a high profile promotion campaign is being planned by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, which it proposes to promote in Egyptian embassies in 58 countries, to support Khattab.

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) supports the nomination of Ambassador Moushira Khattab to the post of the director general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), ECFA Chairman Mounir Zahran said. In a press statement, Zahran said Khattab, the former minister of family and population, is qualified to assume this important post

thanks to her educational and scientific experience. He underlined that ECFA will strongly back the nomination of Khattab at all forums and events.

Ambassador Moushira Khattab vision for UNESCO

“My vision for UNESCO is guided by the current state of peril that has besieged the global community- a state of peril that is not specific to a particular country, continent, race, religion, or people. The daily suffering and loss of human lives has reached unprecedented proportions at the hands of terrorist groups. This world war is not about wiping out armies of terrorists, or winning back territory,” said Ambassador Moushira Khattab during a cultural dialogue gathering on UNESCO under the theme “Egypt, UNESCO and international cultural issues” that kicked off at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo on July 19. She added that the war on terror is about winning back the minds of people. “We, the global community need a paradigm shift in how we conduct our business. We need to reconstruct how we as a global community build peace in the minds of men and women. We must deal with the root causes of terrorism. It is here that the role of UNESCO emerges as crucial and the member States are called upon to embrace and empower UNESCO to move on with its much

needed mandate- a mandate that is increasing in impotence on a daily basis. The global community’s weapon against terror must be through Education, Culture, Science and protection of global heritage, and UNESCO is the army empowered to ignite this renaissance,” reiterated Ambassador Khattab.

Egypt’s nominee elaborated “My vision for UNESCO is shaped by my long experience with the United Nations, my journey with diplomacy and international relations, but above all it is shaped mostly by my work on the ground with the grass roots. The UN’s human rights system ensures States are committed and under legal obligations to implement human rights to its citizens without any discrimination as to gender, religion or any other ground. Rights are equally critical being civil, political, economic, social or cultural rights. Needless to say the agenda for UNESCO must cater for the full implementation of Sustainable Development Goals”.

Profile of Ambassador Moushira Khattab

Ambassador Moushira Khattab holds a PhD on the rights of the child from Cairo University, MA in International Relations from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA and a B.A. Political Science from Cairo University, Faculty of Economics and Political Science. Since obtaining her

doctorate degree and retiring from diplomatic and public life, Ambassador Khattab has been a regular contributor to several renowned academic and research institutions worldwide. In addition to a brief university teaching experience at home in Egypt, Dr Khattab has been a visiting professor at Wellesley College in Switzerland, University of Foreigners in Perugia (Italy) on gender and human issues as well as conducting research and delivering a number of lectures at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC, which she has also represented at a number of conferences across Europe.

Positions

- Rapporteur – Women’s Foreign Policy Group, Egyptian Council on Foreign Affairs.
- Minister of Family & Population, Egypt 2009 – 2011.
- Secretary General of National Council of Childhood & Motherhood (1999 – 2010).
- Expert on UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2002-2010) served both as Vice Chairman and Rapporteur.
- Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Cultural Relations 1999.
- Ambassador of Egypt to South Africa during the Nelson Mandela era and the new democratic dispensation of South Africa 1994-1999.
- Non-resident Ambassador of Egypt to Lesotho and Botswana 1994-1999.
- Ambassador of Egypt to the Federation of the Czech and Slovak republics during the transformation in the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution and later as Ambassador of Egypt to the separate Czech and Slovak Republics-1992-1994.
- Consul at the Consulate of Egypt in Melbourne, Australia
- Chair of the regional Steering Committee on VAC of Middle East & North Africa.
- Egypt’s Radio & TV Union’s Board of Trustees & chair of its Sub-Committee on family and children.
- Egyptian Federation of NGO’s.
- Egyptian Electricity Regulatory Board representing consumers.
- Board of the Higher Institute for Childhood Development; Ein Shams University.
- Child Helpline International (Amsterdam) 2003- 2009.
- Board member of Vodafone Foundation for Social Development
- Chair of the ad hoc UN intergovernmental expert group on UN guidelines on Justice matters related to children victims and witnesses to crime (Later adopted by ECOSOC).
- Member of the advisory group on children without parental care, drafted UN guidelines on the protection of CWPC.
- First Secretary at the Embassy

of Egypt in Budapest, Hungary in charge of consular and bilateral affairs 1997-1981.

- Third Secretary at the Embassy of Egypt in Vienna, Austria in charge of press; bilateral as well as UNIDO affairs 1974-1979.
- Attaché seconded to the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations in New York 1970.
- Headed many Egyptian delegations as an ambassador; Secretary General of NCCM and later as Minister in various international conferences, events and negotiations.

Honors

- Ambassador Khattab has received the following awards for her diplomatic and developmental work:
- The Order of Good Hope by the President of the Republic of South Africa (1999).
- The Order of Merit by the President of the Italian Republic (2007)
- International Women of Courage Award by the US Department of State (2008).
- The Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic (2010).

About the UNESCO

Irina Bokova has been the Director-General of UNESCO since 15 November 2009, and was successfully reelected for a second term in 2013. She is the first woman and the first Eastern European

to lead the Organization. A new Director-General is elected every four years (previously every six years) by the General Conference. Under his/her authority, the Secretariat is expected to translate into reality the programmes approved by the General Conference.

The Constitution of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was signed in London on 16 November 1945 by 37 countries and came into force with its 20th ratification on 4 November 1946. The purpose of the Organization was defined as: “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.”

Today, after more than 60 years of existence, UNESCO functions as a laboratory of ideas and a standard-setter to forge universal agreements on emerging ethical issues. The Organization also serves as a clearinghouse – for the dissemination and sharing of information and knowledge – while helping Member States to build their human and institutional capacities in diverse fields. For all of UNESCO’s major areas of fo-

cus (Culture, Education, Natural Science, Social and Human Science, and Communication and Information), it is possible to trace the ideas on which UNESCO was based to the Organization's present activities.

Egypt & The UNESCO

Egypt Joined UNESCO November 4, 1946. In 1959, after an appeal from the governments of Egypt and Sudan, UNESCO launched an international safeguarding campaign that mobilized international attention on a world-wide scale from Jacqueline Kennedy to people in the poorest countries buying UNESCO stamps to support archaeological research in the areas to be flooded and to remove the Abu Simbel and Philae temple and reassemble them elsewhere.

Egypt Permanent Delegation to UNESCO is currently headed by Mr. Ehab Badawy Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. Across the 1 million square kilometers that comprise the Egyptian landmass, UNESCO identified 7 cultural and natural world heritage sites, with a tentative list of 30 plus potential sites under consideration for future inclusion.

The UNESCO Cairo Office is one of 52 field offices worldwide. It was originally established in 1947, and currently serves all Arab States in the area of Science and Technology. In view of its current mandate, the UNESCO Office in

Cairo serves as a regional UNESCO office for Science and Technology in Arab states.

Khattab is the first woman to be nominated by Egypt for such an international high-profile post. Egypt nominated former Culture Minister Farouk Hosni for the same post in 2009 but he lost then to Bokova. The chances for Khattab to get the top UNESCO job are greater than the former Egyptian nominee as "there is understanding inside the UNESCO to have the next director-general from the Arab group to achieve just geographic distribution," according to Prime Minister Sherif Ismail.

Women power gains momentum internationally

Ambassador Moushira Khattab was ranked third in 2013 out of the five leading female human rights activists in the Middle East and North Africa. The world celebrates International Women's Day on March 8th. International Women's Day is a global celebration of all women, everywhere. It is a rallying call; both for reflection on lessons learned and for accelerating momentum towards gender equality and the empowerment of every girl and woman. It is a day to rejoice in the extraordinary acts of women and to stand together, as a united force to advance gender equality around the world.

The role of women in Egypt's transition is a barometer of prog-

ress and democratic change. On June 30, the thunderous chanting of Egyptian women echoed through the streets. Their voices were louder than their fellow men, adopting a collective firm, assertive tone that asserted their determination. The current Egyptian constitution 2014 is a progressive constitution which includes 247 articles with 11 additional articles. The constitution referendum was held on 14–15 January 2014 and was approved by 98% with significant participation from women. The constitution protects women from all kinds of violence and to support working women to balance their duties towards their profession and towards their families. It also provides support for motherhood and childhood and for senior women and women in need.

Internationally, ranked the No. 1 most powerful woman and female politician is German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who directly controls the \$3.3 trillion GDP of Germany, according to the IMF, and hugely influences the \$16.2 trillion economy of the European Union. Germany is the world's fifth largest economy and the largest led by a woman. In office since 2005, Merkel has topped the World's Most Powerful Woman ten times, from 2006 to 2009 and again from 2011 to 2016. A top five Power Women seven times since 2004, this year Hillary Clinton ranks at

No. 2. Should she win the presidential race, she'll be a strong contender for No. 1.

The World's 100 Most Powerful Women include also the International Monetary Fund head Christine Lagarde; Janet Yellen, Chair, US Federal Reserve; Park Geun-hye, President of South Korea; Michelle Obama, US First Lady; Tsai Ing-wen, President of Taiwan; Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile; Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; Italy, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, US Justice, Supreme Court; Elena Kagan, Justice, US Supreme Court; Sonia Sotomayor, US Justice, Supreme Court; Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar State Counselor; Queen Elizabeth II, Monarch of UK; Loretta Lynch, US Attorney General; Sheikh Hasina Wajed, Prime Minister of Bangladesh; Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, Minister of International Cooperation and Development of U.A.E.; Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland, Bidhya Bhandari, President of Nepal, Elvira Nabiullina, Central Bank Governor of Russia; Egyptian-British Nemat "Minouche" Shafik, Deputy governor, Bank of England; Dalia Grybauskaite, President of Lithuania; Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia and Ameenah Gurib-fakim, President, Republic of Mauritius.

Devil's Head: Rustic beach camp in Egypt's Sinai is a slice of heaven

Strategically located on the Gulf of Aqaba, on the Eastern part of the Sinai Peninsula (465 km from Cairo; 180 km from Sharm El-Sheikh; and 120 km from St. Catherine), Nuweiba is a small town with a lot to offer. A few days at this off-the-beaten-track destination is a remarkable personal and spiritual experience that will rejuvenate the mind and soul.



The small coastal city is divided into three main areas, the port, the city and the old Bedouin village of Tarrabeen. Opened in 1985, the Port of Nuweiba is the industrial area of the city. A few upscale hotels and resorts, supermarkets and bazaars are scattered along the Red

Sea shores. The port also serves as a ferry port, thus allowing for easy travels between Egypt and Jordan. The city of Nuweiba, which in Arabic means 'bubbling spring', was originally an uninhabited oasis. It began to flourish with homes, schools, shops, markets and hotels.

Other than a few local government buildings, the city consists of narrow strips of small shops and bazaars selling silver artifacts, handmade Bedouin clothes, accessories, the most beautiful rugs, and decorative clay and wooden ornaments. The Bedouin village of Tarrabeen, located north of Nuweiba, is well known as Sinai's backpacker heaven, with a number of cheap grass huts and open areas to lounge around. The village is a yet unspoiled paradise for those who want to reconnect with nature, consisting of a thick grove of palms, a shallow bay and lively Bedouin ambience. It was built around some fresh water wells that are still in use today. A number of outdoors restaurants and cafes are located by the beach furnished with woven rugs and cushions to relax, unwind and let time drift by amidst stunning scenery.

Pack light when going to Nuweiba and prepare for steamy hot summer days and a slight chill at night. In winter it is also warm and sunny in the morning but you will need something heavy to keep you warm after

dusk. What better way to take in the tranquil surroundings of Nuweiba, than from beach chair on a sandy strip of land overlooking the crystal clear waters.

Ras Shitan, source of inspiration

If you enjoy underwater photography, bring along your waterproof camera for unique photo opportunities thanks to the rare current along the coast. One of the best locations for diving and snorkeling is Ras Shitan (Devil's Head) north of Tarrabeen along the Nuweiba-Taba coast. Wind and kite surfing along this coast line are also popular.

Ras Shitan literally translates to "Head of the Devil". Though this is not its real name, but this is how it is known. The real name was "Ras el Shateayn" which translates to "Head of the two beaches", but due to foreigners trying to pronounce the Arabic name, it was transformed to "Ras Shitan". It got the name "Head of the two beaches" because of the rock formation that is dividing the place into two separate beaches.

Far away from mass tourism and the big holiday destinations in Si-



nai like Sharm-el-Sheikh and Dahab, Ras Shitan appeals to those tourists who seek a more tranquil experience. After a 30 minutes drive, heading north from Nuweiba, you'll reach the Bedouin camp from where you can easily access the Devil's Head diving site: a couple of palm strokes away from the shore, you'll discover a maze of underwater mountains, canyons, caves and plateaus, but also an incredibly rich ecosystem of hard corals, octopus, puffer fish, moon groupers, and most of all, anemones of all colours, including red, green and purple. You'll be blown away by the scenic and – more importantly – greatly preserved landscape. This completely secluded beach on the Red Sea is mostly known to divers only and travelers who want some isolation, as it only contains camps overlooking the beautiful Red Sea Mountains.

Enjoy the simple life in Ras Shitan Ras Shitan, a popular diving destination in Egypt, is the perfect escape for anyone wanting to find peace, quiet and relaxation along the breath-taking waters of the Red Sea. Neighboring Dahab and located in Northern Nuweiba, Ras Shitan is known for its famous beach camps with simplistic bamboo huts and wooden bungalows. Its simplistic and natural atmosphere emphasizes the beauty of its nature ranging from underwater mountains and caves to its incredibly rich marine ecosystems.

After approximately 12 meters

starts the southern reef. At a depth of 22 meters opens a big Canyon, which goes down to a depth of 40 meters. Colorful formations of hard corals along the Canyon leave a spectacular impression on divers. After a break you will get to see the north side of the reef, which surprises with a totally different structure. The huge corals seem to look like a Chinese garden. Apart from the usual coral-fish you can also find various kinds of slugs and maybe you will be able to find some little fish that try to glide in the corals.

Ras Shitan has incredible mountain scenery. It is also famous for anemones, red, green and purple. It is possible to experience deep diving in Ras Shitan. There are some excellent pinnacles and beautiful coral formations. They are at depth deeper than 40 meters. It has a stunning mountain range, nice coral and vivid marine life. The highlight of this diving destination 15km north of Nuweiba is undoubtedly the contoured topography, including narrow valleys, sand-filled depressions and deep chasms.

Ras Shitan is a beautiful reef with numerous anemone fish, shrimps and a multitude of different nudibranches. The sandy plateau is preceded by large areas of sea grass, in which Pipefish and Sea Horses are often found, along with beautiful corals. This is a really stunning dive offering deep divers the opportunity of viewing some impressive pinnacles and pristine corals at 40 plus meters.