



Periodical Profile

Social Protection Policies in Egypt

Dr. Abdo Al Ashry

**Lecturer in Law at the National Center
for social and Criminological Research**

The right of social protection is a basic human right, however it is a complicated process, both in identifying targeted groups and in providing the necessary means to implement social protection programs. In this context, the Egyptian Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030 - protecting priority care groups - is providing the basic needs of families living in extreme poverty, providing care for the priority care groups, protecting people with special needs and providing decent work for the poor and low-income groups.

Means of Implementing social protection in Egyptian Law:

The social protection policies in Egyptian law are based on two main axes: The first is to provide social security assistance to vulnerable groups in society. The second is to enable these groups to engage in the development process, as the following:

The right of social security and improving the life standard of citizens:

The Social Security Law No. 137 of 2010 provides the poor individual and the poor family the right to receive social security assistance, in accordance with the provisions of this law. The poverty status of the individual and the family is determined by field social research based on target indicators including income, education, number of people, housing, health status and in particular; the disabled and handicapped, the social status, especially orphans, widows and divorced women, and any other indicators or criteria for measuring the poverty of individuals and



the targeted family in rural or urban areas. A decision shall be issued by the Prime Minister (Article 4).

the Social Security Law No. 137 for the year 2010 was amended by Law No. 15 of 2015 .It has given the Prime Minister the authority to innovate programs targeting groups not included in the monthly social security assistance and not mentioned in this law. This comes upon the concerned minister and the minister of Finance's presentations. A prime minister's decree determining the controls and the value of the minimum and maximum of these programs should be issued (Article 5).

Takaful and Karama program:

Takaful and Karama Support Program was established by the Prime Minister's Decision No. 540 of 2015. The Program is targeting families suffering from extreme poverty and need cash and service support, and with children aged 0-18 years.

The program targets:

The categories of people who suffer from extreme poverty or will not be able to work or produce, and are unable to earn their living, such as; adults of 65 and over or those of complete disability which prevents them from work. The program is implemented over three stages in three years; the first phase began in the first half of 2015 in the poorest centers in some governorates. The Minister of Social Solidarity is assigned to issue the governing decisions concerning the conditional monetary support program "Takaful and Karama". He is also assigned to issue a decision to determine the governorates in which the first stage of implementation starts.

Alternative family system:

In accordance with the amendment to the Executive Regulations of the Children's Law under the Prime Minister decree No. 208 of 2014, this system aims to provide children since birth with the integrated social, psychological, health and professional care specifically those whose conditions prevented them from growing up with their natural families, and those who are of unknown descent and abandoned. The alternative family system serves the children at the age of birth, giving



them care by alternative families or within the shelters of the ministry concerned with social solidarity issues, until they mature and become stable through, work for males or marriage for females.

Health care programs for those without social security pension:

The regulation of health care programs for those who are unable to obtain social security pension under the decree of the Minister of Health No. 556 of 2015 regulates the conditions and controls for health care programs for those who are unable. It was started by the most needy segment of pensioners, estimated at about one and a half million families, distributed over all governorates of the Republic from January 2015 for 18 months.

Among the health programs is the health insurance scheme for women covered by Law No. 23 of 2012, health insurance for children under school age by Law No. 86 of 2012, health insurance for farmers and agricultural workers by Law No. 127 of 2014.

In 2018, the legislator enacted the Comprehensive Health Insurance Law No. 2 of 2018, which stated that the insured will continue to benefit from the health insurance services, under the mentioned programs until the end of date of the validity of the provisions of the comprehensive health insurance law in their regard, according to the geographical scale of application as follows:

- Phase 1: Port Said - Suez - Ismailia - South Sinai - North Sinai.
- Phase 2: Aswan - Luxor - Qena - Matruh - Red Sea.
- Phase III: Alexandria - Beheira - Damietta - Sohag - Kafr El Sheikh.
- Phase 4: Assiut - New Valley - Fayoum - El Menia - Beni Suef.
- Phase 5: Dakahlia - Eastern - Western - Menoufia.
- Phase 6: Cairo, Giza, Qalyubia.

The public treasury shall bear insurance contributions on behalf of the insured, including the unemployed, the unable to be employed or for those whose unemployment benefit period expired, as well as dependent family members.



Those who are unable to pay contributions are exempted, and also those with chronic diseases and tumors (Article 40).

Social Housing Program:

The Egyptian legislator laid down the legal framework for this program under the Law No. 33 of 2014. The objectives of the program are to provide housing units for low-income residents in the areas specified by the Ministry of Housing in all the governorates and new urban communities, and to provide building plots for a maximum of 400 square meters in new urban communities for middle-income earners, and to be distributed in a lottery manner, in accordance with the conditions determined by the Council of Ministers.

Development of informal settlements:

The SDF is entrusted with special tasks, including calculating the number of slum areas throughout the Republic in cooperation with the governorates, classifying them through technical committees to determine the method of dealing with them, defining the number of unsafe areas, laying a plan for the development of slums, encouraging civil society and the business sector to contribute in-kind contributions to develop a plan for the slums, the removing buildings in unsafe areas, and following-up the provision of shelters for those who are to be evacuated, whether for safety considerations or for urban planning.

Committee for building and managing the national base of social safety networks

This committee was formed by the Prime Minister's Decision No. 2443 of 2015, which aims to reach a classification of Egyptian families' needs for social protection services and government support services, and to provide mechanisms for targeted beneficiaries and excluding those not eligible for government support services and social protection programs. It provides adequate data to decision-makers to extrapolate future support policies, distributes fair support budgets to Egyptian households, and provides evaluation and monitoring mechanisms for protection programs and government support services. The decision gave the right to the committee to make use of experts and specialists in



the field, and to be consulted in issues related to the definition of social targeting criteria from economic and societal perspectives.

Integrating vulnerable groups into the development process

The social security law shall encourage the involvement of both individuals and beneficiary families in the field of production through the following:

First: The law empowers the social solidarity departments to assist individuals and beneficiary families by the following means:

- Training.
- Providing a grant to establish productive or service projects, together with the planned social security benefits.
- Assisting in obtaining microcredit to establish productive or service projects.
- Assisting in obtaining some tools or machines that enable work (Article 12).

Second: The law provides that all social security assistance to the beneficiary or his share in any assistance shall be suspended; if he refuses to join one of the centers or institutions concerned with social rehabilitation and training, or refuses to engage in the production field by any means specified in the previous article, if the refusal is repeated for three times, without an acceptable excuse or when the earning capacity is achieved at least twice the value of the assistance (art. 13).

Third: The law provides that the Ministry of Social Solidarity shall establish a central database to record the data of individuals, families and the types of social security assistance. The data of this database shall be updated through linking it to the databases of the National Social Insurance Authority, the Civil Status Authority, (Article 17), and other relevant stakeholders. The competent directorate of Social Solidarity would follow-up cases of beneficiaries of social security assistance, at least once every six months to determine the eligibility of each case for the continuation of the benefit and the extent of its commitment to the continuation of the child in education or the engagement in litera-



cy classes, its commitment to vaccination and reproductive health programs, as well as the family's commitment to develop its production capacity (Article 22).

Supporting micro, small and medium-size enterprises MSME:

Egypt's amended Constitution 2014 requires the State to pay special attention to MSME in all fields and to regulate and rehabilitate the informal sector "(Article 28/2).

The MSME Development Agency was established by Prime Minister's Decision No. 947 of 2017. The Authority aims to develop a national program to develop these projects, to establish an encouraging climate, to encourage citizens to access to the Labour market through these projects, promoting and spreading the culture of entrepreneurship, research, creativity and innovation, and coordinating the efforts of all stakeholders in this field (Article 2).

Contract law No. 182 of 2018 with regards to contracts signed by the public bodies obligates the administrative body to take into account the potentials of MSME, in the registration of the operators of the different activities, in laying down the prequalification conditions, in the documentation, evaluation criteria and others without compromising equal opportunities or compliance with quality and performance standards. It also commits it to provide at least 20% of the value of its annual requirements for contracting with such projects ... "(Article 75).

Establishment of Agricultural Provident Fund:

The Agricultural Provident Fund was established by Decree Law No. 126 of 2014, which aims to cover the damage caused by natural disasters, other pest risks to agricultural crops, reduce their effects in order to achieve sustainable agricultural development and maintain the level of agricultural income for beneficiaries in all agricultural regions and communities .

Working Woman:

Law No. 81 of 2016 on the Civil Service stipulates that a female employee shall be entitled to a maternity leave of four months, up to a



maximum of three times for the duration of her civil service, such leave commences from the day following childbirth. This leave may begin one month prior to the expected date of childbirth at the request of the employee and a report from the competent medical board (Article 52).

The National Council for Social Dialogue:

In order to provide job opportunities and protect the rights of workers, the Council was established by the Ministry of Manpower and Immigration pursuant to the Prime Minister's Decision No. 1027 of 2014 to draw up the national policy of ways of dialogue between the parties of the productive process, to create a conducive consultative environment, to participate in the preparation of draft laws on labor laws, union organization, relevant laws, to express opinions in international and Arab labor agreements before signing them, to build and strengthen confidence among partners in the production process, and adopt measures to assist and support economic projects that provide suitable job opportunities. The National Council for Social Dialogue in each governorate shall be established in accordance with the decision of the Prime Minister 1458 for the year 2014 to assist and support economic projects that provide suitable job opportunities within the governorate and propose local investment and economic projects that provide decent work opportunities within the governorate.

Conclusion:

The realization of the right to social protection lies not only in the provision of cash or in-kind assistance to vulnerable groups in society, but it must be extended to the extent that these groups can participate in the process and lift themselves out of the situation of vulnerability. It was quite clear how Egypt set a model to be followed as it didn't stop at developing aid programs within the framework of the right to social protection, but also set incentives, mechanisms and programs that promote and integrate vulnerable groups in the development process.