

£1.8 million Partnership to Support Social Protection Advocacy

The Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) commends the United Kingdom for allocating £1.8 million, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Egypt, to support the 'Strengthening Institutional and Human Resources Capacities of the Ministry of Social Solidarity' project that aims to address social protection issues of vulnerable groups targeted by the Ministry through different advocacy tools including community dialogue events, launching a dynamic social media platform and mass media channels.

The partnership aims to support the most vulnerable families, improve their livelihoods and enhance accessibility of vulnerable groups to improved social care and welfare services through introducing a comprehensive awareness program to increase the vulnerable families' accessibility to social protection and economic empowerment services. Furthermore, the awareness schemes address social behaviour change on issues related to positive practices related to protection from COVID-19, protection of girls from traditional discriminatory practices, the value of education and good health practices for deprived groups addressed by the Ministry of Social Solidarity, community participation and promoting civil society partnerships through the Ministry.

MoSS currently plays an instrumental role in responding to and mitigating the COVID-19 crisis in Egypt. The ministry has identified six initial priority areas of intervention that are manifested in the new partnership's activities. The ministry has led the synchronisation of accelerated interventions to support vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic through enlarging the social protection umbrella and responding to the COVID-19's economic challenges. MoSS is also availing and enhancing its digital services; linking institutional support to volunteerism; tailoring awareness material for children; and offering awareness and support services to vulnerable groups.

The new partnership will also support the expansion of the present comprehensive social protection awareness and advocacy programme 'Waii' that focuses on enhancing awareness and knowledge of vulnerable groups on social protection services. It will also help mainstreaming Waii in MoSS social protection programmes, targeting Takaful and Karama beneficiaries and other targeted groups under MoSS.

The new cooperation will focus on enhancing institutional capacities of MoSS and the National Center for Social and Criminological Research (NCSCR), affiliated with the Ministry, to establish a Social Protection Research Platform to cater to the ministry's research needs.

The Minister of Social Solidarity, H.E. Minister Nivine El-Kabbag said:

Increasing accessibility of vulnerable groups to evidence-based awareness messages falls in the heart of Social Protection Strategies, thus MoSS has placed Waai program for Community Development on top of its priorities. The Ministry will promote its comprehensive awareness vision through diverse tools such as mainstreaming messages among our social workers on the ground whom I consider the real agents of change, introducing digital targeted solutions to enhance awareness among youth and finally through consolidated partnerships with our national partners and civil society organizations. Social behaviour change is a process that requires us to pound on different dynamic communication tools and furthermore, engage communities to promote social change.

The British Ambassador to Egypt, Sir Geoffrey Adams, said:

All over the world states, international organisations, private companies, and NGOs are working together to reduce the economic impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable people, including through targeted support to protect low-income families. The UK is proud to support the launch of this programme with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the UNDP, which will strengthen the Ministry's efforts to address the challenges Egypt faces.

UNDP Egypt Resident Representative, Ms. Randa Aboul-Hosn also stressed the timeliness and significance of the partnership to ensure that the most vulnerable are not to be left behind, especially amidst the global outbreak of COVID-19. This pandemic has left governments and social protection systems overwhelmed and under a great strain worldwide, and this is where UNDP aims to continue to support the government of Egypt. The pertinent £1.8 million funding of the United Kingdom and the extensive and vital efforts and policies taken by MoSS will support the protection of the most impacted Egyptians.

Egypt has already developed the largest Social Safety Net (SSN) system in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with a cash transfer programme that now reaches more than three and half million households, and 11 million beneficiaries that provides vital basic income protection for the poorest and most vulnerable. The new partnership is set to ensure that this safety net continues to be operative and sustainable, while reaching people living in marginalized areas across Egypt.