Ministry Of Education's Efforts

To

Avoid Discrimination in Education

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This paper aims at presenting a summary of the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Education to eliminate discrimination in education. It tackles some basic domains as follows:

1. Equality:

- **Increases in Enrolment**
- **Gender Parity**

2. Quality:

- **Developed Syllabi and Evaluation Systems**
- **Cherish of the Talented & Children with Special Needs**
- **Underlying Proficiency and School Accreditation**

1. Equality

a) Bridging the educational gap between males and females.

The ministry aimed at providing enough and varied educational opportunities for girls embodied in:

1- Enrolling the biggest possible number of girls in the primary stage.

2- Upgrading new schools for girls' education.

(Table 1)

Bridging the gab between males and females

Statement	2000/ 2001	2005/ 2006	Increase rate
Boys	7987195	7965374	-(21821
Girls	7192051	7478134	286083
Total	15179246	15443508	264262
Boys ratio	52.25	51.58%	1.14%
Girls ratio	47.45	48.42%	1.88%

b) The upgraded forms for girl's education:

1- One –Classroom Schools:

These schools have helped to increase girls' education opportunities as statistics prove the success ratio of these schools in achieving their goals. In 1993 /1994 the number of girls in these schools was 2926. Now it has become 68627 (boys and girls) including 65672 girls in 2005/2006. The graduates from these schools are allowed to continue their study in prep and secondary stages, and the age of applying these schools has been raised to 20 for the secondary stage and 22 for those who live in remote areas. This project has begun with 213 schools in 1993/ 1994 and it has become 3146 schools in 2005/2006.

2- Society Schools:

They aim at providing educational opportunities in the less lucky areas or vulnerable areas, deprived of educational services, through the participation of local societies in the framework of co-operation between MOE and UNICEF. These schools began in 1992 with establishing (4) schools and in 2005/2006 the number of these schools has become (188) schools.

3- **Public Association Schools:**

These schools aim at providing educational opportunities in the less lucky areas with poor educational services through the participation of local societies and international organizations. The number of these schools has become (212) schools in 2005/2006 in Cairo, Sohag and Fayoum governorates.

2. Quality-based Outcomes

a) Developing syllabi and evaluation systems in basic education.

First: Developing Syllabi in constant comprehensive reconsideration of primary and prep syllabi through the recommendations of the National Conference for Developing Education.

Incorporating concepts and current cases:

Twenty one concepts and international current issues have been incorporated in the syllabi, like (human rights- women rights and achieving gender parity - child rights- eliminating child labor- legal awareness - tax awareness - rationalizing consumption - citizenship education – democracy - human international law – etc.....).

Integrating the use of technology in schools syllabi:

The Ministry of education has set up a comprehensive plan to enhance education through technology by providing the schools with the necessary

equipments of multimedia rooms, knowledge sources and developed sciences, receiving educational channels transmission, high speed communication channels for distance-training, internet services, satellite communication channels, electronic educational projects, and by producing developed programs and encouraging using them inside classes according to the strategic plan for promoting ICT.

Developing Science and Math syllabi for the third prep stage

The Ministry of education has been keen to gain Egypt's position in comparison to other countries, and to recognize points of strengths as well as weaknesses of its educational system. Consequently, the ministry has been careful to participate in the International Math and Science Competitions known as TIMSS (Trends in international Math and science Studies). In order to prepare the Egyptian pupils taking part in these competitions, the syllabi of Science and Math in the prep stage have been analyzed and compared to international equivalents. Besides, the system of questions in these competitions has been perceived; a process which led to developing these syllabi. Still, this new development has not been an additional burden on the students. On the contrary, it simplified their syllabi and made it easy to understand.

Developing syllabi goals and rephrasing the learning books in the light of the National Standards for Education to ensure the quality of education.

Designing & developing new school subjects like:

- Ethics and values: This subject aims at helping students acquire ethics and good manners suitable for their age and related to different life aspects. This syllabus is to be taught side by side with religion.

- Introducing English Language in 1st primary grade: Due to the importance of language acquisition in the early ages, this subject of English language has been introduced. Educational materials have been designed, developed and applied to the first three grades at the primary stage. This step was taken in 2004- 2005
- Technology for thinking development: It aims at developing abilities, creativity and problem-solving. It has been taken into consideration here to include accompanied activities as an essential part of the syllabus.

Second: Developing Evaluation systems

A) On going assessment for educational institutions in Egypt:

- The Ministry of Education, represented in the National Centre for Educational Evaluation & Examination (NCEEE), has observed and controlled the quality of education according to an annual plan. This plan was to pay school visits to about 3000 schools per year in ten governorates with the aim to develop reports about these visits.
- The National Centre for Educational Evaluation & Examination (NCEEE) prepares a comprehensive report about education every two years all over the country.
- An overseas evaluation for the educational institutions in Egypt has been made. Also, a UNESCO committee has evaluated the stages of educational reform in Egypt. The first evaluation was in 1996 and the second one was in 2003.
- The Program Planning & Monitoring Unit (PPMU) has made a longitudinal study to identify the effect of different educational efforts on the students' acquisition.

B) Comparative international evaluation:

The study of 'the international trends in studying Math and Science in 2003" (TIMSS) has evaluated the students' acquisition in grades 3rd, 4th and

8th of the basic education. Egypt participated in this competition for the 8th grade, which stands for 2nd prep, among 60 countries and under the supervision of the International Association for Evaluating Educational Acquisition.

The ministry has been preparing for the participation in the international competition for science and math whose final exam will be held in 2007 for the students of the 8th grade (2nd prep).

C) <u>The implementation of the authentic assessment project:</u>

- Authentic assessment has already been applied to the first three grades of the primary stage as a first step in 2005/2006. This was done after developing and updating the project in comparison to the piloting project which has been applied partially in 30% of the primary schools all over the country in 2003 /2004.
- The project aims at evaluating the students' cognitive, professional and emotional sides through a new developed system of evaluation where the student can be evaluated throughout the year according to the activities and final exams.
- About 37688 teachers have been trained on applying the authentic assessment to the first three grades of the primary stage. Also, an evaluation of the application has been done by a committee of international experts whose recommendations are being studied to improve performance so that it can be applied on a wider scale along with providing the necessary requirements for success.

b) Cherishing the Talented and Children with special needs:

First: The talented:

The Ministry's efforts concerning this issue aim at the early discovery of talents of the children so as to cherish them. These talented children should

be regarded in any society as an invaluable fortune since they represent the bases for any country's progress and welfare and the promise of a better future.

The Ministry's achievements in this respect;

- Designing a card to follow up kindergarten children as well as the first three grades of primary stage to discover talents. The card includes a summary of the child's distinguished aspects in different fields.
- Preparing special tests to discover talents.
- Training kindergarten mistresses to discover and nurture the talented.
- Enriching all school subjects in the primary stage with advanced activities and applying more advanced syllabi to the talented students (academically talented).
- Conducting continuous several competitions on both national and regional levels.
- Allotting extra marks for those who are talented in sports among the students of GSEC and technical school diploma.
- Paying attention to athletic superiority.
- Developing advanced programs for the talented.
- Setting up a league for the talented to benefit from their opinions through improving communication among them provided that it takes the GSEC ten top students into its membership every year.
- Reconsidering the systems for evaluating students so as to discover talents and not to concentrate, only, on learning. Thereby, the authentic assessment project has been applied in the first three grades of the primary stage.
- Participating in the International Olympiad in Math & Science and some international and worldwide festivals and competitions in

different artistic fields such as: "The Indian competition of Art" (Shinkar), the Nile International Festival for child's songs, and the Shareqa competition for children's drawings.

Second: Children with special needs:

The Ministry is highly concerned with this group for many social legal, educational, and economic considerations. Besides, incorporating them within ordinary schools will improve the quality of the educational process. According to this the Ministry has adopted the following strategy:

- Activating the role of ordinary schools in the field of educating the students with special needs.
- Expanding the work of especial educational schools to perform other additional roles.
- Reconsidering the current legislations (ministerial decrees and regulations) and innovating what these students may need from legislations and ministerial decrees, as well as reconsidering the current educational status to ensure the disabled in their right to be merged into ordinary school.
- Developing and preparing special human cadres capable of dealing with the students with special needs.
- Manipulating modern techniques to serve those children in order to enable them to get benefit from these techniques and use them efficiently.
- Designing & developing syllabi and books that meet the needs and circumstances of these criteria of students.

Development in special needs schools:

- The number of schools and classes (visual - audio- mental - physical) has increased. The statistics showed that there is a regular

increase in the number of pupils and classes. This is shown in the following table:

(Table 2)

The number of schools, classes and students with special needs

School year	Schools	Classes	Students
2000/2001	488	3076	30770
2005/2006	804	3929	36808
Increase ratio	64.75%	27.73%	19.625

The Ministry works hard to take in other groups of students with special needs. In this respect, some services were introduced to double disabled students; the shadow teacher was allowed in ordinary classes to some unified cases of disability and general outlines were put for the exams of the students who suffer from mental paralysis.

c) Underlying Proficiency and School Accreditation:

1. The National Standards for Education in Egypt:

The Ministry has begun an ambitious project for preparing and setting up national standards for education in Egypt in accordance with the principal of total quality since national standards determine the quality standard required in the whole educational system. This challenging project made the Ministry save no effort for almost a whole year of hard working and commitment.

The Standards' Main Domains :

1. **The Effective School:** It deals with the school as a whole unit aiming at achieving total quality in the educational process. This includes all the elements in an active interaction to realize the desired expectations.
2. **The Teacher:** It is interested in determining comprehensive standards for all participants in the educational process inside the school including the teacher, supervisor, social worker and psychologist.

3. **The Distinguished Management**: It is interested in all levels of educational management starting with the executive leadership, passing by middle educational leadership and ending in supreme leadership on the central level in the Ministry.
4. **Community Participation:** It interested in determining the levels of participation between school and society. It deals with the role of school towards society and the society's support to school and other different aspects of educational media.
5. **The Syllabus and the Educational Outcomes:** It is interested in the learner and what he or she should acquire whether knowledge, skills, trends and values. It, also, discusses the syllabus' philosophy, goals, content, educational styles, subjects, resources and evaluation systems. It, also, deals with the outcomes of education achieved in schools.

2. The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Educational Institutions:

It is an association with a titular character and affiliated to the President. It is situated in Cairo but might have branches in governorates. The collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education has resulted in a suggested decree to be submitted and discussed in the current parliamentary session of People Assembly.

The Goals of the Association:

- Improving the educational process in all the public or private educational institutions through a set of quality-based standards that can ensure the conformity of the structure, system, educational programs, stuff performance, resources and management styles in these institutions.
- Having an authentic evaluation for these institutions to accredit them and support their self-assessments.

- Encouraging competition among educational institutions so as to achieve a better educational quality and performance.
- Submitting an annual report to the President, Prime Minister and the concerned Ministers including visits, standards used in evaluating educational institutions, points of weaknesses and methods of reform.

It is worth to mention that The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Education Committee in the National Party participated in preparing a law project of setting up the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation, a process that ended with the issuing of a Republican Decree to set up this the National Authority with a view to promoting the educational process in all educational institutions.