



**Statement by the
UNDP Resident Representative Mr. James W. Rawley
on the occasion of the launch of the
2010 Egypt Human Development Report
“Youth in Egypt: Building our Future”
Cairo, 27 June 2010**

Your Excellency, Dr. Ahmed Nazif, Prime Minister of Egypt
Your Excellency, Dr. Osman Mohamed Osman, Minister of Economic Development
Excellencies, Ministers and Governors
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Prof. Heba Handoussa, Lead Author of the 2010 Egypt Human Development Report
Distinguished Authors of the 2010 Egypt Human Development Report
Distinguished Guests and Colleagues from Egypt’s Development Community
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you today to launch the eleventh edition of the Egypt Human Development Report entitled “Youth in Egypt: Building our Future”.

As many of you know, the global Human Development Report (HDR) was first launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1990 with the simple but profound aim of putting people back at the centre of the development process. Positing that people are the real wealth of nations, the global HDRs have argued that development is about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value and, in turn, building human capabilities – the range of things that people can do or be in life, including leading long and healthy lives, being knowledgeable, having access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living, and, just as importantly, participating in a meaningful way in the life of their communities. These early reports revolutionized development thinking, thanks to the rigor of the human development concept and the stature of the two brilliant minds from South Asia responsible for their creation, the late Mahbub El Haque and the Nobel Prize Laureate Amartya Sen.

The success of these initial reports motivated many countries to consider preparing national HDRs. In 1992 the first such report appeared and only two years later, Egypt produced its first national human development report. Since their debut in 1994, the Egypt National Human Development Reports (EHDRs) have been authored by a team of independent Egyptian scholars, with important contributions from the Institute of National Planning of the Ministry of Economic Development under the leadership of H.E. Minister Osman, and in collaboration with UNDP. Each of the Egyptian Human Development Reports has served as an important platform for discussing critical national and sub-national development issues. Indeed, over the years, the EHDRs have become widely recognized as an important analytical tool that has enriched the development dialogue in Egypt, contributed to the adoption of new policies, and paved the way for both national investments and international development cooperation to address key aspects of Egypt’s human development agenda.

The focus of the 2010 Egypt Human Development Report is on youth, perhaps an obvious, even overdue, candidate for such a report given that approximately 40 percent of Egypt’s young population is composed of people between the ages of 10 and 29, and 25 percent are between the ages of 18-29. The Report tackles such questions as:

- What are the aspirations of youth in Egypt, and what are the opportunities available to them?
- What are the major challenges that youth in Egypt face in realizing their personal goals, and what is their potential to contribute to human development?

The Report analyzes, from a human development perspective, the opportunities and constraints that this sizeable population encounter on a daily basis. Similarly, it examines the role of youth in Egypt's development process, addressing such dimensions as education, health, gender, poverty, employment, housing, and participation in society.

The report's findings indicate that Egypt's youth aspire to be part of a socially inclusive society in which they feel valued, and which avails them opportunities to learn well, find decent work, engage productively in the community, have a voice, afford marriage, and establish their own homes. Materializing these aspirations requires a coherent framework for action, which sets priorities that are integrated within national planning and implementation mechanisms, with clear lines of accountability.

The Report showcases success stories of youth-centred initiatives, programmes, and projects. It also identifies and assesses the most pressing issues affecting youth in Egypt, with the aim of formulating a 'vision for youth' – one that is based on equity, opportunity, ownership, and youth participation in the development process. As such, the Report highlights Nine Main Messages to ensure youth's inclusion and full participation in society.

You will be hearing more about these messages later in the day from Prof. Heba Handoussa, the Director and lead author of the report, and her distinguished team of authors.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is auspicious that we are launching this report just prior to the inauguration of the UN's International Year of Youth that will kick off in August 2010 and which aims to encourage dialogue and understanding across generations and promote peace, respect for human rights, freedoms, and solidarity. The International Year of Youth also encourages young people to do their part to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which is particularly important this year since, in just under 100 days, world leaders will gather in New York to attend a special review Summit on the MDGs to agree on an agenda for accelerating the pace of MDG achievement.

To commemorate the International Year of Youth and to begin acting on the findings of this year's national human development report, I would like to urge all of you here today to take a few moments to reflect on how you can contribute, in your own way, to youth-focused initiatives that bridge the gap between youth and the rest of Society and which can help youth invest their energy, enthusiasm and creativity to accelerate progress on the MDGs in Egypt.

Such youth-focused initiatives can take many forms. For instance, this past February the Social Contract Centre at the Information and Decision Support Centre (IDSC) launched a 'youth website' entirely dedicated to youth and run by youth. I would like to commend the Social Contract Centre and IDSC for taking this initiative that provides an excellent platform for youth interaction. Another example was the nationwide youth and NGO consultation for this year's Human Development Report that was organized by Cairo University. I would like to thank Cairo University for this consultative meeting as well as to congratulate the University for agreeing to work with UNDP to raise awareness on the MDGs among its students.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate the independent team of Egyptian scholars and experts who authored this stimulating and inspiring report and who, under the dynamic and dedicated leadership of Professor Heba Handoussa, managed to produce yet another first-rate report.

We are also fortunate to have among us today a number of Egypt's finest development thinkers, including many of the authors of the Report's background papers, who will be leading today's discussions.

We hope that the analysis and recommendations of this year's report will contribute to wide policy discussions to further strengthen the environment for youth inclusion and empowerment. For our part, we in UNDP are committed to supporting a series of post-launch policy dialogue sessions to ensure the widest possible dissemination of the Report's recommendations.

I wish all you a most fruitful discussion on this year's Report.

Thank you.