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Arab Republic of Egypt
Ministry of Communication and
Information Technology

“Agile government responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Arab region: what are we learning for the future”

PRESENTATION TRANSLATED FROM THE ARABIC VERSION



M. Ghada Mustafa Labib "Deputy Minister of Communication and Information Technology for Institutional Development"

Arab Republic of Egypt
Ministry of Communication
and Information Technology

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Main challenges related to the forum's topic during the Covid-19 crisis

- Providing a safe, virus-free environment for employees to ensure the continuation of providing public service.
- Availability and provision of appropriate infrastructure to accommodate the increasing use of the Internet.
- Poor digital skills among government employees.
- Limited digital participation of citizens.
- The limited capacity of public institutions to adapt and deal with the (Covid-19) crisis, "a challenge of a new framework, a new work environment."

09/12/2020

Best practices during the COVID-19 crisis

- Supporting the health system
- Supporting the educational system
- Support for learning, telework and self employment
- Supporting public services (Egypt's digital platform)

09/12/2020

Promote digital culture for citizens and workers in the public administration

Measures to compensate and assist the financially affected

Measures to help people with special needs

09/12/2020

- Effective cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Health and Population
- Supporting the health system: creating an official website to communicate information about the virus (<https://www.care.gov.eg>)
- Increasing the number of hotlines using technology based on big data and artificial intelligence and providing free lines to the Ministry of Health and Population to respond to citizens' inquiries about the Covid-19, as well as providing hotlines for relief operations and post-recovery consultations.
- Increasing the number of call center employees to receive phone calls and inquiries about the Coronavirus, to avoid long waiting times.
- Set up of a telemedicine service to connect health units in remote areas with central hospitals, which provided 300 contact points in different regions, 14 of them in the quarantine hospitals. Telemedicine plays an important role in combating the Corona virus, by raising the awareness of the residents of those areas about the preventive and safety measures that must be observed, in addition to providing medical consultations to patients and training programs for medical teams in quarantine hospitals.

- The National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority agreed with the four mobile network operators to provide all doctors and nurses working in the health sector with 3000 minutes free calls and 10 GB per month free internet access, in appreciation of their exceptional efforts.
- Telecom Egypt, Orange and Etisalat Egypt launched an initiative to support the health sector and quarantine hospitals by providing 12 respiratory systems, in addition to providing medical and preventive equipment, sterilization and protection tools, to meet the needs of medical teams for a month, in order to ensure their safety while doing their job. The supplies provided included protective clothing, medical masks, face shields and head protectors, in addition to medical gloves and other necessary supplies/PPEs.

- The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, in cooperation with the Ministries of Education and Higher Education and Scientific Research, provides schools and universities with a free access to all educational websites during the period of the suspension of study, without any deduction from internet packages.
- Supporting the distance learning process by offering a number of training courses in modern fields and enabling communication and providing content via the Internet. This is in addition to setting and disseminating quality standards for e-learning, providing best research practices, expert advice in the field of e-learning, and assisting clusters of youth -who received online trainings - to access the markets.
- The Ministry of Communication, in coordination with Internet service providers, increased the download share of home Internet packages by a percentage to meet the needs of students in browsing the various educational platforms and websites. This was done at a total cost of 200 million Egyptian pounds, covered entirely by the State.

- The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology launched the initiative "Our Opportunity Is Digital" during an online meeting, with the aim of entering into a partnership between the government and the private sector and developing small and medium-sized enterprises to contribute to the implementation of mega national projects in the field of digital transformation. The initiative provides a digital platform to launch these projects for small and medium-sized enterprises to implement or participate in their implementation.
- The Institute of Information Technology launched the initiative "Work from Your Home", which aims to train young people in the skills of freelance and remote work and provide excellent income opportunities through partnership with a number of freelance platforms.
- The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology launched the "Empowering Youth for Self-Employed Professional Work" grant, which aims to train 20 thousand young men and women from all regions of the republic on freelance skills through electronic platforms.
- The Information Technology Industry Development Agency (ITIDA) launched a free "Our Digital Future" grant to train young people in the increasingly advanced fields of information technology.

- Organizing the Central Administration for Community Development at the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, a program for training female craftswomen on digital marketing skills using social media platforms, through interactive live broadcast applications (online), as part of the ongoing "Qudwa-Tech" initiative activities.
- The launch of the first training program on artificial intelligence techniques at Assouan University, which includes a number of trainees from Assouan provinces and a number of upper Egypt provinces. The training program was made available through distance learning techniques. This comes with the aim of training youth in various fields of digital transformation technology, including data networks, cyber security, artificial intelligence, fourth and fifth generation networks, cloud computing, big data science, and optical fiber networks.
- The Ministry of Communication and its affiliated bodies will continue their efforts to provide all their training programs, initiatives and activities via the Internet.
- Follow a flexible work policy and work from home for employees whose job allows them to perform tasks from home, and allow mothers with custody of children less than 12 years old and people with chronic diseases to work from home.
- Suspending the use of the timekeeping system at work which uses the electronic fingerprint at the headquarters of the Ministry of Communication and its affiliated bodies; with the suspension of direct meetings and the organization of virtual meetings through various video conference techniques.

- The Egypt digital platform aims to improve and facilitate citizens' access to public services electronically, by automating work cycles and procedures (after analyzing and re-engineering them and eliminating the duplicated steps and procedures that disrupt work cycles), and creating databases and links with all State agencies, and the expansion of the provision of digital governmental services.
- The experimental launch of the Egyptian digital platform has taken place (<https://digital.gov.eg/>) on July 20th, 2020, for 34 services, and it is planned to be complete the launch of 72 services by the end of 2020, in the civil status, housing, land registry, health insurance, and others.
- 210 new services are planned to be launched in 2021, including services for companies and economic establishments. In 2022, the government aims to add 170 new services, then 98 services in 2023, bringing the total services provided by the platform to 550 services.
- Egypt's digital platform services are provided through the mobile phone, in technology centers and in post offices, in addition to hotlines dedicated to providing services.
- The political leadership intends to expand the use of technology centers in government agencies to provide electronic services to citizens through the Egyptian digital platform, and the Port-Said experience is considered to be a successful model once the offices and citizen service centers were developed therein.

- Organizing the Institutional Development Sector, in cooperation with the Software Engineering Appraisal and Accreditation Center, through a set of workshops and online trainings on digital transformation and design and creative thinking for workers and leaders in the State's administrative apparatus.
- The E-Learning Competition Center team held a technical training session for university faculty members to enable them to download their own electronic content and make optimal use of the e-learning system.
- Organizing (ITIDA), represented by the "Sector B5" program, the "Start-up Clinic - Computer Companies- Trip" program, via the Internet, on June, in cooperation with the "Flat6Labs Cairo" program and the Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Business Center and ITIDA.
- On July, the Ministry of Communication held, through (WebEx) video conferencing, a panel discussion entitled "E-learning in Egyptian universities, opportunities and challenges," which dealt with evaluating the experience of using e-learning systems in university education and dealing with the challenges of the next phase to ensure its effectiveness in Egyptian universities .
- The Central Administration for Community Development at the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology organized the "Financial Accounting Skills for Women Handicrafts" training program on July, in cooperation with Microsoft and CARE Egypt for Development. The program was implemented through distance learning techniques, as part of the ongoing activities of the "Qudwa-Tech" initiative for empowering women.

Promote digital culture for citizens and workers in the public sector (continued)

Digital Capacity Development and Building Programs until November 2020

Target Group	Statement	Total
Employees of the State Administrative Apparatus	The number of trainees moving to the New Administrative Capital.	12596
	Number of trainees not moving to the capital, and trainees in the Governorates and Directorates affiliated to it.	5825
Citizens	Number of trainees in Government Services Centers	218
	Number of Citizen Trainees	10955
Total		29594

Measures to compensate and assist the financially affected

- Regulating the disbursement of the irregular workers aid approved by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to people suffering from the repercussions of the Corona virus crisis, through the outlets of the Egyptian National Post Authority without overcrowding.
- Developing a comprehensive plan to facilitate the disbursement of aid for irregular workers through 4000 post offices nationwide, while extending working hours in the main post offices nationwide to include an evening period, from one in the afternoon until five in the evening.
- Coordination with a number of ministries, including the Ministry of Local Development and the Ministry of Education, to allocate about 600 schools and youth centers as additional outlets to facilitate the beneficiaries' access to aid and avoid overcrowding.
- Handing over to each beneficiary an "Easy Pay" card to be used in the disbursement of aid for irregular workers for a period of two months. The amount of the aid is injected in the card at the disbursement dates for each age group separately. The card enables beneficiaries to receive aid through ATMs or post offices, and it can also be used for purchases from outlets.
- Distributing the beneficiaries by age groups among the various post offices nationwide, so that every citizen receives aid from the nearest post office.
- The National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority has coordinated with the four mobile companies to provide basic food to families affected by the covid-19 preventive measures.

Measures to help people with special needs

- The Ministry of Communication launched the automatic testing service for symptoms of the Coronavirus using chatbot technology in sign language using artificial intelligence technology. The service is provided to the deaf and hard of hearing persons through the "Wasel" application and the "Tamkeen" website.
- The National Academy of Information Technology for Persons with Disabilities organized a series of online sessions under the title "The role of communication and information technology in coexisting with the coronavirus and its impact on persons with disabilities." The sessions discussed a number of topics, including the use of business administration for the management of life, building competencies and not CVs, and also Telemedicine and the future of healthcare.
- The Technical Center for Services for Persons with Disabilities launched the service to respond to deaf and hard of hearing persons inquiries about Coronavirus through the "Wasel" mobile application. The service is provided daily around the clock, it includes support to people who have symptoms of virus infection, by connecting them to the relevant government agencies to receive the necessary health care. It is meant to help people with disabilities obtain better opportunities in life, especially in conditions of coexistence with the Covid-19.
- The National Academy of Information Technology for Persons with Disabilities has also organized a series of online sessions for people with disabilities in Africa, in cooperation with the Center for Citizens with Disabilities in Nigeria and Cisco Kenya. The sessions shed

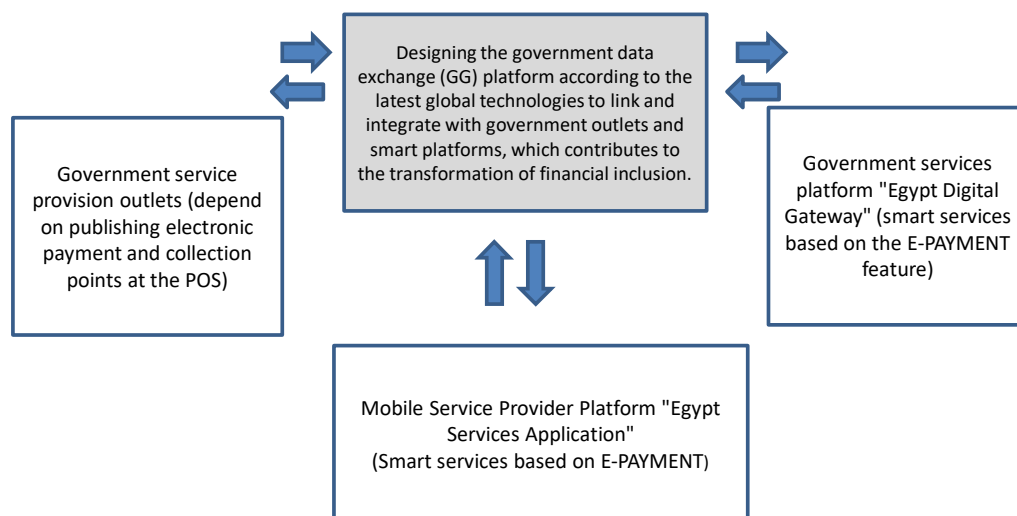
Leadership Actions, Public Service and Human Resource Management

- Launching Egypt's digital strategy that depends on digital transformation and developing digital skills (extracted from the goals of Egypt's Vision 2030, the Egyptian Constitution, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Africa Agenda 2063).
- Development of legal frameworks to support digital transformation, with the promulgation of the Republican Decree N° 89 of 2017 on "Establishing the National Council for Payments" was issued, and Prime Minister's Decree N°1453 of 2015 establishing the "Supreme Council of the Digital Society" headed by the Prime Minister.
- The creation of digital transformation units and information systems units by the issuance of Prime Minister Decree N° 1146 of 2018, which includes "the creation of digital transformation units".
- Ensure the sustainability of digital transformation at the government level (New Administrative Capital, Port Said Governorate).
- Implementing digital capacity building and development programs for government employees, as well as citizens.

Digital Transformation, Institutional Development and Automation of Citizen Services

- The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology completes infrastructure projects in all ministries and state agencies, providing connectivity services using optical fiber technology, preparing and digitizing databases, determining the need for devices and equipment, registering and enlisting the beneficiaries, automating work systems, forming information systems and digital transformation sub-teams, while providing the technical and institutional support to systems, programs, technological solutions, project sustainability, digital transformation and the automation of citizen services.
- The services will include the rest of the governorates in terms of catering services, notarization, family services in court, criminal justice, real estate registration services, and electricity.
- Creating information systems and digital transformation units in all ministries and state agencies, and evaluating candidates, then building and developing their capabilities to qualify them to work in these units.

Channels Providing Government Services and Financial Inclusion



- **What are the challenges and opportunities for digital transformation in the Arab Region?**

With reference to Egypt, challenges were mentioned previously in the presentation. It is worth noting that one of the most important challenges is sustaining the State's efforts to promote a digital culture that provides the opportunity for the government and citizens to communicate in an effective and transparent manner, ensuring that the citizen has access to an effective service that meets his/her needs and is subject to accountability and evolutive.

- **Are the Arab countries ready to adopt digital transformation on a larger scale for a better future of governance?**
 - With reference to Egypt, there is a clear determination from the political leadership, exemplified by both Egypt's Vision 2030 and Egypt's Digital Strategy, supported by the State's efforts towards providing a better and more transparent public service through digital transformation. This is in addition to the issuance of decisions supporting the implementation of the goals of digital transformation (as mentioned previously), which indicates the State's intention to establish a legal framework that guarantees the sustainability of digital transformation projects.
 - Moving to the New Administrative Capital, which represents a civilized shift by providing a unified system for service delivery that works through a unified database, and trained employees to deal in digital form and to provide a distinctive, simple, and fast digital service to the citizen.
 - State efforts through the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology in cooperation with other bodies, and by implementing institutional development programs and policies to create an effective model for government employees , The State's administration seeks to support digital inclusion at the State and citizen level. (For more information about the Egyptian State's efforts, you can access the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology website (www.mcit.gov.eg))

Questions and Answers (continued)

- **What did the reactions to the Covid-19 epidemic show us regarding the diffusion and adoption of technology to speed the government's response in the Arab countries?**
 - With regard to Egypt, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology initiated several efforts, the most prominent of which were mentioned in the two slides of best practices and leadership measures taken by the government to enhance the speed of government response during the outbreak of the crisis: The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology did the following to encourage citizens to use digital tools to receive Government services and doing their business from home:
 - Providing all subscribers to the home internet service with a 20% share on the Internet package (minimum 30 GB).
 - The National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority has agreed with the four mobile operators to encourage the use of electronic payment services, by offering incentive offers to customers who pay their bills and charge their balances using electronic payment methods. And the citizens get 30 times free minutes of the charged credit.
 - The National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority has taken a set of measures to limit the use of traditional means of charging the mobile phone balance, such as scratch-proof plastic charging caps, and replaced them with electronic charging methods, in coordination with the four mobile companies. (For more information about the efforts of the Egyptian State, you can enter on the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology website (www.mcit.gov.eg))

Indicators of the evolution of internet use before and after Corona

The evolution of the use of communications and information technology services and applications

Percentage of increase in the use of telecommunication services Second week of April 2020 Compared to the second week of March 2020	The percentage of increase in the use of different applications	
The voice call 15% international 3% local	59% Instagram	Tik Tok 194%
		Facebook 151%
Home internet 87%	You Tube 41%	Games 96%
	Shahid 40%	
Mobile Internet 18%	WhatsApp 34%	Netflix 69%

Indicators of using Internet services in Egypt
What happens within 60 minutes on the Internet in Egypt

			19 TB of consumption	52 million hits	2 million users	Social media platforms		
7 TB of consumption	3 billion messages	1.5 million users	E-chat	Within 60 minutes	Watch entertaining content	1.4 million views	89 thousand hours watch	30 TB of consumption
16 TB of consumption	70 million searches	1.2 million users	Research engines		Video Games	0.5 million players	11,000 hours of gameplay	11 TB of consumption
1.8 TB of consumption	62 thousand meeting hours	0.1 million users	Remote meetings		Live video broadcast	2000 video maker	35 hours video	15 GB of consumption
307 GB of consumption	1.5 million shopping visits	0.2 million shoppers	Electronic shopping		E-mail	0.7 million users	291 thousand emails	410 GB of consumption
161 TB of consumption	86 million hits	1 million users	Browse the Internet and download data		Search the maps	0.5 million users	3 million searches	102 GB of consumption
			2 TB of consumption		2,113 hours of video clips	0.3 million short video makers	Entertainment videos	

45% Increase Peak Time 13 hours from 3 pm to 4 am	12% Increase Mobile Internet	92% Increase Home Internet	Internet consumption increased in summer 2020 compared to summer 2019
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