

To Whom it May Concern: Realistic Solutions to the Population Problem

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I spoke, in a previous article, about the failure of successive governments to develop a radical solution to the problem of overpopulation, which devours all development efforts despite spending billions in order to achieve the goal. Two people interested in this very important matter, who have an honorable history in this, contacted me after publish the field.

First: Major General Abu Bakr Al-Jundi

He is the former head of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the former commander of the Third Army, one of the men of the armed forces, who loves the soil of this country, and who made a qualitative leap in the work and structure of the largest statistical agency in Egypt, and he has great experience with regard to the problem of population growth. He summarized what he said in this matter: “75% of the Egyptian population is under the age of 40, but the dilemma is the need for the availability of resources to improve the characteristics of this population and provide adequate education, health and basic services opportunities... It is known that merely maintaining the standard of living requires economic growth. At least three times the population growth, and unfortunately, this growth in the four years after the January 2011 revolution did not exceed 2% annually, while the population growth rate exceeded 2.5%, a disastrous situation, which led to the deterioration of the living conditions of many, and the illiteracy rate reached 20.9% in 2015, while the percentage of females reached 27.3%, and the poverty rate reached 27. On the other hand, the fertility rate (the average number of births for a woman during her reproductive life) was 3.5 children per woman in 2014. The phenomenon of early marriage also emerged as one of the tributaries and causes of this problem.

For that, the problem must be dealt with from a participatory perspective between the government in all its ministries, the business community and civil society, within the framework of the comprehensive national strategy, which ensures the exploitation of all the capabilities available to those parties, the best and effective use of them, and reliance on decentralization in addressing the problem, according to the local conditions of each region, and efforts that can be limited to several main axes.

The first: Family planning, as an effective way to slow down population growth, begins with the development of population culture among young people and integrating it into educational curricula, while providing the appropriate number of qualified service providers, as well as providing contraceptives and distributing them free of charge or at nominal prices, with the need to manufacture them locally. In addition to long-term means of protection, work to increase the number of rural women pioneers and support them financially and morally.

The second: Economic and human development, especially in the areas most in need, by encouraging investment with rewarding incentives, establishing small and medium enterprises, improving health and education services, housing and roads, and firmly confronting the phenomenon of dropouts from education, with a focus on empowering women economically and politically to play a major role in this matter.

The third: Accurate and continuous follow-up of developments in population indicators.

Second: Dr. Osama Refaat Sharif

A distinguished Egyptian doctor, he works as an international consultant for population development, representing Population Communication and the Gillespie Foundation in California, and a consultant to the United Nations Population Fund and the Partners in Population and Development (PPD) (25 countries) for South-South Cooperation. This Egyptian doctor has presented numerous research papers on this problem in many countries of the world, and among the most prominent proposals is the “Small Family Club” project, which was published in 2014, as it was presented to the Ministries of Health and Population at that time, and no one moved. They are well educated, with the mother being given a financial reward, and another in-kind. An analytical study was conducted, starting in 2014, to find out the cost of the third child, and the result indicated that the approximate average estimate of the cost of a single newborn on all state ministries 20 years after birth (with an increase of 1,000 pounds annually as an inflation rate) amounts to 430,000 pounds.

The proposed project aims to give 50,000 pounds to each woman who has reached menopause and has one or two well-educated so. This can be in the form of investment certificates divided over 5 years, each with a value of 10,000 pounds, as an alternative to the state bearing the cost of 430,000 EGP for the third child. There is also in-kind support for all members of the Small Family Club in the form of a single benefit provided by government, private, community and charitable institutions, such as a free or reduced public transportation ride, or a “carnet” for more food supplies, the delivery of an apartment, or a discount on the costs of education, treatments, or other services. Thus, we find that this project aims to reduce the burden on the state budget, develop the lifestyle of the Egyptian citizen, achieve population stability, and sustain population development.

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