

# **Egypt**

The  
Gore-Mubarak  
Partnership  
Preparing Egypt  
For The  
21<sup>st</sup> Century

*Country Paper*

Fall 1999

**I**n September 1994, Vice President Gore and Egyptian President Mubarak launched the U.S.-Egypt Partnership for Economic Growth and Development, also known as the Gore–Mubarak Partnership. Operating through a high level public and private sector dialogue, the Partnership promotes policies leading to expanded economic growth and job creation in Egypt and to mutually beneficial economic and commercial ties between the two countries. Several Committees and Subcommittees were charged with pursuing the Partnership’s goals. The mandate of Subcommittee IV is to take the lead in improving education policies and practices in ways that further private sector growth.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE IV AND EDUCATION**

Recognizing that an educated workforce must form the basis of Egypt’s development strategy for the next century, the Gore–Mubarak Partnership established Subcommittee IV (SCIV) to develop and test strategies, systems and structures that will enable Egypt to flourish in the highly competitive, market-driven, information-based, global economy of the future.

The SCIV work program, implemented by its Secretariat in Cairo and Washington, D.C., is pursuing the following objectives:

### **Educating the Future Technical Workforce —**

improving the skills of entry-level technical workers through decentralized public-private partnerships between the Ministry of Education and business associations. Roundtable meetings define the skills required for economic growth in key areas such as tourism, textiles and information technology.

### **Training the Current Workforce —**

supporting management and marketing training for private sector employees to enhance Egypt’s global competitiveness.

### **Improving Access to Computers for Egyptian Students —**

working with the Egyptian private sector to increase the supply and effective utilization of computers by Egyptian students.

### **Empowering Girls —**

collaborating with USAID educational program specialists to report progress on the delivery of girls’ education services, especially in rural areas with large gender gaps and high rates of illiteracy.

### **Enriching Environmental Education —**

coordinating with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs to implement tasks under the Memorandum of Cooperation and joint action plan for environmental education.

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*[G]lobal realities compel us to prepare our young citizens to work and live in a changing world. We should...equip them with the necessary skills, knowledge and language of the next century in addition to developing their understanding of the political, social and economic changes that are influencing the new world market in which they are working, interacting and living.*

*Dr. H.K. Bahaa’ El Din,  
Minister of Education*

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## Zoom in on Egypt

### Geography

**Location:** Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Libya and the Gaza Strip

**Area:** 1,001,450 sq km; slightly more than three times the size of New Mexico

**Environmental Issues:** agricultural land being lost to urbanization and windblown sands; desertification; very limited natural fresh water resources away from the Nile

**Arable Land:** 2%

### People

**Population:** 67,273,906

**Population growth rate:** 1.82%

**Total fertility rate:** 3.3 children/woman

**Ethnic groups:** Eastern Hamitic stock (Egyptians, Bedouins, and Berbers) 99%, Greek, Nubian, Armenian, other European 1%

**Religions:** Muslim (mostly Sunni) 94%, Coptic Christian and other 6%

**Literacy:** 51.4% (male: 63.6%; female: 38.8%)

### Economy

**GDP:** \$188 billion

**GDP per capita:** \$2,850

**GDP by sector: agriculture:** 16%; industry: 31%; services: 53%

**Inflation rate:** 3.6%

**Budget: revenues:** \$20 billion; expenditures: \$20.8 billion

### Communications

**Telephones:** 3.168 million; 70,000 digital cellular telephone subscribers; 7,400 analog cellular telephone subscribers

**Radio broadcast stations:** AM 57, FM 14, shortwave 3

**Radios:** 16.45 million

**Televisions broadcast stations:** 42

**Televisions:** 5 million

*The World Factbook 1999*

[www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html)

### Sharing Educational Practices —

conducting high-level policy meetings between U.S. and Egyptian educators, government decision-makers, and the private sector. Held annually in each country, these meetings facilitate the sharing of educational practices and experiences and build the relationships that are necessary for communication and cooperation on mutual economic interests.

## THE LEARNLINK SECRETARIAT

LearnLink joined the Partnership in August of 1998, serving as a Secretariat to support SCIV's work. As a part of its effort, LearnLink facilitates Egyptian access to the best available practices, technologies and research accessible through U.S. organizations and used in the U.S. education system. This includes: providing SCIV with specific information on best educational practices; disseminating information on advances in educational technologies; exchanging international models, methods and policies for achieving universal basic education; engaging the private sector in helping to set educational goals; providing a vehicle for communication, exchange and logistical support for SCIV meetings; and providing the SCIV Co-Chairs with general technical expertise and advice focused on the Partnership's overall goals.

## **LINKING PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS: PARTNERSHIPS, PROGRAMS AND PILOTS**

SCIV and the LearnLink Secretariat are catalysts connecting individuals and groups for the purpose of facilitating the formation of innovative alliances, experiments, pilot projects and initiatives, both within Egypt and between the United States and Egypt. As the following examples illustrate, these partnerships draw on best practices, key lessons and critical expertise in relevant areas.

### **Globe Schools**

The Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) program (<http://globe.fsl.noaa.gov/>) is a worldwide network of students, teachers and scientists working together to study and understand the global environment and better prepare graduates for the changing environment of the 21 st century. As students from 7,000 schools in 80 countries make environmental observations and report their data via the Internet to the GLOBE Student Data Archive, scientists around the world use the data in their research and provide feedback to the students to enrich their science education. Global images based on student data are displayed on the World Wide Web, enabling visitors everywhere to visualize the student observations. SCIV has taken a lead in mustering private sector support for the involvement of Egyptian schools in the GLOBE program.

### **Master Teachers**

A Master Teacher Exchange Program (MTEP) is underway to build a corps of exemplary Egyptian teachers. In the initial pilot stage, U.S. elementary school professors will visit Egypt to familiarize themselves with local conditions and then help design and deliver workshops on child-centered instructional methodologies, materials and other relevant topics. After completing a follow-up U.S.-based study tour, focused on both child-centered learning practices and methods for involving parents in schools, Egyptian teachers and supervisors will return to Egypt to train other Egyptian educators in selected primary schools, thereby developing centers of innovation with the potential to transform larger segments of the overall Egyptian educational system.

### **Baltimore-Alexandria Sister City Program**

Through partnerships between U.S. and Alexandria schools, as well as programs linking government administrators in Baltimore City and Alexandria Governorate, the Baltimore-Alexandria Sister City relationship focuses on workforce development. A March 1999 SCIV meeting in Washington, D.C. included a tour of Eastern Technical High School in Baltimore, a recent winner of the “Outstanding Career and Technology Education Program Award of Excellence” presented by the U.S. Department of Education. Eastern Tech is a model school dedicated to preparing students to meet the workplace needs of the 21 st century, and SCIV members met with students, teachers and administrators to explore the model for adaptation in Egypt. Other Sister City projects will bring business representatives and educators from the two cities together to develop programs that strengthen the relevance of technical education for workplace needs.

## A Public-Private-Parents Compact

One of the most active members of SCIV is the Alexandria Business Association (ABA), which is involved in job training, job fairs and a variety of workforce development efforts that SCIV will help to institutionalize and expand. The ABA, along with the Alexandria Development Center, provides support for the Alexandria Partnership, a public-private-parents partnership that will demonstrate how institutions and individuals can work together to develop a skilled workforce that contributes to regional economic growth. The Partnership will be based on a “compact” between the private sector—represented by the ABA, the public sector—represented

by the Ministry of Education, and parents—represented by Parents’ Councils. Initially targeting three technical secondary schools, the Alexandria Partnership will launch technology clubs, job fairs, summer internships, a job clearinghouse, apprenticeships, job shadowing, school-based enterprises, a business resource directory, and technology volunteers, all designed to serve the strategic economic interests of the Alexandria governorate.

### **U.S.-Egyptian Partnership for Economic Growth and Development**

#### **Subcommittee I on Economic Policy, Trade, Investment and External Finance:**

Supports Egypt’s efforts to build an open-market economy integrated into the international economic system

#### **Subcommittee II on Technology:**

Improves the efficiency of Egypt’s private sector through increased application of appropriate technologies

#### **Subcommittee III on Sustainable Development and the Environment:**

Promotes cleaner air and water in major cities; protects Red Sea beaches and coral reefs; preserves historical, cultural and religious sites

#### **Subcommittee IV on Education and Human Resource Development:**

Develops activities and provides a forum for exchanging experiences and discussing policies aimed at modernizing the Egyptian education system to adapt to a changing labor market.

## **Making Exchanges Happen**

SCIV not only launches activities but also facilitates the exchange of information and experience. During a SCIV meeting in Washington D.C. in early 1999, for example, the Director of Workforce Development for Goodwill Industries International traced the history of school-to-work initiatives in the United States, noting factors both favorable and unfavorable to their success. He also analyzed the current skill sets required by U.S. business in entry level workers, especially in the areas of mathematics, computers and problem solving, and stressed the need for school-to-

work programs to address them. In another presentation, Children’s Television Workshop (CTW) provided SCIV members with details about its production of an Egyptian Sesame Street series to foster early childhood learning through mass media. Also, reporting on the need to reinvigorate vocational education, an Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education outlined the challenges and strategies used to get employers interested in workforce development and to get teachers out of the classroom and into the workplace.

## Magnification

Another dimension of the LearnLink Secretariat's work involves reinforcing ongoing USAID programmatic and policy initiatives in Egypt, such as the Girls Education Strategic Objective, The Business Nexus, distance learning applications, pre-school and family education interventions, and education activities taking place within the Sesame Street program. By contributing technical assistance to such activities, or by issuing a series of special Partnership reports with wide and strategic distribution, the LearnLink Secretariat can help to magnify their impact.

## Collaborating Across Subcommittees

The SCIV Secretariat is also promoting collaborations between SCIV and other Gore–Mubarak Partnership Subcommittees. At the Spring 1999 SCIV meeting in Washington D.C., the Egyptian Minister of Education and the Egyptian Minister of State for Environmental Affairs signed a Memorandum of Cooperation pledging joint action in environmental education, linking the work of SCIV with that of SCIII, the Subcommittee on Sustainable Development and the Environment. Other linkages between education and technology (SCII) and education and economic development (SCI) will be launched as well.

As partnerships emerge among the public, private, voluntary and education sectors, the LearnLink Secretariat will further its impact through support activities, using exchange visits, technical assistance, short-term training workshops, subcontracts and other creative means to experiment with ideas and approaches. Activities can range from organizing visits between U.S. and Egyptian schools and business associations, to model school-to-career partnerships, to linking employment sectors like hotels with vocational schools for job training, to piloting a Junior Achievers program. LearnLink also holds roundtable meetings on SCIV themes where new partnerships with the potential to further SCIV objectives are expected to emerge.

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*When I see the children of families that live in mud houses learning how to use computers, it makes my heart swell with pride.*

*Moataz Al-Alf, Member of the U.S.-Egypt President's Council, at a school site visit in Sharkeya Governorate*

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