The U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative *in Egypt*

"Now Egyptians chose their leadership for the first time in history, and we are committed to helping that transition succeed. The Egyptian people, proud of the freedoms they have claimed, must decide what kind of a country they want to build."
U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton – September 26, 2012

MEPI is providing critical support to Egyptians as they work to create a more open, democratic, and prosperous society during the country's historic transition. MEPI works directly with Egyptian civil society groups and with U.S.-based organizations that partner with Egyptian groups.

ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Reflecting the demands of the Egyptian people for wider economic opportunity, MEPI's projects train youth to meet job market needs, increase access to capital for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and support advocacy for economic reforms to promote growth.

MEPI encourages economic opportunity in Egypt through entrepreneurship. The Education for Employment Foundation prepares youth to be productive contributors to Egypt's post-Revolution economy through professional development training. The program trains 400 unemployed youth in marketable job skills and 100 young entrepreneurs with the skills to start their own businesses, with high achieving students receiving access to capital. The Generation Entrepreneur Project partners youth with corporate volunteers, who mentor them in the process of starting new ventures, and the program provides the most promising youth with $1,000 seed money for their startups. The Institute of International Education empowers youth with tools for personal skills development and business-specific support, including needs assessments, advisory board formation, project consultation, networking, workshops and media exposure. A local grant in Alexandria teaches 30 Egyptian girls technical and business administration skills, and provides support with acquiring financing for the creation of self-sustaining small businesses.

MEPI is also helping existing industries develop and improve access to capital to bolster the Egyptian economy. Financial Services Volunteer Corps offers consultations and technical training to commercial banks and business organizations to: improve the organization and planning of provision of finance to SMEs; strengthen risk management practices; develop more creative SME-related products and services; and expand outreach to the SME market. Mercy Corps will help Egyptian tech-related for-profit entrepreneurs, business accelerators, angel networks and start-ups, by pooling capital and investing and in at least 15 start-ups throughout Egypt.

EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY

MEPI is helping marginalized groups make their voices heard and participate more fully in public life. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are taking advantage of a more open environment to network

and improve their collective impact through joint strategies and activities.
The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law and Egyptian civil society organizations (CSOs) are developing advocacy campaigns that educate the public and elected officials about the importance of a robust NGO law and the need to reform provisions of the Constitution governing the rights to associate and assemble. MEPI's Alumni Network in Egypt also helps connect social change activists to further civic engagement in the country.

The "Activism 2.0" project develops the capacity of more than 100 different Egyptian civil society organizations to utilize cyberspace as a venue for activism, advocacy, and advancing reforms. The Community Foundation for South Sinai gives citizens a venue to express their concerns to political actors, who are now in a position to effect positive change for the local community, specifically focusing on the interests of Bedouins, women and youth. A local project, Activating Youth and Family Political Participation, is increasing the political participation of 12 to 18 years old youth in Qena with workshops, seminars and family visits that promote the importance of civic engagement.

ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY

MEPI grantees and partners are working to facilitate an environment that promotes constructive dialogue, access to information, and government accountability.

The Social Media: Social Action project is connecting youth-focused NGOs across the region with technologies that will help them engage with new audiences, expand the reach of their work, and build regional networks, while focusing on success stories to further inspire the use of innovative technology in Egypt. A local project, Youth Social Networks, connects young people in cyberspace to share their experiences and inspire each other to achieve their goals.

Another local project seeks to raise public awareness on the values of democracy and respect for human rights by promoting community dialogue, tolerance, and anti-discrimination behaviors through the creation of a media-based module.

STRENGTHENING RULE OF LAW

As Egyptians work to build their new political system, MEPI is supporting community-based efforts to educate Egyptians about their rights and promote equal treatment for all Egyptians, including women, youth, and minorities and marginalized groups to make their voices heard and participate more fully in public life.

The Arab Program for Human Rights Activists advocates for the need to decentralize power in Egypt to promote local governance in six Egypt governorates with workshops to bring together 120 local council representatives to agree upon the most important provisions and texts that support decentralization in the local administration law.

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