Sharm El-Sheikh declaration
Towards an equal partnership in order to raising and activating the right to education as an input for developing home and citizen

Presented from
The foundation of Egyptians without borders for development

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With an initiative from the foundation of Egyptians without borders for development; the coordinator of the Egyptian coalition for education for all; and within the events of the project of "the grand story"; there were an elite of experts, activists, academics, those who are concerned with the strategic planning for education, and members from the Egyptian coalition for education have got together in a workshop for 3 days in the period from 8:11 July 2011 in Sharm El-Sheikh; this was for revising and discussing the governmental strategic plan of education, and to design a proposal about the civil society vision about the plan's document.

According to the Egyptian coalition visions and priorities, in the light of the Arabic and the international orientation in improving the educational system as a strategic option for changing the international reality about the deteriorating conditions of the education because of political, economic, or social conditions in the developing countries, and related to the conditions in Egypt in the light of the most important variable in the modern Egypt history; the people's revolution in 25th January; it was necessary to proceed to the change prospects to rebuild Egypt.... The future.

The workshop's outputs have been displayed in an expanded meeting included 35 representatives from organizations and civil institutions among the members of the Egyptian coalition for the education for all, to discuss, presenting visions, suggestions and recommends, and agree on a common vision which is to be formulated as an expressing document about the civil society conception about the education future in Egypt. And it was agreed on the following:

**First: the vision's principles and foundations:**

1- The civil society organizations in Egypt unequivocally believe that the process of reforming the education should start from realizing that the education is the main entry to meet the Egyptian people hopes and to achieve the revolution goals in rebuilding Egypt as a democratic and modern country.

2- And if in the past there was absence of the political wellness for change and reform, the tyranny dominance, and the corruption
prevalence; are the major obstacle in the way of achieving the desired change; thus we should work together as one hand in a frame of real partnership which is based on the mutual trust and respect among all parties so as not to return or extend the remnants of the past which are still existing in the regulations, policies, thought and culture; and are prevailed in Egypt for more than thirty years.

3- The civil society organizations are asserting that any strategic vision for education must start from the principles and foundations which the civilized world agree on; and which can be summarized in:

a- Education is a right from human rights and especially from child rights which should be guaranteed for all citizens without discrimination according to the criteria of the international conventions which Egypt has endorsed as a minimum.

b- Education is the foundation of the community which is based on knowledge, there is an increasing need to a knowledge that has an advanced type and high quality; in which the learner is the person who learned how to learn throughout all of his/her life; and so the professional educators or the economists who are concerning with the market requirements; should not the only categories to put the plans and strategies.

c- The student should be the axis of the educational process, an active participant and not just recipient or effect, and the first beneficiary from the results in terms of character formulating, enhancing values, the ability of the creative critical thinking's skills, in addition to the knowledge acquisition

d- The partnership among all of the society parties isn't a speech or a decoration to beautify our image to the nations or the donors; but it is a philosophy, thought and behavior based on respect and appreciation to the partners' status and roles, guaranteeing the equal chances to access the
true and accurate information, and sharing at all the stages of planning, executing, monitoring and evaluation; far away from dominance or gimmicks and the mechanisms of the fake participation.

e- The role of the civil society should be pivotal in any strategic plans for reforming the educational process; especially in the field of monitoring and analyzing the gaps, identifying needs, putting alternatives for developing curricula and methods, providing initiatives and the experimental samples, and spreading and enhancing the values, the principles, and the practices of the civil education and human rights at the educational foundations.

Second: describing the current position of the education:

Analyzing the current position of the education refers to that there are available possibilities and chances which can be a base to build on; and in the same time it is confirming the existence of a set of insufficiency images and the challenges the are facing the change's attempts.

1- The available possibilities and chances.

a) The results of what has been invested in the field of the infrastructure and its services, the programs of training and educating the teachers, developing some curricula, producing some textbooks and guides, and inserting programs on IT (information technology).

b) Getting a general frame of the education policies which had been provided at March 2006, including the outlines of the ministry's vision; in which it commits to providing a quality education for all at the all stages of the pre-university education, and adopts a decentralized system based on the society participation. These policies are based on 6 basic axes: applying the effective school learning through activating the teaching methods of the active learning,
consolidating the excellence and curricula development, integrating the advanced educational technology, promoting the community participation, and applying the decentralization within a clear frame, a supported environment with the resources, and national standards for the quality assurance.

c) The revolution of January 25, 2011 and the fall of some of the tyranny and corruption figures of the former regime, and the People's whirling around the demands of freedom, democracy and social justice, and building a modern civil country.

d) The great positive shift in the motives, trends and the size of participation in public life of the Egyptians by the variation of age groups, gender, geographical distribution, and educational social, economic and cultural level.

2- **The shortcomings and challenges.**

a) The need to build more than 250000 classrooms to face the phenomenon of the schools of multiple periods, and high density classes averaging according to official data (41) students in the level of primary education, and up according to the field monitoring data to more than 100 students in some rural areas and urban slums.

b) The shortage of teachers which scored a deficiency of (86734) teachers for only the primary education sector, (18564) for the preparatory stage level according to ministry data that were used in forming the general framework for education policies in 2006.

c) The lack of the well trained educational cadres who took the sufficient and appropriate training for applying the advanced educational curricula, the low of the profession sufficiency, the low of the cultural component in the greater sector of the teachers, the weakness of the current educational structures; especially at the secondary stage, and also the teachers' wages and incentives are still
insufficient for encouraging them on developing and modernizing their teaching practices, or adopting teaching patterns that focus on the learner; also there are restricting central unified curricula that prevent them from dealing by creative and professional methods which rooting the continuation of the phenomenon of private lessons, which reproduce the oriented typical education to success in exams.

d) The growing gap, and malfunction indicators of social justice in education between rich and poor, which has contributed to increasing differences at the level of the quality of educational institutions, the private sector which has become a preserve of a minority of wealthy people in the investing schools, and the public sector with its governmental miserable schools which are available to the overwhelming majority of the poor. The data from UNICEF in 2006 confirmed that about 40% of government spending allocated to the higher-income populations, while the lower income categories are not receiving only (7%).

e) The curricula and teaching methods are still focusing on conservation and without understanding rather than focusing on critical thinking, do not encourage on self-learning, and emphasizes the comprehensive coverage of the material more than perfection, also the available IT possibilities and sources are not operated in most cases, or are used efficiently.

f) The increase in the cost of education, especially for the poorest, poor, and middle families, as a result of the government applying to measures to recover the cost, including re-imposing the educational fees since the late eighties, and although the amount of such fees is estimated at 20 pounds per month, it is a load on the poor families if what we put in account the average number of children per family.
g) The decline of the role of the school and the loss of confidence of the community in its importance as a vital institution in the field of character-building, the consolidation of the values, and sustainable learning, in addition to the decline in the economic value of education, especially in the government sector.

h) Continuing the gender gap in the education enrollment rates, despite the efforts that have been made and the relative improvement that has been achieved, where UNICEF estimated the total number of girls in the age group of (6:11) out-of-school in Egypt about (650000) girls in 2006.

i) The weak systems and mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation and their applying strategies that are focusing on the total character for selection and route guidance, at the expense of the objectives of diagnosis, treatment and support, and the field monitoring indicators assert the absence of the will and the desire to improve these mechanisms of those who are responsible for their implementation, and the prevalence of formal and fabricated practices in formulating the results.

j) The inaccuracy of the data and information from government agencies and the ministry, and incongruent strongly which weakens its credibility, and reduces the efficiency of their use in the processes of analysis, diagnosis and access to the results and proposals.

k) The use of vocational education pathways as warehouses to unload and contain students with lower grades in the scale conservation and achievement, or as a means to reduce their turning flowed to the general secondary education, which contributed to a decline in society's perception of technical education, and the deterioration of its system and its consequences.

l) The continuation of the exams systems, which are limited to measuring the levels of conservation and without the
rest of the abilities of the learner, as the educational prevailing concepts are still based on the behavioral theories which claims that learning occurs successional stage and again, Development depends on organizing a series of goals gradually be transferred guidance direct from the teachers, who are considered the only source of knowledge for the learner.

m) The existence of a state of confusion and ambiguity and lack of clarity of vision of the transition phase, and raising the religious currents' speech and practices which poses a threat to the foundations and principles of the civil state and citizenship.

**Third: the suggestions of change and development:**

1- **At the level of the educational curricula:**

a) The need to conduct a comprehensive review of all existing approaches in terms of curriculum, and dissemination of evidence used in the active education system, allowing sufficient flexibility for diversity according to the characteristics and needs of different regions, and freed the teacher's abilities in the innovation and applying the stimulating methods of research, exploration, critical thinking and self-learning.

b) The integration of non-classroom activities in educational programs and curricula, including expeditions, field visits, practical applications, and raise the awareness of family and community with their importance.

c) Applying the specific strategies to stop the prevailing indoctrination methods, producing and providing resources, tools and multimedia to support operations and creative activities, and change the prevailing cultural patterns among administration and teachers, which reproduces the mentality of domination and polarization towards the centralization.
d) Identifying specific criteria in the field of selecting the efficiencies and work teams, who are responsible for the tasks of the new curricula designing, these criteria should include measuring their cultural vision.

e) Periodic review and continuous updating in the light of the results of the evaluating the application and the rapid global developments, issuing them in an annual report includes the achieved results and the challenges which the applying faces, and announce the results of the revision and evaluation with the means which ensure the highest degree of transparency.

f) Review philosophy, objectives and content of the history subject, and the methods of teaching it so as to focus on the peoples' history and not on the leaders and rulers' one.

g) Stating and regulating the practicing of the students' right to give their opinion in the current curricula, suggest ways to develop them, and provide adequate opportunities for their contributions in devising ways and means of new learning by themselves.

2- At the level of the civil education programs:

a) Developing a curriculum of classroom and non-classroom civic education activities, in which the teachers are training on implementing them in partnership with students and civil society organizations.

b) Linking the implementation of civic education activities with liberalizing the student unions from the dominance of administration, the pioneer teachers or security interventions, and supporting the students' initiatives in designing and implementing the community participation activities.

c) Recognizing and facilitating the right of the civil society organizations' performing their role in the executing the programs of human rights and civic education in schools.
d) The programs of rehabilitating the teachers, specialists and the school management should include the component of civic education and human rights, and integrating them in the standards of their choice and promotion.

e) The necessity to review and purify the books, which include trends and values incompatible with the principles of civic education, citizenship and human rights, in particular Arabic language and religion books.

f) The need to create a school environment and resources for civic education activities (such as the ministry sponsoring of contests and activities).

g) Provide opportunities for students to put the regulating principles and values for the practices and activities in the classroom and school.

3- **At the level of the quality of education:**

a) The need to review and develop the current national quality standards with the broad and effective participation for the rest of the partners (teachers, students, boards of trustees, civil society), taking in account the distinction between both centralized and decentralized levels, ensure flexibility and diversity, and check the general objectives of the educational quality according to international standards.

b) Emphasizing on the quality's long-term objective which is upholding the education's value and importance, the development of society and the state and the global pursuit of progress, and it is a continuous and integrated process, requiring working on spreading the culture of quality within the educational community.

c) The necessity to provide a minimum of supporting factors, resources and accurate and true information to achieve the quality objectives according to the selected criteria.

d) So as not to turn the quality measurement to just getting a certificate; there is a separation among the Educational accreditation standards for the school, measuring the
quality of the processes and the outcomes of the educational process.

e) Using the assistance of international expertise in the field of quality and particularly those who are similar to us in the same characteristics and conditions, and considering the selection of the suitable and appropriate for us locally.

4- **At the level of the education technology:**
   a) The need to put a plan for reviewing and developing the IT programs, activate the use of the available resources, and not limiting the education technology on the computer, and the need to use technological means in laboratories, and other devices such as the data Show which is suitable for the development of curricula, teaching methods, and to ensure installing and operating the Internet for each school.
   
b) Preparing and providing the multimedia for the educational curricula and courses (CD, documentary films).
   
c) The link between the use of IT tools and the sufficient and appropriate rehabilitation for the teachers and the students' training on self-learning using these means, and prevailing the culture of the use of educational technology to all parties.
   
d) Designing a strategy and take proceeds to provide a device for each student within the plan of the effective use of them in the educational process (in the form of scholarships provide a device provided success), and work on accessing to the e-book, and universal means of distance learning, with the multiplicity of its sources.
   
e) Developing a new system and plans for the educational channels in terms of content, and the used methods, and a management based on partnership between all the concerned parties.
f) Developing an efficient and serious system for the hardware maintenance through specialized departments within the educational administrations.

5- At the level of creating the human abilities for the teachers and those who responsible for the educational process:
   a) The need to prepare a study on new needs by the participation methods, design tools for measuring needs based on the vision and objectives of the developed educational output, deduct a list of training priorities, and institutional support, and put strategic and executing plans at the level of the future and immediate needs, which impact on the institutional development of the educational system.
   b) The necessity for restructuring and qualifying the training management and ongoing evaluations, activating the role of the professional academic, and ensure its effective regulatory and administrative independence; and coordination and integration between all parties.
   c) The need to create a developed information and database and (electronic file) for the current positions of the abilities and future needs, and the applied results of evaluating the impact of training and rehabilitation.
   d) Providing the climate, factors and resources that give real opportunities for the trainees in the field of application of their newly acquired knowledge, experience and trends, and follow-up and to identify the challenges that hinder the practice.
   e) The process of forming abilities should include minimum the following axes and topics (pedagogical methods, civic education, citizenship and human rights, civil society and the relationship between the school and the local community, the skills to use technological means of education, leadership skills and teamwork, time management, communication and dealing with different
types of students, planning skills, documentation and follow-up and evaluation, the rights and responsibilities of the trainee in the workplace, new in the field of specialized scientific material.

f) Concerning with the transformational training plans according to the results of the previous evaluation, the teachers' desires, their attitudes, and their investment as a source to cover the deficit in some disciplines.

g) Caring with preparing a cadre of trainers is able to re-training at the level of each school within the framework of refresher training.

6- **At the level of the boards of trustees:**

a) Developing mechanisms that guarantee activating the role of boards of trustees to include clarifying roles and powers, defining the new members, and executing training programs for them on the strategic goals for education, the development needs, quality standards, and the role of boards of trustees in the follow-up, support and evaluation, and linking school with community.

b) The need to raise the awareness of teachers and education departments about the importance of the role of boards of trustees, not only as a source of funding.

c) The clear definition of the responsibilities and powers of the Board of Trustees at the level of planning and decision-making, and activation of the social responsibility of business to finance the budgets and funds the activities of boards of trustees, with the strengthening of the independence of the board in expand from its own budget, and modify the regulating decisions of the in this regard.

d) Modifying the system of boards of trustees that includes in its membership a representative from the civil society from one of the organizations interested in education within the governorate.
Fourth: the role of civil society and the implementation mechanisms:

The civil society organizations emphasizes that the current historical moment, experienced by society and the state in Egypt, in the context of the events of the revolution 25 January are the opportunity which is the most appropriate to adopt a vision, and apply strategies for radical change and the destruction of the educational process, and to reject projects partial reform, which is planned from the authorities, without the participation of real popular, and taking the approach of the social movement that achieves the highest levels of community participation, and strengthen decentralization mechanisms in the frame of support, opportunities and the broader powers for the local communities, raise the prestige of the team voluntary work, and promotes practices social democracy, and citizenship, in this context, we propose strategies and the following mechanisms:

1- Create and activate the civilian observatory for education; its main task is monitoring the exact conditions of the current education, and the level of the citizens' full enjoyment of their rights, managing a community dialogue about the gaps, needs and appropriate solutions to the needs of learners, and those who dropped out of the education system or have been deprived of learning opportunities, preparing proposals and alternatives so as to the work of the Observatory depends on investment and activating the role of the People's Committees, which was founded idea during the revolution, and coordination with the activities of civil society organizations at the level of each governorate of the Egyptian Coalition for Education for All.

2- Activating of the role and responsibilities of boards of trustees of school to work as a link between the school and the local community through coordination with the Civil Observatory with its people's committees and the Education Coalition organizations, and the Board of Trustees monitors the needs of the development of the educational process at the school level, and propose development initiatives.
3- Issuing an annual report on the status of education so that it isn't enough to monitor gaps but cares to identify the positive and creative initiatives at the level of interventions and practices, especially those with a high component of community participation, and relies on active learning approach, and the link between educational, cultural and human rights component.

4- The full coordination and cooperation among non-governmental organizations concerned with education, especially the members of the coalition Egyptian Education for All (35 organizations at the level of 10 governorates), the Coalition Egyptian Rights of the Child (66 Organization at the level of 22 provinces), and government agencies also concerned with it, especially the ministries of education, scientific research, and culture, governorates and local councils as The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, through the partnership protocols which clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the fields of education, enlightenment and training on the values of civic education and human rights, and forming the abilities at students and teachers, department, school boards of trustees of the, members of the People's Committees and local activists.

5- Establishing a mechanism for supporting to the creative community initiatives like the society's schools' experience which relies on local efforts and adopt curricula and innovative methods of teaching practices and self-learning; or which are achieving real results in the field of facing both of the phenomena of dropping out of education and the private lessons; or which contribute to the dissemination of culture, civic values, democracy and participation, or eliminating reading and writing, cultural and functional illiteracy.

6- Managing societal dialogue on the changes are to be made on the regulated legislations, laws and regulations of the educational process, and preparing projects of alternative laws aimed at activating the international standards of the right to education.

7- Activating and supporting the initiatives of the social responsibility, mobilizing societal resources, and the
establishment of a fund for contributions based on the financing the poorest needs, and supporting the excellent initiatives.

8- Supporting the participation of students and their rights in forming unions at the school, the province and the Republic level, their right to create their regulations and their programs with full freedom and independence of the administration, and practicing of their activities, including contributing to the governance, daily management of the day school, and promote holding an intellectual forum for the students to stir them to express their opinion on the national public issues; such as participation in identifying the principles of the new Constitution, or issues of development, human rights and environmental rights.