

Foreword

First, I would like to thank both MSEA and EEA staff for their great efforts made during the last three years to improve and maintain environment quality and to face all challenges and difficulties with sincerity, work devotion, and belief in the environment protection issue.

It gives me pleasure to introduce MSEA achievements during the last three years. It is the best evidence on these significant efforts towards maintaining clean and sound environment for future generations.

MSEA has started to implement the 2002–2017 Environmental Action Plan (EAP), through the first 2002–2007 Five-Year Plan, the second 2007–2012 Five-Year Plan, and in implementation of the presidential electoral platform in its first and second years, successively.

The President's continuous support to environmental work in Egypt and the attention he pays to environment protection from pollution and citizen health maintenance are represented by his instructions to add a new Constitutional Article (Article 59) which stipulates that: "Environment Preservation is a National duty. The Law regulates measures required to preserve sound environment." This has given a great momentum to all environmental workers in Egypt, represented by all line ministries and agencies, civil work institutions, and NGOs to work day and night to address all environmental challenges and problems facing environmental work in Egypt.

Challenges are great considering the interconnectedness of sustainable development three dimensions: the social, economic, and environmental. It is well-known that any solution to an environmental problem should observe both social and economic dimensions, potentially leading to some difficulties whether in planning or implementation.

The State of Environment state in our country has been studied. Strategic plans have been developed to solve some chronic environmental problems through executing programs and projects, whether those funded through the state budget or in cooperation with some international bodies working in the environmental field. In addition, the experience of all advanced countries is utilized through joint-projects implementation. MSEA has developed environmental work priorities in Egypt, which are:

1. To improve Air quality.
2. To stop industrial discharge into the river Nile.
3. To soundly manage solid (domestic and agricultural) wastes.
4. To maintain natural wealth including lands, natural protectorates, biodiversity, and fresh and coastal water.
5. To raise environmental awareness among all sectors.

During previous years, we have encountered major problems, specifically, what is known as sever air pollution episodes (the Black Cloud). These episodes are repeated regularly since 1999 during September, October, and November. This is related to many interconnected reasons: natural or climatic-changes, burning agricultural wastes e.g. rice straw, environment-polluting industries, vehicle exhaust (frant significant traffic jams due to the huge number of vehicles), wastes self-burning in dumpsites, and many other factors.

MSEA has made many efforts in cooperation with the Ministry of Urban Development,

Governorates, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Interior to put an end to this phenomenon's impacts. Compared to previous years, there is a great and significant improvement. We are working on achieving greater successes during the following years. MSEA, in coordination with the Ministry of Military Production and Daqahlia Governorate, have established two plants in "Qalabsho" area to produce fertilizers from rice straw. Operation started in September, 2007, with production capacity absorbing 300,000 ton of rice straw annually. Costs of both plants have reached LE 20 million. In addition there is a plant in Menofeya and two plants in Sharqeya. Two other plants producing thermal gas from rice straw are operating in Sharqeya and Daqahlia Governorates providing residential units with gas. Besides, 19 lines in waste recycling plants in Delta are operating to produce fertilizers and fodder. 700 compactors are purchased and distributed on agricultural cooperatives and farmers.

Coordination with the Armed Forces has been sought to exploit its great capacities and excellence in the execution of national-service works. This year, the cooperation protocol with Queen Service Co. for gathering and compressing rice straw in some Sharqeya Markazes was extended. MSEA supported this system with 185 automatic compactors and 70 tractors at the value of LE 15.5 million. Operation financial cost is estimated at LE 8.5 million; the total value = LE 24 million. The Armed Forces has provided 95 tractors, 95 trailers, and 1200 trainees. The Transport Department of the Armed Forces has been assigned the transfer of compressed straw over 80 vehicles, 7 ton capacity each, and the establishment of an 8-feddan training camp in El-Tal El-Kebeir. H.E. Field Marshal, Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief, the Minister of Defense and Military Production has issued instructions that the produced amount should be 70,000 ton of rice straw.

In this concern, MSEA approach is to provide farmers with capabilities and change their practices into utilizing and recycling rice straw to produce fertilizers and fodders. Thus, rice straw will have an economic value from which farmers will benefit instead of burning the straw and polluting air.

MSEA has approached the problem of municipal solid wastes and has removed, during the previous years, 14 million m³ of accumulated wastes, in cooperation with the Armed Forces National Service Agency and Military Engineers Department. MSEA has also provided Governorates with equipment and mechanisms to contribute in solving this chronic problem which eventually leads to waste self-burning in dumpsites and, accordingly, air pollution especially during the "Black Cloud" phenomenon.

MSEA has also succeeded in putting an end to industrial discharges polluting the Nile. These come from 91 large facilities discharging a total amount of 4.952 billion m³ or 99.64% of total industrial effluents. This problem has been solved either through environmental compliance of these factories or through closing drains outlets.

MSEA has started the execution of the second phase of the Industrial Pollution Abatement Project (IPAP). IPAP is the extension of the first phase that ended in 2005 with \$ 35 million budget. 24 projects have been executed to apply Cleaner Production (CP) technology in 20 industrial establishments. This phase budget amounts to LE 1 billion, approximately. For the first time, five international bodies have contributed to the budget, these are: the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation, the French Agency for Development, and the Global Environment Facility. Facilities are funded by an 80% long-term loan and a 20% grant, focusing on highly-polluted areas: Helwan, Shubra El-Kheima, and Marriott Lake. 75 industrial establishments will benefit during the project's five-year implementation period (2007 – 2012).

The Government of Egypt is committed to fulfill its obligations to the climatic changes issue and Kyoto Protocol. Egypt is among the first countries in the Middle East and Africa to make significant progress in building its capacities in this area. The National Committee for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), under MSEA, has been established and approved 36 projects in the mechanism scope. Total investments of the approved projects are \$ 1137 millions approx., achieving annual decrease in green house gases by around 6.5 million ton Co₂ equivalent. These projects contribute to realizing sustainable development plans and making \$ 40–50 million annual financial returns for Egyptian companies, Environmental Protection Fund EPF, and foreign investors. Besides, companies would be using CP technologies which would establish good reputation for Egyptian products and better maintain the environment.

Believing in the importance of natural resource maintenance including natural protectorates and biodiversity, MSEA has made great and significant efforts in this field. Up till now, 27 natural protectorates have been declared over 15% of total Egyptian land area. Many projects have been implemented to protect plants, fowls, and wild animals against extinction and to increase their reproduction.

MSEA has executed a 100 km long green belt project around Greater Cairo (Ring Road) over four phases and with half a million trees costing LE 100 millions. The project is one of the most important environmental projects largely contributing to pollution load reduction in Greater Cairo. The 14 km first phase completed in June 2006, the second phase implementations has started. The important advantages of the project include using treated wastewater in irrigating timber plantations. Kinds of timber trees with economic yield are chosen. Egypt's First Lady has honored us by planting the first tree in June 2005.

The practical application of the Law on Environment Protection No. 4/1994 and its Executive Regulations and the development of environmental approach during the last years have shown the need to introduce necessary amendments to Law and Executive Regulations provisions. These amendments target rectifying deficiencies in environmental compliance provisions or in regulating more comprehensive environment protection, and amending the thresholds set forth in tables annexed to the regulations to cope with society developments and ecology updates.

Therefore, some technical committees specialized in legislation and environmental affairs have been working on studying the provisions of Law 4/1994 and its Executive Regulations, consulting specialists, experts, specialized EEAA Departments, State Council representatives, environment affairs stakeholders and environment officials in different governorates. Committee efforts, studies, and discussions lead to the development of proposals to amend some Law provisions and Regulation articles, annexes, and tables.

We believe in the necessity of joining forces of all ministries and governmental bodies with NGOs and civil community organizations to promote environmental work. Environmental projects implementation requires uniting the efforts of all these bodies; roles and responsibilities are interconnected and environment-related laws and legislations are multiple. This requires full and integrated coordination between all parties and dedication to solve such problems and maintain our natural wealth and resources to be delivered to future generations in a clean and sound state for a better future. Thus, the environment sector decentralization should be applied, and local units and EMU roles should be supported to execute environmental work and solve environmental problems. Technical support is provided to RBOs and EMUs hoping that EMUs would play a greater role in the near future.

During the last years MSEA has made significant effort to raise citizens' awareness on all levels, especially school and university students, in cooperation with all audio, read, and visual media and serious NGOs. On this occasion, special acknowledgement goes to Integrated Care Society and the efforts of the First Lady HE Mrs. Suzan Mubarak for fruitful and constructive cooperation in implementing some environmental joint projects in informal settlements such as the Environmental Promotion Project in Ezbet El-Walda, Arab El-Walda, and El-Ma'asara in Helwan, Cairo, as well as founding the Green Corner in Mubarak Public Libraries.

MSEA, all staff, experts, and specialists have exerted the utmost efforts believing in the importance of ongoing work to improve environment for future generations through developing a studied scheme in the light of many complex and interconnected challenges. Applying the Enforcement and Compliance Policy, which MSEA has been following since its establishment in 1997, has been inevitable.

We have undertaken to continue working, day and night, to maintain our natural resources and wealth against deterioration, and improve the state of environment. Maintaining a clean and sound environment is one of the major requirements necessary to protect citizens' safety and realize Egyptian product quality.

We are all hopes in the continuous improvement of the state of environment in Egypt year on year.

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