



## THE COOPERATIVE REFORM PROCESS IN EGYPT ACTIVATED

It has been almost two years since the ILO prepared the Cooperative roadmap, a report on the reform of cooperatives in Egypt. Due to the political changes in the country, the follow up on the Cooperative Roadmap was only resumed in the past couple of months.

A joint workshop was organized by the Egyptian National Competitiveness Council (ENCC), an independent NGO, with technical and financial assistance of the ILO on 30 October 2014. The objective of the workshop was to discuss, among other agricultural issues, the new cooperative law in light of the Cooperative Roadmap.

ILO Consultant Mr Huseyin Polat presented an updated version of the Cooperative Roadmap with concrete suggestions for next steps as to its implementation. The presentation of the Roadmap was well received by the national stakeholders where issues and expectations regarding the process were raised.

Although the Minister of Agriculture, who was scheduled to make a keynote address at the opening, could not be at the event, he later invited the ILO Cairo Director, the ILO Consultant and ENCC representatives to his office for a discussion.

The Minister informed the group that the Government has prepared a draft revision of the Agricultural Cooperative Law, although he did not elaborate on the specific nature of changes. The old agricultural cooperative law dated from 1980 a number of shortcomings including autonomy and independence of agricultural cooperatives from the government. The Minister received Arabic copies of the Cooperative Roadmap report, ILO Recommendation 193 and the third edition of the ILO publication on Guidelines for Cooperative Legislation.

The next steps in the process include: checking the draft revision of the Agricultural Cooperative Law against ILO Recommendation 193 and other relevant references provided before finalization. The Minister of Agriculture expressed his support to the reform process.

He also announced that a joint National Committee will be established to carry out necessary activities and to develop a technical cooperation project to strengthen the implementation of the reform with an additional component on capacity building with the objective of job creation in rural areas.

For an ILO Newsroom Feature on agricultural cooperatives in Egypt, see [http://ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS\\_204313/lang--en/index.htm](http://ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_204313/lang--en/index.htm)

For an article on the Cooperative Roadmap in Egypt, see <http://ica.coop/en/media/news/ilo-proposes-%E2%80%98co-operative-roadmap%E2%80%99-egypt#%2EUQ5sW1wQUI-w%2Etwitter>

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR BEDOUIN WOMEN IN EGYPT

“The Way Forward After the Revolution: Decent Work for Women in Egypt and Tunisia” project, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, has undertaken an intervention on “Socio-Economic Justice for Bedouin Women” which started in September 2013 in partnership with the Centre for Egyptian Family Development (CEFD), a local NGO. The project aims at creating decent work opportunities for women from the Eastern Desert, 450 Bedouin mainly in Aswan and Red Sea governorates.

The initiative encourages the organization of economic solidarity groups of Bedouin women in order to enable them to participate in income generating activities in their communities. The project also provides judicial assistance for women to complete their personal IDs and register their own businesses.

Three cooperatives were created as part of this initiative: Nafaes, an agricultural cooperative producing medicinal and aromatic plants (membership is open to both men and women); and Ebda’a Ganoubeya and Ebda’a Badaweya, two women producer cooperatives making handicrafts.

As part of this initiative, the ILO organized training workshops on Mainstreaming Gender Links in Value Chain Analysis, My.COOP and GET Ahead for Women in Enterprise for cooperative leaders and members. The ILO project has also been building the capacity of young coaches among members of local community based organizations.

An agreement was signed in November 2014 with the Industrial Modernization Centre (IMC) in Egypt, an independent body established by a presidential Decree in 2000 to modernize the Egyptian Industry. The IMC is currently providing skills training and is helping the cooperatives in introducing more innovative and adapted designs to handicrafts products. The next steps will focus on marketing support, product quality improvement, branding, and development of marketing tools for handicrafts.