

# Towards Constructing An Egyptian Democracy Index

*(A glance on the International Indexes)*



**The Social Contract Center**

**August 2014**

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An Egyptian Democracy Index**

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# Policy Brief

## Towards Constructing an Egyptian Democracy Index (A glance on the International Indexes)

### Introduction

In the current phase of Egypt's history and since Egypt's revolution in 2011, when people went to streets calling for "bread, freedom, social justice, and human dignity", democracy became a necessity for reform, and for building the new state "which believes in democracy as a path, a future, and a mode of living" as was stated in the Egyptian constitution in 2014.

Although there are lots of efforts to measure democracy and formulate international democracy indexes worldwide, yet most of these efforts adopt the concept of "one size fits all" as they do not take into consideration the specificity and the nature of each country and the differences in their political, economic, social, and institutional systems.

Based on this, a great need arised to define democracy, set democratic standards and measure democracy on a national basis, and develop a national homemade democracy index that fits the national context, and the political, social, economic, institutional, and legal system in Egypt.

Developing this index nationally will create a sense of ownership for reform; it does not only improve Egypt's image outside and compete with other countries, but it also enables monitoring and tracking the level of democracy in Egypt over time and according to political, social and economic changes.

This brief aims to set a general framework for an Egyptian democracy index that takes into consideration the pillars of democracy within the national context. Such framework is set in the light of democracy indexes and measurements that are conducted by international and regional organizations.

### Definition:

Although there are many definitions and applications for democracy in each country according to its political, social, economic context, however, there is a consensus that democracy must be built on "**The rule of people**" and according to the values of "**freedom, equality, rule of law, participation, and accountability**" which foster political and social consensus, stability, and development.

### Components of democracy:

- **Separation and balance of powers:** between the legislative, executive and judiciary authorities in order to give the chance to enable monitoring and accountability.
- **Independence of the judiciary:** which guarantees the process of accountability, the settlement of the disputes and resolution of internal conflicts, and equality in front of the law.
- **A pluralistic system:** which enables a good representation of parties, unions, and other civil society organizations in the political life.
- **Respect for the rule of law:** where everyone is equal in front of the law and rules and laws are binding and enforceable.
- **Accountability and transparency:** people have the right to access information about the activities of the government, to monitor its activities, and to set the government accountable.
- **Free, independent and pluralistic media:** it plays an essential role in guaranteeing the freedom of expression and freedom of information, which are necessary for facilitating the effective participation of citizens in democratic processes, transparency and accountability.
- **Respect for human and political rights:** this includes freedom of association and expression and the right to vote and to get elected. In addition to the basic human rights, such as having access to basic public services and goods and a dignified life.

## Requirements of Democracy:

**Constitution and laws:** Existence of an enforced constitution and laws that guarantee democratic standards, human rights, freedom, and equality.

**Institutions:** Existence of strong independent institutions; government, civil society organizations, and private sector.

**Culture:** Having a culture of democracy is very essential. This culture can be built by education and raising awareness of people about their rights and responsibilities, respect, compromise, tolerance....

**Economy:** Poverty is the main challenge for democracy, as it hinders democratic practicing and people rights to choose freely. From another side, when democracy expands, development increases, as it was proved that a country which switches from non-democracy to democracy achieves an increase of about 20% in GDP per capita over the subsequent three decades.

## Why measuring democracy?

### International Assessment

- There has been a new global trend to conceptualize and assess democracy and regimes performance for conducting comparison between countries, ranking, labeling, "naming and shaming"; creating a tool for advocacy; raising awareness and pushing forward towards democratization. However many scholars think it is not fair and not even possible to make comparison between countries because each country has different economic, social, political and legal system.
- It is worth mentioning that democracy assessment mainly started as a result of the flow of foreign aid to promote democracy in many developing countries, which required an assessment mainly from donors or from international community to measure the impact of those donors' interventions from one side, and to motivate countries to improve their image on democracy basis in order to get more foreign assistance and stimulate investment.

### National Self-Assessment

- From another side, many international initiatives encourage countries to undertake self-assessment, so that there will be a kind of ownership of democracy, to improve their indicators in order to result in better impact and policies, to improve their international image and to compete with other countries.
- Self-assessment is essential because each country will set its definition of democracy and its priorities and will conduct an assessment tailored to its legal, political, social, economic and institutional conditions.
- It is worth mentioning that some of the countries that undertook a national self-assessment exercise of democracy managed to adopt an action plan for reform to avoid the drawbacks that arise in the assessment (such as problems in transparency, accountability, fighting corruption, development of civil society...) also each country managed to decide which area of democracy and governance it wants to focus on as an entry point for reform. For example some of these countries focused on parliament formulation and elections while others focused on local governance and democracy. Moreover, the continuity and sustainability of the assessment was assured as national led assessment continued to be conducted regularly after raising the demand on the data collected on the part of the scholars, politicians, media, activists, parliamentarians, and government officials themselves.

# International Democracy Indexes

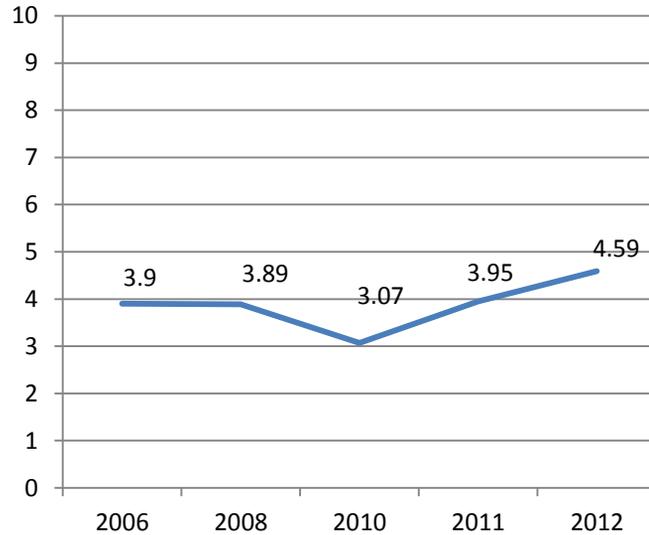
## • Democracy Index (Economic Intelligence Unit- The Economist)

The index is based on expert interviews and household surveys, and is analyzed on a scale from 0 to 10 degrees, where 10 means full democracy .

**Egypt score** in 2012 was 4.59 out of 10 (Hybrid regime; a mix between democratic tendencies, and other non democratic ones), and it ranked 109 of 167 countries. Illustrated below are the categories' scores for Egypt (where higher scores are better):

- Electoral process and pluralism (3.42 out of 10).
- Functioning of government (4.64 out of 10).
- Political participation (5 out of 10).
- Political culture (5.63 out of 10).
- Civil liberties (4.12 out of 10).

Democracy Index for Egypt (2006 - 2012)

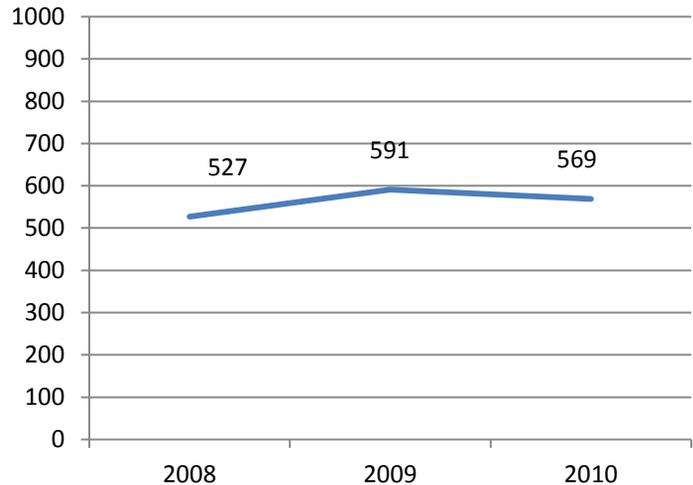


## • Arab Democracy Index (Barometer) - Arab Reform Initiative

The Arab Democracy Index measures two kinds of indicators: means of democratic transition (such as legislation) and practices of democratic transition (such as elections). The index also tackles 4 principles or values: The strength and accountability of public institutions, Respect for rights and the rule of law, Equality and social justice. The Arab democracy index is analyzed on a scale from 0 to 1000 points (where higher is better).

**Egypt scores** in 2010 were 569 points out of 1000, which reflects (democratic tendencies), it scored higher degrees on the availability of means of democracy, and scored lower degrees in democratic practices.

Arab Democracy Index (Egypt)



## • Freedom in the World - Freedom House

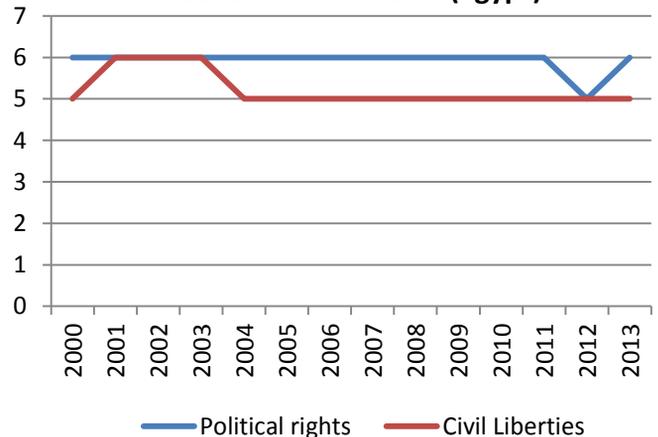
It produces annual scores based on surveys representing the levels of political rights and civil liberties - in 195 countries- on a scale from 1 (most free) to 7 (least free).

**Egypt status** in 2013/2014 is "Not Free", as it got (5.5 out of 7), which is the average score of:

**Political rights:** Scored (6 out of 7), which measures electoral process, political pluralism and participation.

**Civil liberties:** Scored (5 out of 7) which measures freedom of expression, rule of law, and individual rights.

Freedom in the World (Egypt)



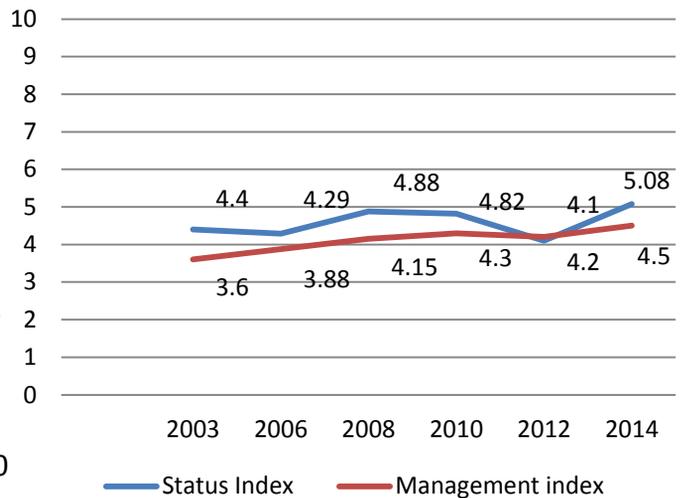
## Transformation Index BTI - Bertelsmann Stiftung

The BTI publishes two rankings: The **Status Index** which ranks the countries according to their political and economic transformation, and the **Management Index** which ranks the countries according to their leadership's political management performance.

In 2014, **Egypt** ranked the 82 among 129 countries **on the status index**, with a score of 5.08 out of 10 (the higher the better).

On the **Management index**: Egypt ranked the 82 also among the 129 countries, with a score of 4.50 out of 10.

## Transformation index (BTI) Egypt

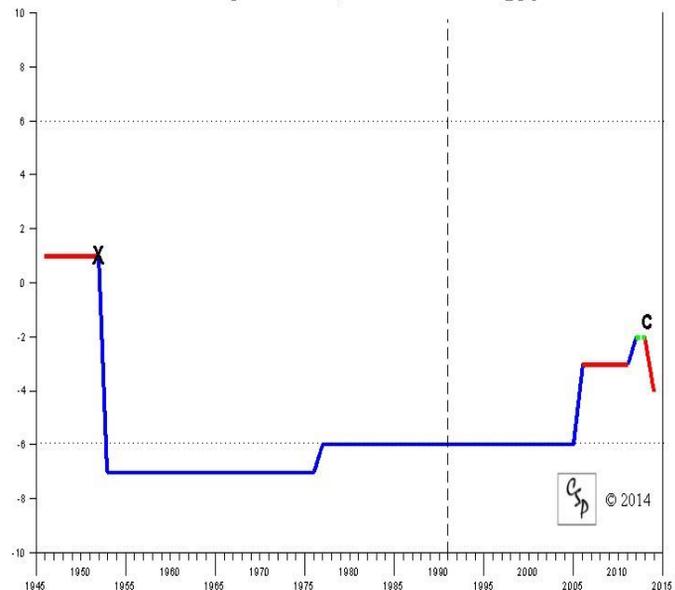


## Polity IV - Maryland University (USA)

Polity's index is about a state's level of democracy, is based on academic evaluation based upon published materials of the state's elections, openness and level of participation. Polity score ranges from -10 to +10, where (10) represents full democracy.

**Egypt's Rank:** Egypt got the score from -5 to 0 in 2013 to be labeled as (closed anocracy: where power is exercised in small elite group, competing together rather than the public). The graph shows that the red lines in the graph means (Factionalism Politics with special or ethnic-based political factions that compete for political influence in order to promote special agendas) that represents the era from 1945 to 1952, 1996 -2010, and from 2013 till now. The Green small color is a transition period in 2011. The letter (X) in 1952/1953 represents (Autocratic Backsliding event), and the letter (C) in 2013 (Coup d'Etat).

## Authority Trends, 1946-2013: Egypt



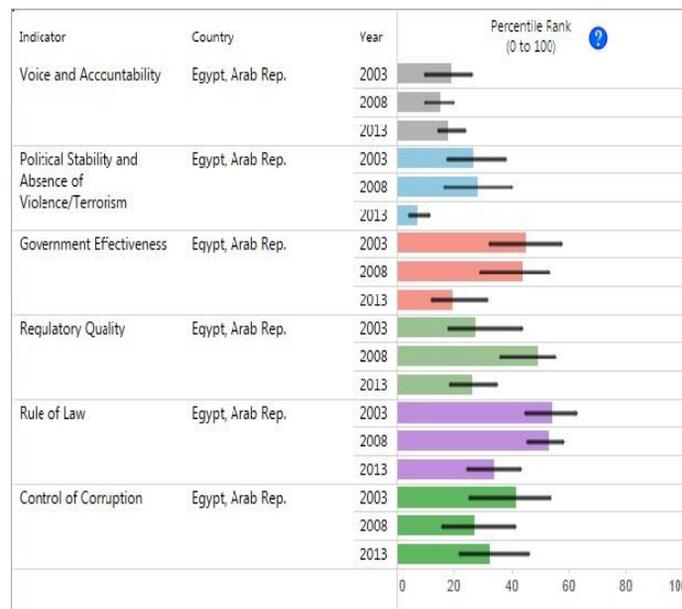
## Worldwide Governance Indicators - World Bank

Aggregated indicators which combine the views of enterprises, citizens and experts, on six dimensions, the index is analyzed from 0 to 100 (higher is better).

**In 2012, Egypt scores in the six dimensions are :**

- Voice and Accountability (26.54 out of 100)
- Political stability and absence of violence (7.58 out of 100)
- Government effectiveness (25.36 out of 100)
- Regulatory quality (33.01 out of 100)
- Rule of law (40.28 out of 100)
- Control of Corruption (34.45 out of 100)

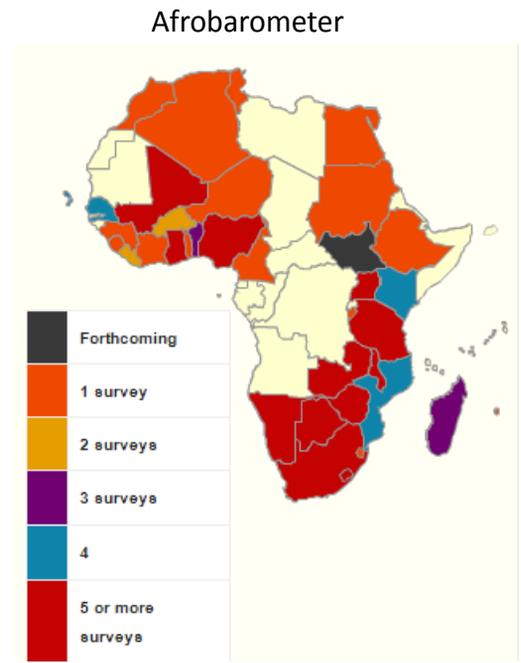
## WGI -Egypt



## Afrobarometer

The Afrobarometer is an independent research project that measures democracy, governance, participation, livelihood, macroeconomics, social capital, taxation, gender issues, globalization and service delivery in Africa through household surveys.

**Egypt scores** are only available in 2013 (round 5) as it is the only round Egypt has participated in. The survey in Egypt was conducted on a sample of 1200 households . 25% of the sample see Egypt now as undemocratic, 14% see it as semi democratic. 54% of the sample see that the most essential characteristic of democracy is to provide basic necessities like food, clothing and shelter for everyone. 50% stated that Politics is clean and free from corruption. And 24% see that Legislature closely monitors the actions of the President is the most important aspect of democracy.



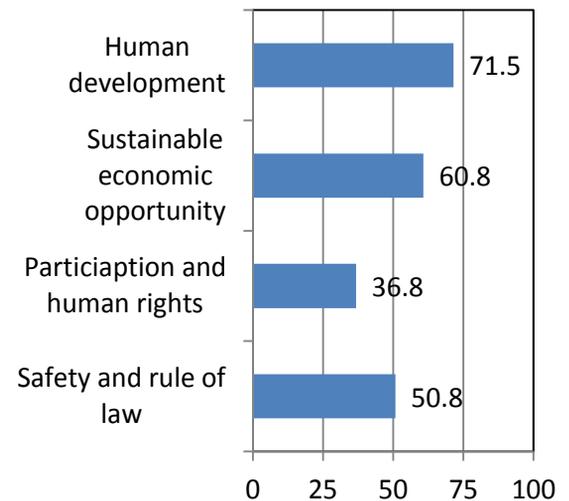
## • Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)

It is conducted by "Mo Ibrahim Foundation" which was established in 2006 with a focus on the critical importance of leadership and governance in Africa. It was founded by Dr. Mo Ibrahim, a Sudanese philanthropist and businessman.

The IIAG is compiled using international and African sources. The index is analyzed on scale from 0 to 100 (where higher is better).

**Egypt's Score:** In 2013, Egypt ranked 19<sup>th</sup> among the 52 countries, with a score of 55 out of 100 (where higher is better), as it scores higher degree than the continental average (51.6) and higher than the regional average (54.0) for North Africa.

## Ibrahim Index of African Governance

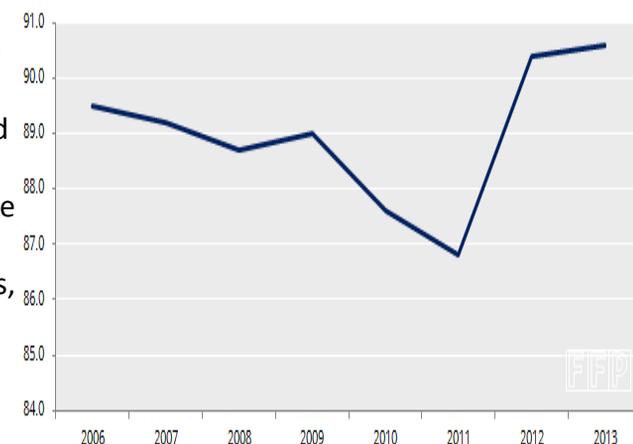


## • Fragile States Index – FSI (Fund for Peace)

Is produced by an American think tank "Fund for Peace". The index uses 12 factors to determine the rating for each nation, it includes: Social, economic, political and military indicators. Data from three primary sources is triangulated and subjected to critical review to obtain final scores for the FSI. The index is analyzed on a scale from 0 to 120 (the lower is better).

**Egypt's Score:** In 2014, Egypt ranked 31<sup>th</sup> of 178 countries, with a score of 91 out of 120 (The lower the better) Egypt status is (Alert).

## Egypt: Trend 2006-2013



## World Audit for Democracy and Human Rights (World Concern Institute – UK)

World Audit is an international nonprofit company, which offers a one-stop site for measurement of democracy and human rights; it collects statistics and reports from other agencies which are concerned mainly with political rights, civil liberties, press freedom, perceptions of corruption, human rights, and the rule of law, where countries ranked are 149.

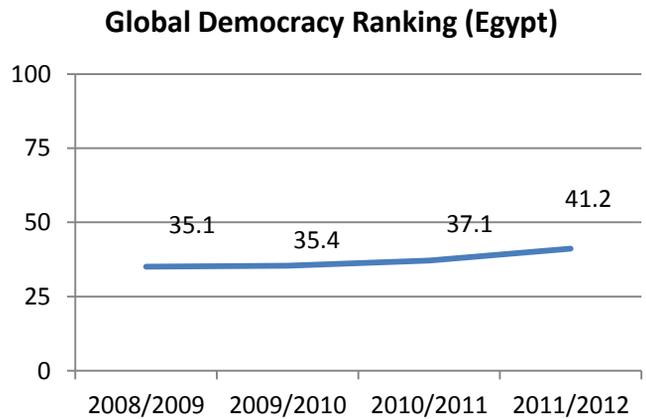
**Egypt's Rank:** In 2013, Egypt ranked 103 between the countries ( where lower is better).

World Audit for Democracy & Human rights	Egypt Score
Political rights 1 – 7 (lower is better)	6
Civil liberties 1 – 7 (lower is better)	5
Press freedom 0 to 150 (lower is better)	114
Corruption 0 to 149 (lower is better)	92

## Global Democracy Ranking (Democracy Ranking Association –Vienna)

Is being carried out by the Democracy Ranking Association (Förderung von Demokratiequalität” in Vienna, Austria). It measures the quality of democracy through mixing between measuring some political aspects and other nonpolitical dimensions, like: gender, economy, knowledge, health, environment. The index is analyzed on a scale from 1 (poorest) to 100 (strongest). The index mainly relies on data that are prepared by other international organizations

**Egypt's Rank:** Egypt ranked 103 of 115 countries, with a score of (41.2 i.e. low quality of democracy) in 2011/2012 with an increase of 6 degrees from 2008 / 2009 (35.1) (the higher the better).



## Other International and National Sources of Indicators Related to Democracy

Some international indexes rely on other sources of data (national and international) to calculate democracy index, specially those that are concerning with the components of democracy, such as: human rights, equality, corruption, integrity, justice. Some of these International sources are: World Values Survey, Corruption Perceptions Index, Human Development Report, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, International Commission of Jurists, Direct Democracy Database (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, IDEA) Elections Guide (International Foundation of Electoral Systems, IFES).

Many National institutions are providing data about democracy related topics, like: Public Opinion Poll Center–Information and Decision Support Center, IDSC (Egyptian Cabinet), Baseera, (Mosharka) The Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement, and The International Development Center.

## Challenges and Criticism of Democracy Measurements

The main criticism directed to democracy indexes worldwide are mainly concerned with:

- **Definition of democracy** and how to operationalize it and make it applicable.
- **Sources of data** and its objectivity; whether it is collected from household surveys, expert surveys, does it rely on primary sources of data, or readymade indicators of other institutions.
- **Focus of indicators** whether they measure single dimension of democracy like the status of the state or a multidimensional focus of democracy (social, political, and economic).
- **Combining theory and practice**, index should measure what is on papers, like existence of laws and decrees, and the actual application and enforcement of these laws.
- **Quantity Vs Quality**, indexes should go beyond measuring the existence of democracy to measuring the quality of democracy.

# Towards Constructing an Egyptian Democracy Index (Major Highlights)

There is a great need to create an Egyptian democracy index that is homemade, nationally owned, tailored to the Egyptian context, and to be for reform purpose. There are major points that should be guiding the Egyptian democracy index, in order to guarantee efficiency and objectivity:

**Democratizing the process:** Egypt's Democracy Index should be democratized in itself, i.e. following democratic steps in its formulation and measurement; adopting participatory approach; engaging all the stakeholders, creating an independent national committee in order to create a sense of ownership, and inclusiveness.

**Framework:** A general framework of democracy index should be designed, where a conceptual and operational definition of democracy should be assigned. And the institutional and legal framework for the Egyptian political system should be reviewed.

**Areas and levels of assessment:** Determining the levels and areas of assessment, whether they are at the national level, or the local level, as well as determining which areas will be tackled (social, political, or economic.....).

**Components and indicators:** Defining the components of the democracy index according to the country's priorities, interest and well.

**Data collection and data sources:** It should be determined whether we depend on household surveys, expert interviews, or content analysis by scholars, whether we need to collect our own data or to use readymade indicators.

**Dissemination:** The wide dissemination of the index results gives more credibility to the index and makes it a public good and helps raise the awareness of the citizens, the civil society and the public officials on their rights and responsibilities.

**Action plan:** keeping doing assessments without being accompanied by an action plan makes people lose interest and trust and the assessment loses its credibility.

**Sustainability:** Egypt Democracy Index should be hosted in a national independent organization to guarantee both sustainability and institutionalization.

Egypt's Democracy Index*	
Democracy Principles	Areas of assessment
Participation/ Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political pluralism</li> <li>Right to participate</li> <li>Competitiveness</li> <li>Elections participation</li> <li>Joining associations / parties /...</li> <li>Social responsibility and activism</li> </ul>
Human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic / Social / Political rights</li> <li>Absence of torture and abuse</li> </ul>
Equity/ Fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equal and fair opportunities</li> <li>No discrimination on any basis</li> </ul>
Freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom of expression / association/affiliation/ choices / practices....</li> </ul>
Control and authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong state</li> <li>Security</li> <li>Sovereignty and legitimacy</li> <li>Independent decisions</li> <li>Credibility</li> </ul>
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Openness of the state/ freedom of information</li> </ul>
Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies and decisions reflect people/ party's needs, demands ...</li> </ul>
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balanced Power / Independent institutions/ different lines of accountability (legal/ financial/ political...)</li> </ul>
Combating corruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrity of the state (administrative/ political / governmental / private sector....)</li> <li>Institutions and laws that combat corruption</li> </ul>
Rule of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitution and laws</li> <li>Equality in front of the laws</li> <li>Laws enforcement</li> <li>Judiciary independence</li> </ul>
Solidarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tolerance and respect</li> <li>Building Consensus</li> <li>Social security and peace</li> <li>Citizenship and belonging</li> </ul>

\*This framework is inspired by the Guides for assessing the quality of democracy produced by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral assistance (IDEA) and other international democracy indexes produced world- wide.

## Conclusion

Democracy now is mandatory to Egypt's future if we want to accelerate the process towards development and stability. Most of the international indexes show that Egypt did not progress well according to democracy standards (participation, equality, human rights, and freedom...) and there is still a long way to go.

There is an increasing need to develop an "Egyptian Democracy Index" that is homemade and nationally owned; that reflects the economic, social, political, and legal background of Egypt, and that fits with the national context and priorities. The index should be used as a monitoring tool for the progress of democracy; a raising awareness tool for people, civil society, and public officials; an accountability tool to set the government accountable for its performance according to democracy standards and finally as a self-review tool for the government to re-correct its attitude towards democracy.

The major highlights for Egypt's Democracy Index imply that it should be democratized in itself by engaging stakeholders and forming a national participatory committee to supervise the formulation of the index and to ensure that the index represents the different points of view on democracy. Also, a wide dissemination of the index data is highly required to make it a public good and to give more credibility to the index. The index results should be action oriented that feeds directly in the public policy. Furthermore, the sustainability of the index is a crucial issue to guarantee reform.

A proposed framework of Egypt's democracy index is based on a combination of components in order to cover different aspects of democratic life, and accordingly gives a comprehensive overview of Democracy status in Egypt, including participation and political rights, freedom, human rights, equity and fairness, the authority and the strength of the state, transparency, accountability, rule of law, integrity, and finally the values that are prevailing in the society.

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