

Sustained Growth and Anti-Corruption Policies in Egypt

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Received: 4 Jan. 2023, Revised: 20 Feb. 2023, Accepted: 24 May 2023.

Published online: 1 Sep. 2023.

Abstract: The paper draws attention to the Arab Republic of Egypt's efforts to confront both administrative and financial corruption as it demonstrates an obstacle to developmental policies. On World Anti-Corruption Day, this was initiated in 2014, when Egypt launched its first national anti-corruption strategy. This strategy was characterized by being in two phases. The first phase was from 2014-2019 and the second phase was from 2019-2022. The research problem centers around the global doubts about the Egyptian role and efforts in combating corruption, thus the research paper aims to measure the extent of administrative corruption before and during the two phases and display the Egyptian role in that matter. The methodology of the research paper is the descriptive-analytical approach, where it analyzes the numbers and ratios related to anti-corruption policies during the two phases. Also, the role of the National Anti-Corruption Academy will be observed by examining the practical cases and assessing its effectiveness and whether it is influential or not. The paper concludes that progress has been made with regard to Egyptian efforts to combat corruption, however, better cooperation and coordination between all concerned bodies and institutions is a must to ensure the sustainability of such improvement.

Keywords: Anti-Corruption - National Anti-Corruption Strategy - National Anti-Corruption Academy

1 Introduction

Anti-corruption programs in Egypt have witnessed great development over the past years. Before 2014, Egypt did not have a unified anti-corruption strategy until the 2014 Egyptian constitution was issued, in which Article 218 (a newly included article) underlined the state's commitment to combating corruption by all national agencies. With sincere political will and constant support for anti-corruption efforts, the first strategy 2014/2018 was launched, through which it achieved notable successes.

This was quite evident during Egypt's endeavor to achieve sustainable development goals by launching Egypt's Vision 2030, and raising economic growth rates, Egypt's belief that eliminating corruption is the magic key to increasing the flow of investments and the success of the economic reform system.

After Egypt's success in putting the issue of corruption on the public policy agenda in all its forms, during the first phase/strategy, a second phase of the National Strategy has been prepared in 2019/2022 which addressed challenges faced during the implementation of the first phase. Especially the difficulty of measuring the progress being made in implementation as well as the means of measuring achievements against the planned objectives. Percentage of achieved progress for each targeted goal. Thus, a quantifiable goal to implement 60.95% by the end of the second year of phase II was set.

Egypt was among the first countries to ratify the United Nations Convention against Corruption (December 2021). It was proactive in supporting law enforcement agencies and combating corruption through the Public Prosecution agencies, the Central Auditing Agency, the Ministry of Interior's agencies, and the Anti-Money Laundering Unit, in addition to the Administrative Control Authority, which represents Egypt in the implementation of the International Convention against Corruption.

Literature Review

There have been many references that dealt with the issue of corruption and combating it, especially in the Arab Republic of Egypt.

In this research paper, [1] came in conjunction with a clear interest from the state by addressing the phenomenon of corruption, as well as her scientific research interest in its role in solving the problems of society, thus she gave special

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attention to diagnosing and researching ways to treat such problems. In this context, her study raises a fundamental question: Can the research efforts exerted in studying issues of transparency and corruption become one of the possible ways to mitigate and confront this phenomenon? Can research efforts play a supportive and complementary role to the national efforts undertaken by the state to combat corruption? These questions lie in the scope of the current study as it seeks to explore the terms "transparency and corruption", in a bid to determine how developing it can promote transparency and combat corruption in Egypt.

Another study [2] dealt with the role of Media in exposing corruption as it showed how not a day passes without portraying the fight against corruption by all Egyptian Media platforms whether it is printed, audio, visual, or electronic. Directly exposing corruption or indirectly by addressing a topic related to

The legal framework was also examined by Egyptian literature as study [3] dealt with the provisions of the constitution and the fight against corruption and the Egyptian economic system, it demonstrated that the Egyptian experience has provided a model for rationalizing public spending in government contracts, and provided a model of integrity and transparency to keep pace with the global development in the field of government contracting, also the study showed that the early discovery of terrorist funding sources is the efficient means of protection for African societies, thus it is necessary to take active action to detect money laundering and illegal external financing.

Additionally, a study by [4] has dealt with the phenomenon of administrative corruption, it explained that it is one of the dangerous phenomena facing modern societies, especially in developing countries, as it has spread and increased as a result of the changes that the international and local community have gone through, those changes that were characterized by inconsistency in the light of globalization, and its effects were reflected on the social, economic, political and cultural structure as well as the performance of public employees and thus the efficiency of public office.

Egypt's active action to combat such a dangerous phenomenon involves the establishment of various control agencies to at least limit this phenomenon: such as the Administrative Control Authority in Egypt, and the National Authority for Combating Administrative Corruption in Saudi Arabia. Currently, the Law deals with cases of administrative corruption through regulation and scrutiny, it established a system for it based on justice and equality, as well as punitive provisions to deter cases of this corruption. The author concluded that it can only be combated by eliminating the factors that lead to its perpetration or cause it.

Meanwhile, the study by [5] focused on the issue of corporate governance and its role in combating financial and administrative corruption, which is considered one of the most prominent issues in regional and international institutions and organizations.

At the international level, where [6] the paper analyzes whether transparency, the quality of budgetary management, and the strength of auditing institutions have a positive impact on corruption. Confidence in governments can be increased from a comparative analysis. The study is based on data from a panel of 75 countries around the world on transparency and corruption published by international organizations, testing the relationship between transparency and accountability in a country and corruption and trust in governments. The results show that transparency and the quality of budget management and audit systems positively affect the perception of corruption.

Thus, politicians should consider promoting the preparation and disclosure of accounting information as a tool to improve public administration and reduce the sense of corruption. However, neither transparency nor strengthening of the upper agencies for financial control has been found to increase the level of trust.

Also, [7] this study was commissioned by the Department for International Development (DFID) to assess the body of evidence on corruption. The resulting evidence sheet is intended to be a reliable assessment of the literature on corruption. The study serves as a major source of staff composite knowledge, helping to inform policy narratives and program design.

The paper's aim was to address questions such as "What conditions facilitate corruption, what are its costs and what are the most effective ways to combat it?" "And what are the costs of corruption for the poor and the state? Both financial costs and non-financial impact.

On the other hand, [8] inspected means to reduce the impact of corruption on the performance of the electricity sector. They found that most sub-Saharan African countries have implemented electricity sector reforms, however, after nearly two and a half decades of reforms, there is no evidence that the reforms have mitigated corruption. There is no evidence that the reforms had any effect in terms of technical, economic, or welfare. The authors analyzed the impact of corruption on three key performance indicators: technical competence, access to electricity, and income. The study concluded that corruption can significantly reduce the technical competence of the sector and constrain efforts to increase access to electricity and national income, and negative impacts are minimized when independent regulators are created, and privatization is carried out. These results indicate that well-designed reforms not only directly enhance the performance of the sector, but also

indirectly reduce the negative effects of institutional deficiencies at the macro level such as corruption on micro and macro performance indicators.

Where [9] focused on marketing mechanisms and outsourcing processes following the new public administration reform agenda which sparked a debate about whether close interactions between public and private actors may lead to corruption in the public sector. The main response to these concerns has been to increase transparency, so far, however, empirical evidence of its effectiveness is scant and mixed. This article argues that the beneficial effects of transparency on corruption hinge on the type of transparency, and in particular, who is the intended recipient of the information, by drawing on newly collected data for more than 3.5 million government contracts between 2006 and 2015, analysis shows that overall bidding transparency significantly reduces corruption risks, Yet the effect is largely driven by ex-ante transparency, that is, transparency that allows for lateral oversight by insiders in the bidding process.

It is quite clear after reviewing the literature that sustainable policies linked to combating corruption in Egypt are not adequately dealt with. Thus, this study focuses in this article on Egypt's role and efforts exerted in combating corruption, as well as measuring the extent of administrative corruption. The Egyptian National Anti-Corruption Academy and its role in combatting corruption will be analyzed by portraying practical cases and assessing its impact, functionality, and influence.

2 The First Anti-Corruption Strategy 2014/2018

During his visit to the headquarters of the Administrative Control Authority President El-Sisi called for adopting a national strategy for combating corruption commemorating International Anti-Corruption Day on December 9, 2014. [10]

The National Coordinating Committee for Combating Corruption - formed by Resolution No. 2890 of 2010 - amended by Resolution 493 of 2014 - completed the implementation of nearly 99% of its objectives, as the Administrative Control Authority was able to work on improving the level of performance of the government agencies, and establishing the principles of transparency and integrity among its employees, building citizens' confidence in state institutions, enhancing local, regional and international cooperation, as well as the participation of civil society organizations. [11] This strategy comes in accordance with the implementation of Article 218 of the Egyptian Constitution, which states:

“The state is committed to combating corruption, and the law determines the competent oversight bodies and agencies. Competent oversight bodies and agencies shall, in coordination with one another, commit themselves to combat corruption, promoting the values of integrity and transparency, in order to ensure the good performance of public office and the preservation of public money, and developing and following up the implementation of the national anti-corruption strategy in partnership with other concerned bodies and agencies, in the manner regulated by law”

The Administrative Prosecution in Egypt issued a report asserting the role of such a strategy in combating corruption during the period from 2014 to 2017, where the state took three main paths to confront and eliminate corruption through three basic directions; the first related to the issuance of laws and regulations that would combat corruption, the second related to empowering the supervisory and judicial authorities based on implementing the strategy and the third is the will of the political leadership to combat corruption. The third element stated here “Leadership Will” is considered the driving force of the whole initiative as it was characterized by the existence of a will to combat corruption without covering up corruption or the corrupter, whatever their positions, this will create the climate to combat corruption.

Many advantages have appeared as a result of Administrative Prosecution in combating corruption, including:

1. The number of legal cases that the Administrative Prosecution initiated investigations during that stage.
2. Completion rate: The Public Prosecution Office completed (148,815) cases during the year 2014 out of the total cases that were being investigated. The cases that were completed in 2013 were (130,563) cases, an increase of (18,252) cases. It was also completed during the year 2015 (153,763) cases out of the total cases that were in circulation in the investigation, and the number of cases that were completed in 2014 was (148,815) cases, an increase of (4948) cases. During the year 2016, (189,156) cases were completed out of the total cases that were being investigated. The cases that were completed in 2015 were (153,763) cases, with an increase of (35,393) cases [11]

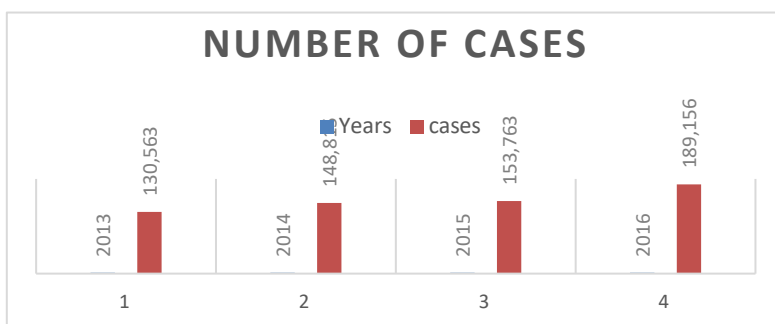


Fig. 1: Shows the number of cases from 2013 to 2016

After four years after launching its first national strategy on International Anti-Corruption Day, all units of the Egyptian state's administrative agencies joined forces with law enforcement institutions in order to activate the executive procedures for the strategy.

The Sub-Committee of National Coordinating for Prevention and Combating Corruption took over the task of following up on the implementation of the strategy, as well as its technical secretariat has undertaken the task of monitoring and following up on successful best practices withstanding the challenges that faced the implementation of the strategy in its first version. The strategy has established the principles of accountability and responsibility without discrimination, in its objectives and executive procedures, it voiced a strong message with regard to the impact that fighting corruption and the shared responsibility of all state authorities and society. It declared the citizen's right to know the results and efforts made in implementing the strategy and following it up. The accelerated steps taken by the Administrative Control Authority and the concerned authorities confirm that Egypt seeks to become one of the anti-corruption countries, this was evident during the first stage, and at the beginning of the second stage, as a prelude to succeeding in eradicating corruption, the objective of the strategy was to enhance the standard of living for all citizens and realize economic development and growth and communicated to the public through various means, such as social media and websites. [12]

3 The second anti-corruption strategy 2019/2022

President El-Sisi launched the second national anti-corruption strategy 2019/2022, at the conclusion of the 2018 Africa Forum in Sharm El-Sheikh, it comes as a continuation of the first strategy launched by the President in 2014, and this launch coincides with the International Anti-Corruption Day on the 9th of December [13]

The vision of the strategy is based on a society that is aware of the dangers of corruption and rejects it, with the support of an administrative body that upholds the values of transparency and integrity and known for its efficiency and effectiveness, the strategy message emphasizes identifying and evaluating the risks of corruption in Egypt and working to prevent and combat it through setting objectives, executive procedures, programs and mechanisms that ensure its containment, and activating a societal culture that rejects corruption, supporting the capabilities and independence of agencies and bodies to prevent corruption, and raising the levels of transparency and integrity in the country, with the engagement of all segments of society and in cooperation with local, regional and international stakeholders in order to achieve Egypt's Vision 2030 in order to activate the international and regional agreements concerned with combating corruption, especially the UN, Arab and African agreements. [14]

The coordination between the members of the Subcommittee of National Coordinating for Prevention and Combating Corruption resulted in the use of experts in the field of social sciences and management science, about setting the basic elements for the second version of the general strategy of the Egyptian state in this field, as it was prepared after studying the challenges presented by the 2014/2018 strategy to avoid them, and after studying many international experiences in ways to combat corruption and determining the most appropriate ways to apply it to the Egyptian situation.

The National Coordinating Committee for Combating Corruption has announced the duration of the strategy is four years, starting from January 2019 until the end of December 2022. The following nine objectives were proclaimed to regulate integrated efforts to not only combat corruption but also aid in facing challenges that might face the national committee during the second phase of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2019-2022 [15]

- 1- Developing efficient and effective administrative agencies
- 2- Providing public services of high quality
- 3- Activating transparency and integrity mechanisms
- 4- Developing the legislative structure supporting the fight against corruption:
- 5- Updating judicial procedures to achieve prompt justice

- 6- Supporting law enforcement agencies to prevent and combat corruption:
- 7- Increasing societal awareness of the importance of preventing and combating corruption.
- 8- Activating international and regional cooperation in preventing and combating corruption
- 9- Engaging civil society organizations

4 State Evaluation of the 2nd phase of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy: -

In October 2021 the Administrative Control Authority launched a follow-up report on the results of the national anti-corruption strategy 2019-2022 confirming that Egypt’s mission in striking corruption through prevention and combating it was quite successful. The goals and procedures implemented during the first and second years amounted to 60.95% of the total strategy, with a success rate of 85.27%. In a careful reading of the results of the strategy’s follow-up, we find that the first year of 2019 targeted the implementation of 39% of the total strategy, and 36.06% of it was implemented, with a success rate of 92.46%. The plan also, during the year 2020, followed up on the implementation of 2.94% of the strategy, which is in implementation arrears during 2019. The follow-up resulted in the implementation of 1.17% of the total strategy, bringing what was implemented during the first and second years to 60.59% of the total strategy, with a success rate of 85.27%. [16]

The report indicates that another year has passed with the National Anti-Corruption Strategy in 2020, the year 2020 ended with the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, which witnessed in its first quarter the outbreak of a global health crisis that affected all countries, namely - the Covid-19 virus pandemic, which posed a challenge to the anti-corruption system in the Arab Republic of Egypt. However, the detailed planning of the implementation steps of the strategy facilitated the system’s recovery process from the crisis. Many of the coordinators and officials responsible for following up on the implementation of the national strategy in the various state agencies have been infected with the virus, and as a precautionary measure to prevent disease, the holding of periodic direct meetings with the implementation coordinators at the headquarters of the Administrative Control Authority has been limited, and they have been replaced by indirect virtual means of communication. In the first year (2019) with the target of implementing 39% of the strategy, succeeded in implementing 36.06% of the total strategy, with a success rate of 92.46%. [17]

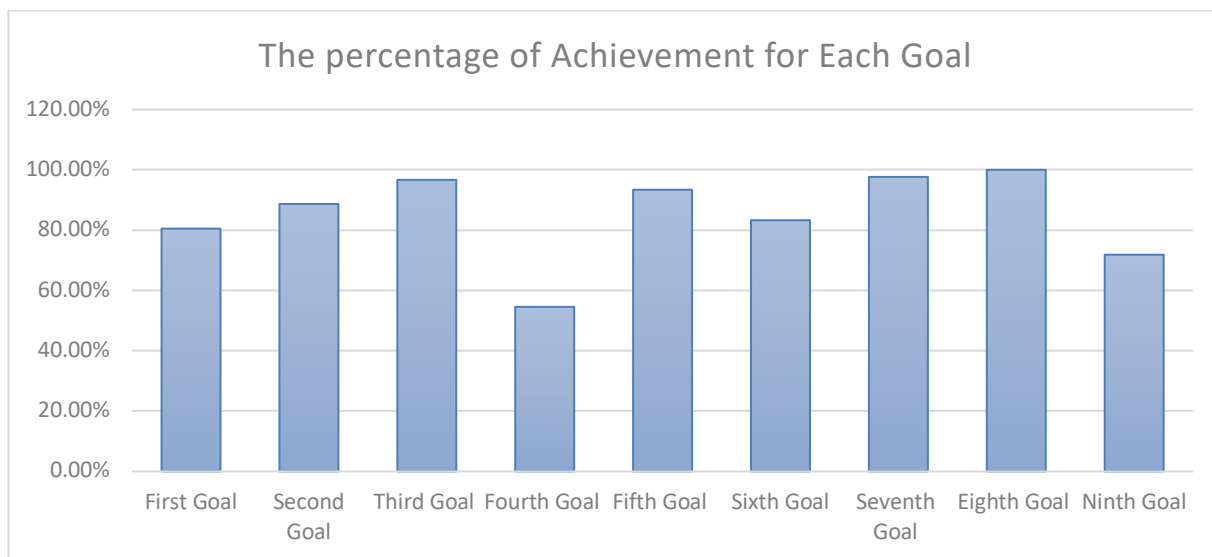


Fig. 2: shows the percentage of achievement for each goal in the second Phase

While during the second year (2020) which targeted the implementation of 32.06% of the total strategy, 23.36% were implemented, with a success rate of 72.86%.

- The plan also targeted, the year 2020, to follow up the implementation of 2.94% of the strategy, which is in implementation arrears during 2019. The follow-up resulted in the implementation of 1.17% of the total strategy, bringing what was implemented of the strategy during the first and second years to 60.59% of the total strategy. 85.27% success. [16]

- The results of the follow-up of the National Coordinating Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Corruption for the first and second years of the strategy. (85.27%) of the two-year target was achieved, with a rate of (59.60%) of the goals and procedures of the strategy. [17]

- The report of the results of the follow-up to the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2019-2022 includes the most

prominent successful practices, which were represented in achieving 14 goals, as a working guide for internal audit units was prepared, 40 organizational structures were created, the implementation of the workers' opinion survey on the work environment in 2019, and coordination to improve the value of the indicator, In addition to launching the "Rate Your Services" website with the aim of evaluating public services, the "GFMIS" system has been fully activated. [16]

The Egypt Award for Government Excellence has also been activated, and 45 electronic services have been provided on the Digital Egypt portal and 42 electronic services on the local services portal. The Internet, and continuing to publish the citizen's budget and budget, as well as preparing an ethical charter for the university community "faculty members and students. [18]

- Two versions of the Local Corruption Perceptions Index were issued during the years 2019 and 2020, the human rights and anti-corruption course was taught in all public universities, and an international workshop was implemented on protecting sports from corruption, in addition to holding 22 conferences to raise awareness of the dangers of corruption and the role of civil society in preventing and combating it. [19]

The report monitored the most prominent challenges, which were represented in 6 points: the delay in implementing the second version of the workers' satisfaction survey with the work environment, the failure to create a legislative support unit in most of the targeted organizational structures, and the insufficient interaction on the website "Rate Your Services" to issue a report on citizen satisfaction On government services, the lack of issuance of laws to protect whistleblowers, witnesses, victims, and experts, international cooperation in criminal matters, and freedom of information, as well as the lack of a law amending Law No. interests. [19]

5 Conclusion

The National Anti-Corruption Academy plays a key role in providing education and training in anti-corruption sciences to members of governmental and non-governmental organizations. The Academy has also established a Center for Research and Studies to conduct specialized studies and research in the field of combating corruption.

Also, Anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies (oversight and security) played a pivotal role in anti-corruption efforts, by ensuring the rule of law, taking preventive measures that prevent corrupt practices from occurring, as well as drawing up the general anti-corruption policy and supervising its implementation in cooperation with the concerned authorities. On the other hand, global and local developments and developments may lead to the emergence of new forms and areas of corruption, which may impose restrictions on anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies, as it becomes necessary for those agencies to develop advanced and renewed policies and procedures to prevent and combat corruption, and this strategic objective works to enable Anti-corruption agencies.

The effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts increases in societies that are aware of the dangers of corruption and the mechanisms to prevent it, and that is able to exercise social control and accountability through advanced systems for reporting and complaints that are efficient, effective, and responsive. All state institutions, along with civil society organizations and the private sector, play a role. It is vital in educating citizens and enabling them to exercise their oversight role, in a way that contributes to enhancing public confidence in the integrity of anti-corruption mechanisms.

Finally, combating corruption requires not only concerted national efforts, but international and regional ones as well, given that corruption is not limited to state borders, but rather a transnational phenomenon that requires joint cooperation, which is confirmed by the United Nations Convention against Corruption in its preamble that corruption is no longer a local matter. Rather, it is a transnational phenomenon that affects all societies and economies, which makes international cooperation to prevent and combat it necessary.

According to our analysis, Egypt advanced two degrees in the annual report issued by Transparency International on the Global Corruption Index for the year 2020, as its evaluation became 33 points out of 100, and this is considered progress compared to 2019 when Egypt's evaluation was 35 points. Egypt ranked 117th out of 180 countries, while it ranked 11th in the Arab countries.

It is noticeable, in light of the implementation of the two phases, that there is progress, which indicates the intention and will of the political leadership to combat corruption in all its forms in Egypt. However, all agencies concerned with combating corruption must unite and distinguish each agency in its competence, while ensuring the independence of these agencies over the executive authority and impartiality when adjudicating crimes. Corruption, which achieves more progress in combating corruption in a way that does not affect sustainable growth policies in the coming stages, finally the third phase of the strategy (2023-2030) is expected to build on the achievements of the previous phases and focus on sustainable development and the empowerment of civil society organizations to combat corruption.

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