



Date: 3 September 2019 Issue: Source: Al-Mal

Egypt's population growth lowest in 10 years

The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) announced the annual bulletin of births and deaths statistics for 2018. It noted that the rate of population increase in Egypt fell to its lowest level in 10 years, reaching 18.7 percent.

Over the period 2009 to 2014, the rate of increase continued to rise from 22.6 percent to 25.2 percent, before it began to decline gradually.

Our Views

- First, we would like to point out that the news confused the rate of population growth on the one hand and the rate of natural increase on the other hand. What is meant in the bulletin of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics is the rate of natural increase, i.e., the number of births minus the number of deaths, which is measured per thousand of the population, not as a percentage as reported.
- While the Bulletin of Births and Deaths indicates that the rate of natural increase has dropped from 25.5 children per 1,000 inhabitants in 2012 to only 18.7 in 2018, the annual statistical yearbook indicate that the population growth rate increased from 2.4 percent to 4.5 percent during the same period. So, is this considered statistical inconsistency due to unintentional error on the part of CAPMAS? Or are the data really sound. If sound, they need a scientific explanation that allows an understanding of the dynamics of population growth in Egypt and helps to put in place the appropriate mechanisms to reduce it. For example, is this due to the phenomenon of population momentum, which says that population continues to grow even after fertility rates decline as there is a broad category of young people of productive age in society?

- The Ministry of Social Solidarity is exerting great efforts and is taking an active role to face the increase in population. However, it is inaccurate to link the low rate of natural increase to the “Kefaya 2” initiative as reported in more than one news report, for the following reasons:
 - Firstly, the rate of natural increase has already started declining before the initiative began.
 - Secondly, the population phenomenon is complex and multi-dimensional, as it comprises economic, social, political, religious, psychological and geographic dimensions. The improvement in the rate of natural increase should not be attributed to one single initiative no matter how effective it is.
 - Thirdly, the impact of the campaign has not yet been rigorously evaluated unlike the Takaful and Karama program, and any talk about the impact of the campaign remains just unsubstantiated talk for which there is no solid scientific evidence.
- Historical experience indicates that population efforts in Egypt lack sustainability. The Government has succeeded in reducing the natural increase rates more than once since the sixties, but none of these efforts has been sustainable, for many reasons such as weak governance of the population file and the imbalance of the responsible institutional structure. The National Population Council must therefore be empowered and its reporting transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Prime Minister directly.
- Despite the launch of the National Population Strategy 2015-2030, there are many questions about it. Has adequate funding been allocated to implement all activities of the Strategy? What is the implementation status of the strategy so far? Has each stakeholder fulfilled its assigned role in implementing the strategy? What is the extent of achievement at the level of each pillar?

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