

The Threat of Overpopulation in Egypt

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The Threat of Overpopulation to Human Rights in Egypt

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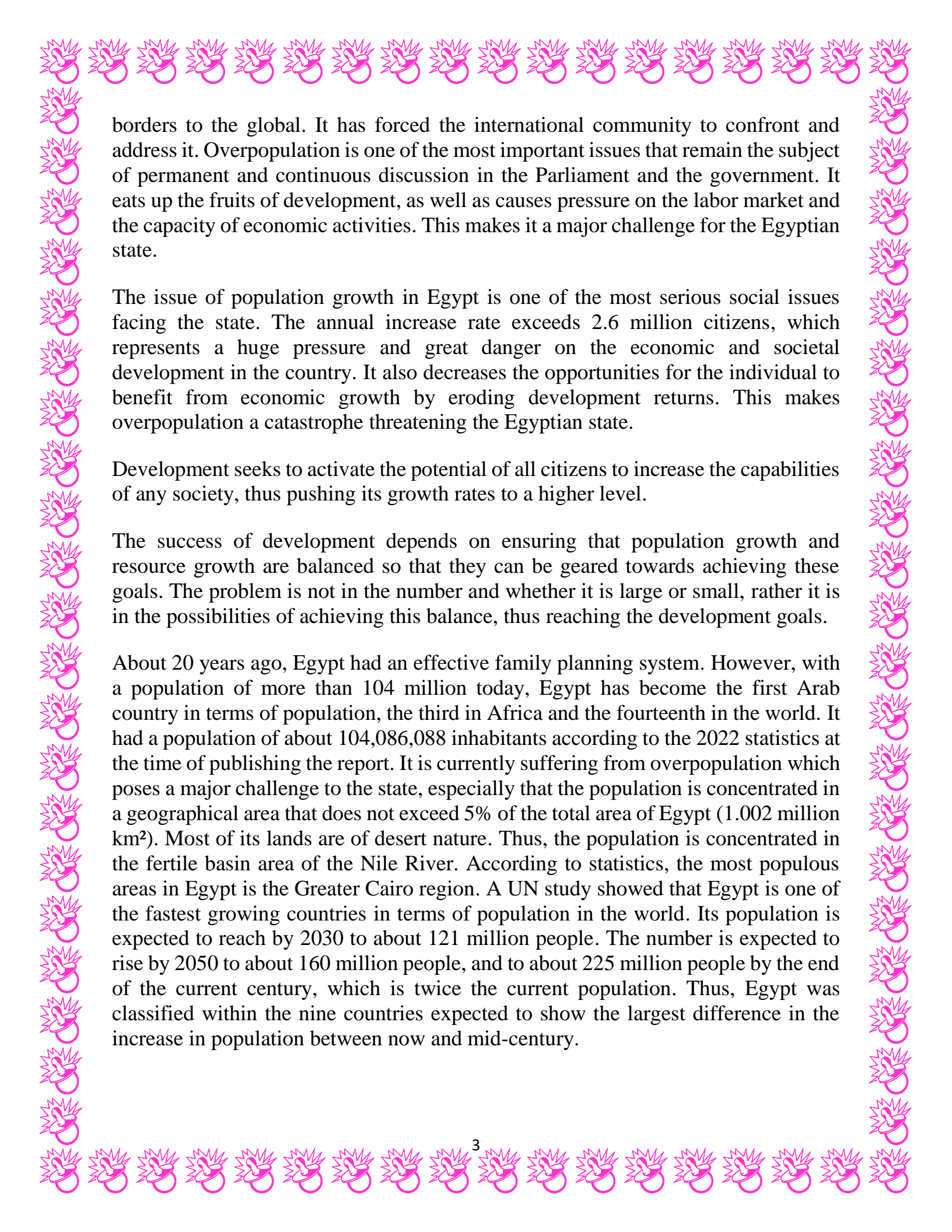
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Introduction

Overpopulation poses a challenge to all countries, developed and developing alike. There are facts that cannot be ignored about the population problem now. As much as it affects the individual and society, its dimensions have transcended regional



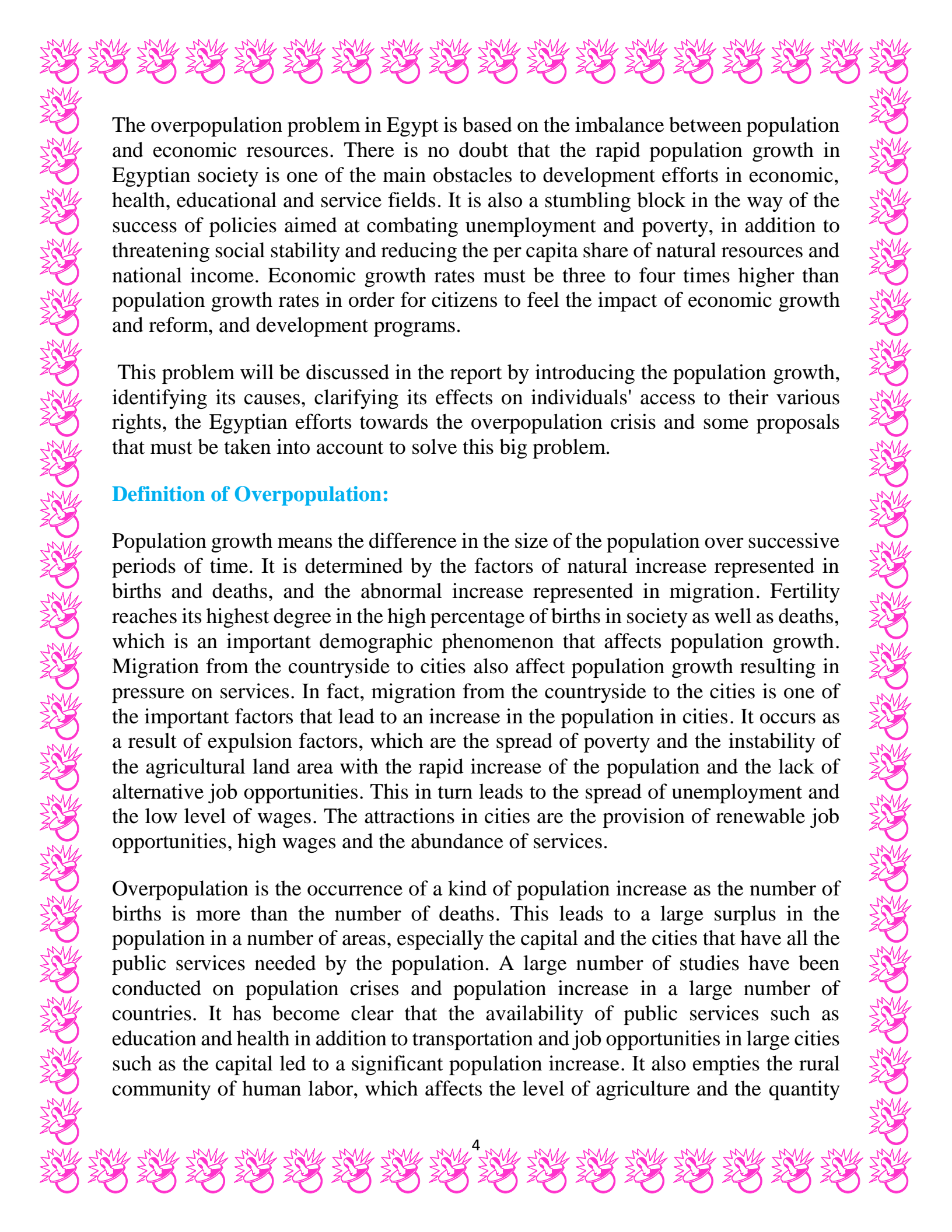
borders to the global. It has forced the international community to confront and address it. Overpopulation is one of the most important issues that remain the subject of permanent and continuous discussion in the Parliament and the government. It eats up the fruits of development, as well as causes pressure on the labor market and the capacity of economic activities. This makes it a major challenge for the Egyptian state.

The issue of population growth in Egypt is one of the most serious social issues facing the state. The annual increase rate exceeds 2.6 million citizens, which represents a huge pressure and great danger on the economic and societal development in the country. It also decreases the opportunities for the individual to benefit from economic growth by eroding development returns. This makes overpopulation a catastrophe threatening the Egyptian state.

Development seeks to activate the potential of all citizens to increase the capabilities of any society, thus pushing its growth rates to a higher level.

The success of development depends on ensuring that population growth and resource growth are balanced so that they can be geared towards achieving these goals. The problem is not in the number and whether it is large or small, rather it is in the possibilities of achieving this balance, thus reaching the development goals.

About 20 years ago, Egypt had an effective family planning system. However, with a population of more than 104 million today, Egypt has become the first Arab country in terms of population, the third in Africa and the fourteenth in the world. It had a population of about 104,086,088 inhabitants according to the 2022 statistics at the time of publishing the report. It is currently suffering from overpopulation which poses a major challenge to the state, especially that the population is concentrated in a geographical area that does not exceed 5% of the total area of Egypt (1.002 million km²). Most of its lands are of desert nature. Thus, the population is concentrated in the fertile basin area of the Nile River. According to statistics, the most populous areas in Egypt is the Greater Cairo region. A UN study showed that Egypt is one of the fastest growing countries in terms of population in the world. Its population is expected to reach by 2030 to about 121 million people. The number is expected to rise by 2050 to about 160 million people, and to about 225 million people by the end of the current century, which is twice the current population. Thus, Egypt was classified within the nine countries expected to show the largest difference in the increase in population between now and mid-century.



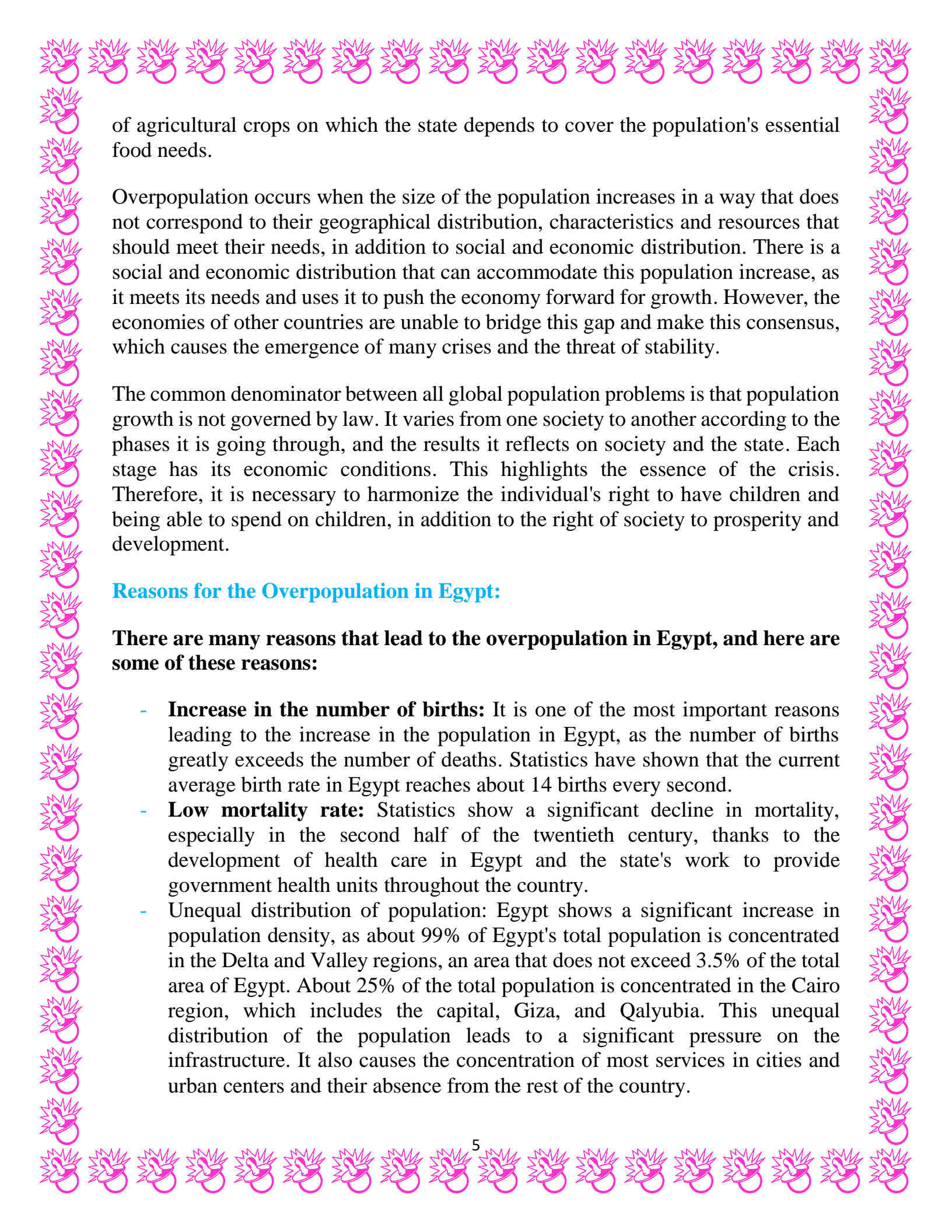
The overpopulation problem in Egypt is based on the imbalance between population and economic resources. There is no doubt that the rapid population growth in Egyptian society is one of the main obstacles to development efforts in economic, health, educational and service fields. It is also a stumbling block in the way of the success of policies aimed at combating unemployment and poverty, in addition to threatening social stability and reducing the per capita share of natural resources and national income. Economic growth rates must be three to four times higher than population growth rates in order for citizens to feel the impact of economic growth and reform, and development programs.

This problem will be discussed in the report by introducing the population growth, identifying its causes, clarifying its effects on individuals' access to their various rights, the Egyptian efforts towards the overpopulation crisis and some proposals that must be taken into account to solve this big problem.

Definition of Overpopulation:

Population growth means the difference in the size of the population over successive periods of time. It is determined by the factors of natural increase represented in births and deaths, and the abnormal increase represented in migration. Fertility reaches its highest degree in the high percentage of births in society as well as deaths, which is an important demographic phenomenon that affects population growth. Migration from the countryside to cities also affect population growth resulting in pressure on services. In fact, migration from the countryside to the cities is one of the important factors that lead to an increase in the population in cities. It occurs as a result of expulsion factors, which are the spread of poverty and the instability of the agricultural land area with the rapid increase of the population and the lack of alternative job opportunities. This in turn leads to the spread of unemployment and the low level of wages. The attractions in cities are the provision of renewable job opportunities, high wages and the abundance of services.

Overpopulation is the occurrence of a kind of population increase as the number of births is more than the number of deaths. This leads to a large surplus in the population in a number of areas, especially the capital and the cities that have all the public services needed by the population. A large number of studies have been conducted on population crises and population increase in a large number of countries. It has become clear that the availability of public services such as education and health in addition to transportation and job opportunities in large cities such as the capital led to a significant population increase. It also empties the rural community of human labor, which affects the level of agriculture and the quantity



of agricultural crops on which the state depends to cover the population's essential food needs.

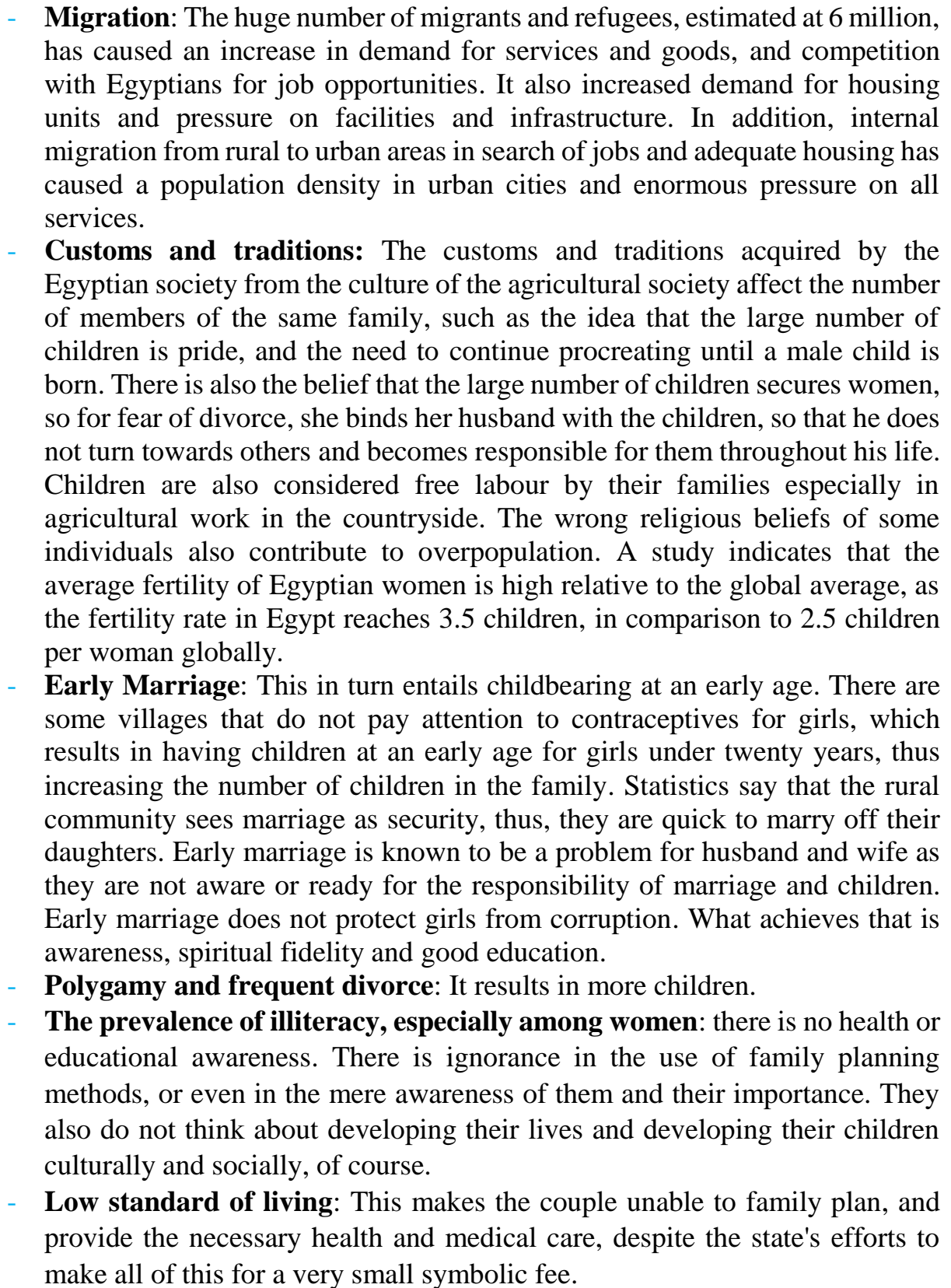
Overpopulation occurs when the size of the population increases in a way that does not correspond to their geographical distribution, characteristics and resources that should meet their needs, in addition to social and economic distribution. There is a social and economic distribution that can accommodate this population increase, as it meets its needs and uses it to push the economy forward for growth. However, the economies of other countries are unable to bridge this gap and make this consensus, which causes the emergence of many crises and the threat of stability.

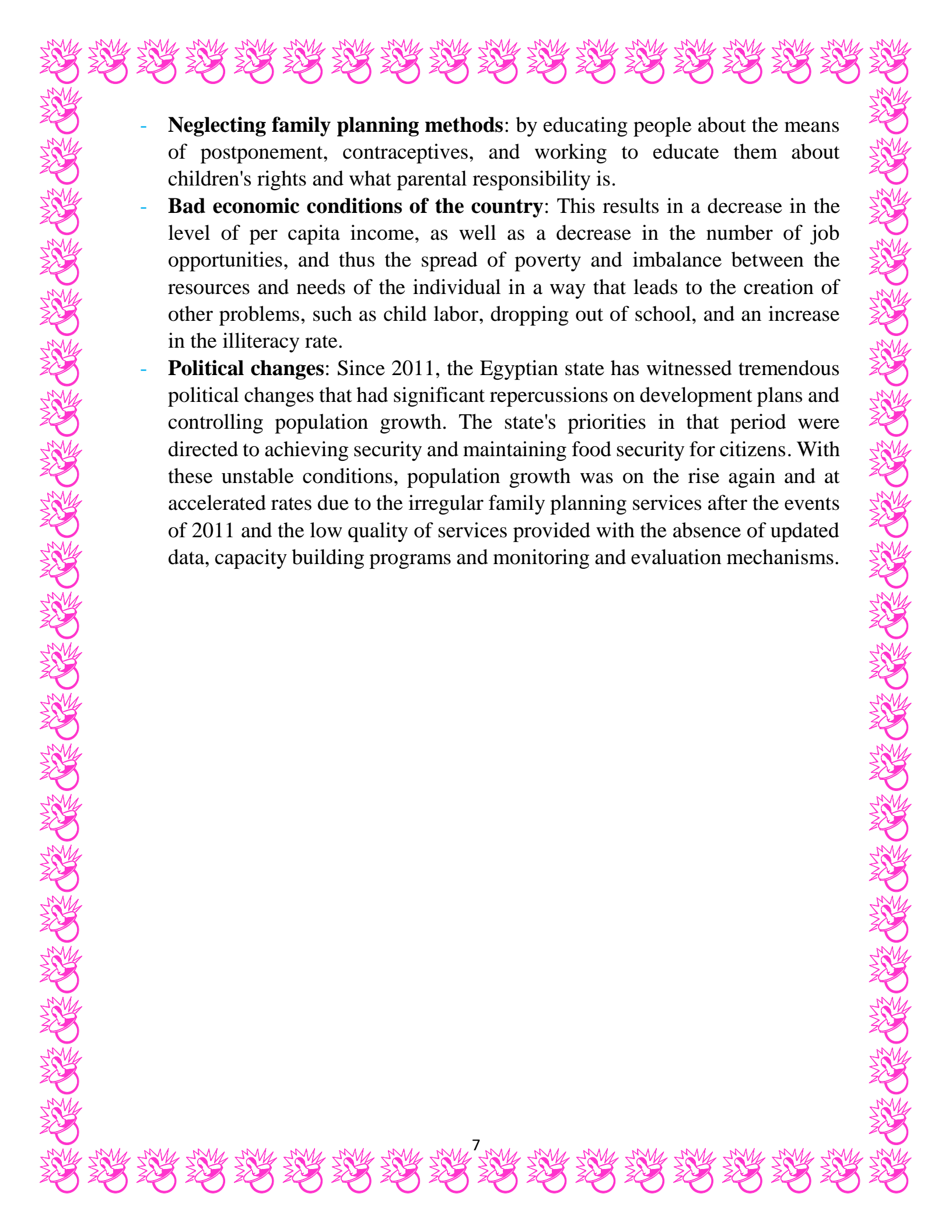
The common denominator between all global population problems is that population growth is not governed by law. It varies from one society to another according to the phases it is going through, and the results it reflects on society and the state. Each stage has its economic conditions. This highlights the essence of the crisis. Therefore, it is necessary to harmonize the individual's right to have children and being able to spend on children, in addition to the right of society to prosperity and development.

Reasons for the Overpopulation in Egypt:

There are many reasons that lead to the overpopulation in Egypt, and here are some of these reasons:

- **Increase in the number of births:** It is one of the most important reasons leading to the increase in the population in Egypt, as the number of births greatly exceeds the number of deaths. Statistics have shown that the current average birth rate in Egypt reaches about 14 births every second.
- **Low mortality rate:** Statistics show a significant decline in mortality, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, thanks to the development of health care in Egypt and the state's work to provide government health units throughout the country.
- **Unequal distribution of population:** Egypt shows a significant increase in population density, as about 99% of Egypt's total population is concentrated in the Delta and Valley regions, an area that does not exceed 3.5% of the total area of Egypt. About 25% of the total population is concentrated in the Cairo region, which includes the capital, Giza, and Qalyubia. This unequal distribution of the population leads to a significant pressure on the infrastructure. It also causes the concentration of most services in cities and urban centers and their absence from the rest of the country.

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- **Migration:** The huge number of migrants and refugees, estimated at 6 million, has caused an increase in demand for services and goods, and competition with Egyptians for job opportunities. It also increased demand for housing units and pressure on facilities and infrastructure. In addition, internal migration from rural to urban areas in search of jobs and adequate housing has caused a population density in urban cities and enormous pressure on all services.
 - **Customs and traditions:** The customs and traditions acquired by the Egyptian society from the culture of the agricultural society affect the number of members of the same family, such as the idea that the large number of children is pride, and the need to continue procreating until a male child is born. There is also the belief that the large number of children secures women, so for fear of divorce, she binds her husband with the children, so that he does not turn towards others and becomes responsible for them throughout his life. Children are also considered free labour by their families especially in agricultural work in the countryside. The wrong religious beliefs of some individuals also contribute to overpopulation. A study indicates that the average fertility of Egyptian women is high relative to the global average, as the fertility rate in Egypt reaches 3.5 children, in comparison to 2.5 children per woman globally.
 - **Early Marriage:** This in turn entails childbearing at an early age. There are some villages that do not pay attention to contraceptives for girls, which results in having children at an early age for girls under twenty years, thus increasing the number of children in the family. Statistics say that the rural community sees marriage as security, thus, they are quick to marry off their daughters. Early marriage is known to be a problem for husband and wife as they are not aware or ready for the responsibility of marriage and children. Early marriage does not protect girls from corruption. What achieves that is awareness, spiritual fidelity and good education.
 - **Polygamy and frequent divorce:** It results in more children.
 - **The prevalence of illiteracy, especially among women:** there is no health or educational awareness. There is ignorance in the use of family planning methods, or even in the mere awareness of them and their importance. They also do not think about developing their lives and developing their children culturally and socially, of course.
 - **Low standard of living:** This makes the couple unable to family plan, and provide the necessary health and medical care, despite the state's efforts to make all of this for a very small symbolic fee.

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- A decorative border consisting of a repeating pattern of pink hand icons with fingers spread, arranged in a rectangular frame around the text.
- **Neglecting family planning methods:** by educating people about the means of postponement, contraceptives, and working to educate them about children's rights and what parental responsibility is.
 - **Bad economic conditions of the country:** This results in a decrease in the level of per capita income, as well as a decrease in the number of job opportunities, and thus the spread of poverty and imbalance between the resources and needs of the individual in a way that leads to the creation of other problems, such as child labor, dropping out of school, and an increase in the illiteracy rate.
 - **Political changes:** Since 2011, the Egyptian state has witnessed tremendous political changes that had significant repercussions on development plans and controlling population growth. The state's priorities in that period were directed to achieving security and maintaining food security for citizens. With these unstable conditions, population growth was on the rise again and at accelerated rates due to the irregular family planning services after the events of 2011 and the low quality of services provided with the absence of updated data, capacity building programs and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

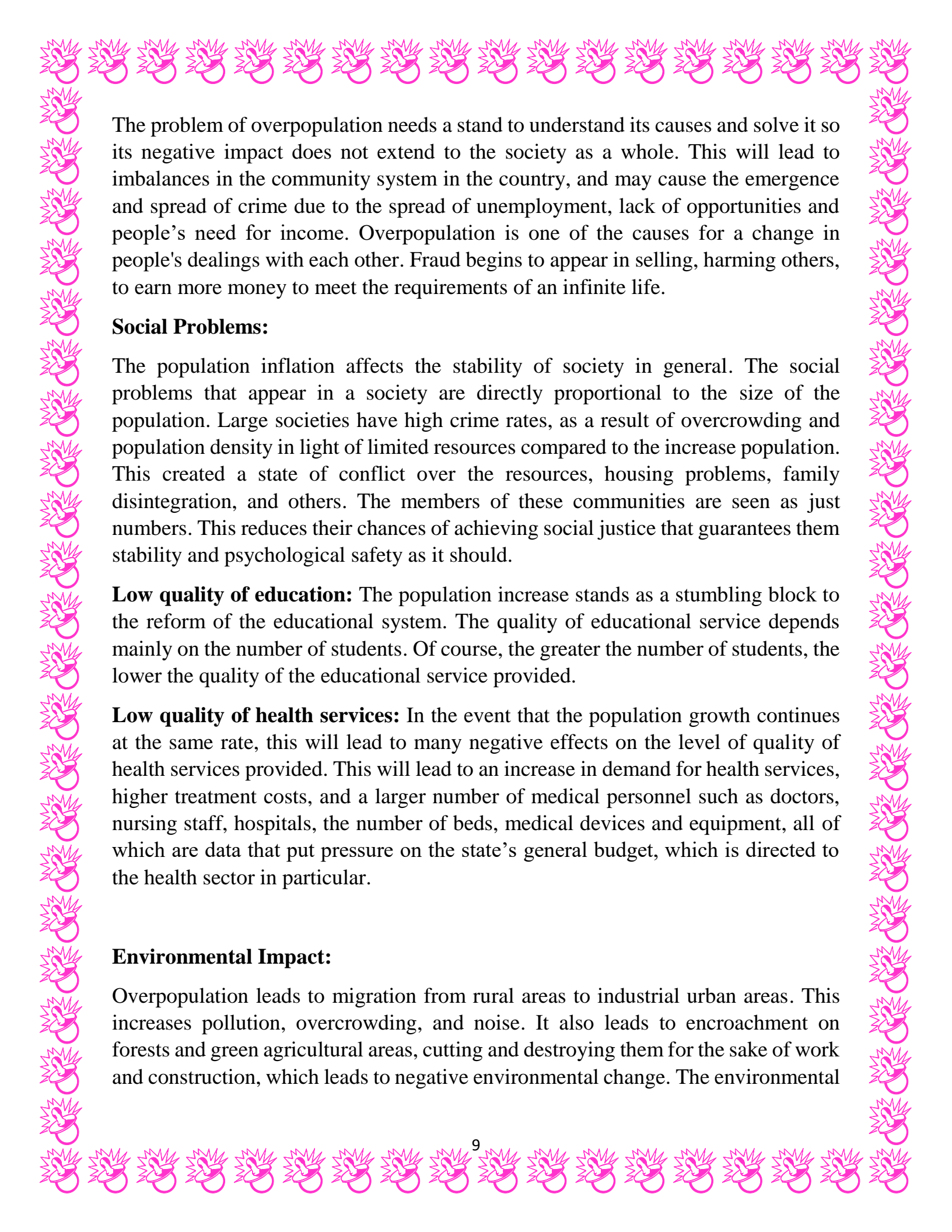


The Impact of the Overpopulation Crisis on Human Rights:

Economic Impact and Community Development:

The negative effects caused by the large increase in population on the economic, social and cultural levels stand as an obstacle to the development and prosperity of society due to:

1. Increasing the consumption of individuals, and thus reducing their savings for investment purposes. This leads to reducing the possibility of raising the level of national income per capita, as the national income becomes lower than its previous rates. This consequently leads to a decrease in the standard of living.
2. The high cost of living as prices rise with the increase in demand for all resources, including health care, food and shelter, and the lack of materials produced and raw materials.
3. Increasing the state's expenditures on basic services such as education, health, utilities, protection, security and housing. The high population leads to a shortage and an increase in demand for them. Consumer spending is at the expense of development expenditures and funds allocated to investment projects such as industry, agriculture and trade, which leads to the depletion of resources.
4. The spread of the phenomenon of unemployment, especially among the educated, which leads to the migration of scientific competencies abroad.
5. The apparent decline of wage ratio in the private and government sectors due to the large supply of labor. The population increase may lead to an increase in the prices of goods and services as a result of the increase in demand for them in a manner disproportionate to the wage ratio. This leads to a decrease in the standard of living of individual and the family, difficulty of caring for children and child labor, large number of family disputes, weakness of family control as a result of the parents' preoccupation, and increase in psychological pressure on parents.
6. 6. The increase in the prices of housing units due to the difficulty of providing the necessary numbers to meet the needs of new families, in addition to the increase in population leading to urban sprawl on agricultural lands and a decrease in agricultural production, thus affecting the state's economy.
7. The collapse of public utilities as a result of increased pressure on them and insufficient investments to renew and expand them.
8. Insufficient services such as food, housing, clothing, hospitals, schools, and transportation, because the state is unable to serve all this number.



The problem of overpopulation needs a stand to understand its causes and solve it so its negative impact does not extend to the society as a whole. This will lead to imbalances in the community system in the country, and may cause the emergence and spread of crime due to the spread of unemployment, lack of opportunities and people's need for income. Overpopulation is one of the causes for a change in people's dealings with each other. Fraud begins to appear in selling, harming others, to earn more money to meet the requirements of an infinite life.

Social Problems:

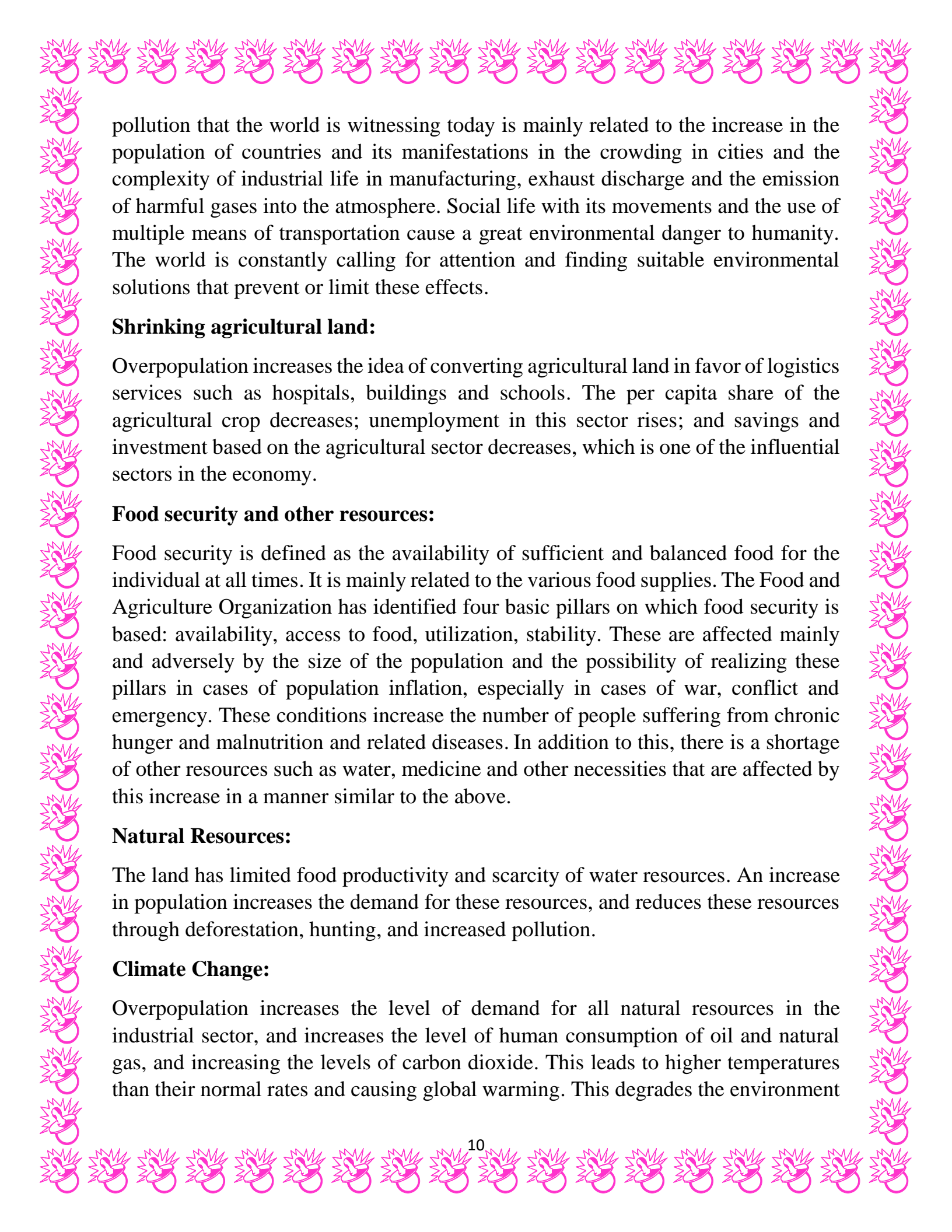
The population inflation affects the stability of society in general. The social problems that appear in a society are directly proportional to the size of the population. Large societies have high crime rates, as a result of overcrowding and population density in light of limited resources compared to the increase population. This created a state of conflict over the resources, housing problems, family disintegration, and others. The members of these communities are seen as just numbers. This reduces their chances of achieving social justice that guarantees them stability and psychological safety as it should.

Low quality of education: The population increase stands as a stumbling block to the reform of the educational system. The quality of educational service depends mainly on the number of students. Of course, the greater the number of students, the lower the quality of the educational service provided.

Low quality of health services: In the event that the population growth continues at the same rate, this will lead to many negative effects on the level of quality of health services provided. This will lead to an increase in demand for health services, higher treatment costs, and a larger number of medical personnel such as doctors, nursing staff, hospitals, the number of beds, medical devices and equipment, all of which are data that put pressure on the state's general budget, which is directed to the health sector in particular.

Environmental Impact:

Overpopulation leads to migration from rural areas to industrial urban areas. This increases pollution, overcrowding, and noise. It also leads to encroachment on forests and green agricultural areas, cutting and destroying them for the sake of work and construction, which leads to negative environmental change. The environmental



pollution that the world is witnessing today is mainly related to the increase in the population of countries and its manifestations in the crowding in cities and the complexity of industrial life in manufacturing, exhaust discharge and the emission of harmful gases into the atmosphere. Social life with its movements and the use of multiple means of transportation cause a great environmental danger to humanity. The world is constantly calling for attention and finding suitable environmental solutions that prevent or limit these effects.

Shrinking agricultural land:

Overpopulation increases the idea of converting agricultural land in favor of logistics services such as hospitals, buildings and schools. The per capita share of the agricultural crop decreases; unemployment in this sector rises; and savings and investment based on the agricultural sector decreases, which is one of the influential sectors in the economy.

Food security and other resources:

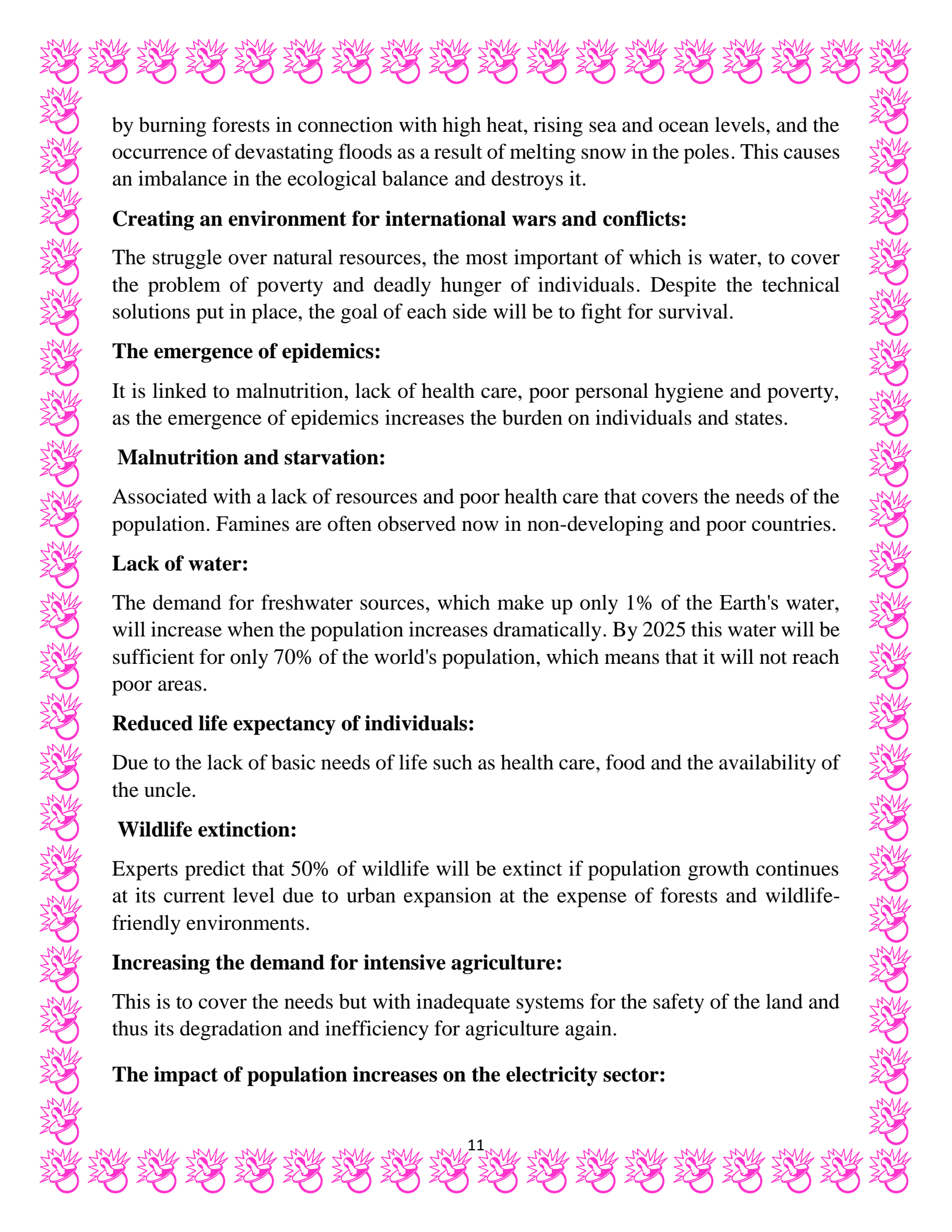
Food security is defined as the availability of sufficient and balanced food for the individual at all times. It is mainly related to the various food supplies. The Food and Agriculture Organization has identified four basic pillars on which food security is based: availability, access to food, utilization, stability. These are affected mainly and adversely by the size of the population and the possibility of realizing these pillars in cases of population inflation, especially in cases of war, conflict and emergency. These conditions increase the number of people suffering from chronic hunger and malnutrition and related diseases. In addition to this, there is a shortage of other resources such as water, medicine and other necessities that are affected by this increase in a manner similar to the above.

Natural Resources:

The land has limited food productivity and scarcity of water resources. An increase in population increases the demand for these resources, and reduces these resources through deforestation, hunting, and increased pollution.

Climate Change:

Overpopulation increases the level of demand for all natural resources in the industrial sector, and increases the level of human consumption of oil and natural gas, and increasing the levels of carbon dioxide. This leads to higher temperatures than their normal rates and causing global warming. This degrades the environment



by burning forests in connection with high heat, rising sea and ocean levels, and the occurrence of devastating floods as a result of melting snow in the poles. This causes an imbalance in the ecological balance and destroys it.

Creating an environment for international wars and conflicts:

The struggle over natural resources, the most important of which is water, to cover the problem of poverty and deadly hunger of individuals. Despite the technical solutions put in place, the goal of each side will be to fight for survival.

The emergence of epidemics:

It is linked to malnutrition, lack of health care, poor personal hygiene and poverty, as the emergence of epidemics increases the burden on individuals and states.

Malnutrition and starvation:

Associated with a lack of resources and poor health care that covers the needs of the population. Famines are often observed now in non-developing and poor countries.

Lack of water:

The demand for freshwater sources, which make up only 1% of the Earth's water, will increase when the population increases dramatically. By 2025 this water will be sufficient for only 70% of the world's population, which means that it will not reach poor areas.

Reduced life expectancy of individuals:

Due to the lack of basic needs of life such as health care, food and the availability of the uncle.

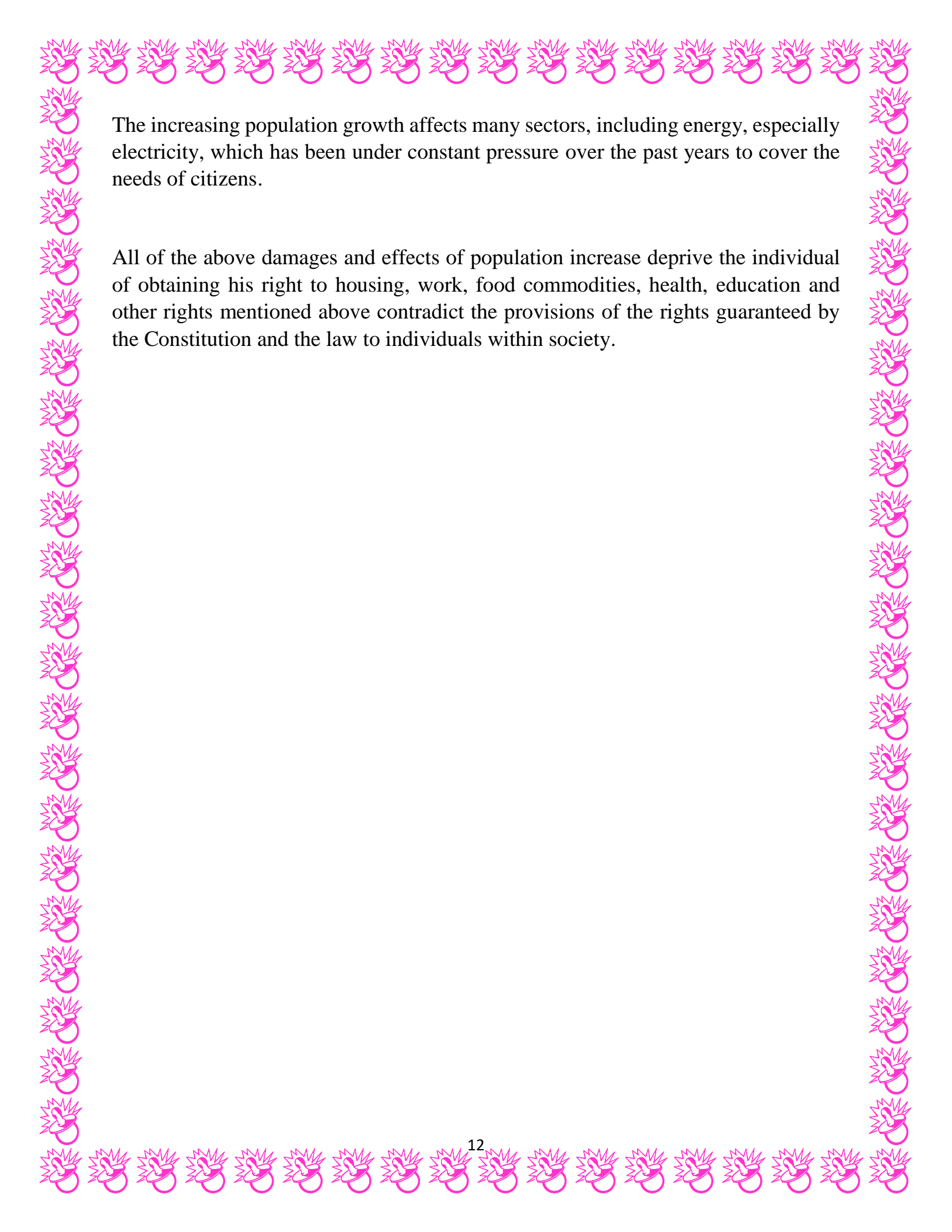
Wildlife extinction:

Experts predict that 50% of wildlife will be extinct if population growth continues at its current level due to urban expansion at the expense of forests and wildlife-friendly environments.

Increasing the demand for intensive agriculture:

This is to cover the needs but with inadequate systems for the safety of the land and thus its degradation and inefficiency for agriculture again.

The impact of population increases on the electricity sector:



The increasing population growth affects many sectors, including energy, especially electricity, which has been under constant pressure over the past years to cover the needs of citizens.

All of the above damages and effects of population increase deprive the individual of obtaining his right to housing, work, food commodities, health, education and other rights mentioned above contradict the provisions of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the law to individuals within society.

Egyptian Efforts towards the Overpopulation Crisis:

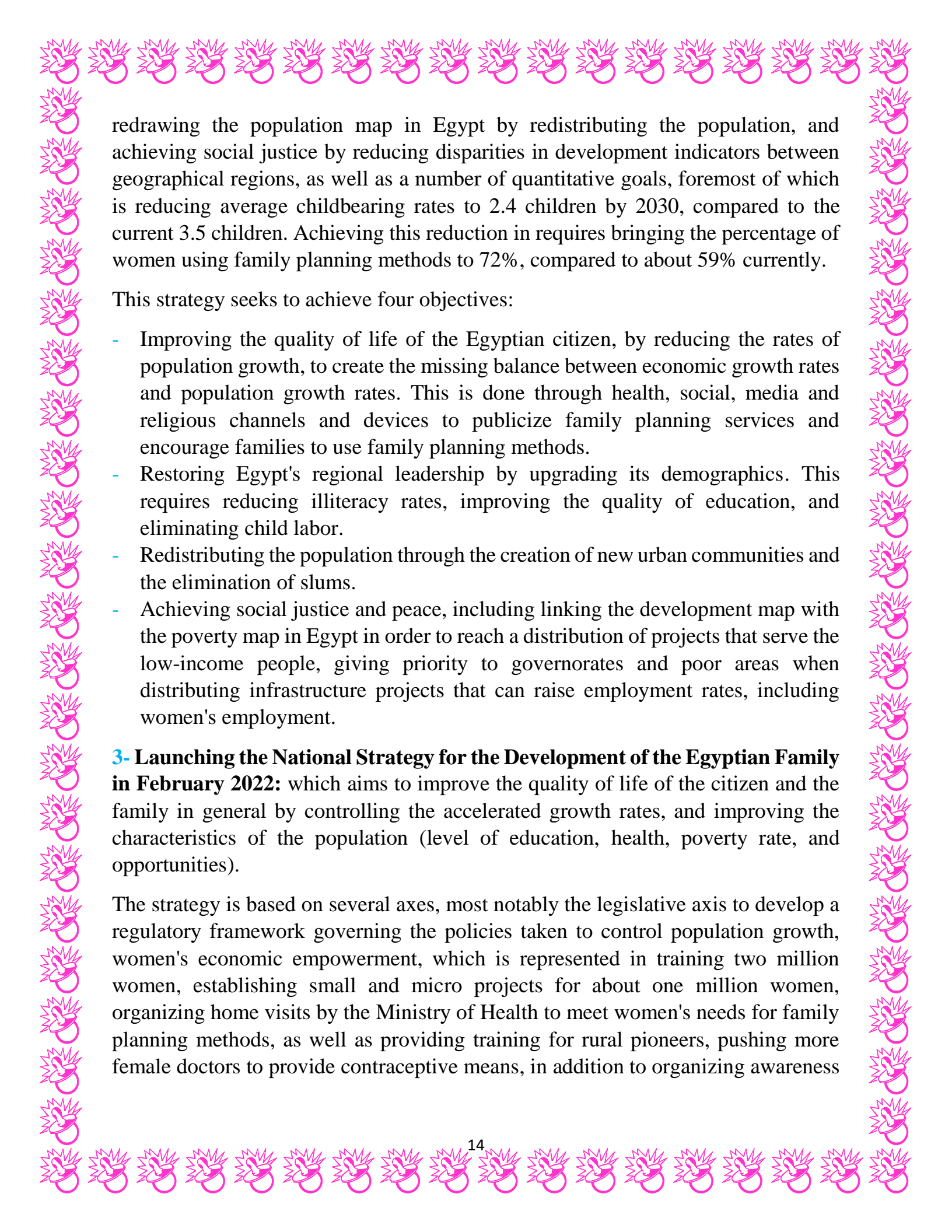
The state has moved quickly in developing a precise plan for economic and social development in accordance with the National Project for the Development of the Egyptian Family, aimed at reducing the poverty rate by at least one percent annually, and controlling the population growth rate by developing the appropriate treatment for that crisis through several axes as follows:

- ❖ Raising the efficiency of hospitals and family health and development units.
- ❖ Inclusion of EGP 2 billion for the Egyptian Family Development Project in the sustainable development plan.
- ❖ Implementation of one million micro projects through the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the Women's Enterprise Development Authority.
- ❖ Training 2 million women on project management, digital literacy and financial inclusion, qualifying them for the labor market according to investment opportunities in each governorate.
- ❖ Establishing a government fund for the insurance and development of the Egyptian family, which grants incentives to families committed to the determinants of population growth control.

The Egyptian political leadership is aware of the seriousness of the population issue, which has become an increasing challenge to development plans in Egypt and its serious repercussions, which has made this issue a priority in the reform and construction process carried out by the Egyptian state since 2014 to achieve comprehensive and balanced development, as many measures, initiatives and programs have been taken in order to confront this problem, and these procedures can be summarized as follows:

1- The Egyptian Constitution (Article 41): The Egyptian Constitution obligated the state to develop a national program that creates a balance between population increase and available resources, Article 41 of the Egyptian Constitution 2014 stipulates that: " The state commits to the implementation of a housing program that aims at achieving balance between population growth rates and the resources available, maximizing investment in human energy, and improving its features, within the framework of achieving sustainable development."

2- Launching the National Population Strategy (2015-2030): This strategy aims to improve the quality of life of the citizen through: reducing population growth rates to create the missing balance between economic and population growth rates,



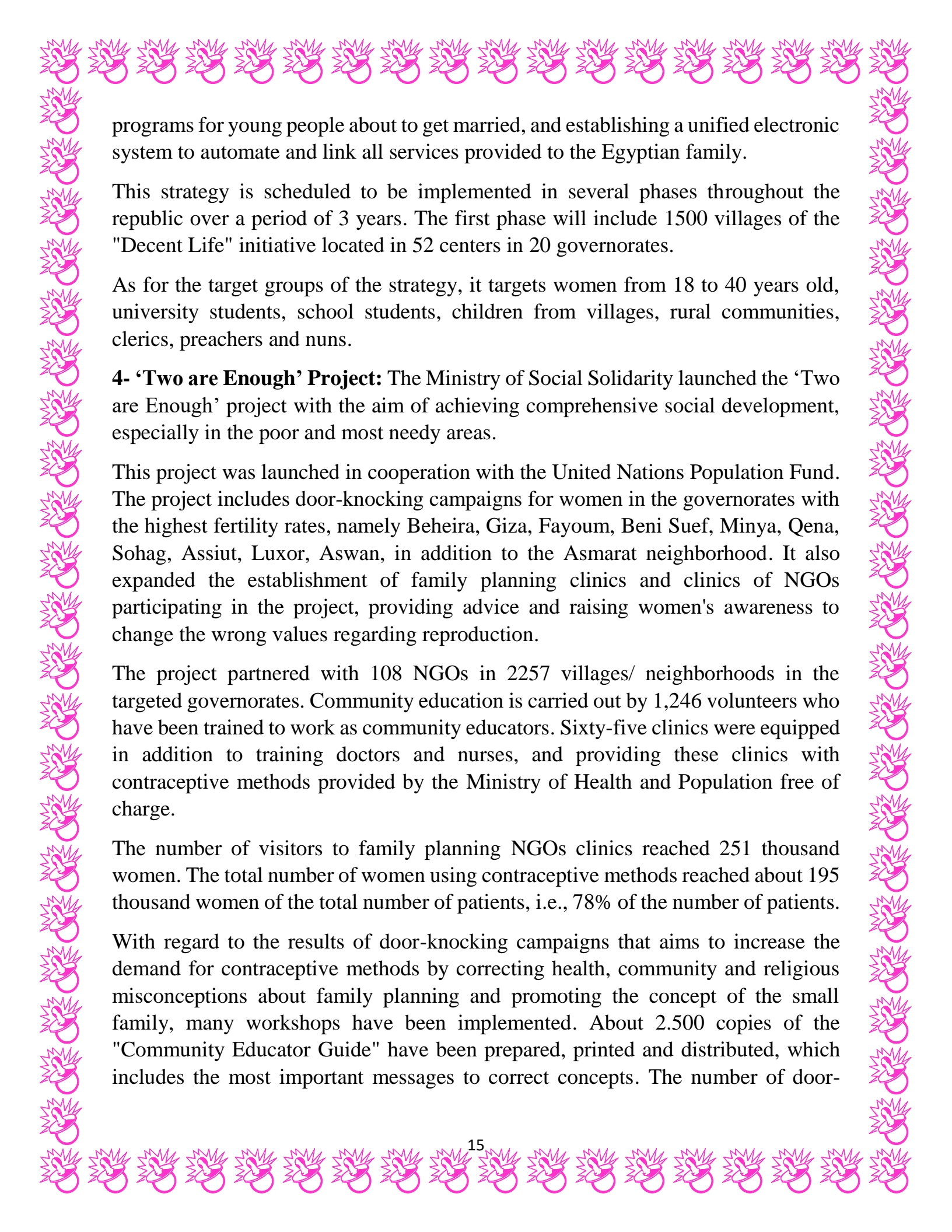
redrawing the population map in Egypt by redistributing the population, and achieving social justice by reducing disparities in development indicators between geographical regions, as well as a number of quantitative goals, foremost of which is reducing average childbearing rates to 2.4 children by 2030, compared to the current 3.5 children. Achieving this reduction in requires bringing the percentage of women using family planning methods to 72%, compared to about 59% currently.

This strategy seeks to achieve four objectives:

- Improving the quality of life of the Egyptian citizen, by reducing the rates of population growth, to create the missing balance between economic growth rates and population growth rates. This is done through health, social, media and religious channels and devices to publicize family planning services and encourage families to use family planning methods.
- Restoring Egypt's regional leadership by upgrading its demographics. This requires reducing illiteracy rates, improving the quality of education, and eliminating child labor.
- Redistributing the population through the creation of new urban communities and the elimination of slums.
- Achieving social justice and peace, including linking the development map with the poverty map in Egypt in order to reach a distribution of projects that serve the low-income people, giving priority to governorates and poor areas when distributing infrastructure projects that can raise employment rates, including women's employment.

3- Launching the National Strategy for the Development of the Egyptian Family in February 2022: which aims to improve the quality of life of the citizen and the family in general by controlling the accelerated growth rates, and improving the characteristics of the population (level of education, health, poverty rate, and opportunities).

The strategy is based on several axes, most notably the legislative axis to develop a regulatory framework governing the policies taken to control population growth, women's economic empowerment, which is represented in training two million women, establishing small and micro projects for about one million women, organizing home visits by the Ministry of Health to meet women's needs for family planning methods, as well as providing training for rural pioneers, pushing more female doctors to provide contraceptive means, in addition to organizing awareness



programs for young people about to get married, and establishing a unified electronic system to automate and link all services provided to the Egyptian family.

This strategy is scheduled to be implemented in several phases throughout the republic over a period of 3 years. The first phase will include 1500 villages of the "Decent Life" initiative located in 52 centers in 20 governorates.

As for the target groups of the strategy, it targets women from 18 to 40 years old, university students, school students, children from villages, rural communities, clerics, preachers and nuns.

4- 'Two are Enough' Project: The Ministry of Social Solidarity launched the 'Two are Enough' project with the aim of achieving comprehensive social development, especially in the poor and most needy areas.

This project was launched in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund. The project includes door-knocking campaigns for women in the governorates with the highest fertility rates, namely Beheira, Giza, Fayoum, Beni Suef, Minya, Qena, Sohag, Assiut, Luxor, Aswan, in addition to the Asmarat neighborhood. It also expanded the establishment of family planning clinics and clinics of NGOs participating in the project, providing advice and raising women's awareness to change the wrong values regarding reproduction.

The project partnered with 108 NGOs in 2257 villages/ neighborhoods in the targeted governorates. Community education is carried out by 1,246 volunteers who have been trained to work as community educators. Sixty-five clinics were equipped in addition to training doctors and nurses, and providing these clinics with contraceptive methods provided by the Ministry of Health and Population free of charge.

The number of visitors to family planning NGOs clinics reached 251 thousand women. The total number of women using contraceptive methods reached about 195 thousand women of the total number of patients, i.e., 78% of the number of patients.

With regard to the results of door-knocking campaigns that aims to increase the demand for contraceptive methods by correcting health, community and religious misconceptions about family planning and promoting the concept of the small family, many workshops have been implemented. About 2.500 copies of the "Community Educator Guide" have been prepared, printed and distributed, which includes the most important messages to correct concepts. The number of door-

knocking visits reached 9.300 million visits. The number of visits of targeted women to family planning clinics at the Ministry of Health and NGOs clinics reached 1.751 visits.

The program succeeded in mobilizing 1.250 volunteers to cooperate in community marketing for all social issues marketed by the Ministry. During the suspension of door-knocking campaigns in the second quarter of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 703 thousand phone calls were made to raise awareness of family planning and ways to prevent the Coronavirus.

5- Expansion of social protection programs: the latest of which was the addition of one million families to the conditional cash program "Takaful and Karama", which was launched in 2015, as well as the disbursement of exceptional assistance to 9 million families within 6 months. The state directed more than 2 trillion pounds to social protection programs, during the previous eight years (2014/2015-2021/2022), with a 95% increase, compared to the previous eight years (2006/2007 - 2013/2014).

One of the most prominent fruits of social protection programs was the decrease in poverty rates in Egypt for many years. The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) explained that poverty rates declined in Egypt to 29.7% in the year 2019-2020 compared to 32.5% in the year 2017-2018. For the first time in 20 years, the rate of extreme poverty decreased to 4.5% in 2019/2020 compared to 6.2% in 2017/2018.

6- Increasing public utility services to citizens: Despite the huge increase in the population, the percentage of households connected to the public electricity network reached 99.7% in 2017, compared to 99.07% in 2006. The percentage of households connected to the public water network reached 96.97% in 2017 compared to 96.60%. The percentage of households connected to the public sewage network reached 55.89% compared to 46.60% in 2006.

7- Increasing the agricultural area: The state sought to increase the cultivated area by implementing projects aimed at expanding land reclamation, the most prominent of which were: the One and a half Million Feddan Project and the New Delta Project.

Through these projects, the state aims to achieve self-sufficiency and national food security in line with the rates of population increase. According to the statements of the Minister of Agriculture, the total area of agricultural land has now reached about

9.4 million acres, of which 6.1 million acres are old lands, and the rest are new and reclaimed lands.

8- Preparing a water resources strategy: until 2050, and developing a national plan for water resources until 2037 at a cost of \$50 billion, which is expected to increase to \$100 billion. It is based on four main axes, including: rationalizing the use of available water resources and raising the efficiency of the irrigation system through canal lining projects and conversion to modern irrigation systems; improving water quality through the establishment of dual and triple treatment plants; providing additional water sources such as desalination of sea water; creating a climate for optimal water management through legislative and institutional development and increasing citizens' awareness of the importance of rationalizing water and preserving it from all forms of waste and pollution.

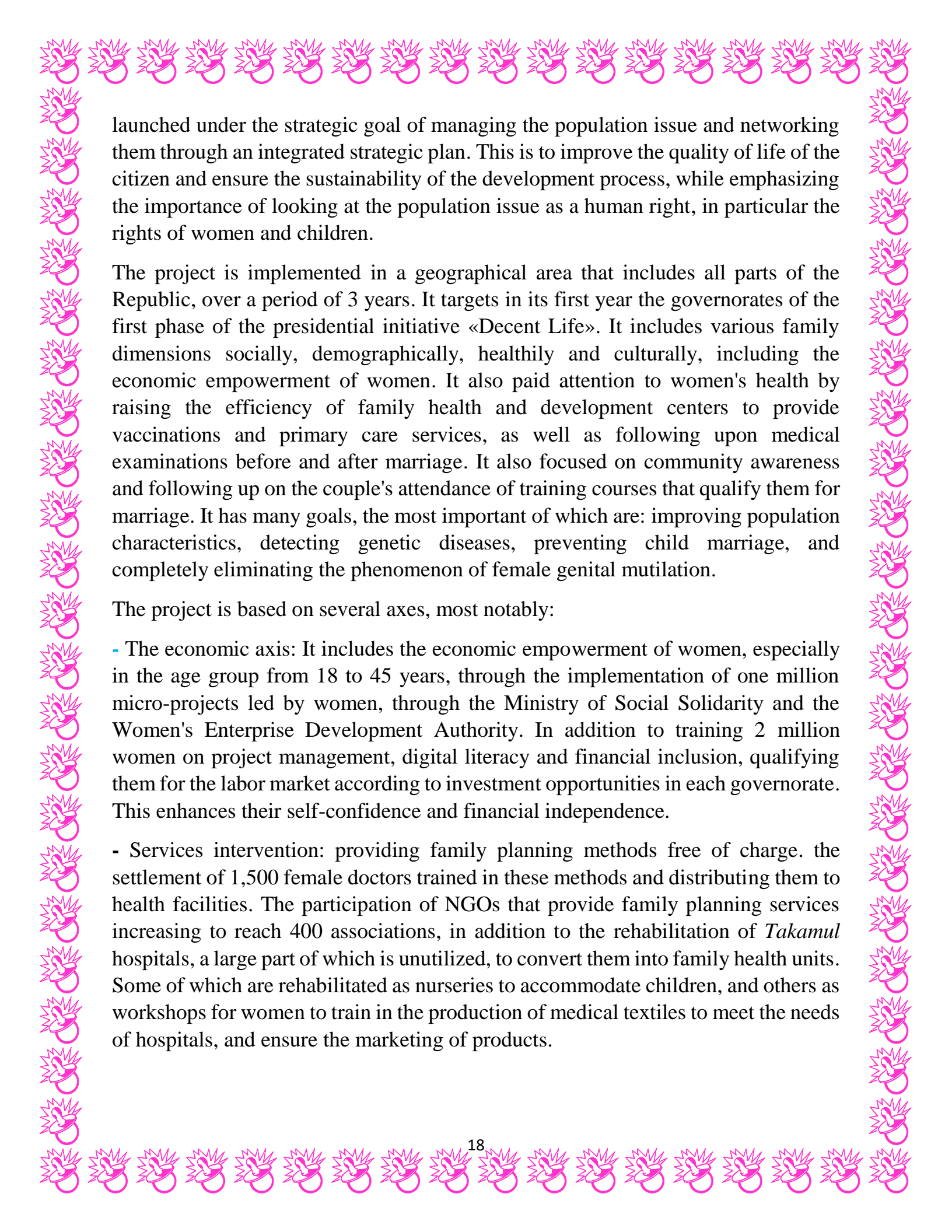
9- Elimination of slums: The political leadership has paid great attention to the elimination of unsafe slums, and the development of unplanned areas in various governorates, through the expansion of social housing projects. They decisively addressed building violations and land encroachment, and geographical diversity in the establishment of national projects. It has implemented projects in various parts of the Republic, and not limited to major cities.

This is in addition to the urban development project in the provincial capitals, which is funded by the Urban Development Fund and aims to address the problem of the growing demand for housing.

10- Launching the 'Decent Life' initiative in 2019 to improve the standard of life for the most vulnerable community groups at the state level. The initiative relies on the implementation of a set of service and development activities that will ensure a 'decent life' for this group and improve their living conditions.

11- Launching the 'Housing for all Egyptians' initiative to provide housing units for middle-income citizens. The initiative aims to establish 3 million housing units to accommodate the growing demand for housing in light of the steady population increase.

In January 2021, **President** Sisi ordered the establishment of a mechanism through which the necessary measures would be taken within the framework of improving the demographic characteristics, the quality of life of the Egyptian citizen and the social concerns of the Egyptian family, not just controlling population growth. The National Project for the Development of the Egyptian Family 2021-2023 was

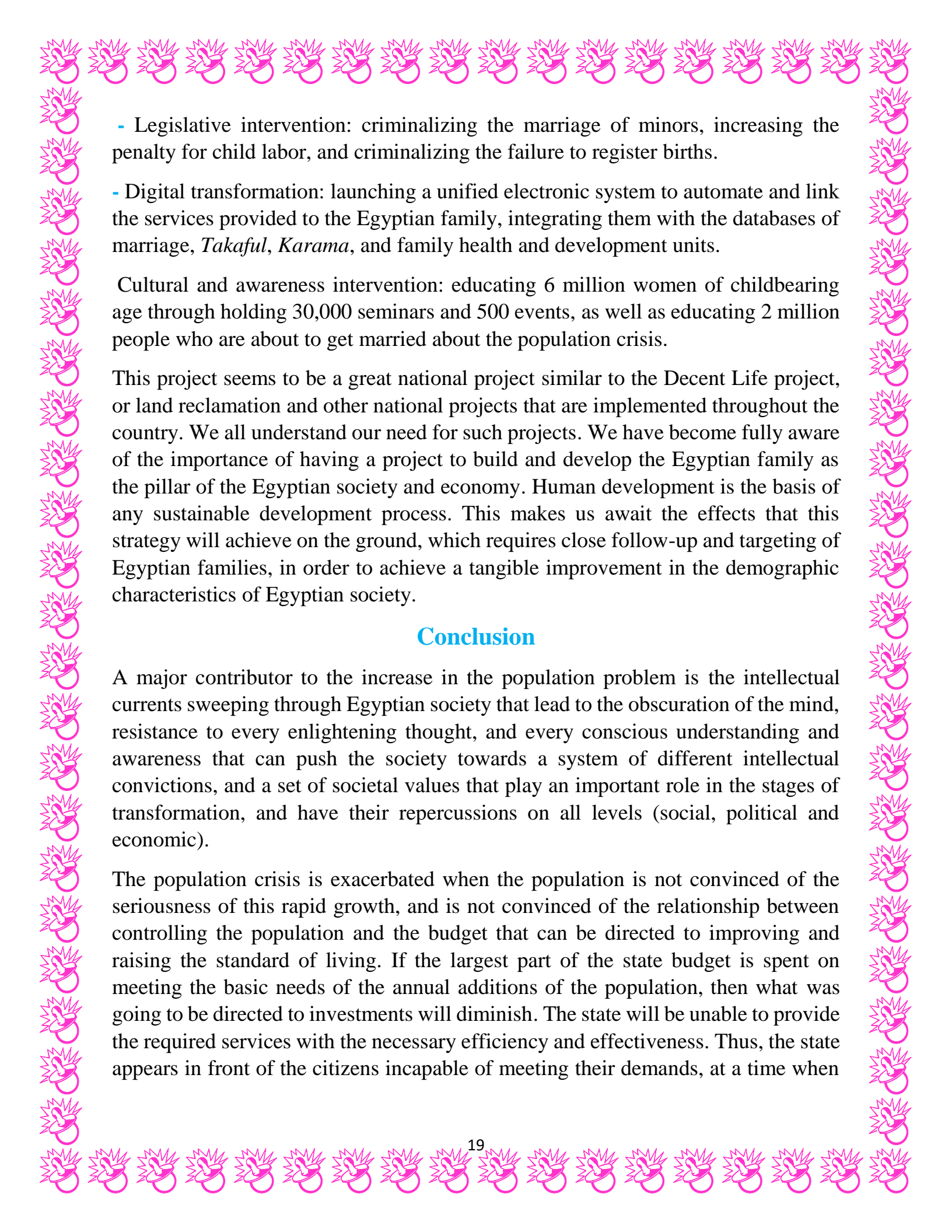


launched under the strategic goal of managing the population issue and networking them through an integrated strategic plan. This is to improve the quality of life of the citizen and ensure the sustainability of the development process, while emphasizing the importance of looking at the population issue as a human right, in particular the rights of women and children.

The project is implemented in a geographical area that includes all parts of the Republic, over a period of 3 years. It targets in its first year the governorates of the first phase of the presidential initiative «Decent Life». It includes various family dimensions socially, demographically, healthily and culturally, including the economic empowerment of women. It also paid attention to women's health by raising the efficiency of family health and development centers to provide vaccinations and primary care services, as well as following upon medical examinations before and after marriage. It also focused on community awareness and following up on the couple's attendance of training courses that qualify them for marriage. It has many goals, the most important of which are: improving population characteristics, detecting genetic diseases, preventing child marriage, and completely eliminating the phenomenon of female genital mutilation.

The project is based on several axes, most notably:

- The economic axis: It includes the economic empowerment of women, especially in the age group from 18 to 45 years, through the implementation of one million micro-projects led by women, through the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the Women's Enterprise Development Authority. In addition to training 2 million women on project management, digital literacy and financial inclusion, qualifying them for the labor market according to investment opportunities in each governorate. This enhances their self-confidence and financial independence.
- Services intervention: providing family planning methods free of charge. the settlement of 1,500 female doctors trained in these methods and distributing them to health facilities. The participation of NGOs that provide family planning services increasing to reach 400 associations, in addition to the rehabilitation of *Takamul* hospitals, a large part of which is unutilized, to convert them into family health units. Some of which are rehabilitated as nurseries to accommodate children, and others as workshops for women to train in the production of medical textiles to meet the needs of hospitals, and ensure the marketing of products.

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- Legislative intervention: criminalizing the marriage of minors, increasing the penalty for child labor, and criminalizing the failure to register births.
 - Digital transformation: launching a unified electronic system to automate and link the services provided to the Egyptian family, integrating them with the databases of marriage, *Takaful*, *Karama*, and family health and development units.

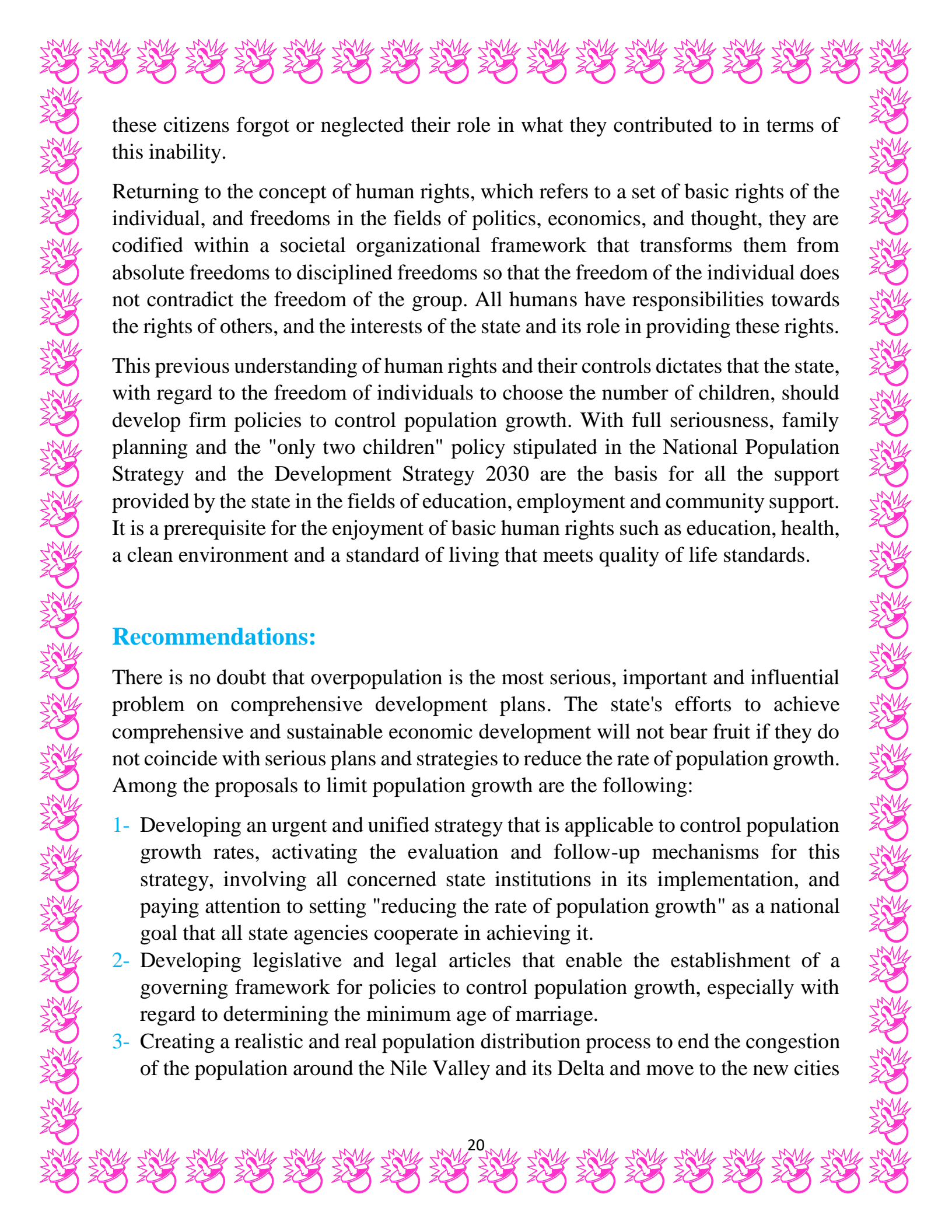
Cultural and awareness intervention: educating 6 million women of childbearing age through holding 30,000 seminars and 500 events, as well as educating 2 million people who are about to get married about the population crisis.

This project seems to be a great national project similar to the Decent Life project, or land reclamation and other national projects that are implemented throughout the country. We all understand our need for such projects. We have become fully aware of the importance of having a project to build and develop the Egyptian family as the pillar of the Egyptian society and economy. Human development is the basis of any sustainable development process. This makes us await the effects that this strategy will achieve on the ground, which requires close follow-up and targeting of Egyptian families, in order to achieve a tangible improvement in the demographic characteristics of Egyptian society.

Conclusion

A major contributor to the increase in the population problem is the intellectual currents sweeping through Egyptian society that lead to the obscuration of the mind, resistance to every enlightening thought, and every conscious understanding and awareness that can push the society towards a system of different intellectual convictions, and a set of societal values that play an important role in the stages of transformation, and have their repercussions on all levels (social, political and economic).

The population crisis is exacerbated when the population is not convinced of the seriousness of this rapid growth, and is not convinced of the relationship between controlling the population and the budget that can be directed to improving and raising the standard of living. If the largest part of the state budget is spent on meeting the basic needs of the annual additions of the population, then what was going to be directed to investments will diminish. The state will be unable to provide the required services with the necessary efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, the state appears in front of the citizens incapable of meeting their demands, at a time when



these citizens forgot or neglected their role in what they contributed to in terms of this inability.

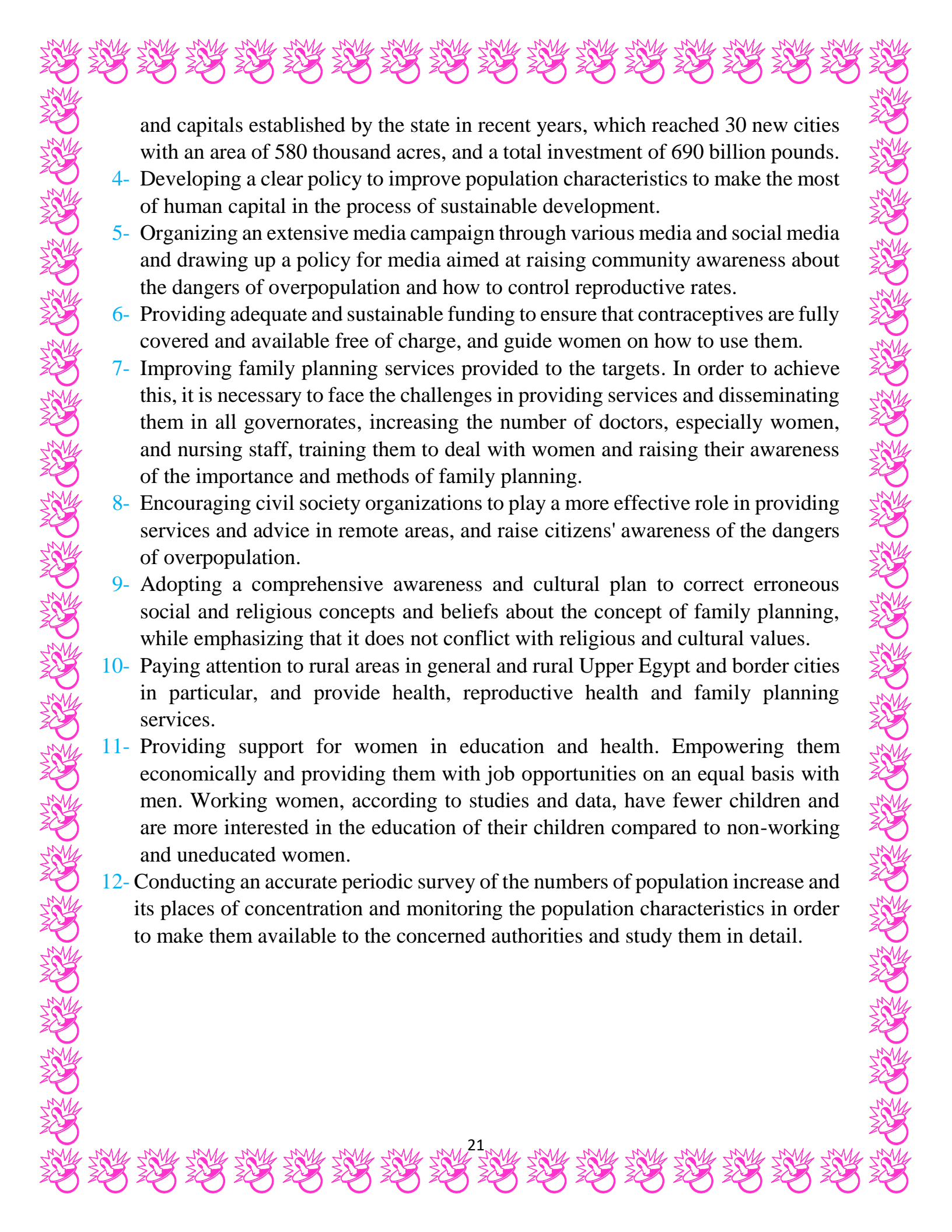
Returning to the concept of human rights, which refers to a set of basic rights of the individual, and freedoms in the fields of politics, economics, and thought, they are codified within a societal organizational framework that transforms them from absolute freedoms to disciplined freedoms so that the freedom of the individual does not contradict the freedom of the group. All humans have responsibilities towards the rights of others, and the interests of the state and its role in providing these rights.

This previous understanding of human rights and their controls dictates that the state, with regard to the freedom of individuals to choose the number of children, should develop firm policies to control population growth. With full seriousness, family planning and the "only two children" policy stipulated in the National Population Strategy and the Development Strategy 2030 are the basis for all the support provided by the state in the fields of education, employment and community support. It is a prerequisite for the enjoyment of basic human rights such as education, health, a clean environment and a standard of living that meets quality of life standards.

Recommendations:

There is no doubt that overpopulation is the most serious, important and influential problem on comprehensive development plans. The state's efforts to achieve comprehensive and sustainable economic development will not bear fruit if they do not coincide with serious plans and strategies to reduce the rate of population growth. Among the proposals to limit population growth are the following:

- 1- Developing an urgent and unified strategy that is applicable to control population growth rates, activating the evaluation and follow-up mechanisms for this strategy, involving all concerned state institutions in its implementation, and paying attention to setting "reducing the rate of population growth" as a national goal that all state agencies cooperate in achieving it.
- 2- Developing legislative and legal articles that enable the establishment of a governing framework for policies to control population growth, especially with regard to determining the minimum age of marriage.
- 3- Creating a realistic and real population distribution process to end the congestion of the population around the Nile Valley and its Delta and move to the new cities



and capitals established by the state in recent years, which reached 30 new cities with an area of 580 thousand acres, and a total investment of 690 billion pounds.

- 4- Developing a clear policy to improve population characteristics to make the most of human capital in the process of sustainable development.
- 5- Organizing an extensive media campaign through various media and social media and drawing up a policy for media aimed at raising community awareness about the dangers of overpopulation and how to control reproductive rates.
- 6- Providing adequate and sustainable funding to ensure that contraceptives are fully covered and available free of charge, and guide women on how to use them.
- 7- Improving family planning services provided to the targets. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to face the challenges in providing services and disseminating them in all governorates, increasing the number of doctors, especially women, and nursing staff, training them to deal with women and raising their awareness of the importance and methods of family planning.
- 8- Encouraging civil society organizations to play a more effective role in providing services and advice in remote areas, and raise citizens' awareness of the dangers of overpopulation.
- 9- Adopting a comprehensive awareness and cultural plan to correct erroneous social and religious concepts and beliefs about the concept of family planning, while emphasizing that it does not conflict with religious and cultural values.
- 10- Paying attention to rural areas in general and rural Upper Egypt and border cities in particular, and provide health, reproductive health and family planning services.
- 11- Providing support for women in education and health. Empowering them economically and providing them with job opportunities on an equal basis with men. Working women, according to studies and data, have fewer children and are more interested in the education of their children compared to non-working and uneducated women.
- 12- Conducting an accurate periodic survey of the numbers of population increase and its places of concentration and monitoring the population characteristics in order to make them available to the concerned authorities and study them in detail.