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The Egyptian Parliament and its Relationship with Civil Society: Challenges and Alternative Solutions

March 2016

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with Civil Society:**

Challenges and Alternative Solutions

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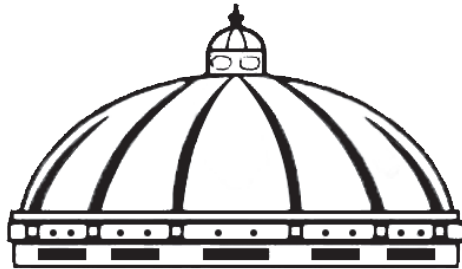
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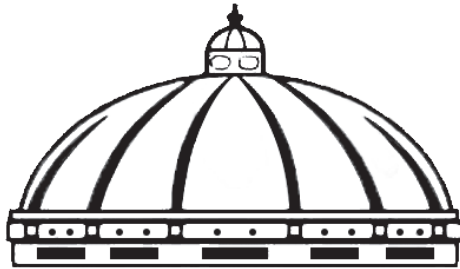
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**The House of Representatives
and its Relation with Civil Society:**
Challenges and Alternative Solutions

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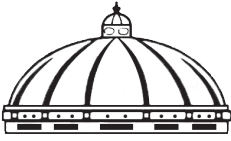
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The House of Representatives and its Relationship with Civil Society

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I- Introduction

Civil society is a legitimate channel through which public opinion can be expressed to MPs and may, in certain circumstances, offer an alternative process through which legislation can be proposed or even drafted. Civil society can help to promote political pluralism and may contribute to the entrenchment of a multi-party political system in States undergoing constitutional transition.

In the absence of sufficient support from experts or research facilities within the House of Representatives, many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) may be able to offer a level of technical and policy expertise that parliamentarians may, at least in the short term, lack.

The existence of civil society in Egypt is recognised by Articles 75, 76 and 77 of the Constitution which enables citizens to form NGOs. In addition to the Constitution there is also secondary legislation (Law 84/2002), which regulates the activities of civil society, and there are draft proposals for further secondary legislation. In addition to Articles 75-77, the Constitution recognises the broader contribution which civil society may make to Egyptian public life in several Articles, for example, Article 16 (support for victims of the revolution); Article 25 (combatting illiteracy and promoting education); Article 83 (protection the health of the elderly).

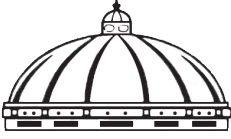
Following the political transition in 2011, there is a movement towards greater engagement of citizens within the political process. As well as the provisions of Articles 75-77 of the Constitution, Article

85 also stipulates: “Each individual has the right to address public authorities in writing and in signature. No address shall be made in the name of groups except for legal persons.” Thus in addition to the existence of organised civil society and NGOs the Constitution has also recognised the importance of dialogue between citizens and political institutions in Egypt. Harnessing this dialogue between the different stakeholders, actors and institutions within Egyptian society will be an important part of the political process.

More generally, the participation of the civil society sector in Egyptian political discourse offers enhanced opportunities to address issues such as a lack of transparency in decision-making. It also provides a process through which the House of Representative could engage directly with the public. The House should consider those practical and procedural developments which are required to facilitate participation by NGOs within the political process and adapt internal rules of procedure accordingly to support this.

Greater involvement of NGOs will not be without difficulty. Due largely to the fact that Egypt remains a State in transition, where Executive dominance has historically limited involvement by NGOs, a number of challenges exist in order that the House can cooperate with NGOs and embrace them within the policy and decision-making processes. Notwithstanding these potential obstacles, the House should consider NGOs as integral to better law-making and part of a wider representation of citizens within the Egyptian polity.

By engaging with the civil society sector the House of Representatives could also enhance its legitimacy with the public by demonstrating that it is willing to listen directly to the views of the public and that it will be responsive when there is public cause for concern. By harnessing the input of civil society the House should seek to build a better public profile and use opportunities such as committee inquiries to engage with NGOs.



2- Building Mutual Trust between the House and Civil Society

The relationship between the House of Representatives and NGOs should be based upon an acceptance of mutual trust.

Building coalitions with NGOs as well as more generally engaging directly with citizens may be advantageous for MPs especially in circumstances where such contacts can offer specialist policy advice. The establishment of trust-building mechanisms that will allow the House of Representatives to engage with NGOs could help to facilitate the necessary dialogue between the House and NGOs in order to create a more horizontal political process that is less controlled by the Executive. One possible measure could include the House considering how the right of NGOs to campaign could be improved (though this will need to be considered alongside the draft NGO law proposed in June 2014). Another opportunity could arise from civil society initiatives, for example media campaigns that scrutinise and call parliamentary processes and decisions to account.

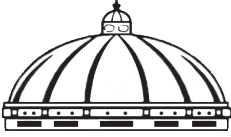
The issue of access to majority parties and to the House of Representatives by NGOs more generally remains a significant source of distrust for civil society organisations. For example, the requirement that all NGOs register with the Government could restrict the number of NGOs which the House may have contact with and has the potential to exclude some stakeholders from the political dialogue. Though registration of NGOs is commonplace in many States, and is part of a broader overall objective to promote transparency, the risk is that only

those NGOs who are considered to be sympathetic with the policies of the majority party will be permitted to register. It is therefore important that the public recognise that any register of NGOs operated by the House does not exclude voices of the opposition.

Bridging the gap between the House and NGOs will require compromise and therefore a starting point could be for MPs to organise roundtable meetings with those civil society groups that wish to participate in the work of the House and which could make a contribution to policy and law-making. As noted above, it is important that in doing so the House is not overly selective and should not automatically exclude NGOs which may express contrary opinions to the majority.

An additional point for the House to consider in order to maximise the scope and potential of its relationship with civil society is to consider carefully the policy/legislative priorities which NGOs will be most effectively able contribute to. In order to win the support from civil society it is essential that MPs start engaging with the most pressing issues facing the country (for example, the social rights of civilians, healthcare and education. To this end, House committees would be likely to have an enhanced role with respect to the relationship with NGOs. Committees should therefore consider publication (as far as possible) an annual work programme which would enable NGOs to prepare and submit contributions in good time. In addition, information concerning key committee members such as the chair, rapporteur, specialist and legal advisers should be freely available to enable NGOs to initiate contact and make submissions.

Finally, the primary challenge for the House of Representatives will be for it to develop and maintain good lines of communication with civil society and citizens more widely. However, the existing by-laws which regulate civil society do not provide for a coherent means of communication with the House and the absence of a structured dialogue is likely to inhibit the impact of civil society. Going forward it would be helpful to improving the relationship between the House and civil society for the House to explore the regulation of civil society.



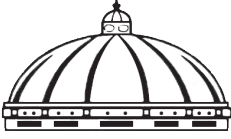
3- Improving Knowledge and Capacity within the House of Representatives

As a general development the House should consider how it could improve access for a range of stakeholders in order to increase trust and transparency. Reaching out to civil society specialists on specific policy issues, in order to compensate for the House's lack of institutional knowledge could also help to build bridges with the wider public by indicating that the House is giving careful consideration to the socio-economic issues which affect Egyptian society at large.

Given that much of the House's technical and policy based scrutiny activities are likely to take place within committees, there is a need for the committees to consider how they can, most appropriately, integrate civil society within the inquiry process. As noted above, a commitment to providing information to NGOs would be an important starting point.

A lack of research support and expertise amongst parliamentarians will undoubtedly have negative implications, at least in the early years of the House's work, for the process of drafting and deliberating over legislation. This increases the need for committee members to reach out to civil society, where there is a high concentration of technical expertise, for advice and assistance. The support provided by NGOs could range from policy advice to legal analysis and impact assessments of legislative proposals.

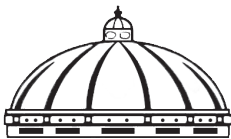
Moreover, by increasing the overall level of expertise within committees this could help to improve the general levels of accountability within the House. Legislative or policy based scrutiny within the committees which are better prepared, supported and ultimately more informed, and which focus on core issues which are important to the wider Egyptian public, could help to create an environment of consensus and common purpose.



4- Civil society and Policy Delivery

As noted above, the future potential contribution of civil society to Egyptian public life has been acknowledged within the Constitution, for example, Article 16, 25 and 83. Civil society organizations are therefore likely to have some role to contribute to the provision of State services in Egypt which may, in some instances, include using public funds on behalf of the State. This is often the case in many States with respect to NGOs assisting in the delivery of, for example, education or health services.

Increasingly, it may be open to NGOs to undertake comprehensive development functions that promote social justice and combat poverty, which is work that many MPs would be interested in. Such a decentralising approach to policy delivery is the norm within many States and helps to bridge the gap between citizens and the parliament. NGOs may also becoming carriers of the message of human rights protection and democracy promotion in that they integrate previously marginalized groups. Through maintaining good relations with NGOs the House will be able to scrutinise their work and undertake financial audit of their activities. This accountability of NGOs, when coupled with the accountability that NGOs can also bring to the political process, could help to promote a climate of mutual confidence between the House and NGOs and bring the work of the House to the wider attention of Egyptian society.



5- Widening Participation in Political Life

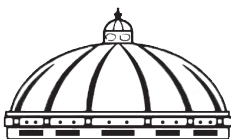
In States which are undergoing a process of political and constitutional transition, the interaction between the parliament and civil society can operate so as to prevent a sense of political alienation by certain sections of society who may consider that they are under-represented within the parliament. This can often be a legacy of the executive dominance which preceded the reform process.

Engaging directly with citizens should be a priority for the House and part of the overall attempt to develop a broader dialogue and reduce the executive dominance within the political process. Under Article 138 of the Constitution there is an opportunity for citizens to petition the House directly and this provides that: “Citizens may submit written proposals regarding public issues to the House of Representatives. Citizens may also submit complaints to the House of Representatives, which are to be referred to the relevant ministers. If the House requests it, the minister must provide clarifications, and the citizen who submitted the complaint is to be informed of the result.”

The application of this article would involve a number of challenges that could decrease its effectiveness. In particular it is the awareness and culture of citizens who lack sufficient knowledge of their civil and political rights, as well as of the nature of the Egyptian political system. This will make such a constitutionally legitimate right unfamiliar to many of them, potentially reducing its effectiveness. Awareness campaigns would thus be required to inform citizens of this right as well as the possibilities and ways to maximize it and the House should use electronic media as a means of increasing awareness of the rights included in Article 138.

Though direct participation by citizens through the prerogatives in Article 138 are important opportunities it is likely that organised dialogue through civil society will be the cornerstone of reducing executive dominance. In Egypt, the shift away from executive dominance will need to be organised and involve the House establishing direct contact with NGOs which, for example, represent women's issues, gender equality or religious minorities. Such partnerships could help to mainstream discourse about all matters of human rights and civil liberties within the House more generally.

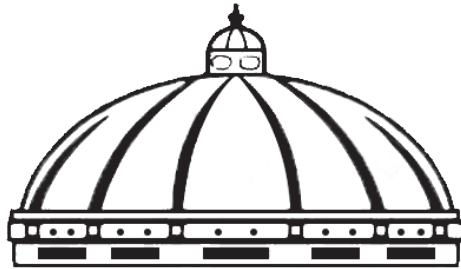
This form of indirect involvement provides additional channels of communication for Egyptian citizens who may believe that their interests will not necessarily be fully represented within the political process. Such involvement could assist in depoliticising gender or religious issues within the political process and enable groups which consider themselves as marginalised to be more inclined to participate in Egyptian political affairs.



6- Checklist for House Relations with Civil Society

1. Establish trust-building mechanisms that will encourage the support of civil society for the work of the House;
2. A constructive dialogue with civil society and citizens more generally has the capacity improve levels of accountability within the House
3. Working with civil society could promote inclusion of all parts of Egyptian society and enhance the representative functions of the House;
4. The involvement of civil society in the activities of the House of Representatives could especially contribute to the level of expertise within parliamentary committees;
5. Committees should develop open mechanisms for engaging with civil society, for example, by placing calls for expert evidence on the web pages of parliamentary committees;
6. Engaging with civil society may improve access to the House for a range of stakeholders which could help to increase trust and transparency;
7. If the House reaches out to civil society specialists on specific issues this could compensate for parliament's lack of institutional knowledge on some of the issues it will be legislating on;

8. The House should also consider the scrutiny of civil society as part of developing a reciprocal process of accountability, for example, by conducting financial audit of NGOs in circumstances when they make use of public funds;
9. Minority parties within the House could especially benefit from the involvement of civil society in order to increase their effectiveness within the House and to help bring issues within the public domain;
10. good working relationship with civil society could also help to promote the international reputation of the House of Representatives.



Challenges of the relationship between society and the parliament

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For many decades, the relationship in Egypt between the citizens and society from one side, and the political and legislative process on the other side has been, for many decades, poor and strained. The weak societal influence on the political and legislative process and all that relates to it was the biggest shortcoming of the political process in Egypt. Nevertheless, the engagement of the masses in politics and the prominent developments that took place in the aftermath of the events of 2011, made the citizens and society a variable that no one can ignore or discard. This has been reflected in Article 138 of the current Constitution of 2014, which stipulates that:

“Citizens may submit written proposals regarding public issues to the House of Representatives. Citizens may also submit complaints to the House of Representatives, which are to be referred to the relevant ministers. If the House requests it, the minister must provide clarifications, and the citizen who submitted the complaint is to be informed of the result.”

Article 85 of the Constitution also stipulates: “Each individual has the right to address public authorities in writing and in signature. No address shall be made in the name of groups except for legal persons.”⁽¹⁾ Likewise, Articles 75, 76, and 77 give citizens the right to establish **non-governmental organizations and institutions, federations and syndicates, and trade unions**, respectively—all of which acquire legal identities, enjoy independence from interference by administrative agencies, and are consulted about draft laws and regulations related to their fields of operation. The Constitution also permits the establishment of a number of consultation authorities and councils such as the National Media Council (Article 211), the National Press Council (Article 212), and the National Media Association (Article 213), in addition to a number of specialized councils stipulated under Article 214 and which have legal identities, such as the National Council for Human Rights, the National Council for Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, and the National Council for the Disabled, in addition to, the independent oversight bodies, mentioned in Article 215:

“Independent bodies and regulatory agencies are identified by law. These

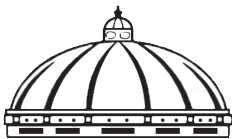
1 - Egypt's Constitution of 2014, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/Newvrr/consttt%202014.pdf>.

bodies and agencies possess legal identities; have technical, financial, and administrative independence; and are consulted about draft laws and regulations that relate to their fields of operation.”

Moreover, the Constitutional committee was keen to guarantee the representation of different social groups in the House of Representatives and the municipalities through Articles 180, 234 and 244 of the Constitution, which stipulate the necessity of having a quota for farmers, workers, women, Christians, disabled people, and Egyptian expatriates within the House of Representatives; workers and farmers shall be represented in by no less than 50 percent of the total number of seats. One quarter of the seats are allocated to youth and one quarter to women, and these percentages include proper representation by Christians and disabled persons. Article 244 stipulates that “the State shall grant youth, Christians, persons with disabilities, and Egyptian expatriates appropriate representation in the first House of Representatives to be elected after this Constitution is adopted, in the manner specified by law.”

This paper seeks to shed light on the most important challenges and problems expected to be encountered during any future attempts to regulate the relationship between society and the Egyptian parliament, in light of the State’s poor expertise in this regard.

One of the major challenges expected to be encountered is related to the broad meaning and **subcategories contained within the notion of ‘society’** and the different matters related to each subcategory. This poses a challenge to the parliament in terms of its ability to embrace and communicate with those various and diverse subcategories of society within communication channels as a legislative institution from one side, and the communication challenge posed before MPs as individuals from the other hand. That broad meaning of the “Society” will inevitably lay a on the Parliament when communicating with diverse groups within society and when giving them equitable chances to contact the Parliament and have an effective impact. This connection can thus be subdivided into two relationships: **the relationship with civil society and its institutions, and the relationship with ordinary citizens**; naturally, a number of problems arise when regulating each of them.



I- the relationship with civil society and its organizations

This relationship is expected to be regulated by Article 85 of the Constitution which stipulates that “each individual has the right to address public authorities in writing and in signature.” which allows the legal entities, represented in CSOs, to address legal persons of public authorities. This right raises the question of which methods can be used to establish this communication. However, this can lead to a number of problems and challenges related to the Egyptian political and legal context, issues which are expected to affect the future of regulating this relationship or possibly even limit it and minimize the communication’s effectiveness. One of these major challenges is related to the nature of the previous political practice in Egypt which sought to maneuver the pressure on the political regime to enact reforms; communication and partnership with civil society were among such pressures. As a result of these pressures, channels of communication were established, along with partnerships, with organizations and entities which favored and supported the regime., **or/ and forming councils, organizations, and other entities fully affiliated with it to act as the sole and legitimate representatives of certain categories or sectors of the society**, while excluding other entities. This meant that such pro–regime entities failed to faithfully represent such categories⁽²⁾. The situation in Egypt, however, became more complex in the aftermath of the events of 2011. As a result of the political openness after 2011,

2- Nouran Sayid Ahmad, "Crisis of structural civil and political rights and women: Views based on the reality of citizenship in Egypt", in "Citizenship and women's rights in Egypt after Arab revolutions", Arab Forum For alternatives, 2014, p.18.

the number of organizations and entities increased and their activities became more diverse, causing their presence to be felt more in Egyptian political life. Consequently, a series of events and disputes took place which reflected **the distorted mentality by which many State institutions in Egypt perceive civil society institutions**. Many of the civil institutions were accused of committing violations, and some of them were even raided; as they were considered a threat to the State who sought to undermine it and incite people against it.⁽³⁾ The idea of these institutions posing a threat to the State became even stronger when some of them focused on missions and activities **that scrutinized the performance of the State institutions at that time**. This oversight role was regarded by the State institutions as a violation of their mandate. The other roles civil society institutions could play were ignored; such roles include providing services and special consultation to the State institutions, supporting decisions and policies, and proposing draft laws and legislation to the Parliament in different fields. This bias and readiness to attack civil society and its institutions in Egypt was attributed to society being one of the main reasons for dispute and tension between the legislative and executive authorities in Egypt in the Parliament of 2012. Following the outbreak of controversy over the foreign funding received by civil society organizations, the government decided to withdraw from one of the Parliament's sessions at that time, and in return the Parliament threatened to withdraw confidence from the government.⁽⁴⁾ The image of civil society was also distorted, fueling the parliament's suspicion about its activities; similarly, civil society also had its own suspicions about the parliament after detecting defects in parliamentary elections—in addition to the long history of negative stance from the Parliament's side to cooperate with civil society institutions.

One of the challenges that the parliament is expected to soon face regarding its relationship with civil society and related organizations is related to the bylaws. The bylaws do not include any means of

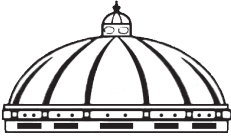
3 - What role does civil society play in Egyptian parliamentary elections? Al Arab Newspaper, 16 January 2015, <http://www.alarab.co.uk/?id=42867>.

4 - Ahmad Hamdoon, "Practices of Egypt's House of Representatives under Bylaws of 1979: A Theoretical - applicable study", 2013, Mada Media Development, p.29.

cooperation or partnership between the parliament and the assisting organizations and bodies of civil society. Article 75 of the bylaws stipulates that parliamentary committees can whenever needed seek the expertise of a number of individual experts and specialists upon request from the committees—either temporarily to discuss a certain issue, or permanently as the House decides at the beginning of each legislative term. The Bylaws of 1979 did not include rules allowing the House and its committees to seek information from bodies or organizations in civil society. Article 76 of the bylaws stipulates that parliamentary committees are permitted to seek information, documents, and data related to the topics under discussion from official and public bodies—a formula that excludes civil society and its entities.⁽⁵⁾ Civil society institutions are not expected to be allowed to play a dynamic role in the beginning, which is a challenge any future bylaws should overcome in order to establish partnerships and create communication and coordination with these institutions, rather than merely with individual experts.

One of the aforementioned challenges which will be faced has to do with the various categories falling under the notion of ‘civil society’; as these exceed even the civil society organizations people are familiar with, such as syndicates and student unions; hence, a broad understanding of this variety is required. The challenge lies in the fact that each of these categories should be granted equitable chances to communicate with the parliament. Other challenges related to this multiplicity have to do with the procedures that should be followed to give each category the chance to communicate with the House, particularly those categories which represent certain sectors and hold divergent views. Members of such categories will seek to communicate with the House separately in order to affect it and submit demands to parliamentarians. This might entail the allocation of more time to listen to each one of them, in accordance with the agendas of the House and its committees.

5- - The Bylaws of 1979 of Egypt's House of Representatives, <http://is.gd/du5hjc>.



2- The Relationship between the Parliament and the Citizen

The relationship between parliament and the ordinary citizens is problematic on more than one level. Starting with the strained relationship between the two sides throughout the parliamentary experience in Egypt, as citizens were not permitted to communicate in any way with the parliament as an institution, especially direct communication. This has deepened the rupture between the institution and the citizens throughout the entire parliamentary term (four or five years), along with the seasonality of political and parliamentary work in Egypt which meant that MPs isolated themselves from their constituencies for most of the duration of their parliamentary terms; which resulted in the absence of citizens' confidence in the Parliament and its real representation of the citizens, and a weak public oversight of the performance of the parliamentarians. That was reflected in passing and approving controversial laws and regulations by the Parliament without knowing the opinions and demands of the citizens about them.. After 2011, the relationship between citizens and the parliament was marked with tension during the time of the 2012 Parliament, brought about by an openness in political life that allowed everyone to engage personally and directly in political work. Intensively taking part in demonstrations was one of the aspects of this political freedom, as was the case at the first sessions of parliament; a group of protesters attempted to deliver what they called "Assignment letter from the people to the People's

Assembly”.⁽⁶⁾ The Parliament responded to their letter by forming a committee to consider the demands of the young protestors. At times, tensions escalated following clashes in the area surrounding the parliament.⁽⁷⁾

Article 138 of the Constitution stipulates that: “Citizens may submit written proposals regarding public issues to the House of Representatives. Citizens may also submit complaints to the House of Representatives, which are to be referred to the relevant ministers. If the House requests it, the minister must provide clarifications, and the citizen who submitted the complaint is to be informed of the result.” The application of this article would involve a number of challenges that could decrease its effectiveness. One of the major challenges is related to the **awareness and culture of citizens** who lack sufficient knowledge of their civil and political rights, as well as of the nature of the Egyptian political regime. This will make such a constitutionally legitimate right unknown to many of them, potentially reducing its effectiveness. Awareness campaigns would thus be required to inform citizens of this right as well as the possibilities and ways to maximize it.

The approved way of submitting written proposals imposes challenges in terms of the prerequisite procedures and technical measures involved. **Facilitation and technical aid should be provided in the process of proposal formulation and submission** to provide support to illiterate citizens, especially considering the fact that the percentage of illiterate people in Egypt is not small, reaching 26.1% according

6 - Rebels condemn Muslim Brotherhood affiliates preventing protesters from demonstrating before the parliament, Al Youm Al Sabee, 1 February 2012, http://www.youm7.com/story/201211/2//%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8_%D8%A7%D984%D8%AB%D988%D8%B1%D8%A9_%D98%A%D8%AF%D98%A%D986%_%D985%D986%D8%B9_%D8%A7%D984%D8%A5%D8%AE%D988%D8%A7%D986%_%D984%D984%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D987%D8%B1_%D8%A3%D985%D8%A7%D985%_%D8%A7%D984%D8%A8%D8%B1%D984%D985%D8%A7%D9591538/86%.

7 - Clashes break out between protesters, Muslim Brotherhood affiliates around the House of Representatives, Masress, 31 January 2012, <http://www.masress.com/dostor/68667>.

to some statistics.⁽⁸⁾

On the other hand, **an organized and easy method should be available to citizens living in governorates which are far from the capital city.** Citizens could be allowed, for instance, to send their proposals easily in the form of letters, ensuring continuity of communication with the Parliament. A number of challenges are thus posed concerning the potential methods of communication between the citizens and the Parliament and their variety. For example, will there be a direct method through which citizens can meet parliamentarians personally to hand them their complaints and proposals, as is the case in many parliaments around the world? Other parallel methods, such as emailing messages and posting letters, should also be made available to citizens.

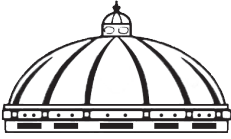
Another challenge relates to Egypt's political culture and practice, **which sorely lacks the concept of institutional work and organization.**

⁽⁹⁾ This coincides with lacking the culture of searching for and forming blocs or groups to defend rights and submit proposals to the Parliament, with the exception of efforts exerted by some organizations or blocs to submit certain demands. This creates the possibility that many citizens will flow in either individually or in small groups to submit their complaints and requests and similar demands to the Parliaments. As a result, the House would receive a considerable number of requests submitted by citizens, creating an extra burden on it as it attempts to respond appropriately to these proposals and requests.

8 - CAPMAS: Illiteracy drops in Egypt to 26.1%, Egyptian Al Shorouk newspaper, 8 September 2012, <http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cddate=08092012&id=ad645e3843-9222-cc-8a9f-1eff3d089494>.

9 - Hassan Mohammed Shafi'i, "Egyptians elections between theocratic-based publicity and weak politics", Al Hayat, 31 October 2015, www.alhayat.com/Opinion/Writers/11819220/%D8%A7%D984%D8%A5%D986%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D984%D985%D8%B5%D8%B1%D98%A%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D98%A%D986-%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A8%D988%D98%A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D984%D8%AA%D8%AF%D98%A%D986-%D988%D8%B6%D8%B9%D981-%D8%A7%D984%D8%B3%D98%A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9.

As far as individual communication with MPs is concerned, one of the major challenges for them, particularly at the first stage of the legislative term, is that **many citizens' requests are expected to be centered around the narrow personal services**. This means that many of the requests will be submitted orally or else the demands will make up a considerable part of the proposals submitted by MPs to the House. This issue is related to the culture of providing services and to the expectations held by citizens with regard to MPs and the parliament. It should be taken into account, however, that many citizens will not address their representative MPs in the House; i.e., citizens will not communicate directly with the parliament as an institution. This burden will be shouldered by the MP and is closely related to the nature of the political culture of citizens as stated above; it is something which is expected to last for a long time. The challenge which the future bylaws are expected to overcome is the necessity of regulating the relationship between citizens and the parliament (as an institution) in a way that enables them to contact the House and submit their requests in general, as well as regulating the relationship between citizens and parliamentarians (as individuals). This, in return, requires that MPs are provided with technical and logistical support, with parliamentary assistants also made available to facilitate communication inside the House.



3- Conclusion

The following are a number of challenges expected to be faced with regard to regulating the rights granted to citizens by the constitution:

- One of the challenges, for example, is related to whether it is expected that proposals will be submitted in the form of draft laws, petitions and complaints, and/or questions about the progress made in particular matters or rights under discussion in order to activate the oversight role of citizens and avoid any attempts to ignore requests. It is therefore expected that a wider range and forms of proposals will be allowed with the aim of promoting the principle of establishing partnership with citizens and society.
- A number of alternatives will also be made available concerning the way to organize communication. Thus, a relevant question is: will parliamentary committees be tasked with communicating with the public and organizations under the future bylaws, or will a specialized committee be established inside the House to manage communication and outreach?
- A major challenge is related to the possibility of diversifying the means of communication with the Parliament. Many forms of communication can be introduced, including both the establishment of direct communication between the House and all the different categories of society as well as the use of electronic communication methods or written letters to enable citizens and the different groups

to have access to needed data and information. ⁽¹⁰⁾

- Related to the organization of communication and outreach comes the issue of the diversity and multiplicity of the groups and organizations the parliament is expected to deal with. A heavy burden will therefore be placed on it, particularly in light of the specialized and structural legislation the coming parliament is anticipated to pass. Consequently, the provision of procedural rules is needed, which should include: identifying definite times during sessions for the discussion of proposals, specifying the time allocated for each proposal, providing records of groups and people who desire to communicate with the House, etc.
- Legislations which concerns civil society that need to be passed by the Parliament as well as the importance of consultation about this matter.
- Finally, an additional challenge has to do with the question of whether communication with civil society and experts will be carried out on a temporary basis to discuss particular issues, or on a permanent basis through the establishment of consultation committees which coordinate work with the parliament and its different committees.

10 - Najeem Mizyan, "Parliament openness to citizens and civil society", Nador City, http://nador.nadorcity.com/%D8%A7%D986%D981%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D984%D8%A8%D8%B1%D984%D985%D8%A7%D986-%D8%B9%D984%D989-%D8%A7%D984%D985%D988%D8%A7%D8%B7%D986-%D988%D8%A7%D984%D985%D8%AC%D8%AA%D985%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D984%D985%D8%AF%D986%D98A_a5396.html.