

The information presented in this presentation is based on several inputs by the researcher in addition to the inputs of several other experts from agricultural land committee affiliated to the National Democratic Party in Egypt



Protecting agricultural land from urbanization or managing the conflict between informal urban growth while meeting the demands of the communities
Lessons learnt from Egyptian policy reforms

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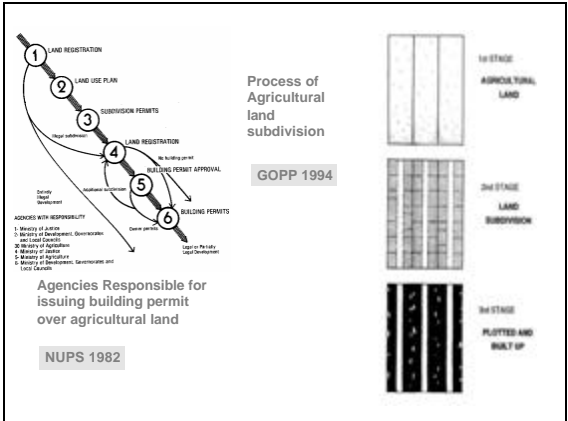
Research Methodology and main sources

1. Desk work information analysis
2. Primary data collection (key informant interviews, focus group discussions)
3. Researcher views based on his PhD. outcomes
4. Outcomes of discussions and concept papers arising from the NDP high committee for agricultural land preservation and urban management
5. Duration of the research (September 1998 -November 2004)

Research paper outline

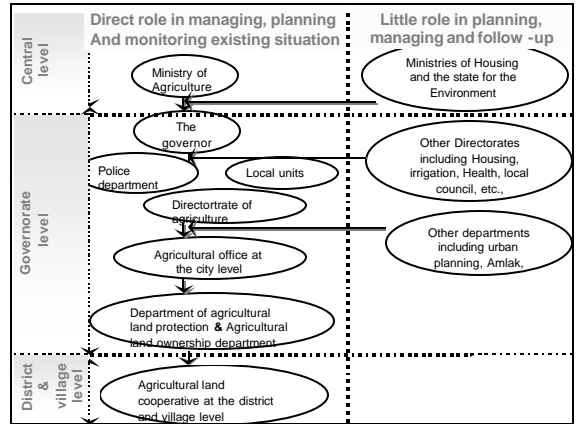
- Urbanization in Egypt
- Magnitude of the agricultural land loss in Egypt
- Different impacts arising from this problem
- Agricultural land management in Egypt
- Way forward
- Current reforms
- Final conclusions





The main forms of urbanization over agricultural land

- Planned, legal development with good standards of layout and services, though this is also densifying beyond planned levels
- "Informal" developed areas on agricultural land -with permits -reasonable to good building standards especially on main streets.
- "Informal" developed areas of low standards - very limited open space, poor infrastructure
- Traditional villages that have become surrounded by the city -densifying, poor infrastructure



The way forward

“Not Facing Reality”

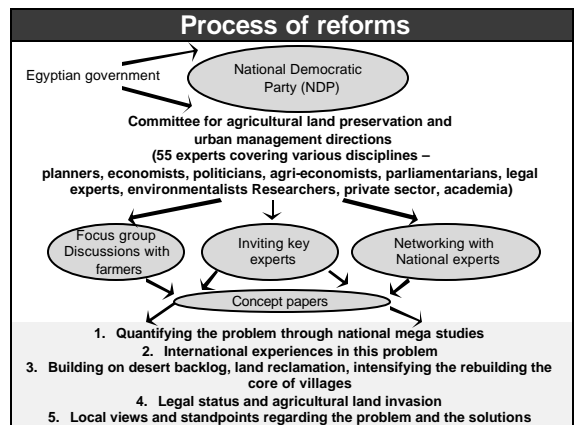
From the first moment this reaction seems irrational, but, unfortunately, is the dominating opinion, as its advocates refuse in principle to admit the realities or question data correctness. Laws for protecting agricultural land and their regulations are not acknowledged as the causes of the dilemma and they totally agree and believe that they are fully effective.

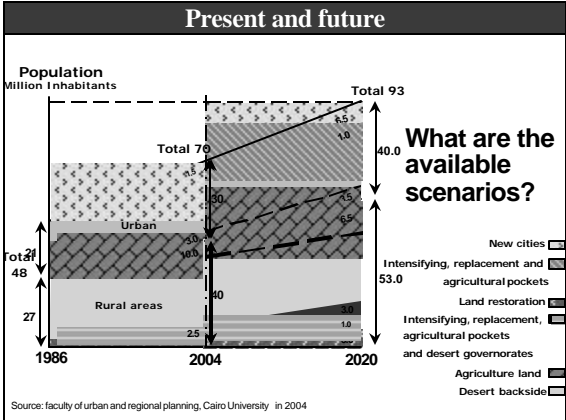
“For want of a better world”

The group adopting this opinion is one step ahead of the former group, they are behind the traditional views and positions that the current new cities and mega national projects policies suffices to solve the problem. Yet, patience is required for new cities to achieve their objectives; this only requires performance efficiency improvement, which is the best strategic option.

“Wishful thinking”

This opinion shares its former in adopting similar dimensions, however its advocates are optimists and have confidence in the future, ambiguous optimism of the future based on Egypt's history and that Egypt always overcomes difficulties.





National reforms

1. Main principles of the national reforms,

- The citizen's right to all his basic needs – among which is the right of having a house in an acceptable location (agricultural preservation versus housing needs).
- Protecting the agricultural land is a challenge facing the Egyptian society and requires a comprehensive, balanced, and logical thinking (integrated thinking rather than sectoral)
- Preserving agricultural lands is the responsibility of the whole society, and it is not fair that one institution should undertake the full responsibility (Avoiding centralisation and supporting local solutions).
- Full decentralisation in managing the problem where governors should be fully supported to manage these problems locally and in cooperation with the local authorities and the local citizens (participation, governance).

National reforms

Based on the above principles, the following practical and applied concepts were agreed upon:

- Reviving a dynamic Village boundary concept;
- Full refusal of any action that may contradict this concept, which entails the effectuation of the Urban Boundary concept, necessitating accordance with economic, social, and environmental standards; and
- Complete prohibition of building on agricultural lands outside this approved boundary.

.....→ Direction where development is allowed over agricultural land
 ——— Old village boundary
 ——— Dynamic village boundary

National reforms - Continued

First Tier: A ministerial committee headed by the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Agriculture, Housing, Local Development, and Interior, are members of this committee. This committee will be mainly responsible for the following:

1. Establishing the general policies that ensure the maintenance of agricultural lands
2. Monitoring the accordance of the strategies presented from the involved ministries (within the framework of planning urban management and land utilization) with such policies;
3. Accrediting the national urban management plan (physical terms and ensuring good utilization of both urban and rural lands)
4. Assigning MOHUUC to provide aerial photographing

National reforms - Continued

<p>Second Tier: A Follow-up committee under the responsibility of the Ministers of Housing, Agriculture and Local Development; GOPP shall constitute its technical secretariat and shall carry out the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow-up the implementation of the general policies of urban growth management and land uses. 2. Suggest flexible standards which allow change in the land use from agricultural uses to other uses & monitor the local government implementation of these standards. 3. Monitor all the challenges and problems which face urban development in Egypt generally and in rural areas in specific. 	<p>Third Tier: Coordinated by the Minister of Local Development, local authorities should perform the following responsibilities;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set down physical plans, in light of general policies and relevant strategies formulated and agreed upon with the higher two tiers of committees. 2. Physical plans should be prepared in cooperation with the local popular councils and should present the local visions. 3. It should be fully participatory plans and will be updated each five years 4. According to the standards agreed upon with GOPP, these plans will be approved technically and implemented.
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Egyptian reforms – Key lessons

1. Command and control instruments, which characterize the Egyptian government system, can't cope with the huge demands for land in rural areas. Hence there was a drastic change in the way, the problem was perceived.
2. The Egyptian approach, led by NDP, was innovative, responsive to the local and the market needs.
3. The reforms represented a balanced approach between central and local level intervention in land issues.
4. Participatory approaches are crucial for solving land problems and political will was highly necessary in order to arrive at hard solutions.
5. Protection of agricultural land is necessary, coupled with the necessary flexible mechanisms to allow for certain land use changes to meet community demands in rural areas.
6. Certain decisions should be focused on managing conflicts through negotiation and market based instruments rather than full protection.