

Wafaa Ashraf Moharam Bassim (Egypt)

Date and place of birth: 21 November 1955, Cairo, Egypt

Working languages: Excellent command of Arabic, English and French, Very good command of Italian

Current position/function

Ambassador, retired, member of the Egyptian Council of Foreign Affairs and member of the foreign affairs Committee of National Council on Women. I have over 40 years of experience in the field of human rights, with the civil and political rights at its core. Sharing knowledge of international human rights instruments, norms, principles and institutional mandates has been central to my profession during my long serving career as a diplomat.

Main professional activities

Throughout my extended career as a diplomat, I have managed to acquire rich and multidimensional expertise related to human rights. This has provided me with a panoramic view of different themes related to civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. During the period 2014–2016 I was appointed as an Ambassador of Egypt to the Holy See. Before that I was Egypt's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva in 2012 and 2013 where I chaired Egypt's delegation to the consecutive sessions of the Human Rights Council and followed up the work of all treaty bodies. As a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chief of the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs during the period 2005–2013, I witnessed different transformations prominent among which was the establishment of the Human Rights Council in 2006 as well as the Review of the Council's status, work and functioning five years later.

Educational background

I have a B.A. in Political Science and International Relations from Cairo University, 1977, and a Diploma in International Law HEI, Geneva 1984. I have acquired in-depth knowledge of the rights and standards enacted in the international human rights instruments, norms and rules through academic and professional training, research, and relevant practical experiences. As a former diplomat to the United Nations, I worked closely with the United Nations human rights mechanisms including the OHCHR, the HRC, as well as with a wide range of NGOs.

Other main activities in the field relevant to the mandate of the treaty body concerned

My professional life has been dedicated to studying and practicing human rights. My long service as Egypt's representative to the United Nations and in the Egyptian embassies as well as my previous experience as a Deputy Assistant Minister for European Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during which I was a chief negotiator of the general framework of cooperation between Egypt and the EU set by the association agreement including issues of human rights, has provided me with the opportunity to study and understand human rights norms and instruments. I followed closely the work of the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Council, and locally as senior Assistant Minister and subsequently Chief of the Cabinet of the Minister, has availed me of the opportunity to formulate a comprehensive vision of the civil and political rights in relationship with other human rights, its components, its sectoral priorities as well as various impediments that hinder the realization all human rights.

List of most recent publications in the field

As an official representative of my country throughout my long diplomatic career, I have written and supervised many human rights reports, the most recent of which are the reports of the foreign affairs Committee of National Council on Women on gender based violence and also on the Egypt economic cost of gender based violence survey, in an evaluation report for the UNDP on the activities of the Cairo Centre For Conflict Resolution And Peace Keeping in Africa (CCCPA).