

## **Egypt Merges the Ministry of State for Administrative Development with the Ministry of Local Development**

Earlier this month, Egypt formed a new government headed by Ibrahim Mahlab, Minister of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities in the former government of Dr. Hazem Beblawi which resigned on 24 February 2014, in the context of major protests in the country.

A noteworthy action of the new government is the merger of the Ministry of State for Local Development and the Ministry of State for Administrative Development in a single Ministry to be headed by Major General Adel Labib, after the two Ministries were separate for many years. Labib served as the Minister of State for Local Development in the former government, and previously served as governor of Qena, Beheira, and Alexandria. He is known for his "development with internal capacity" approach, through which a number of public services were improved in the governorates he headed with no additional costs for the State budget.

According to analysts, various reasons lie behind this merger. Some see that the new government will not last long given the expected election of a new President of the Republic next month; thus reducing the need for a large number of Ministers. Others attribute the decision to the high complementarity between the work of the two Ministries and the value that such merger could have in terms of strengthening them especially since both are "ministries of state", with limited financial and human resources available to them.

Upon taking on his tasks, the new Minister reported to the media that the new Ministry would focus on a number of key issues in the next phase. Those include: continued activation of the decentralization process to reduce bureaucratic red-tape in Egyptian governorates, prompt enactment of the new local administration law, completion of the slum development plans, use of solar energy for street lighting in governorates and implementation of e-government to streamline procedures and services in all local administration offices, in a manner that would save time, efforts and costs.

It is worth mentioning that the Ministry of State for Administrative Development is an active player in regional and international cooperation in the area of good governance and is also a member of the [Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network](#) (ACINET).

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