

Egypt's Minister of Communications and Information Technology Amr Talaat said that the country has prepared its national strategy for artificial intelligence (AI) to serve Egypt's development goals.

The strategy has been planned under the slogan "Artificial Intelligence for Development and Prosperity", and aims to utilise this technology to achieve Egypt's development goals and drive economic growth.

Talaat added that these efforts have contributed to advancing Egypt's ranking of 55 on the government's AI Readiness Index in 2020.

He explained that the next three years are expected to witness an increase in reliance on AI applications and solutions in government sectors. This reliance comes in light of the projects being implemented to achieve digital transformation and implement the government's transition plan to the New Administrative Capital (NAC).

As part of this process, the Egyptian Government is aiming to shift its work to a paperless, participatory, digital method.

The minister's statement came during his speech at the opening of the 25th World Artificial Intelligence (AI) Show, which Egypt is hosting for the first time.

The conference is being held under the auspices of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. It has been organised by Trescon Global, in cooperation with the Information Technology Industry Development Agency (ITIDA).

It is taking place under the slogan "Maintaining AI Ecosystem in Egypt", in the presence of a group of the most prominent information technology experts in the fields of AI and machine learning, as well as senior executives and consultants.

The conference aims to explore the AI market in Egypt, and adapt its applications to meet the challenges resulting from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Talaat stated that Egypt's hosting of this conference comes in conjunction with the serious steps taken by the country to implement the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence.

It is an important component in building up the country Egypt to ensure its transformation into a digital society. This would take place through the digitisation of work systems in institutions to improve the efficiency of services and to ensure they are provided in a more transparent manner.

It would also enable community members to handle technology efficiently. In addition, Egypt will be a producer and exporter of technology, which can contribute to achieving economic growth through innovation and technological progress.

Talaat indicated that the communications and information technology (CIT) sector is the highest growth sector in the country for the second year in a row. The sector's growth rate is expected to reach 16% during the current fiscal year, whilst its employment rates have grown by 20% over the past three years.

The CIT sector's contribution to Egypt's GDP has also jumped by about 40% since 2018.

The minister pointed out that investment in capacity building programmes has doubled eight times during the past three years. This has been driven by a plan that is being implemented to train more than 115,000 people in 2021 at various levels of technological programmes, at a cost of EGP 400m.

Talaat stressed the Egyptian Government's keenness to establish partnerships between the public and private sectors to spread emerging technologies, and utilise AI technology in the development sectors.

In his speech, he indicated that Egypt is building 15 smart cities, as part of an ambitious plan to build 30 new cities. These cities are expected to accommodate more than 14 million people and provide more than 6 million new job opportunities. The private sector is a key partner in building and operating these smart cities based on modern technologies.