Fourth meeting of the

Anti-Corruption Community of Practice in the Arab States Region

"The Arab Region after 2011: Issues and Prospects for Anti-Corruption Cooperation"

Rabat, Morocco

7-8 June 2011

PROGRAMME

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"We must acknowledge that the participation of other decision-makers, together with the Ruler, in policy matters, and holding ministers administrating the country to their responsibilities in accordance with clearly defined laws, that consider the country's circumstances, is more beneficial for the country and more preserving of it."

Khaireddine Al Tunsi, 1867

I. BACKGROUND

1. Perhaps, there has not been a year in the modern history of the Arab region, more defining than the year of 2011. The gradual, albeit generally cautious, progress on the governance reform agenda over the past decade witnessed a tremendous boost when the populations of most Arab countries[1] took to the streets in massive and unprecedented protests demanding freedom and an end to corruption and social and economic injustice. So far, the ensuing chain of events – commonly referred to as the "Arab Spring" – ousted longstanding presidents, generated significant reform initiatives and is driving vibrant debates on democracy and development in most Arab countries. Many argue, however, that the extent to which the "Arab Spring" is able produce a brighter future for the peoples of the region is far from being determined. Indeed, the current situation offers significant opportunities for reform, but also presents a host of serious challenges. Addressing grievances over past governance abuses is very important; however, what may be more critical is the ability to establish and pursue a clear vision for the future that does not undercut ongoing accountability efforts, but rather provides adequate policy guidance to decision-makers and helps to manage public expectations, while ensuring that forthcoming reforms are designed and implemented in a more participatory and evidence-based manner.

2. Corruption is at the heart of the region's political, economic and social problems. In the past, it was difficult for many stakeholders to make such a statement; but in the present, similar views seem to enjoy broader support, although solid and credible data on the actual magnitude and impact of existing corruption is still very limited. In 2010, anti-corruption was an issue that had just broken taboo-status and was gaining stronger political momentum and wider stakeholder engagement, but had not yet attracted adequate and consistent support from Arab governments and their international development partners, with some few exceptions. In 2011, the "Arab Spring" transformed anti-corruption into a top reform priority for an overwhelming number of new national stakeholders. Demand for anti-corruption assistance is constantly on the rise, and so is the interest to respond among donors and technical assistance providers. While specialized anti-corruption capacities in the region are generally limited and related institutional experiences are still in their embryonic phase, there is no shortage in anti-corruption ideas and initiatives, which invoke a number of questions that are critical for the future of anti-corruption efforts in the region: what are the most effective measures to prevent corruption in

[1] The term "Arab countries" refers to the members of the League of Arab States including Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, occupied Palestinian territory, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

State institutions, and how may these measures be effectively integrated in national anti-corruption systems? What concrete mechanisms may be put in place to hold the corrupt accountable and recover the proceeds of corrupt practices? What institutional arrangements are more suitable to address corruption in a certain country's context? What specific systems should be established to control corruption in the more vulnerable sectors? What are the means to strengthen private sector engagement against corruption, internally, and vis-à-vis the public sector? What safeguards may be established to address corruption risks in political systems? How may a culture of integrity be effectively promoted within State institutions and in society at large? These are some of the overarching questions that form an integral part of the ongoing anti-corruption dialogue in the region. Other cross-cutting concerns are also being voiced: how may the recently elevated levels of political commitment be sustained and increased? How may the active participation of non-state actors in anti-corruption efforts be promoted? How may anti-corruption efforts be anchored in broader governance reforms? What are the specificities of supporting anti-corruption efforts in transitional and fragile situations?

3. After 2011, the approach to anti-corruption cooperation in the Arab region is not going to be the same anymore, particularly at the country-level, where related interventions in the past have mostly been absent or limited in scope and impact. Unlike many other development partners, UNDP realized the importance of promoting anti-corruption cooperation in the Arab region earlier on, and has accordingly engaged in sustained activities since 2002-2003 when corruption was still being treated as a taboo and avoided in governance reform processes and the majority of related multilateral and bilateral cooperation frameworks. UNDP's Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR) took the lead in this sensitive area in cooperation with a number of key partners at the national, regional and global levels. Its approach was incremental focusing on raising awareness and establishing action-oriented networks of reform drivers in government and civil society. This approach gained additional momentum in 2005 with the entry into force of the ***UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)***,[2] and the launch of the ***Good Governance for Development in the Arab Countries Initiative (GfD)***[3] with the joint support of POGAR and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In 2006-2010, POGAR worked with its international partners[4] to support a series of specialized activities that benefited hundreds of stakeholders from twenty countries and contributed to the abolishment of the taboo and the emergence of an active and more empowered regional community of policymakers and practitioners, which evolved into the ***Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET)***[5] in 2008, and other regional and national alliances and networks. Many of these policymakers and practitioners

[2] As of 15 May 2011, the Arab countries that are States Parties to the UNCAC are Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Comoros, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Syria have only signed the Convention and are yet to become States Parties. Oman and Somalia are not signatories yet (http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/signatories.html). The Palestinian National Authority has also committed to implement the UNCAC in a statement addressed to the UN Secretary General in 2005 (http://www.aman-palestine.org/uncac/palestine.htm).

[3] For more info, please visit http://www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en_34645207_34645555_1_1_1_1_1,00.html.

[4] Major partners include the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the League of Arab States, and the World Bank.

[5] For more info, please visit http://www.pogar.org/resources/ac/.

have indeed led anti-corruption efforts in their countries and are now active contributors to the ongoing anti-corruption dialogue in the region.

4. In parallel, UNDP Country Offices in the Arab countries, slowly but steadily, started to increase their support to anti-corruption efforts[6] drawing on the advent of the UNCAC and the regional anti-corruption platform that has been provided by POGAR, including the ***Anti-Corruption Community of Practice (AC-CoP) in the Arab states region***, which was established in 2008 in cooperation with UNDP's global Programme on Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness (PACDE). The AC-CoP is part of the global anti-corruption community of practice in UNDP. It brings together practitioners from the UNDP Country Offices in the Arab countries and their key national counterparts in addition to representatives of partner organizations and other donors and technical assistance providers. Since its first meeting in 2008, the AC-CoP in the Arab states region provided a vibrant and effective mechanism for sharing knowledge and encouraging concrete action against corruption. It contributed to deepening country-level cooperation in several countries and created fresh opportunities for bilateral efforts. It also reinforced regional-level work by contributing to the advancement of the anti-corruption policy dialogue among peers from different Arab countries, and informing the development of the ***Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries (ACIAC) Project***, which will be implemented by UNDP in 2011-2014.[7] Finally, it also helped shape UNDP's internal thinking on anti-corruption and informed the development and validation of a number of related knowledge products.

5. The current situation in the Arab region offers valuable opportunities for anti-corruption cooperation; however, it is important not to see these opportunities in isolation of the challenges and issues that existed in the past and the gradual advancement that occurred in recent years. Accordingly, it is important to continue the effort to maximize the potential of the UNCAC and its ***Mechanism for the Review of Implementation***[8], commonly referred to as the "Review Mechanism", which if utilized properly, may offer unique opportunities for *de jure* and *de facto* progress on the anti-corruption agenda. It is also equally important to unleash the latent power of linkages between anti-corruption and the development agenda, particularly the achievement of the ***Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)***[9], and matters that concern the daily lives of citizens such as employment, economic opportunities and access to basic services, such as education, healthcare and water and sanitation. The fourth AC-CoP in the Arab states region, which will convene in Rabat (Morocco) on 7-8 June 2010, gains particular importance in this period of hope and transformation for the peoples of the Arab countries. UNDP is

[6] In 2006, only two UNDP Country Offices (Jordan and Lebanon) were engaged in anti-corruption cooperation. In 2010, the number stood at eight offices, albeit varying in terms of scope and frequency of interventions (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan-Juba, Tunisia, and Yemen). Efforts in 2009-2010 mainly focused on supporting countries to join the UNCAC (e.g. Bahrain); develop and implement national anti-corruption strategies (e.g. Iraq); strengthen anti-corruption agencies (e.g. Jordan and Sudan-Juba); train and empower civil society on anti-corruption issues (e.g. Lebanon and Yemen); and integrate anti-corruption components in public administration reforms in countries where dealing with corruption was constrained (Egypt and Tunisia).

[7] The project brief may be downloaded at http://www.pogar.org/publications/ac/2011/aciac/overview-e.pdf.

[8] The Review Mechanism was adopted at the third session of the CoSP, which was held in Doha (Qatar) on 9-13 November 2009 (http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/CAC-COSP-session3-resolutions.html).

[9] For more info, please visit http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml.

increasingly expected to play a central role in providing development assistance to its national counterparts and anti-corruption is at the heart of these expectations. Anti-corruption has long transformed from the mere issue of criminalizing and prosecuting bribery and embezzlement into a more vigorous and demanding area of work. Thanks to the advent of the UNCAC and the continuously evolving international discourse on anti-corruption, reflected most recently in the G20 Seoul Summit Declaration,[10] the challenges for anti-corruption practitioners have become more substantial. They are expected to design and implement specific initiatives to address corruption through targeted reforms in public administration, public finance, political processes, the private sector and the public-private interface, the delivery of public goods and services, the justice system, and others. They are also required to support more inclusive stakeholder participation at the national level, and more efficient cooperation at the international level, both of which are critical for the fight against corruption. In 2011, there is a global consensus, which reverberates in the Arab region, calling for concerted efforts to address corruption, in response to the growing evidence of its devastating impact on development, and as its close links with other serious threats to human security including climate change, terrorism and trafficking in humans, weapons and drugs. How stakeholders react to this call largely depends on the political will and the technical readiness in each country and the aptitude of donors and technical assistance providers to add value to related efforts.

II. THEMATIC FOCUS

6. UNDP's long-established presence at the country-level and its proven ability to engage various stakeholders in long-term cooperation frameworks offer solid bases to move forward. The rich governance portfolio that UNDP has developed over the past two decades, its diverse partnerships with other organizations, particularly the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and the pioneering work it has supported in the Arab region over the past few years offer a comparative advantage that can be used to add value to the ever-so-growing and increasingly more attractive area of anti-corruption cooperation.

7. Accordingly, the fourth meeting of the AC-CoP in the Arab states region will not have one thematic focus, but rather provide an opportunity to enrich the knowledge-base needed by Country Offices and their national counterparts to undertake anti-corruption programming in this particularly sensitive phase. Focus will be put on issues that seem to be a priority in the ongoing regional anti-corruption dialogue and that fall within UNDP's niche. Those issues include (a) anti-corruption agencies; (b) civil society and anti-corruption; (c) corruption in sectors that deliver basic services to the public; and (d) support to UNCAC implementation. In addition, the meeting will offer an opportunity for participants to engage in interactive discussions on the ongoing developments in the region and lessons learned on anti-corruption programming in crisis-affected, transitional and fragile situations.

[10] The Declaration may be downloaded at http://www.g20.org/Documents2010/11/seoulsummit_declaration.pdf.

III. OBJECTIVES

8. The overall aim of this meeting is to increase the knowledge-base need to support anti-corruption programming in Arab countries in light of ongoing regional developments. More specifically, the meeting seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide an interactive platform to discuss **emerging issues and prospects for anti-corruption programming within UNDP** and reflect on related particularities in crisis-affected, transitional and fragile situations;
- Explain the **process and the tools of the UNCAC review mechanism,** including related experiences, lessons learned and proposals to enhance future efforts;
- Familiarize participants with the "**Guidance Note on UNCAC Self Assessments: Going Beyond the Minimum"** and train them on using it to support inclusive UNCAC self assessments at the country-level.
- Inform ongoing efforts and discussions at the country-level on establishing and strengthening **anti-corruption agencies**;
- Update participants about the developing work on **anti-corruption in sectors and the achievement of the MDGs**; and
- Explore the prospects for **civil society engagement on anti-corruption** in the Arab countries and identify possible entry points for programming in this area.

IV. PARTICIPANTS

9. Participants include leading governance and anti-corruption practitioners from UNDP Country Offices in Arab countries and a selected group of national counterparts including governmental and non-governmental experts. Representatives of regional and international organizations and other donors and technical assistance providers will also join the meeting. Resource persons include experts from GIZ, UNDP, UNODC, ESCWA, as well as other leading independent experts in their respective fields.

V. METHODOLOGY AND DOCUMENTATION

10. The regional meeting is designed to deliver particular learning objectives in an interactive manner over a period of two days. It will include (i) plenary presentations with Q&As to set present key concepts and share the findings from recent research conducted by UNDP and other international development partners; (ii) roundtable discussions to enable collective in-depth interaction on particular issues and relevant experiences; and (iii) small-group exercises to transfer skills in a more effective manner. The working languages will be Arabic and English with simultaneous interpretation in both languages.

11. The following documentation will be made available to participants:

- The United Nations Convention against Corruption (Arabic and English).

- UNDP Guidance Note on UNCAC Self Assessments: Going Beyond the Minimum (Arabic and English).
- UNDP knowledge products on corruption and developments including the Practice Note, the Primer and the Guidance Note (Arabic and English).
- UNDP desk studies on corruption in education, health, and water and sanitation (English).
- UNDP anti-corruption brochures (Arabic and English).
- UNDP Anti-Corruption Newsletter, Volume Six (English).
- Other material submitted by participants.

VI. AGENDA

Tuesday, 7 June 2011	
09.00 – 09.30	**Registration**
09.30 – 11.00	**First Session – plenary** **The Arab Spring: Voices from the Trenches** ***Objective:*** *Provide an interactive platform for participants to exchange updates about the situation in their countries and share perspectives on emerging issues and prospects for anti-corruption programming.*

- **Opening remarks**

  Ms. Alia Al Dalli, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Morocco

- **The story from Morocco: dealing with the challenges and preparing for the future**

  H.E. Minister Mohammad Saad AL ALAMI, Minister of Public Sector Modernization, Morocco

- **Anti-corruption programming in a new era: seven messages to anti-corruption practitioners in the Arab region**

  Mr. Arkan EL SEBLANI, Legal Specialist, Regional Programme, Regional Bureau for the Arab States, UNDP

- **Updates from selected Country Offices**

  Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Tunisia and Yemen

11.00 – 11.30	**Break**

11.30 – 12.30	**Second Session – plenary** **The UNCAC Review Mechanism: Process and Tools** ***Session Objective:*** *explain the UNCAC review mechanism to participants including the process as per the resolution of the "Conference of States Parties to the UNCAC" and the work of the "Implementation Review Group", and present the tools used, including the UNCAC Self Assessment Checklist.*

- **A closer look at the UNCAC and its Review Mechanism**

  Mr. Jason REICHELT, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, Corruption and Economic Crime Branch, Division for Treaty Affairs, UNODC

- **Questions and Answers**

12.30 – 13.30	**Third Session – plenary** **The UNCAC Review Mechanism in Action: the Story from the Arab Region** ***Session Objective:*** *facilitate interactive discussions on the experiences of Arab countries with the UNCAC Review Mechanism including lessons learned and proposals to enhance related efforts.*

- **An overview on Arab countries in the UNCAC Review Mechanism**

  Ms. Zahra BAZZI, Programme Associate, Regional Programme, Regional Bureau for the Arab States, UNDP

- **The experience of Morocco on the UNCAC Self Assessment**

  Mr. Ahmad LAAMOUMRI, Director of the Modernization of the Administration, Ministry of Public Sector Modernization, Morocco

- **The experience of Jordan on the UNCAC Self Assessment**

  Ms. Ban KARAKI, Corruption Prevention Department, Anti-Corruption Commission, Jordan

- **Questions and Answers**

13.30 – 14.30	**Break.**

14.30 – 15.30	**Fourth Session – plenary** **Going Beyond the Minimum: Supporting Inclusive Self Assessments** ***Session Objective:*** *present to participants the Guidance Note that was recently developed by UNDP in cooperation with its partners providing suggestions on how to make UNCAC self assessments more inclusive and more useful for the UNCAC Review Mechanism and the development and implementation of national anti-corruption strategies and programmes.*

- **Presentation of the Guidance Note**

  Mr. Mustafa KHAWAJA, Governance and Anti-Corruption Expert, Independent

- **Putting the Guidance Note in action: experiences from Asia**

  Mr. Samuel DE JAEGERE, Policy Analyst, Public Administration Reform and Anti-Corruption, Asia-Pacific Regional Center, UNDP

- **Questions and Answers**

15.30 – 17.30	**Fifth Session – small-group exercises** **Putting the Guidance Note into Action: Steps and Skills Needed** ***Session Objective**: train participants on how to support the completion of the preliminary steps for inclusive UNCAC self assessments and different phases of the process in a manner that complements the UNCAC Review Mechanism whenever possible and supports nationally-driven anti-corruption reform efforts.*

- **Trainer presentation**

  Mr. Mustafa KHAWAJA, Governance and Anti-Corruption Expert, Independent

- **Small-group applications**

  Coordinators: Mr. Mustafa KHAWAJA, Mr. Samuel DE JAEGERE, and Mr. Arkan EL SEBLANI

19.30	**Social Event** **For further information and registration, please contact the organizers.**

Wednesday, 8 June 2011

09.00 – 11.00	**Sixth Session – roundtable** **Anti-Corruption Agencies: Panacea or Pandora's Box?** ***Session Objective:** support participants to contribute to the ongoing efforts and discussions in their respective countries with regards to the establishment of anti-corruption agencies, or their enhancement where they already exist, drawing on lessons learned from the Arab region and other international experiences.*

- **Anti-corruption agencies: concepts, experiences, and alternative approaches**

  Mr. Alan DOIG, Anti-Corruption Expert, Independent

  Mr. Hannes HECHLER, Officer, Anti-Corruption and Integrity Project, GIZ

- **Developing the capacities of anti-corruption agencies: challenges and**

opportunities

Mr. Abdessalam ABOUDRAR, President, Central Instance for Corruption Prevention, Morocco

Mr. Francesco CHECCHI, Anti-Corruption Project Coordinator, Bratislava Regional Center, UNDP

- **Roundtable discussion**

11.00 – 11.30	**Break**

11.30 – 13.30	**Seventh Session – roundtable** **Anti-corruption in Sectors and the MDGs: Moving a Step Forward** ***Session Objective:*** *update participants about the developing work on anti-corruption in sectors and the achievement of the MDGs including related activities and knowledge products that have been recently developed by UNDP building on the results of anti-corruption community of practice meetings at the regional level (Beirut, 28-30 June 2010) and the global level (Bangkok, 8-9 November 2010).*

- **Tackling corruption in sectors: knowledge products and tools for policymakers and practitioners**

  Dr. Juanita OLAYA, Governance Expert, Independent

  Mr. Francesco CHECCHI, Anti-Corruption Project Coordinator, Bratislava Regional Center, UNDP

- **From Beirut to Rabat: initiatives made and results achieved so far**

  Mr. Saeed MOUSSA, Chairman of the Board, Alliance for Integrity, Iraq

  Mr. Hussein HASSAN, Senior Governance Specialist, Social Contract Centre, Egypt

  Mr. Ahmed FOUKARA, Director of Strategy and Studies Department, Central Instance for Corruption Prevention, Morocco

- **Roundtable discussion**

13.30 – 14.30	**Lunch**

14.30 – 15.45	**Eighth Session – roundtable** **Civil Society and Anti-Corruption: Thinking Outside the Box!** ***Session Objective:*** *support participants to explore the prospects for civil society engagement on anti-corruption in the Arab countries, in light of ongoing developments in the region, and to identify possible entry points for programming*

in this area.

- **Promoting the participation of civil society in anti-corruption efforts: challenges and opportunities**

  Dr. Juanita OLAYA, Governance and anti-Corruption Expert, Independent

  Ms. Arwa HASSAN, Senior Programme Coordinator, Transparency International

- **Civil society and anti-corruption in the Arab region: good practices and lessons learned**

  Mr. Hassan AL ANSI, Project Manager, Strengthening the Capacity of the Media and CSOs in Transparency, UNDP Yemen

  Mr. Ibrahim Bisharat, Project Manager, Community Development, Local Governance Support Programme, UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People

- **Roundtable discussion**

15.45 – 17.00 **Ninth Session – plenary**

Anti-Corruption in Crisis-Affected, Transitional and Fragile Situations: Lessons Learned and the Way Forward

Session Objective: *conclude the meeting by discussing the findings of recent research on challenges and issues that are particular to crisis-affected and transitional situations and summarizing the discussion in previous sessions including perspectives on anti-corruption programming in the Arab region.*

- **Issues and Prospects for Anti-Corruption Cooperation in the Arab Countries**

  Ms. Maria ORTIZ PEREZ, Associate Programme Management Officer, Emerging and Conflict Related Issues, UN Economic and Social Commission of West Asia

  Mr. Dimitri VLASSIS, Chief, Corruption and Economic Crime Branch, Division for Treaty Affairs, UNODC

  Mr. Arkan EL SEBLANI, Legal Specialist, Regional Programme, Regional Bureau for the Arab States, UNDP

- **Concluding remarks**