



Ministry of Justice
Lebanese Republic



Under the Patronage of H.E. the Minister of Justice in the Lebanese Republic

Professor Ibrahim NAJJAR

Regional High-Level Seminar in Preparation to the Conference of State Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption

Beirut, Lebanon

15-16 October 2009

CONCLUSIONS

A. Introduction

Under the patronage of H.E. the Minister of Justice in Lebanon and in the framework of the Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity Network (ACINET), the Regional Support Unit organized a high-level seminar in Beirut (Lebanon) on 15-16 October 2009 in preparation for the third session of the Conference of the State Parties (CoSP) to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) which will be held in Doha (Qatar) on 9-13 November 2009. The Seminar was organized with the support of UNDP's Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (UNDP-POGAR) and in coordination with the CoSP's Secretariat at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The seminar was attended by twenty high-level officials representing Arab anti-corruption institutions that are members in ACINET and belong to Arab countries that are State Parties to the Convention, in addition to international experts and representatives from the Council of Europe (CoE), the League of Arab States (LoAS), UNDP and UNODC.

Participants were informed about the various activities undertaken by the CoSP's Secretariat since the second session of the Conference in Bali (Indonesia) in 2008, including (i) preparatory activities conducted by the three international intergovernmental working groups on the review mechanism, technical assistance, and asset recovery; (ii) knowledge tools developed by the Secretariat, such as the new UNCAC Self Assessment Checklist and the UNCAC electronic legal library; and (iii) related global initiatives that are being developed to support UNCAC implementation, such as the corruption prevention initiative, the private sector initiative, the parliamentarians' initiative, and the international anti-corruption academy. Participants also learned about key issues that will be addressed in the third

session of the CoSP which will take place in Doha and the expected deliverables.

After that, the seminar shifted focus to the topic of "review mechanisms" and the mechanism proposed for reviewing UNCAC implementation. Participants listened to in-depth presentations on international experiences in this regard, including the experience of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), which is responsible for reviewing the Council of Europe's anti-corruption instruments; the experience of the Committee of Experts of the Mechanism for Follow-up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC); and the experience of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on reviewing the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. They also listened to an informative presentation on the experience of Jordan, which voluntarily joined the UNCAC pilot review programme in 2008-2009. In-depth discussions on the details of these review mechanisms and related experiences followed.

Finally, participating delegations presented major UNCAC implementation steps in their own countries since the second session of the CoSP in Bali in 2008. This included UNCAC ratification laws, the adoption of new anti-corruption legislative measures; strengthening institutional anti-corruption structures including specialized agencies and committees; increasing quantitative and qualitative knowledge on the issues addressed by the Convention; developing and implementing specialized national strategies and varied training programmes; and building and reinforcing bridges of communication and cooperation with non-government actors as partners in UNCAC implementation.

In addition to the above, the seminar also provided an opportunity for delegations from different Arab countries to communicate with each other and discuss common challenges and technical assistance needs for UNCAC implementation. As such, the seminar contributed to the strategic objectives of ACINET, and to efforts aimed at enhancing the Arab countries participation in CoSP, while emphasizing the need to sustain these efforts in different Arab countries through national consultations and various knowledge activities that involves all the actors concerned with UNCAC implementation in each country.

B. Conclusions

The seminar proceeded in accordance with the attached agenda. At the end, participants formulated and adopted the following recommendations in light of the various presentations and rich discussions made during the two days of the seminar:

1. Participants welcome the organization of the third session of the Conference of State Parties in Doha (Qatar) on 9-13 November 2009, and consider that this session is an important milestone for efforts aimed at enhancing integrity and combating corruption in the Arab region and the world, thus requiring the widest possible participation from Arab countries, and in particular members of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET), given that they are among the institutions that are actually responsible for implementing the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).
2. Participants underline the need to enhance and broaden the Arab countries' preparations for the third session of Conference of State Parties, and also underline the importance of reconciling Arab viewpoints with respect to the agenda of the Conference, noting the critical role that the League of Arab States plays in this respect, in coordination with the

concerned international actors, such as UNDP and UNODC.

3. Participants consider that active Arab participation in the sixth Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity, which will be held in Doha (Qatar) on 7-8 November 2009, just before the third session of the Conference of State Parties, will enhance the Arab countries' contribution to international efforts aimed at developing the foundations for future action in the area of integrity and anti-corruption at the global level.

4. Participants invite the Secretariat of the Conference of State Parties to consider the possibility of organizing a meeting on the side of future Conference sessions, to serve as a periodic informal forum bringing together different regional anti-corruption networks, with a view to engaging the networks' members in a vibrant knowledge exchange on their UNCAC implementation experiences and, thus, introducing an interactive technical dimension to the Conference of State Parties various side activities.

5. Participants agree that reaching an agreement on the UNCAC review mechanism, which balances efficiency and effectiveness on the one hand, and respect for national sovereignty on the other, is critical for the UNCAC's success and for enabling State parties to properly implement it, and accordingly welcome the proposed mechanism with its various components including self-assessment, technical exchanges among peers, and field visits coordinated with the reviewed States, since such a mechanism would constitute an appropriate mechanism that will help states to accurately and objectively identify their UNCAC implementation needs and obtain the required technical assistance.

6. Participants indicate that more attention should be paid to the role of oversight bodies due to their pivotal impact on the prevention of corruption and the enforcement of related laws, and accordingly invite donors and technical assistance provider to support the Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity Network (ACINET) in developing and implementing regional programme for developing the capacity of oversight bodies based on successful Arab regional experiences and international best practices and experiences.

7. Participants believe that there is a need to exert additional efforts to disseminate accurate knowledge to UNCAC stakeholders in Arab countries on UNCAC provisions and implementation requirements, while encouraging efforts aimed at developing comparative legal databases that contain all related laws and facilitate the needed harmonization of national legislations with the UNCAC.

8. Participants welcome the updates that have been introduced to the UNCAC Self-Assessment Checklist, and note that Arab countries have actively contributed to this process through the Arab Governmental Expert Group (AGEG) with the support of UNDP-POGAR and in coordination with UNODC, and call upon Arab states to use the new UNCAC self-assessment checklist for its important role in helping countries identify UNCAC implementation needs and priorities and forms of technical assistance required in this regard.

9. Participants call on UNDP-POGAR and its partners, particularly UNODC, to play a key role in supporting the follow-up on these conclusions within the framework of the Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity (ACINET).

In conclusion, the participants expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the Lebanese Republic, represented by the Ministry of Justice and to the organizers for the efforts that

helped make this important activity a success.