



FACT SHEET 1

THE UNITED NATIONS AND ACTION AGAINST CORRUPTION: A GLOBAL RESPONSE TO A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

The Challenge

Corruption is a complex social, political and economic phenomenon that impacts on every aspect of society. It causes reduced investments or even disinvestment, with many long-term effects, including social polarization, lack of respect for the rule of law and human rights, undemocratic practices and diversion of funds intended for development and essential services.

The Response

The United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime* (UNODC) is leading the global efforts towards improved international cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice. Fighting corruption is part of the overall effort of UNODC to create the foundations for democracy, sustainable development and the rule of law. To further pursue these goals, and building on its efforts dating back to 1989, UNODC launched in 1999 a Global Programme against Corruption (GPAC) in response to an increased need for support in their anti-corruption efforts on the part of the States. The activities of UNODC and its technical cooperation efforts undertaken under this Programme aim at assisting Member States in building integrity, as well as preventing and controlling corruption through:

- Advancing knowledge and expertise on anti-corruption measures and tools;
- Providing technical assistance to build and strengthen national capacities to prevent and control corruption;
- Enhancing coordination and cooperation among organizations active internationally in anti-corruption policy and advocacy.

The United Nations works with Member States upon request providing guidance and technical assistance. In providing these services, UNODC follows an integrated approach to corruption, namely one that is fact-based, transparent, non-partisan, inclusive, comprehensive, impact-oriented and flexible. To this end, the Global Programme against Corruption has been tailored to function as a modular design. Its various elements incorporate different activities that can be executed both individually and in packages at the international, national and sub-national (e.g., municipal) levels. It takes into consideration that corruption is a complex phenomenon. Its character differs from country to country depending on the prevailing social, economic and cultural conditions and, particularly, the legal background. GPAC is composed of three main components: action learning, technical cooperation and evaluation.

GPAC and Judicial Integrity

Since 2000, GPAC, in collaboration with Transparency International (TI) and the British Department for International Development (DFID), supports Chief Justices from common and civil law countries in identifying and applying best practices in strengthening judicial integrity and capacity.

The outcome of this process has been:

- a list of key objectives for judicial reform;
- a set of measurable performance indicators;
- a comprehensive assessment methodology for judicial integrity and capacity;
- a draft Universal Declaration on Judicial Conduct and
- a “safe” and productive learning environment for Chief Justices in which they can be exposed to best practices regarding judicial reform, management of change and the strengthening of the rule of law.

Interagency Coordination

In December 2001, UNODC was requested by the Office of the United Nations Deputy-Secretary-General to enhance coordination and cooperation across all organizations internationally active in anti-corruption policy,

advocacy and operations. This effort was undertaken to avoid undue duplication and to assure effective and efficient use of existing resources.

As a result, UNODC:

- has taken the lead in establishing an Inter-agency Anti-Corruption Mechanism that will assure better synergy across the United Nations and other agencies active in the field of anti-corruption work and
- is supporting the United Nations Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in developing an Organizational Integrity Initiative aimed at mainstreaming ethics throughout the United Nations system.

GPAC at Work

Because corruption is dynamic and has crosscutting dimensions and impact, GPAC takes an equally dynamic and holistic approach. Emphasis is evenly distributed among preventive, enforcement and prosecutorial measures.

By 2005, GPAC plans to manage 15-20 technical assistance projects supporting Member States in preventing and controlling corruption. At present, projects are being implemented in Hungary, Lebanon, Nigeria, South Africa, Colombia, Indonesia, Romania, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Uganda. GPAC also works to improve coordination among donors and identifying and promoting best practices.

Technical cooperation reflects a modular approach of comprehensive anti-corruption measures, or tools, that may be implemented in different stages at the international, national and local levels. This maximizes the flexibility of such measures to fit the needs and context of each country or subregion. Each tool is tested and refined by the action-learning process before being made available to Member States.

Tools

Manuals are considered as both policy guidelines and a practical set of “tools” to promote a common understanding of policies and enhance Governments’ capacities to build integrity to fight national and transnational corruption.

The *United Nations Anti-Corruption Toolkit* is a set of continually refined tools and case studies to “fix” corruption problems of all kinds.

The *draft United Nations Manual on Anti-Corruption Policy* intends to guide policy makers and the *draft United Nations Supplement on Legal Instruments* is a comprehensive guide to existing legal instruments.

The *draft United Nations Handbook for Prosecutors and Investigators* has been developed in close collaboration with the United States Department of Justice and the criminal justice system in South Africa. Other toolkits and manuals can be envisaged with the required collaboration, dissemination and support.

Through its *Publication Series*, UNODC develops and disseminates specialized material of various types, for different purposes and geared for various public, academic and professional audiences, in electronic and hard copy.

The United Nations, an organization with universal membership and a global mandate, is ideally positioned to deal with global challenges. Member States have accepted the fact that corruption is a global phenomenon and mandated UNODC through the General Assembly to support the negotiation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The United Nations Convention against Corruption serves as the centrepiece for efforts against corruption and UNODC will assist Member States to ratify it and implement its provisions. More specifically, UNODC will provide advisory services including training to help close the gap between what exists and what is being called for or codified as standards in the new Convention.

Resources

Extra-budgetary resources are the basis for technical cooperation activities. For 2003, contributions amounting to US\$ 1,900,000 have been received from a number of donors. The sustainability of the technical cooperation activities of UNODC will depend on ongoing support from the donor community. Substantially higher resources will be required to best assist Member States in implementing the new Convention against Corruption.

For further information:

www.unodc.org and www.unis.unvienna.org