The use of information and communications technologies for the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

7th intersessional meeting of the open-ended intergovernmental Working Group on Prevention

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Background paper prepared by the Secretariat

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- Purpose: Provision of information to enable the Working Group to discuss how to promote the use of information and communications technologies for the implementation of the Convention in order to facilitate public sector transparency and combat corruption, and to draw up a list of best practices on how to enhance and promote such use .

36 States – parties submitted information

Until May 18, information was received from 27 countries: **Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Germany, Greece, Ecuador, Jamaica, Japan, Mauritius, Montenegro, Myanmar, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Republic of Tanzania and United States of America**

9 more countries submitted information before the meeting of the Working Group: **Bahrain, France, Israel, Malaysia, Oman, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, United Arab Emirates.**

Effect of ICT on corruption

- Easy access to government information and services promotes transparency and accountability

- Limiting face-to-face interaction of citizens with the public officials limits also opportunities for corruption

Use of ICT by States-parties

- ICT used to promote integrity in public procurement, to ensure transparency of procurement and to simplify the administrative procedures

- ICT used to strengthen public reporting mechanisms and provision of services to the public through centralized transparency portals and websites of individual government bodies as well as through using e-government solutions to simplify administrative procedures

- ICT actively used to promote the participation of society
  - by encouraging the contribution of the public to decision-making processes,
  - by ensuring effective access to information,
  - by promoting and protecting the freedom to seek, receive, publish and disseminate information concerning corruption,
  - by undertaking public information activities that contribute to non-tolerance of corruption,
  - by disseminating information about the anti-corruption bodies in the country and by providing access to those bodies for the purposes of reporting of incidents of corruption
  - use of specialized websites and mobile telephone applications to facilitate the reporting of acts of corruption, including anonymously, appeared to be gaining momentum.

- Risks associated with the introduction of new technological solutions

Integrity in Public Procurement and Management of Public Finances

The trend : publication of procurement notices on government websites, establishing Internet procurement portals with templates of documents, fully integrated e-procurement solutions .

A number of States are moving from systems which passively provide information to systems which allow for interaction with users

Interesting examples:
- Use of ICT and internet portals to conduct public consultations on future procurement procedures
- Use of ICT to manage the whole procurement process and to analyze the results of the procurement
- Use of ICT for procurement fraud detection

Public reporting

Using ICT to provide access to information on the organization, functioning and decision-making process of government bodies

Using ICT to simplify administrative processes and to provide services

Using ICT to raise the profile of the anti-corruption bodies and to provide information to the public on the anti-corruption activities of the government

Using ICT to provide information to the public on the financial activities of the government

Using ICT to provide access to information on the organization, functioning and decision-making process of government bodies

- Online transparency portals, which:
  - provided basic information on the structure of the public administration, or
  - allowed for direct access to documents (legislation, regulations, bylaws), and
  - allowed for interaction with users

Using ICT to simplify administrative processes and to provide services

- Sectoral and thematic portals providing electronic services

- Mobile centres providing services to citizens

Using ICT to raise the profile of the anti-corruption bodies and to provide information to the public on the anti-corruption activities of the government

- Ensure transparency and strengthen public reporting
  - online portals
  - social networks and
  - mobile telephone applications

Using ICT to provide information to the public on the financial activities of the government

- making information on financial transactions of the Government as well as auditing reports public in order to promote transparency and accountability of the public administration.

Participation of Society

Enhancing the transparency of and promoting the contribution of the public to decision-making processes

Ensuring that the public has effective access to information

Undertaking public information activities that contribute to non-tolerance of corruption, as well as public education programmes, including school and university curricula

Respecting, promoting and protecting the freedom to seek, receive, publish and disseminate information concerning corruption

Enhancing the transparency of and promoting the contribution of the public to decision-making processes

Using institutionalized consultation mechanisms to promote the participation of society through specialized structures involving representatives of the civil society and the private sector

Using websites and mobile phone applications to stimulate public debate over important issues and to provide input into policymaking

Open Government Initiative and open data

Using public opinion polls to seek input

Ensuring that the public has effective access to information

- Allowing members of the public to make specific requests for government information, and

- Pro-actively making government information available to the public

Undertaking public information activities that contribute to non-tolerance of corruption, as well as public education programmes, including school and university curricula

- Anti-corruption programmes for youth

- Developing anti-corruption programmes for public officials

- Using social media to raise awareness on corruption

Respecting, promoting and protecting the freedom to seek, receive, publish and disseminate information concerning corruption

- The freedom to seek, receive and disseminate information is considered an important anti-corruption tool and is promoted in many of the States parties.

- Limitations to the freedom to seek, receive, publish and disseminate information concerning corruption are contained in their general access to information legislation

Making relevant anti-corruption bodies known to the public and providing access to such bodies for the reporting, including anonymously, of corruption

- All States take measures to ensure the visibility of the anti-corruption bodies and to promote reporting of corruption.

- Increasing use of Internet and mobile telephone applications to both provide information to the public on the activities of anti-corruption bodies and to seek input and feedback.

- Hotlines

- Anonymous reporting a controversial issue.

Conclusions

Most of the measures reported were practical, technologically oriented and required both legislative reform and the upgrading of the technologies used by the public administration.

As part of its discussions, the Working Group may wish to consider how States can reinforce efforts to use information and communication technologies to effectively prevent corruption.

The Working Group may also wish to discuss challenges of using ICT given the broad range of applicable implementation measures and the utility of ICT in different environments, taking into account factors such as the levels of literacy in general and computer literacy in particular; the availability of technology, including computers and mobile telephones; and Internet penetration.

The Working Group may further wish to recommend to States parties that they strengthen the exchange of information on how they use ICT to achieve better implementation of the Convention.

The Working Group may wish to request the secretariat to continue its efforts to gather information on good practices related to use of ICT to achieve better implementation of the Convention, particularly in the context of the second implementation review cycle.

Thank you!

For further information:

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