

PRESS RELEASE

03 December 2008, Pretoria:

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Regional Office for Southern Africa (UNODC ROSAF) Public Service Commission (PSC). & University of South Africa (UNISA)

On 14 December 2005, the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) came into force and became the first legally binding, global anti-corruption agreement. This Convention provides a unique opportunity for Governments, policy makers, religious organisations, the media, NGOs, other institutions working against corruption, private sector, and civil society to mount a global response to this global problem.

On 9 December 2003, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption was signed in Merida, Mexico and the United Nations General Assembly declared this day (9 December) as the International Anti-Corruption Day. The day is commemorated globally to enhance the awareness of citizens about the impact of corruption on their lives and about solutions to corruption. Each year a theme and slogan are developed to commemorate the day. The theme for 2007-2008 is:

**Corruption: Your "NO" counts
Help us to "blow the whistle" and "Say NO to Corruption"**

UNODC ROSAF has been involved with various anti-corruption initiatives in the Southern African region. Its programming has, within the framework of the CICIP/UNICRI Global Programme against Corruption (GPAC), focussed on supporting the national anti-corruption programme to assist Governments in the region in efforts to prevent, detect and fight corruption and promote integrity, transparency, accountability and the rule of law within the country. The programme initiatives are intended to provide institution building and direct support to the Governments.

Highlights: Southern Africa

In tackling corruption in the region, UNODC has undertaken several successful projects in line with the Office's mandate. Specifically, these have included:

- In 2003, UNODC assisted the government of South Africa in undertaking an assessment of to determine the extent of corruption in South Africa. This culminated in the publication of the *Country Corruption Assessment Report*;
- During 2005, UNODC assisted in the organisation of the 2nd Anti-Corruption Summit in South Africa. The purpose of the Summit, which was a follow up of the 1st National Summit held in 1999, was to address corruption in cooperation with business, public sector and civil society

organisations. 27 Resolutions pertaining to the development of National Anti-Corruption Programme as a mechanism to implement the UN Convention against Corruption were adopted.

- Further to this, a similar project was implemented in Swaziland during 2006 to build on the experience acquired in South Africa. The Swaziland project culminated in the formulation of a national strategy against corruption and a national action plan, as well as the establishment of a National Anti-Corruption Forum.
- UNODC, in corporation with the National Anti-Corruption Forum, also undertook a review of ethics teaching in schools and tertiary institutions in South Africa. This was designed to determine the extent to which ethics is incorporated into the educational curriculum in line with the recommendations from the 2nd National Anti-Corruption Summit.
- In 2005, UNODC undertook a project on enhancing the rule of law by strengthening the integrity and capacity of the court system in South Africa. Undertaken in cooperation with the Justice System Institutions, including the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, the Chief Justice and the National Prosecution Authority Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and civil society, the project aimed to provided the basis for sustainable social, political and economic development.
- A similar project was also undertaken in Mozambique in collaboration with the Supreme Court, the Attorney General's Office, Centre for Justice and Judiciary and UNDP Mozambique; and finally
- UNODC supported the organization of the 3rd National Anti-Corruption Summit in cooperation with the Office of the Public Service Commission (OPSC)

Asset Recovery: the StAR Initiative

Asset recovery is a fundamental principle of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. To further this, UNODC and the World Bank launched the Stolen Asset (StAR) Recovery Initiative in 2007. The aim is to strengthen the legislative, investigative, judicial, and enforcement capacity of states in order to deter asset theft and successfully recover stolen assets. The StAR Initiative is also designed to promote cooperation between States seeking to recover assets, and States in which the assets are being harboured: for example, helping countries produce the adequate and appropriate requests for mutual legal assistance.

The 2008 Event

In 2008, the PSC, UNODC ROSAF and UNISA will be jointly commemorating the International Anti-Corruption Day. Within the context of the key roles played by each organisation towards the eradication of corruption, the 3 organisations will be holding the 2008 International Anti-Corruption Day, on **Tuesday 9 December 2008, at the Senate Hall, UNISA from 8h30 for 9h00 until 13h15. Members of the media will be afforded time for post-event interviews.**

The event will be in the form of a roundtable discussion, and will include perspectives and updates from key players amongst Government, civil society, the media, and the private sector, offering an opportunity to better understand and discuss the pressing issues surrounding corruption.

An invitation, as well as draft programme, is attached for your perusal, and discussions will be based on the following:

- The role of the PSC in promoting integrity in the Public Service;
- The United Nations and anti-corruption;
- The role of investigative journalism in uncovering corruption; and
- The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA): Successes and challenges in combating corruption.

To RSVP for the event, or for any further queries, kindly contact Kevin Town at UNODC.

Kevin Town

Programme Association: Communications & Advocacy
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Regional Office for Southern Africa

Tel: 012-342-2424

Cell: 071-688-3760

Email: kevin.town@unodc.org.