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Prevention

Youth and the prevention of corruption

Background paper prepared by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 3/2 on preventive measures, the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption stated that, while the implementation of the Convention is the responsibility of States parties, the promotion of a culture of integrity, transparency and accountability and the prevention of corruption are responsibilities to be shared by all stakeholders and sectors of society, in accordance with articles 7-13 of the Convention. In the same resolution, the Conference called upon States parties to promote, at various levels of the education system, educational programmes that instil concepts and principles of integrity. In the report on its third session (CAC/COSP/2009/15), the Conference emphasized the need to further promote campaigns to sensitize the public, including youth, about the risks and problems posed by corruption.
2. The first session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption was held in Vienna from 13 to 15 December 2010. For that session, the Secretariat prepared a background paper containing information on anti-corruption initiatives involving young people, usually defined by the international community as persons in the age group 15-24.
3. The present background paper seeks to elaborate on that paper. It does not purport to be exhaustive or illustrative of the major national, regional and international anti-corruption activities and initiatives that involve young people. Instead, it aims to highlight the need to involve young people in anti-corruption efforts and to provide an overview of existing projects and activities that promote youth participation in the fight against corruption. The paper provides conclusions

* CAC/COSP/2011/1.



and recommendations that the Conference may wish to take into account during its deliberations.

II. The need to engage young people

4. The United Nations has long recognized that the imagination, ideals and energy of young people are vital for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. Member States acknowledged that in 1965 when they endorsed the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (General Assembly resolution 2037 (XX)). Two decades later, the General Assembly observed 1985 as International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace. It drew international attention to the important role that young people play in the world and, in particular, their potential contribution to development. In 1995, on the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, the United Nations strengthened its commitment by directing the international community's response to the challenges concerning young people in the next millennium. It did so by adopting an international strategy, the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and the Supplement thereto.¹ The implementation of this strategy has included the *World Youth Report*, International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (established by the Assembly in its resolution 64/134 and commencing on 12 August 2010), and International Youth Day (established by Assembly resolution 54/120). At the end of International Year of Youth, in August 2011, the United Nations Programme on Youth, together with Restless Development, produced the *Private Sector Toolkit for Working with Youth*.² This focuses on the partnership between young people and the private sector as an addition to the technical papers on young people as agents of development. International Youth Day is on 12 August and its theme for 2011 was "Change Our World 2011". It should be noted that other intergovernmental organizations are increasingly focusing on youth and on investing in activities dedicated to children and young people.

5. The focus on young people is part of a larger pattern. Recent literature appears to indicate a shift in the importance of focusing more on people and societies than on systems in order to foster development and change, using a "bottom-up" or grass-roots approach.³ This approach stems from a concept of citizen responsibility and self-governance.⁴ It is also based on the idea that the active participation of

¹ General Assembly resolution 50/81, annex, and resolution 62/126, annex.

² United Nations, *Private Sector Toolkit for Working with Youth* (New York, 2011). Available from <http://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/PrivateSectorKit.pdf>.

³ See, for example, BetterAid, "Development effectiveness in development cooperation: a rights-based perspective", October 2010, available from www.betteraid.org/en/member-downloads/doc_download/134-developmenteffectivenessindevelopmentcooperation.html; Stinne Hjulmann and Stine Vejborg Andersen, *Youth as Agents of Change in Anti-Corruption: A Cloak for a Neo-Liberal Agenda?* (Copenhagen, Centre for Business and Development Studies, 2011), available from http://studenttheses.cbs.dk/bitstream/handle/10417/2011/stinne_hjulmann_og_stine_vejborg_andersen.pdf?sequence=1; and Students Partnership Worldwide, SPW/DFID-CSO Youth Working Group, *Youth Participation in Development: A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers* (2010), available from www.ygproject.org/sites/default/files/6962_Youth_Participation_in_Development.pdf.

⁴ Hjulmann and Andersen, *Youth as Agents of Change*, p. 113; Graham Burchell, "Liberal

citizens fosters the development process. Participation can be in the form of information-sharing, consultation, decision-making and initiating action.⁵ In the fight against corruption, this approach aims to increasingly integrate those who are affected by corruption into the fight against it. This is based on the understanding that those affected are more willing to bring in new ideas and opinions that stimulate positive change.

6. Involving young people in the fight against corruption is crucial for multiple reasons. Firstly, their importance in the fight against corruption derives from the fact that they make up a considerable proportion of the general population. In 2011, 1.2 billion people, or 17.3 per cent of the world population, were estimated to be between 15 and 24 years of age. This share is considerably higher in the least developed countries (20 per cent) than in more developed ones (12.5 per cent).⁶ Secondly, a large segment of the world's poor are young people: more than half of young people live on less than two United States dollars a day.⁷ Since corruption hinders development efforts, it increases inequality and thus affects the poor the most. Corruption is often present in sectors such as education and health, which again affect young people directly. Thirdly, young people's willingness to voice their opinions against corruption derives from their belief in change. This willingness is accompanied by their ability to act and fuelled by their energy. Subsequently, their efforts and initiatives against corruption are being increasingly recognized around the world. Youth are the public officials, policymakers and business leaders of tomorrow. For this reason, including them in anti-corruption efforts is an investment, and involving them in the fight against corruption can ensure a solid future of anti-corruption policies and practices.

III. Anti-corruption youth activities and initiatives

7. The engagement of young people to attain anti-corruption and integrity goals can take different forms, which could be grouped in four categories, as follows: youth services; youth development; youth leadership; and youth empowerment.⁸ The category of youth services includes activities towards developing a solid theoretical and ethical framework to help young people understand why it is important to engage in the fight against corruption. Activities may include awareness-raising campaigns or educational curricula designed to broaden students' understanding of corruption and the means to prevent and control it. Activities in the youth development category aim to create a stronger level of engagement and

government and techniques of the self", *Economy and Society*, vol. 22, No. 30 (1993), pp. 267-282; E. Ostrom, J. Walker and R. Gardner, "Covenants with and without a sword: self-governance is possible", *American Political Science Review*, vol. 86, No. 2 (1992), pp. 404-417.

⁵ *Youth Participation in Development*, p. 11.

⁶ United States Census Bureau, International Programs, International Data Base. Available from www.census.gov/population/international/data/idb/region.php?N=%20Region%20Results%20&T=4&A=aggregate&RT=0&Y=2011&R=101,102,103,104&C= (accessed 5 September 2011).

⁷ *Youth Participation in Development*, p. 6.

⁸ Transparency International, "Youth and corruption", Working Paper No. 6 (2009). Available from www.transparency.org/publications/publications/working_papers/working_paper_no_6_2009_youth_and_corruption.

encourage young people's personal development while fostering their commitment to fight corruption. This can be done through formal and non-formal training initiatives, such as training and learning programmes that assist students in making decisions in their professional and personal lives. The third category, youth leadership, includes activities to build young citizens' knowledge and skills and to empower them to act as leaders in the anti-corruption movement and their communities and to challenge the status quo. Such activities include interactive virtual training programmes on countering corruption. The fourth category, youth empowerment, is about promoting activities that intensify the role of young people in the fight against corruption. Toolkits and joint capacity-building efforts between anti-corruption and youth organizations can provide impetus for broader collaboration to involve young people in the political and civic scene of their countries and communities. Activities in this category also aim to build partnerships and coalitions with other actors at different levels and from various sectors, including government, the private sector, civil society and international organizations. Activities should be structured to increase the social inclusion of young people and to ensure the more sustainable development of their societies.

8. These categories are not mutually exclusive and are to be regarded as a guide to the different means by which young people might be engaged. The sections below focus on international, regional and national activities and initiatives that are organized both for young people and by young people.

A. International anti-corruption youth activities and initiatives

9. The Global Youth Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity is an example of efforts to involve young people in the fight against corruption and promote them as influential actors in fostering a culture of integrity, transparency and accountability. The first Global Youth Forum was organized by the Qatar Foundation and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Doha on 7 and 8 November 2009. It was conducted in parallel with the sixth Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity, whose theme was "Strength in unity: working together against corruption". The Global Youth Forum mirrored the agenda of the Global Forum and focused on two topics, debated in round-table discussions. The first round table, entitled "Creating and maintaining a culture of identity", focused on the role of education and public awareness; partnerships with civil society and the media to foster an ethical climate; and conflicts of interest. The second round table, entitled "Bridging the public and private sectors' efforts for reform", focused on freedom of information for greater accountability; public and private responses to corruption in vulnerable sectors; and assessing progress against corruption and rewarding anti-corruption leaders. Students between 14 and 18 years of age came from more than 10 different countries from all regions of the world. The structure of the Global Youth Forum drew inspiration from the Model United Nations: each student was assigned a role, including representatives of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations. Selected students were also requested to act as rapporteurs. UNODC moderated the round-table discussions. The Global Youth Forum was designed to foster interactive dialogue between all participants, with a view to reaching policy-oriented conclusions and recommendations. Selected

students were invited to present the conclusions of each round table to the Global Forum, which allowed the voices of young people to be heard by the leaders of today. This kind of youth forum, other examples of which include the one held at the eleventh session of the International Anti-Corruption Conference, foster direct engagement with young people and allow their voices to be heard.⁹

10. Educational tools that use technology and different forms of social media have increased the engagement of young people in the fight against corruption. For example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in cooperation with the International Institute for Educational Planning, has developed a capacity-building programme to fight corruption in the education sector. The programme, entitled Ethics and corruption in education, aims to promote the circulation of knowledge, strengthen national capacities and promote policy debate to create an education sector free of corruption and improved by a culture of ethics. Additionally, the initiative and working group Principles for Responsible Management Education encourage business administration faculties and universities to adopt the United Nations Global Compact principles, which include anti-corruption, in their curricula, research and teachings. The World Bank Institute has a learning programme on governance and anti-corruption and has also developed the “Youthink!” distance learning programme, and Transparency International has launched the *Teaching Integrity to Youth* toolkit.¹⁰ Another example is New Tactics (www.newtactics.org/en/about), a platform that uses an interactive website, training courses and publications to gather and disseminate information and discussions about methods used and experiences gained in anti-corruption, among other fields. Internet-based learning tools are starting to bridge the gap between having and sharing knowledge on combating corruption.

11. In an effort to focus on education as a key prevention measure, UNODC has taken the initiative of developing academic networks. An informal group of anti-corruption experts and higher education specialists recently started work on the development of academic materials on corruption for use by universities and other educational institutions worldwide. In its current composition, the expert group covers a broad geographical and linguistic spectrum and comprises university professors representing disciplines such as law, business, public administration, and social sciences and criminology; officials of international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Bar Association; and diplomats, legal professionals and policymakers. This global initiative seeks to provide teachers with a comprehensive set of academic reference materials, including a list of themes and a compilation of teaching aids such as case law and case studies on anti-corruption, developed for both undergraduate and graduate students. The material, which is under development, will encompass an extensive thematic outline, annotated with a detailed bibliography of suggested reading and a teacher’s manual to aid the use of the material in the classroom. Its dynamic structure is expected to allow for continuous amendments and extensions of the material, as

⁹ For more information on the sixth Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity, and the Global Youth Forum, see www.gf6.pp.gov.qa/agenda.htm.

¹⁰ Transparency International, *Teaching Integrity to Youth: Examples from 11 Countries*, Corruption Fighters’ Tool Kit (Berlin, 2004). Available from www.transparency.org/content/download/2888/17878.

well as context-specific adaptations (e.g. jurisdiction- or discipline-based), updated with the latest research and other developments. As an open-source tool, the compilation of material will be available to educational institutions online, free of charge. Progress on the initiative will be presented to States parties at the fourth session of the Conference.

12. Innovative linkages have also proved to be invaluable, such as promoting young people's participation in anti-corruption work through sport and music. One example is the UNODC Global Sport Fund (www.globalsportfund.com), a 10-year project that provides opportunities for young people living in developing countries to actively participate in amateur sports. The project has two objectives: health, as regular participation in active sports can lead to improved physical and mental health and well-being; and prevention, to reduce youngsters' exposure to various temptations, including drug and alcohol abuse and other behaviour that may lead to delinquency. The main goal of the Global Sport Fund is to promote the values of balanced competition, respect for oneself and others, and self-control at all times. Those sports initiatives can easily be replicated to instil and disseminate other values, such as fairness and honesty, which are fundamental to a culture of integrity. The main concept of another sports initiative, supported by the Qatar Olympic Committee, is to enhance the involvement of young people in the crime prevention efforts of UNODC by organizing youth sports camps. The camps also provide lectures and practical exercises on fairness and crime prevention. An example of an anti-corruption activity involving music is the global music competition Fair Play: Anti-Corruption Youth Voices, organized by the World Bank Institute and Jeunesses Musicales International. The competition is for original songs on anti-corruption by young musicians, aged 18-35. The winners are selected not only by a jury but also by the audience, who are encouraged to participate and vote online. The three winning bands perform in global anti-corruption forums. In addition to this, Fair Play selects young artists to be international musical ambassadors. Each ambassador records and releases original tracks on fighting corruption in order to motivate and engage young people worldwide to join the fight. Fair Play shows how music competitions not only engage the competitors in anti-corruption efforts, but also involve the audience through the songs produced.

13. International anti-corruption networks for young people have become vital, not only for sharing information to drive young people's engagement in anti-corruption. The Global Youth Anti-Corruption Network (<http://voices-against-corruption.ning.com>) is one such network. It is involved with the Voices against Corruption initiative and also organized the 2010 Global Youth Forum: Mobilizing Youth against Corruption (<http://voices-against-corruption.ning.com/events/global-youth-forum-2010>), which took place in Brussels from 26 to 28 May 2010. The event brought together 50 young civil society leaders, musicians and journalists from around the world to exchange experiences and formulate action plans to fight corruption in their countries. The network was developed by the World Bank Institute and aims to provide a platform for young people to set their own agendas and discuss innovative reform. The initiative combines face-to-face and interactive communication, including through Web-based and videoconferencing tools. The objectives include identifying a core group of young people to share experiences in fighting corruption while inspiring others, and using music as a medium of communication and awareness-raising. Various outreach events have taken place under the umbrella of the Global Youth Anti-Corruption Network. The Global

Development Learning Network (www.gdln.org), for example, is a virtual network launched in January 2010. It is a global partnership of more than 100 learning centres that offers the use of advanced information and communication technologies to people working in development around the world. The main objective is to bring together different youth initiatives to exchange experiences. Such initiatives are selected and featured on a dedicated website on the basis of youth groups demonstrating engagement in demanding and obtaining greater public accountability and transparency in their respective countries. Another example of an international network is the Young Leaders Integrity Alliance (<http://comminit.com/?q=democracy-governance/node/265515>), a multinational platform aimed at strengthening networks and building the capacities of young people.

14. The above are examples of opportunities provided to young people at the international level. However, on numerous occasions, young people have used and developed such opportunities to build on and develop activities and institutions, involving other actors such as civil society organizations. At times, such activities have produced a domino effect. These activities include, to name a few, artistic performances, publications and videos about incidences of corruption, the creation of blogs, websites and forums, and communication through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. By engaging with others in anti-corruption discourse, young people have been able to involve more people in the fight against corruption in order to initiate effective change.

B. Regional anti-corruption activities and initiatives

15. There are also a number of regional anti-corruption platforms and initiatives for young people. Examples include: the Anti-Corruption Student Network in South-East Europe, which involves student organizations from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the Ibero-American Youth Organization, which includes Portugal and Spain; the European Youth Forum; the Latin American Youth Forum; and the Pacific Youth Charter,¹¹ which states the following: “We believe that governments must be free of corruption and inequality. [...] We need to resolve corruption, conflict and competing interests through compromise, negotiation and non-violent measures.”

C. National anti-corruption activities and initiatives

16. The majority of anti-corruption activities and initiatives involving young people take place at the national level. Building on the notion that education is key to engaging young people, in Argentina, the national anti-corruption agency sought the opinion of young people on corruption and published the survey results in a book which is now required reading for ethics and citizen education classes, a compulsory subject for Argentine secondary-school students. In Italy, a national programme entitled *Scelgo Io!* (My Choice!) was developed for primary and secondary schools. The programme is aimed at empowering students to take

¹¹ Available from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEAPREGTOPSOCDEV/Resources/502632-1163365702511/Youth_Charter_English.pdf.

responsibility for and respect fundamental rights and values such as the rule of law, equal opportunities, ethics, justice, human rights and the environment. In Latvia, young people were given the opportunity to draft an anti-corruption teaching programme through the peer to peer initiative. One of the objectives of the National Union of Student Representations of Lithuania is to promote integrity among students. To that end, training seminars and lectures on integrity and accountability involving student and political leaders are regularly held at universities and secondary schools. In Uganda, the initiative Corruption Alert Uganda aims to engage young people from different universities in debates, outreach programmes, seminars, open forums and workshops, including the annual Corruption Alert National Inter-University Conference. In Morocco, a project called the University of Transparency was created to study and research anti-corruption and good governance. This project brings together university academics for workshops, seminars, research activities and round-table discussions.

17. Other anti-corruption educational measures include projects such as Youth Initiative against Corruption in Malawi, the youth against corruption project in Poland and Integrity Clubs in Sierra Leone. There are also other educational means of engaging young people, for example through camps, workshops and training programmes such as Youth against Corruption, a programme supported by the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine and the Mike Menning youth democracy camp in Papua New Guinea, as well as the Anti-Corruption Training Programme in Palestine. Educational materials, in the form of books and booklets, such as *Guide to Youth Action against Corruption* in Kenya and *Youth against Corruption* in Lebanon. Programmes in Colombia and Nigeria have focused on inter-university cooperation through the *Cátedra* programme and Rural Youth against Corruption, respectively. Countries such as Latvia and the Republic of Korea have used a general approach, raising awareness through measures such as exhibitions, symposiums, workshops, lectures, study trips and discussions to educate civil society as a whole; including young people in the fight against corruption; and creating a higher level of understanding about anti-corruption work.

18. Furthermore, young people have joined national networks and forums that promote the debate on governance issues, such as the Youth Forum on Governance and Leadership in Kenya. The World Bank has used innovative ways to promote rural youth engagement, such as using radio and cell phones in Burundi: this enabled young people to voice their views and concerns regarding corruption. Before the United Nations Convention against Corruption entered into force, Lebanon developed the Youth Charter on Combating Corruption, which included the following statement: “We, the youth, pledge to combat corruption in public elections, whether it be by forgery, by buying of votes, or by using legislative work to serve private interests”. In Papua New Guinea, the Youth against Corruption Association is also working to empower its young people to uphold their rights and become active participants in anti-corruption efforts. The goal is pursued by giving members a platform to freely express their concerns and to be heard.

19. International organizations, such as the World Bank, and non-governmental organizations, such as Transparency International, have also organized events at the national level, such as the Anti-Corruption Youth Concert in Bangladesh and the Corruption-Free Tomorrow Starts Today competition in Ukraine. Young people were

also supported to empower larger parts of civil society through the Youth Engagement and Support programme in Bangladesh, which encouraged young people to launch campaigns and participate in debating competitions, street theatre and cartoon contests. In Indonesia, the SPEAK Youth Club helped organize anti-corruption activities using social networks, and the Cicak campaign used Facebook to speak out against specific incidences of corruption.

20. Many examples exist in which young people have developed their own activities and initiatives that engage others. One such initiative is Ocasa in Colombia, a non-governmental organization led by a young team, which empowers other young Colombians to fight corruption through awareness-raising, training and networking. This example shows how young people can empower other youngsters, by building their capacities, engaging them and providing them with opportunities to be active in combating corruption. Another is the Students and Youth against Corruption campaign in India, which is active online. Young people in India are promoting conversations and raising awareness about corruption through their websites and blogs, such as the Youth against Corruption, Poverty and Injustice initiative.

21. Monitoring activities have also been taken up by young people. Examples include the monitoring of the provision of public services, such as in Bangladesh, community monitoring through integrity clubs in Liberia and the monitoring of political campaigns and elections in Armenia and Lebanon.

22. Moreover, young people have established national networks, drawing on the experiences they have gained through international initiatives. One example is the Youth Initiative in Nepal, which was inspired by the Global Youth Anti-Corruption Network. In Zimbabwe, members of the network of youth against corruption institutionalized accountability and transparency within youth-based non-governmental organizations.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

23. The international, regional and national efforts to engage young people in the fight against corruption are to be commended. The initiatives described in the present paper must be encouraged, and the momentum that they have generated should be maintained. The early engagement of the young in anti-corruption policy formulation, programming and delivery is beneficial in two ways. First, it enables today's policymakers, lawmakers, standard-setters and practitioners to benefit from the energetic and innovative approach that young people are able to contribute. Second, it stimulates an early assimilation of concepts of integrity that will inform the growth and behaviour of the citizens and leaders of tomorrow.

24. To this end, the Conference may wish to consider ways to bring the voice and contributions of young people closer to the institutional anti-corruption discourse. More in-depth research and analysis of existing youth-oriented anti-corruption initiatives, with a view to identifying the most effective practices, could be considered. Similarly, the Conference may wish to recommend that UNODC engage more systematically with such initiatives, with a view to bringing the voice of young people to the attention of the States parties. In this regard, the Conference may wish matters pertaining to young people to be a standing item on the agenda of

the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption. This would enable State parties to report on youth anti-corruption efforts, and provide a platform to share good practices and discuss challenges and how to strengthen existing and future youth initiatives.

25. Member States may also wish to consider supporting the development and maintenance of a youth portal that could be included in the Tools and Resources for Anti-Corruption Knowledge (TRACK). The youth portal could act as an anti-corruption forum promoting and showcasing the initiatives and activities of young people at the national, regional and international levels.

26. Member States may further wish to consider providing political and financial support for the organization of a youth forum to be held in parallel with the fifth session of the Conference, which is to be held in Panama in 2013, similar to the Youth Forum organized in 2009 before the third session of the Conference.