

Remarks
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Special Event: UNCAC and the Integrity, Transparency and Anti-corruption Preventive Policies

Anti-corruption Strategies: Understanding What Works, What doesn't and Why?

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Your Excellency Mr. Saad Al-Mahmoud, President of the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority (ACTA) of Qatar,

Your Excellency, Mr. Taneti Mamau, President of Kiribati,

Your Excellency, Mrs. Rosana Alvarado, Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Ecuador,

My colleague from UNODC Mr. Jason Reichelt,

Distinguished colleagues,

For more than two decades now, UNDP has been partnering with many countries to support the development, implementation and monitoring of national anti-corruption policies and strategies.

Through that work, we have gained significant insights into what works and what doesn't in a variety of contexts. It is therefore a pleasure to join you in this important discussion that aims to enhance our collective knowledge.

For the first time, the international community recognizes the link between corruption, peace and development.

Indeed, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that to transform people's lives and build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, we need to reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms. This is recognized as an important end in itself as well as an important condition to achieve all other sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The UN Convention on Anti-Corruption (UNCAC), that came into force 12 years before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda,¹ envisioned a world where corruption cannot flourish, its perpetrators are held accountable, and victims get back what is rightfully theirs.² Articles 5 and 6 of the Convention encourage governments to develop and implement effective and coordinated anti-corruption policies and strategies.

Given the enormous investments - estimated to be around 1.4 trillion \$ a year³ - that are required to achieve the sustainable development agenda -- anti-corruption strategies need to ensure that these investments get to where they are most needed. Hence the need for anti-corruption policies and strategies that can anticipate, prevent and counter corruption practices that evolve within a rapidly shifting political and technological landscape.

Part of that landscape is also the increasing perception that corruption is one of the structural drivers of radicalization that can lead to violent extremism; and extremist groups like ISIL consistently profile an alternative societal model where there is law and order and where corruption will not be tolerated.

¹ UNCAC was adopted in 2003

² [Reframing of the preventive, punitive and asset recovery measures of UNCAC]

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/nov/18/14tn-dollars-a-year-needed-to-reach->

We therefore need to ensure that our strategies and preventive frameworks respond to these increasingly complex and interconnected challenges.

Dear colleagues

UNCAC had been a driving force behind the development of national anti-corruption policy and strategy in many countries,⁴ But results on the effectiveness of these policies and strategies have been mixed and experience from around the globe points to important gaps between strategy and its implementation.

In response, in 2013, UNDP and UNODC convened a high-level meeting to prepare guidelines for developing, designing and implementing sustainable anti-corruption strategies. The Kuala Lumpur Statement on Anti-Corruption Strategies was endorsed in 2013 in Panama by the Conference of States Parties and is now part of the global normative framework on anti-corruption”.

One year later, in 2014 we conducted a comprehensive review and assessment of 14 anti-corruption strategies in the Asia-Pacific region which informed the UNODC-led expert group commissioned to produce a Practical Guide for Development and Implementation of National Anti-Corruption Strategies”.

Based on our experiences, allow me to make a few reflections on how to ensure successful implementation of anti-corruption strategies.

First, an effective anti-corruption strategy requires a deep **understanding of the political economy of corruption** within the national, local and international context. Many anti-corruption programs fail because they did not anticipate the nature, location, organization, and strength of the resistance to the reforms, both inside and outside the government structures. Understanding where, and how corruption occurs, the power-relationships and the national and international networks that

⁴ UNCAC “encourages the development and implementation of effective and coordinated anti-corruption policies and strategies”.

support it, is fundamental to appraising and enhancing anti-corruption policies and programs.

Second, strategies are a key opportunity to engage in a popular dialogue on corruption and development. To ensure full national ownership, anti-corruption policies and strategies need to be developed, implemented and monitored **in a participatory and consultative manner** with strong involvement of parliament, government institutions, civil society, youth organisations, faith-based organisations, the media, academia and the private sector. The strategy should include effective mechanisms to ensure the various stakeholders cooperate with one another.

Third, strategies need to be **clear in scope and ambition and with realistic budgets attached**. Substantive resources are needed that are commensurate with the mandate of the anti-corruption institutions. It is through the allocation of financial and human resources that governments can best show their political will and commitment to the effective implementation of anti-corruption strategies.

Fourth, timing and sequencing of implementation matters, aiming for concrete milestone achievements towards the 2030 sustainable development deadline. **Pragmatism also** matters and a gradual approach may be needed, as a way of detecting forces of resistance, assessing their relative strength, and gaining time to gather resources to overcome opposition and build capacity.

Fifth, is the need to **address the corruption problem comprehensively** with attention to the local level, the sectoral level, the national level as well as at the international level. Anti-corruption strategies need to include measures to address illicit financial flows, corruption risks in sectors that are considered highly vulnerable, (such as tax and customs agencies or the construction sector). Our experience also

shows the importance of addressing corruption at the level of our cities and municipalities.

Sixth, fighting corruption and bribery in all its forms, requires effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, with simple, meaningful, measurable and manageable indicators, and monitoring methods including self-assessments, expert reviews, surveys and feedback mechanisms. Access to timely and accurate information and disaggregated data are essential. Regular diagnostic surveys of households, businesses, and public institutions can help to identify priorities for anti-corruption action and programs.” They are also an essential indicator for the public's trust in the state and its institutions.

And **finally**, as the corrupt always invent new means to get away with their crimes, anti-corruption strategies ought to be living documents that need to be revisited regularly to ensure they respond to new trends and challenges.

UNDP together with UNODC and other UN agencies stands ready to provide policy and programme support and facilitate South-South, South-North and triangular collaboration.

To conclude, I want to thank again Excellency Minister Saad Al-Mahmoud for convening this meeting. I also want to thank Qatar for playing a lead role in the Global Alliance on Goal 16 which is a partnership between member states, civil society and the private sector to promote collaboration on how best to report on the Goal 16 targets, including target 16.5 on substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms. The Global Alliance is facilitated by UNDP, UNODC and UNESCO.

I thank you all for your attention.