



## P R E S S R E L E A S E

### Non-Government Members of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network meeting in Cairo

## Joint action to ensure enforcement of laws, key to foster anti-corruption in Arab countries

On the occasion of the regional workshop of the Non-Governmental Group of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET), more than 40 activists and experts representing leading CSOs and academia have discussed during two days challenges and strategies to address four anti-corruption priorities in the region.

Representatives from Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, the occupied Palestinian territory, Djibouti, Yemen and Mauritania, as well as regional CSOs have jointly agreed in Cairo on common strategies to tackle corruption in their respective contexts. These strategies will be articulated as Position Papers that will draw on the rich discussions of the various working sessions held during the Meeting, which was organized by UNDP in the framework of the Arab Governance Week during the period of 26-29 November.

*"The meeting has been a unique opportunity to move forward against corruption in the participant countries, particularly on the issues of the 'recovery of assets derived from corruption', the 'right of access to information', 'corruption in public lands' and the 'fight against impunity'",* said **Dr. Azmi Shuaibi, Coordinator of ACINET's Non-Governmental Group.** *"Thanks to the papers that we will develop on these four topics, civil society will have the possibility to participate in a more efficient way in the fight against corruption",* he added.

*"Corruption has become prevalent throughout the Arab region; we need national action plans that involve all stakeholders to fight it effectively. It has been traditionally a taboo that nobody touched but fortunately, at present, academicians, media and NGOs, among others are more encouraged to act against corrupt practices",* **Shuaibi** stated.

#### Exchange of good practices

Most of the participants underlined the opportunities that the Arab uprisings have opened to fight corruption as well as the need to foster cooperation and alliances while raising awareness on the negative effects of corruption. The attendees, non-governmental members of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network, ACINET, had the opportunity to exchange experiences and good practices in the fight against corruption. *"One of our activities has been to pressure the authorities to recuperate the Libyan money deviated by corruption and to commit other countries in that process; we need to recover the financial assets pertaining to the Libyan society",* explained **Mr Ibrahim Ali,** from the

Libyan Transparency Association.

#### Challenges

*"Governments have started to be involved in anti-corruption practices and there has been certain level of alliance building in civil society; however, we need solidarity from other Arab countries and the international community to help regaining the assets deviated as a result of corruption and investing them in development",* commented **Salah El Din Al Jorshi,** from Tunisia, representing the **Arab NGO Network for Development.**

Although corruption is normally addressed from an economic perspective, workshop participants underlined its impact on human rights as well, especially the right to development. To this regard, **Ms. Entissar Al Shawafi** from the **Yemeni Coalition to fight Corruption,** highlighted the negative impact of corruption in the energy sector. *"One of the major challenges is to report cases of corruption; if this does not happen, organizations fighting corruption will have no credibility and public recognition",* she asserted.

On a different level, **Dr. Salah Al Ghazali,** from **Kuwait Transparency Society,** addressed the risks posed by the lack of political parties and of a consistent election management system. *"Parliamentary corruption constitutes a major problem: if the legislative authority is corrupted, this will affect the whole country",* he said. **Dr. Saadi Abdullah,** the chairman of **Arab Parliamentarians against Corruption,** also discussed the role of parliamentarians. *"They can be our strongest allies because they make the laws and are supposed to make sure that governments implement them",* he stressed. The Group agreed to meet again in March to review work progress and continue providing its members with tools to promote change and advance anti-corruption reforms across the Arab region through joint action, and whenever possible, productive partnerships with other stakeholders with governments and beyond.

For more information on ACINET and its Non Governmental Group, please visit [www.pogar.org/acinet](http://www.pogar.org/acinet).