



**Under the Patronage of His Excellency the Prime Minister
the Engineer Mohammed Shiaa Al Sudani**

High-Level Regional Meeting
**Strengthening Cooperation for Effective
National Anti-Corruption Strategies**

3-5/06/2024

Baghdad, Iraq

Programme

Supported by



Overview

Promoting integrity and anti-corruption is a global priority essential for achieving sustainable development across all its dimensions. Success in this endeavor relies on several key factors: strong political leadership, specialized institutional and individual capacities within both public and private sectors, and broad societal engagement at all levels. These efforts must be integrated into a cohesive framework of coordinated and effective strategies, tailored to the unique political, economic, and social contexts of countries aiming to achieve tangible progress.

At the same time, it is crucial to recognize the cross-border dimensions of promoting integrity and anti-corruption. Opportunities for cooperation and the exchange of expertise provided by international collaboration should not be overlooked. These efforts support the implementation of national anti-corruption visions and strategies, effectively linking them to broader initiatives aimed at achieving development, enhancing economic competitiveness, strengthening social cohesion, and building public trust in institutions.

This is affirmed by the Global Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16, on peace, justice, and strong institutions. International conventions and treaties, notably the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), also affirm this commitment. Approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 2003 and entering into force in 2005, UNCAC has, by 2024, garnered 190 signatories, including 21 Arab countries.

In this context, Arab countries are making various efforts to prevent and combat corruption, albeit with varying degrees of success. Over the past decade and a half, some have developed national anti-corruption strategies to formalize these efforts and by 2024, 11 countries are effectively implementing these strategies. In the same direction and since its establishment in 2008, the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET) has provided a broad participatory platform for specialized regional cooperation aiming to enhance member capacities, facilitate information exchange, and support policy dialogue in governance. ACINET's efforts have led to pioneering initiatives stemming from its ministerial conferences and regional meetings. The most recent, the sixth ministerial conference, resulted in the Baghdad Declaration titled “Anti-Corruption for Human Security and Society” (2018) has recommended forming and operationalizing regional expert groups from among its members to assist Arab countries in advancing their anti-corruption and integrity efforts, leveraging comparative experiences to enhance regional cooperation.

Accordingly, the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET), with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and in partnership with the Federal Commission of Integrity of the Republic of Iraq and the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), is holding a high-level regional meeting entitled “**Strengthening Cooperation for Effective National Anti-Corruption Strategies**” in Baghdad, Iraq, between 3 and 5 June 2024.

The meeting is attended by delegations from 12 Arab countries, including heads and representatives of integrity and anti-corruption commissions and oversight bodies, in addition to parliamentarians, high-level officials from the ministries of health, education, and public transportation, as well as experts and representatives of specialized regional and international organizations. The meeting aims to facilitate the exchange of expertise and experiences to enrich national anti-corruption strategies through effective sectoral approaches on the one hand, starting with health, education and public transport sectors, and regional cooperation on thematic priorities of common interest on the other hand, starting with safeguarding the development of legal texts against corruption risks, ethics and conduct in public office, and cross-border cooperation on corruption investigations.

The meeting provides ACINET members with an opportunity to review the progress made in implementing national integrity and anti-corruption strategies. This includes results achieved in legal, institutional, and sectoral reforms, criminal convictions, recovery of funds from corruption, training and awareness-raising efforts, and the successful involvement of civil society and the private sector. This comparative analysis will help formulate common visions for developing a roadmap towards establishing and operationalizing two series of regional expert groups at sectoral and thematic levels within the framework of ACINET and in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program, regional and international organizations such as the League of Arab States, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, while leveraging comparative experiences in establishing similar expert groups in the Arab region and elsewhere.

The design adopted for this high-level meeting, including plenary sessions with all attendees, parallel working sessions focused on selected sectors and topics, and bilateral and multilateral side meetings, is expected to stimulate focused and in-depth discussions leading to a series of regional recommendations for establishing and operationalizing the proposed regional expert groups and defining their work priorities. Follow-up on these initiatives will be conducted within the framework of ACINET, chaired by the Federal Commission of Integrity in Iraq, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and other partners.

The two languages of the conference are Arabic and English, with simultaneous interpretation available. The detailed agenda of the meeting is shown below, and the relevant documents will be published on the websites www.arabacinet.org and www.undp-aci.org within a month of the conclusion of the meeting. For inquiries and suggestions, please contact us via email at the following email address: info@arabacinet.org.

Agenda

Day One (Monday, 3 June 2024)

09:00 – 10:00 Registration

10:00 – 10:30 Opening Session

Objective: Welcome the participants and convey strategic messages about the high-level meeting and efforts to support cooperation in promoting integrity and anti-corruption in the Arab region.

Opening Statement

- H.E Judge Haidar Hanoun, Head of the Federal Commission of Integrity in Iraq and Chair of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET)

Official Statements

- Thomas Saylor, Ambassador of the European Union in Iraq
- Ghimar Deeb, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Iraq

10:30 – 12:00 **First Plenary Session: Comparative Overview of National Anti-Corruption and Integrity Strategies in the Arab Region**

Objective: Review the current state of efforts to develop and implement national anti-corruption and integrity strategies in the Arab region, focusing on four key areas: (a) the process of developing these strategies, (b) their vision, goals, and desired outcomes, (c) the approved monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and (d) the tangible results achieved, including the adoption and implementation of legal, institutional, and sectoral reforms, issuance of criminal convictions, recovery of funds from corruption, implementation of training and awareness raising programs, or the successful engagement of civil society and the private sector.

Chair

- H.E Judge Haidar Hanoun, Head of the Federal Commission of Integrity in Iraq and Chair of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET)

General Introduction into the Session

- Anouar Ben Khelifa, Anti-Corruption and Integrity Specialist, UNDP Regional Hub for the Arab states

Interventions by participating delegations

- Dr. Manal Abdul Hadi, Director General of the Planning and Research Department at the Federal Commission of Integrity, Republic of Iraq
- Mr. Saleh Altunaib, Assistant Secretary General for the Financial and Administrative Affairs, Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), State of Kuwait
- Mr. Khalid Almuzaini, Director of the Office of Planning and Monitoring, Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), State of Kuwait
- H.E Sami Al-Salaita, Vice-Chairman, Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- H.E Retired Honorary Judge Claude Karam, Chair of the National Anti-Corruption Commission, Republic of Lebanon
- Mr. Ali Berro, Head of Anti-Corruption Unit, Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform, Republic of Lebanon
- Mr. Djamel Ramini, Deputy Director of Awareness Unit, La Haute Autorité de Transparence, de Prévention et de Lutte contre la Corruption (HATPLC), People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- Mr. Mohamed Abuneama, Officer, Administrative Control Authority, Arab Republic of Egypt
- Mr. Ziad Sarahna, Head of the Department of Planning and Programs, Anti-Corruption Commission, State of Palestine

Open discussion

12:00 – 12:30 Break

12:30 – 13:30 Second Plenary Session: Towards Forming Regional Expert Groups in the Framework of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network

Objective: Introduce the concept of regional expert groups and facilitate an exchange of views and knowledge from comparative experiences. This includes insights into bilateral and multilateral cooperation at both governmental and non-governmental levels and into the establishment and operationalization of similar groups in the Arab region and beyond.

Chair

- Ms. Hilda Ijeilat, Chief Executive Officer, Jordan Transparency Center

Speakers

- Dr. Haytham Yassine, Anti-Corruption and Anti-Money Laundering Specialist, UNDP Regional Hub for the Arab states
- Dr. Youssef Ibrahim, Vice President of the Arab Center for Legal and Judicial Research, League of Arab states
- Irakli Kotetishvili, Former Chair of the Civil Service Board, Georgia

Open Discussion

13:30 – 14:30 Lunch

14:30 – 16:30 Bilateral and Multilateral Meetings

Objective: Provide participants with the opportunity to hold bilateral and multilateral meetings to follow up on matters of mutual interest and explore avenues for cooperation, further development, and institutionalization

Day Two (Tuesday, 4 June 2024)

09:00 – 11:00 Parallel Working Sessions (Part 1)

Objective: Conduct Section (A) of the dialogue focusing on three key areas of mutual interest: safeguarding the development of legal texts against corruption risks, integrity in the health sector, and integrity in the education sector. This will be achieved through three parallel sessions, each facilitated by a coordinator who will frame the dialogue. Following this, participants and experts will offer interventions, while others will contribute from their own country perspectives, enriching the discussion. The aim is to establish a shared understanding of the importance of these areas, assess current efforts in the Arab region, and identify noteworthy best practices and lessons learned to enhance future endeavors.

Safeguarding the Development of Legal Texts against Corruption Risks (Section A)

Integrity in the Health Sector (Section A)

Integrity in the Education Sector (Section A)

11:00 – 11:30 Break

11:30 – 13:00 Parallel Working Sessions (Part 2)

Objective: Conduct Section (B) of the dialogue focusing on safeguarding the development of legal texts against corruption risks, integrity in the health sector, and integrity in the education sector. This will be done through three parallel sessions; each has a coordinator who will facilitate the exchange of views and presentation of suggestions on how to establish and operationalize specialized regional expert groups for each of these areas. Participants will discuss the purpose, added value, potential membership, and priorities of each group, as well as the operational means necessary to achieve proposed goals. They will also address existing opportunities and challenges that should be considered when establishing and supporting these groups.

Safeguarding the Development of Legal Texts against Corruption Risks (Section B)

Integrity in the Health Sector (Section B)

Integrity in the Education Sector (Section B)

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Parallel Working Sessions (Part 3)

Objective: Conduct Section (A) of the dialogue focusing on three key areas of mutual interest: integrity in the public transport sector, ethics and conduct in public office, cross border cooperation on corruption investigations. This will be achieved through three parallel sessions, each facilitated by a coordinator who will frame the dialogue. Following this, participants and experts will offer interventions, while others will contribute from their own country perspectives, enriching the discussion. The aim is to establish a shared understanding of the importance of these areas, assess current efforts in the Arab region, and identify noteworthy best practices and lessons learned to enhance future endeavors.

Integrity in the Public Transport Sector (Section A)

Ethics and Conduct in Public Office (Section A)

Cross-Border Cooperation on Corruption Investigations (Section A)

Day Three (Wednesday, 5 June 2024)

09:00 – 11:00 Parallel Working Sessions (Part 4)

Objective: Conduct Section (B) of the dialogue focusing on enhancing integrity in the public transportation sector, strengthening ethics and conduct in public office, cross-border cooperation on corruption investigations. This will be done through three parallel sessions; each has a coordinator who will facilitate the exchange of views and presentation of suggestions on how to establish and operationalize specialized regional expert groups for each of these areas. Participants will discuss the purpose, added value, potential membership, and priorities of each group, as well as the operational means necessary to achieve proposed goals. They will also address existing opportunities and challenges that should be considered when establishing and supporting these groups.

Integrity in the Public Transport Sector (Section B)

Ethics and Conduct in Public Office (Section B)

Cross-Border Cooperation on Corruption Investigations (Section B)

10:30 – 11:00 Break

11:00 – 12:30 Third Plenary Session: Outcomes of the Parallel Working Sessions

Objective: Present and discuss the conclusions drawn from the parallel working sessions on the six areas of mutual interest: safeguarding the development of legal texts against corruption risks, ethics and conduct in public office, cross-border cooperation on corruption investigations, as well as integrity within the health, education, and public transport sectors.

Chair

- H.E Retired Honorary Judge Claude Karam, Chair of the National Anti-Corruption Commission, Republic of Lebanon

Safeguarding the Development of Legal Texts against Corruption Risks

Mr. Ali Berro, Head of Anti-Corruption Unit, Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform, Republic of Lebanon

Ethics and Conduct in Public Office

Ms. Hama Zidan, Head of Operations, AMAN Coalition for Transparency and Accountability, State of Palestine

Cross-boarded Cooperation on Corruption Investigations

Mr. Mohamed Almosly, Consultant, Anti-Money Laundering, UNDP Iraq

Integrity in the Health Sector

Mr. Mostafa Hunter, President, Health Governance International

Integrity in the Education Sector

Mr. Ali Fayyad, Executive Director, Partners Jordan

Integrity in the Public Transport Sector

Ms. Alia Moh'd Rafiq Abdelhamid Smade, Head of The Legal Affairs Department, Ministry of Transport, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

12:30 – 13:00 Closing Session

Chair

- H.E Judge Haidar Hanoun, Head of the Federal Commission of Integrity in Iraq and Chair of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET)

Regional Recommendations

- Arkan El Seblani, Regional Chief Advisor and Programme Manager on Anti-Corruption and Integrity, UNDP Regional Hub for the Arab states

Towards the 7th Ministerial Conference of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET)

Closing statement

13:00 Lunch