Exploring the link between integrity and gender equality in the Arab countries

Towards a Regional Alliance of Women Against Corruption

Beirut, 27 April 2022
Outline

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Global Integrity & Gender Equality Mandates
Key international governance and gender equality instruments

Gender Equality
prohibits all forms of discrimination, against all groups of women, in all spheres of life (political, civil, legal, social, cultural and sexual and reproductive realms)
≠ no link to corruption

Anti-corruption
UN Convention against Corruption ; Oct 2003; 188 State Parties (August 2021)
Core values : fairness, accountability and transparency, equality before the law
≠ explicit relation to gender
1) For U.N., corruption = "one of the biggest impediments" to achieving the SDGs

2) Gender equality: a precondition for sustainable development; a fundamental driver for more inclusive and equitable societies

1: No Poverty.
2: Zero Hunger.
3: Good Health and Well-being.
4: Quality Education.
5: Gender Equality.*
6: Clean Water and Sanitation.
7: Affordable and Clean Energy.
8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.
9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

10: Reduced Inequality
11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
12: Responsible Consumption and Production
13: Climate Action
14: Life Below Water
15: Life on Land
16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal

Gender Mainstreaming = gender equity is cross-cutting in the 16 other objectives
For anti-corruption strategies’ effectiveness and to achieve sustainable development

✓ Anti-corruption and gender equality efforts tend to be mutually reinforcing.
✓ Synergies between the two can strengthen policy decisions and legal frameworks which in turn enhance women’s empowerment and their increased participation in social, economic and other activities.

It is essential to:
➢ include a gender perspective into any preliminary analysis;
➢ improve the overall understanding of the complex interrelation of corruption and gender.

Methodological challenges:
❖ insufficient data, including cross-country information,
❖ lack of understanding and evidence of the causal mechanisms behind the possible relationship between gender and corruption.
A regional approach for improved governance and equality?
MENA countries’ commitment to

1) UNCAC:
• 12 out of 22 Arab countries have adopted National Anti-Corruption Strategies & 18 out of 22 Arab countries have put in place Anti-Corruption agencies.
• Public sector integrity is considered priority in AC reform policies.

2) Achieve the 2030 Development Agenda
Why enhance regional knowledge on improving the fight against corruption through a gender lens?

➢ Policy makers, civil society and researchers may wish to examine the link between corruption and gender in a nuanced manner to develop adequate policy responses.

➢ Support by a regional women’s alliance in the field of transparency and accountability across the Arab States region?

➢ Attentive to regional and national context, culture and sectors?

➢ INCREASE KNOWLEDGE ON THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN AC through
  • Mutual capacity building
  • Cross-regional learning
  • Capacity-building at the national level
  • Enforce anti-corruption and gender sensitive public policies
Considerations on a regional AC Women’s Alliance

I. Participation and operation of the Women’s Alliance
II. Actions by the Women’s Alliance
III. Support provided to the Women’s Alliance
IV. Information collection
V. Views of leading regional experts
Who could be involved and when?

**Women’s Alliance Participants:**

- **Women leaders** from government, the private sector, academia and civil society to support anti-corruption through a gender lens in the Arab region.

**Friends of the Alliance** for input & guidance to strengthen impact

- **Local consultative groups**: women from different stakeholder groups with relevant anti-corruption, sector or gender equality expertise (incl. existing Women AC groups - Iraq (UNDP, 2020) Palestine (April 2022));

- **Partner institutions** = regional or international civil society organisations as well as relevant inter-governmental organisations (e.g., UN WOMEN, UNODC).

**Meetings:**

- **Alliance**: quarterly meetings
- **Friends**: upon demand /availability but at least once a year
Actions by a regional AC Women’s Alliance?

➢ Support expertise and advocacy work on specific issues, measures to be taken;
➢ A watchdog role concerning the execution of public services;
➢ Contribute to the identification and development of preventive and repressive measures, incl. laws (e.g., through studies, knowledge database, training and networking);
➢ Support monitoring and follow-up on prevention and anti-corruption policies;
➢ Sensitization of the various stakeholders to the phenomena of corruption and gender equality;
➢ Act as an active agent in the elaboration of corruption prevention, gender equality and sustainable development;
➢ Participate in specialized conferences towards public authorities and parliamentarians and the international community.
What’s needed for pragmatic interventions building on gender mainstreamed anti-corruption programmes?

- Clear definitions (corruption, gender equality, women empowerment) and sanctions
- Stakeholder mapping and issues mapping;
- Understand SDGs interactions;
- Gender related observations in AC strategies;
- Sector integrity engagements;
- Gender disaggregated data on:
  - access to public services and utilities,
  - employment in the public service and the private sector supporting the public service, incl. in leadership positions,
  - perpetration of corruption offences & AC law enforcement;
  - know who establishes the overview and the controls.

What else?
UNDP’s support to a regional AC Women’s Alliance

**Women’s alliance**
- Determine research agenda
- Suggest policy proposals and validate policy recommendations

**UNDP**
- Facilitate the development of a roadmap
- Facilitate communication between participants in the Alliance, incl. meeting organisation
- Provide support to policy research in relevant areas, incl. through relevant UNDP activities and programmes
- Draft documentation (analytical, proposals & recommendations)
- Maintain a database (people, policy topics, research)
- Raise visibility & awareness at national, regional and international level
Views of leading regional experts :

• Would you agree that there is a need for a regional AC Women’s Alliance (ACWA)?
• If there is, who should participate in it?
• What should be the ACWA’s actions?
• Any other suggestions?

Next steps:
Identify women participants incl. stakeholder mapping of domestic women’s AC initiatives
Desk research on the AC gender dimension incl. 1) in current AC strategies & Action Plans and 2) selected sector specific risk assessments