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Training workshop on “Enhancing Social Accountability for the Better Delivery of Public Basic Services”

Amman, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

12 June 2014

Programme

In cooperation with



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Overview

A training workshop titled “Enhancing Social Accountability for the Better Delivery of Public Basic Services” was held in Amman on 12 June 2014 in partnership between the UNDP’s Regional Project on Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries (UNDP-ACIAC) and the Jordanian Anti Corruption Commission, and in collaboration with the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network “ACINET”. The workshop brought together concerned members of the Anti-Corruption Commission, representatives of other official bodies responsible for delivering public basic services, as well as representatives of civil society actors including media, academia, and activists in non-governmental organizations. The training workshop aimed to increase participants understanding of the concept and practice of social accountability, key mechanisms and tools that were developed to enhance the concept including the information and communication technology tools (ICT), and its impact on improving the delivery of public basic services in light of the comparative experiences in the region and the world.

I. Background

1. Accountability is a consequence of the implicit “social compact” between citizens and the state, and a fundamental principle of democratic governance, which is based on participation; it proclaims citizens basic rights, and allows them to actively demand accountability. Accountability can be “horizontal” through internal and external mechanisms adopted by the state to provide check and balances and oversight, or “vertical” through people-state interaction mechanisms, often of irregular forms, such as electoral processes. The traditional forms of accountability have been found to be insufficient to strengthen citizens participation in decision making process, and enable them to hold those make decisions to account.

2. “Social accountability” refers to the collective efforts of individual citizens and civil society actors, to hold governments to account for their obligations in an informal manner, particularly in terms of public service delivery including health, water and education. Strengthening social accountability means amplifying “citizens voice”, including the less privileged groups such as women and youth, and facilitating their engagement with government in an informed, systematic and constructive way, to ensure that the government honors its commitments.¹

¹ Reflections on Social Accountability, Catalyzing democratic governance to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals – UNDP 2013

3. Social accountability initiatives in public basic services can take different approaches including “social audit”, “participatory audit” and “community score cards”. Factors of success of social accountability initiatives include: “access to and effective use of information”, “civil society and countries capacities” and “synergy between the two”². If social accountability is to be successfully “institutionalized”, it can then improve governance and enhance development effectiveness. In particular, social accountability initiatives can add value to anti-corruption and integrity efforts by providing additional checks and balances on governments and exposing corruption incidents, negligence and oversight, which other traditional forms of accountability cannot address³.

4. At the international level, the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) of 2004, in articles 9, 10 and 13, recognizes the crucial role that society plays in fighting corruption, which has been pronounced by the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network “ACINET” in different occasions and enshrined in its regional conclusions under the label “Towards Strengthening Social Participation in Fighting Corruption in the Arab Region” as emanated from its third Ministerial Meeting that took place in Fes on 19-21 June 2011. The Declaration on the Right to Development of 1986, specifically in articles 1, 2 & 9, proclaims that every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, and that the state have the duty to formulate appropriate national development policies on the basis of society participation. Moreover, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 in article 20, and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 in article 22, emphasize the freedom of association to strengthen social participation and impose a different form of accountability on the governments.

5. There is an increasing International recognition of social accountability as an approach to ensure democratic governance. UNDP recognizes the importance of the society capacities to effectively participate and assert accountability being the demand side of good governance, which is vital to strengthen reforms interventions including anti-corruption and integrity, and to realize development and human rights. In this context, UNDP has developed a Guidance Note to inform the development and implementation of such initiatives⁴. UNDP has lately conducted a review of the social accountability implemented initiatives and lessons learned of these initiatives to further support the development of a new framework⁵. The World Bank has also been promoting for the

² Carmen Malena with Reiner Forster Janmejaj Singh - Social Accountability An Introduction to the Concept and Emerging Practice

³ Fostering Social Accountability: From Principle to Practice – Guidance Note UNDP 2010

⁴ Fostering Social Accountability: From Principle to Practice – Guidance Note UNDP 2010

⁵ Reflections on Social Accountability, Catalyzing democratic governance to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals – UNDP 2013

social accountability concept since the past two decades for the implementation of poverty reduction strategies and public sector reform processes. The World Development Report “Making Services Work for Poor People” of 2004, suggests that service delivery can be improved by enabling poor people to monitor the delivery of services through amplifying their voice in policymaking, and by strengthening the incentives for providers to serve the poor. World Bank’s support to social accountability interventions including services provisions, has been further developed in its governance anti-corruption strategy and multi-stakeholders engagement guidance note, which was developed to inform the implementation of initiatives with a broad range of stakeholders⁶. In 2011, the Global Partnership for Social Accountability initiative was launched with funding provided by the World Bank and other international organizations to support civil societies and governments in solving critical governance issues in developing countries⁷. Recently, the world is calling for the inclusion of social accountability within the post-2015 development framework.

II. Fostering Social Accountability in Jordan

1. In this context, UNDP cooperates with its partners in Jordan, particularly the Anti-Corruption Commission, to develop social accountability capacities as part of the anti-corruption efforts. The collaboration has been realized in the form of a pilot initiative aims to strengthening social accountability for better delivery of health services, supported by UNDP Jordan and its Regional Project on Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries, with additional funding provided by UNDP's global Programme on Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness (PACDE). The initiative specifically aims to foster citizens’ participation in monitoring the integrity and quality of health services, and build capacities in voicing their needs and revealing corruption in this sector, through using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Phase I of the initiative resulted in various outcomes including the development of an electronic platform (www.sharek.jo) integrated with smart phones and social media applications, and linked to official bodies responsible for the provision of, oversight and fighting corruption in health services delivery, starting with the Ministry of Health and the Jordanian Anti Corruption Commission, which makes this platform the first of its kind in Jordan.

⁶ World Bank Governance and Anti Corruption Strategy, 2007 and the Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Guidance Note, 2009.

⁷ For Further information on the Global Partnership Social Accountability on please visit <http://gpsaknowledge.org/>.

2. In tandem with these efforts, Jordanian public institutions have adopted mechanisms for filing and processing complaints through traditional platforms and e-government initiatives, albeit on a small scale. Further initiatives have also been implemented by non-governmental organizations to strengthen citizens participation in improving basic services such as “makana” initiative, which aimed to strengthen society participation in monitoring education services using simple approaches, in addition to other initiatives aimed to raising public awareness of the right to access to information related to basic services and citizens budget.

3. All these efforts provide a ground for the implementation of fundamental principles integrated in national charters and strategies including; the Jordanian Constitution and the Jordanian National Charter, which emphasize the process of enrooting democracy and enabling citizens participation in development and human rights realization. The National Integrity System of 2013, which is based on the principles of participation in decision-making, citizens right to be acquainted with the work of public sector, as well as protection of citizens rights in public services through the deployment of simple and transparent processes and adoption of channels for filing and processing complaints. The National Strategy on Anti Corruption 2013-2017, which aims to create appropriate environment to enhance integrity of and fighting corruption in sectors through improving and publicizing services delivery processes, as well as enhancing civil society participation in anti-corruption efforts. Finally, the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan under which Jordan pledges to adopt participatory approach in improving public services and enhancing e-government and e-services.

III. Methodology

1. The purpose of the workshop, which comes as part of the efforts between the Jordanian Anti Corruption Commission and UNDP's Regional Project on Anti-corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries to implement the joint action plan, was to increase participants understanding of the concept and practice of social accountability, key mechanisms and tools that were developed to enhance this concept including Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and its impact on improving public basic services. In particular, the workshop aimed to:

- Provide participants with a comprehensive picture of the social accountability concept, its impact, role of key actors, and enabling environment for social accountability initiatives.

- Enable participants to explore in detail the practices of social accountability in monitoring public basic service, and key tools and mechanisms that were developed in this area.
- Enrich participants’ knowledge about the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in fostering social accountability.
- Train participants on using the electronic platform “Sharek”, and involve them in proposing a national capacity development plan to effectively harness the electronic platform in improving the health services.

2. This workshop was designed to deliver the learning objectives indicated here above in an interactive manner, over a period of one day and through 4 sessions to be conducted by experts from the region and the world. The workshop included practical exercises with Q&As and open discussions to share experiences and knowledge. 26 participants joined the workshop including members of the Commission and other official bodies, which are involved in the delivery of public basic services, as well as representatives of civil society actors including media, academia, and activists in non-governmental organizations. The working languages were Arabic and English with simultaneous interpretation in both languages.

IV. Agenda

Thursday, 12 June 2014

08:30 – 09:00 Registration and pre-workshop evaluation form

09:00 – 10:45 First Session

Introduction to Social Accountability

Objective: Enable participants to understand the concept and practice of social accountability, its contribution to improved governance and development, role of civil society actors and their relationship with the public sector, and key elements of the enabling environment for social accountability initiatives.

- **Opening remarks**

Mr. Ramzi NUZHA, Board member of Anti-Corruption Commission Council

Dr. Stuart GILMAN, Senior Advisor, UNDP’s Regional Project on Anti Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries

- **Panelists**

Dr. Juanita OLAYA, Senior Advisor, UNDP's Regional Project on Anti Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries

Ms. Nancy FASHHO, Project Officer, UNDP's Regional Project on Anti Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries

- **Open discussion**

10:45 - 11:00 **Break**

11:00 – 12:45 **Second Session**

Social Accountability practices in public service monitoring

Objective: Enable participants to understand the concept and practice of social accountability in public service monitoring, and empowering them to play a constructive and effective role in this area; and to explore in detail public service monitoring key mechanisms and tools such as social audit, participatory audit, public procurement, community score cards, etc.

- **Panelists**

Mr. Refaat ABDELKARIM, Governance and Civic Engagement Program Advisor, Care International Egypt

Ms. Nancy FASHHO, Project Officer, UNDP's Regional Project on Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries

- **Q&A**
- **Practical Exercises within Small Working Groups**
- **General discussions and conclusions**

12:45 – 14:00 **Third Session**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) role in fostering social accountability

Objective: Enable participants to understand the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), especially new media, in enhancing social accountability in public service monitoring, key challenges associated with using this tool and approaches to address them. Enable participants to use the electronic platform "Sharek" and train them on its applications

- **Panelists**

Mr. Yousef AL-ALEM, Director of Echo Technology

Ms. Nour HEMEIMET, website developer, Echo Technology

- **Q&A**

- Practical guide to the electronic platform “Sharek” applications
- General discussions and conclusions

14:00 – 14:10 **Closing and post-workshop evaluation form**

14:10 - 15:00 **Lunch**
