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Republic of Lebanon

Under the Patronage of H.E. the Speaker of Parliament

Workshop

**Supporting the Implementation of the United Nations
Convention against Corruption in Lebanon**

Parliament, Thursday, 5 December 2013

Programme

Overview

The workshop on “Supporting the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in Lebanon” is held in Beirut on 5 December 2013 under the patronage of His Excellency the Speaker of the Parliament and with the joint support of the Ministry of Justice, together with the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform, Lebanese Parliamentarians Against Corruption (LebPAC), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This activity is part and parcel of national efforts aimed to support the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) to which Lebanon had become a State Party on 22 April 2009. The workshop aims to provide a solid foundation for stakeholders to achieve further progress in this field, including the development and implementation of a coordinated and effective national strategy that strengthens integrity and anti-corruption efforts and promotes the participation of society, the rule of law, good governance, and reduces the waste of public money. In its first part, the workshop aims to review progress achieved on the implementation of the Convention in Lebanon. It then explores relevant means for advancing related legislative efforts in light of current challenges, and finally examines the importance of sectoral approaches in fighting corruption by concentrating on the customs and real property administration given their importance in relation to the Lebanese economy, and the important role they can potentially play in providing a good model in this regard. Participants include ministers, members of parliament, judges, senior officials, and representatives of various governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations, in addition to members of the National Network for the Right of Access to Information, regional and international experts, and representatives of partner states, donors, and regional and international organizations such as UNDP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

The workshop draws on results achieved and lessons learned from a number of previous initiatives that were launched in the 1990s following the end of the war in Lebanon, but were not institutionalized in a specialized manner. It also draws on the ongoing cooperation with UNDP and the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET)¹ which is currently chaired by Lebanon represented by H.E. the Minister of Justice. In December 2011, His Excellency Prime Minister Najib Mikati established an inter-ministerial anti-corruption committee under his chairmanship, and a supporting technical committee chaired by H.E. the Minister of State for Administrative Reform, and entrusted them with a number of tasks that would enable Lebanon to implement the UNCAC, and activate participation in ACINET. With the completion of the composition of the technical committee in mid 2012, such efforts began to gain a practical and more concrete character; it laid the foundations for further steps in this respect, despite the major challenges facing Lebanon in the context of regional instability and the accumulation of obstacles stemming from various deeply-rooted structural problems. The technical committee developed two major reports. The first identifies the major gaps existing between the provisions of Lebanese laws and the provisions of the UNCAC, specifically Chapter III dealing with the criminalization of corruption and law enforcement, and Chapter IV focusing on international cooperation. The second report outlines specific recommendations for a national anti-corruption strategy, paving the way for further efforts that aim to develop this strategy in a participatory manner. The committee also recommended

¹ ACINET includes 43 ministries and agencies from 16 Arab countries and observer members from Brazil and Malaysia, in addition to a “Non-Governmental Group” encompassing key non-governmental entities active in this field in the Arab region.

that more attention be paid to sectoral anti-corruption approaches given their ability to maximize the use of efforts and resources and achieve more concrete results. It also identified pilot sectors including customs and real property administration.

In parallel, the Parliament and the Council of Ministers have continued to devote efforts for the modernization of anti-corruption legislations, although there is agreement that that such efforts are need of additional support. recent key achievements in this area include the referral of a draft bill on the right of access to information and the anti-corruption law in the public sector to the Parliament's General Assembly, the successful preparation of a draft bill on whistleblower protection and a proposal by the Administration and Justice Parliamentary Committee amending the anti-illicit enrichment law. Achievements also include the opening of discussions on the bill relating to the activation of regulatory authorities and the bill on the activation of the judiciary. Meanwhile, the Council of Ministers referred a bill on public procurement to Parliament and is currently debating a bill on conflicts of interest. It is worth mentioning in this regard that LebPAC, the National Network for the Right of Access to Information, UNDP, and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy have played pivotal roles in supporting these efforts.

Practical steps have also been undertaken to accompany legislative efforts to promote de facto adherence to anti-corruption principles, although such steps are generally still considered limited compared to the government's aspirations and citizens' expectation. Certain Ministries, particularly those who are members of the inter-ministerial anti-corruption committee, have recently taken a number of steps in this regard. For instance, the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the High Judicial Council, adopted measures to establish the principle of accountability within the judiciary, leading to an unprecedented number of disciplinary measures against several judges and ensuring more transparent procedures in the recruitment of judicial officers. Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities also adopted a code of conduct for members of the security forces, and is in the process of taking practical measures to deal with some corruption cases recently raised in the media. The Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform launched a project in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance aimed at anti-corruption at the sectoral level, along with a large number of initiatives undertaken by the Ministry in terms of modernizing and developing the Lebanese administration. The media has also played a key role in highlighting potential corruption cases and has instigated judicial action in some cases. On the other hand, the role played by civil society organizations in this regard remains limited, with a few exceptions mainly focusing on supporting and advocating for legislation, or relating to broader efforts focusing on elections and municipal activities.

In this context, the workshop which is being held just a few days before the International Anti-Corruption Day (December 9), seeks to create a common ground for dialogue among the various stakeholders on the state of anti-corruption efforts in Lebanon and prospects for enhancing them in light of international commitments and the needs of citizens. Thus, the workshops sessions raise a number of priority issues including strengthening the implementation of the UN Convention, the formulation of a coordinated, effective and national anti-corruption strategy, advancing related legislative initiatives, and launching pilot sectoral initiatives that lay the foundations for further concrete efforts that positively impact people's lives.

For more information please email us at aciac@undp.org.

Agenda

Thursday 5 December 2013

09.30 – 10.00 Registration

10.00 – 12.00 First Session

Implementing the UNCAC in Lebanon: Existing Efforts and Prospects for Development

***Objective:** present the general framework of the workshop, its objectives and expected results; and enable participants to discuss key developments regarding Lebanon's efforts to implement the UNCAC; and means to activate these efforts and expand them in the framework of a coordinated and effective national strategy that strengthens integrity and counters corruption in a manner that reflects the principles of the participation of society, the rule of law, and good management, and reduces the waste of public funds.*

- **Welcome Statements**

H.E. Mr. Yassine JABER, representing H.E the Speaker of the Parliament

Mr. Luca RENDA, Country Director, UNDP Lebanon

- **Official Statements**

H.E. Mr. Chakib CORTBAOUI, Minister of Justice and Chair of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network

H.E. Mr. Mohammad FNEISH, Minister of State for Administrative Reform, and Chair of the National Anti-Corruption Technical Committee

Mr. Alain BIFANIE, Director General, Ministry of Finance

- **The implementation of Chapters III and IV of the UNCAC in Lebanon**

Judge Arlette JREISSATY, Adviser to the Court of Cassation, and Chair of the sub-committee in charge of drafting the self-assessment report on UNCAC implementation

- **Proposals for a national anti-corruption strategy**

Mr. Nasser ISRAOUI, Head of the Technical Cooperation Unit, Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Development

- **Open discussion and conclusions**

Mr. Arkan EL SEBLANI, Manager, Regional Project on Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries, UNDP

12.00 – 12.15 Break

12.15 – 13.30 Second Session

Progressing the Legislative Framework On Anti-Corruption In Lebanon: Current Efforts and the Right of Access To Information Law as a Case Study

***Objective:** enable participants to deepen their knowledge about key requirements for compliance between Lebanese laws and the UNCAC, and about key results of legislative efforts in this field to date, as a basis to achieve broader participation in strengthening these efforts in the future, while focusing on the draft bill on the right of access to information as a case study.*

This session is organized in cooperation with:

Lebanese Transparency Association

National Civil Society Parliament Liaison Unit

- **Moderator**

Hon. Mr. Robert GHANEM, Member of Parliament, Chair of the Administration and Justice Committee

- **Legislative anti-corruption efforts**

Hon. Mr. Ghassan MOUKHEIBER, Member of Parliament, member of the Administration and Justice Committee, Chairperson of "Lebanese Parliamentarians against Corruption", Chair of the National Network for the Right of Access to Information

- **Commentators**

H.E. Mr. Fadi ABBOUD, Minister of Tourism

Dr. Amer KHAYAT, Secretary General, Arab Anti-Corruption Organization

- **Open discussions and conclusions**

13.30 – 13.45 Break

13.45 – 15.00 Third Session

Strengthening Integrity and Preventing Corruption at the Sectoral Level: Customs and Real Property

***Objective:** create a common platform for the promotion of a specialized dialogue among stakeholders on mechanisms that can help promote integrity in the customs and real property sectors, in light of related international standards, good practices and lessons learned from comparative experiences, paving the way for practical steps to be taken for the prevention of corruption in these two key sectors and others in the future.*

Parallel Session A : Customs

- **Moderator**
Dr. Rajaa EL SHERIF, Advisor to the Minister of Finance
- **Speakers**
Mr. Mourad ARFAOUI, Regional Development Manager for MENA, World Customs Organization
Mr. Badri DAHER, Inspector General, Customs Directorate General, Ministry of Finance
- **Open discussion and conclusions**

Parallel Session B : Real-Property

- **Moderator**
Mr. Ali BERRO, Advisor to the Minister of State for Administrative Development
- **Speakers**
Mr. Constantine PALICARSKY, International Expert
Mr. George MERAQUI, Acting Director General of Real Property Administration, Ministry of Finance
- **Open discussion and conclusions**

15.00

Lunch (registered participants)

Invitation by H.E. Mr. Mohammad FNEISH, Chair of the Technical National Anti-Corruption Committee and Minister of State for Administrative Reform
