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High-Level Regional Consultation on

**Paths for Cooperation on Anti-Corruption and
Integrity in Arab Countries:**

Achievements, Challenges and Future Directions

Skhirat, Kingdom of Morocco, 19-20 November 2014

Programme

Overview

The Kingdom of Morocco is hosting a high level regional consultation on the "Future Directions for Cooperation on Anti-Corruption and Integrity in Arab Countries", organized in Skhirat on 19-20 November 2014, by UNDP's Regional Bureau for Arab States in cooperation with the Central Authority for Corruption Prevention. This important event brings together distinguished officials and activists that are specialized in this field, including senior representatives of concerned agencies and ministries, parliamentarians, leaders from civil society and the business community and delegates of donor agencies and regional and international organizations. Participants also include practitioners from UNDP's Country Offices in Arab countries as well as the UNDP Global Anti-Corruption Initiative (GAIN), which has also provided support to the event.

The high-level regional consultation is designed to enable participants to review the results achieved in the framework of the first phase of UNDP's regional project on Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries (ACIAC) and to explore related opportunities and challenges for further cooperation in 2015 and beyond with the overall aim of bringing stronger focus on transparency and accountability in a manner that is conducive to development and security efforts across the region.

The consultation draws on a conviction that corruption exists in all countries, rich and poor, but is more likely to spread in countries that are unable to establish and activate specialized mechanisms to control it. Corruption undermines peoples' trust in their governments and undercuts their ability to enjoy a decent life, as it allows the confiscation of state decisions in favor of the powerful few, contributes to squandering public funds, prevents accountability for performance and promotes a culture of impunity. When left unchecked, corruption may destabilize societies and in some cases may even trigger violent conflicts.

The consultation builds on the progress achieved by a number of Arab countries during the past few years in fighting corruption and enhancing integrity and is based on the conviction of a majority of stakeholders working in this area that related efforts require continued political and technical support to achieve more progress, particularly with regards to enhancing levels of transparency in the management of public affairs and activating related accountability. This gains even more importance in light of growing political, security, economic and social challenges that are afflicting large parts of the Arab region and further straining its resources. This calls for exploring and adopting all means available to increase these resources and maximize their added value in achieving development.

The meeting gives a wide spectrum of participants an opportunity to engage in direct an open dialogues on efforts to fight corruption and enhance integrity in the region and on the role of UNDP in supporting these efforts, namely through its specialized Regional Project on "Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries". It will also enable them to exchange views at the strategic level on how UNDP may continue to support these efforts in the next phase in a manner that is responsive to the needs of stakeholders in light of emerging priorities and multiplying changes associated with the ongoing regional transformations, taking into consideration commonalities and particularities between Arab countries in terms of their development levels and governance models.

The high-level consultation's agenda has been designed on the basis of a series of informal consultations held with numerous stakeholders in the region during the past two years. It revolves around a number of thematic issues and proceeds according to a methodology that enables participants to engage in focused and

interactive discussions about each issue, resulting in concrete proposals UNDP will take into account in light of its mandate and resource availability. Participants will first review results achieved to fight corruption and enhance integrity in Arab countries and will then discuss three key thematic issues and explore related cooperation paths, including supporting effective and sustainable frameworks to reinforce the “Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network” and to enhance bilateral cooperation between Arab countries and with other countries from the developing world, or what is known as “south-south cooperation”. The first issue relates to stimulating collaborative work for the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), and supporting this in a manner that increases the *de facto* levels of transparency and accountability. The second issue deals with the most effective approaches that need to be adopted to enhance integrity and reduce corruption risks in sectors that are considered to be of particular importance to national development agendas, including sectors that generate major revenue for the State, and those that deliver critical services to its citizens. As for the third issue it addresses how to involve new specific groups of stakeholders and strengthen their capacities to contribute constructively in developing, implementing and monitoring anti-corruption initiatives. In conclusion, the consultation will devote specific time to focused discussions on key characteristics of transition countries, with a view to prepare for the harmonization of the suggestions arising from the thematic discussions with the characteristics of those countries compared to other Arab countries in the region.

The results of the high-level consultation will feed into efforts to develop the second phase of the Regional Project on “Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries” which constitutes a key component of UNDP’s new Regional Programme for Arab states and UNDP’s Strategic Plan for the period of 2014-2017. It is expected that the internal steps necessary for the adoption of the regional project document be completed afterwards, with a view to beginning implementation in 2015, while prioritizing support to countries that have expressed their desire to engage in related activities and benefit from its services.

Agenda

Wednesday 19 November 2014

09.00 – 10.00 Registration

10.00 – 11.00 Opening Session

Objective: *Explain the importance of working on strengthening anti-corruption efforts and enhancing integrity in the Arab countries in light of recent regional and international developments, and present the agenda items and initial reflections thereon, and inform participants about key achievements and lessons learned from the first phase of UNDP’s Regional Project on “Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries” (2011-2014).*

- **Opening Remarks**

H.E. Abdesselam ABOUDRAR, President of the Central Authority for Corruption Prevention, Morocco

Ms. Ayshanie LABE, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Morocco

Mr. Yakup BERIS, Regional Programme Adviser, Regional Bureau for Arab States, UNDP

H.E. Mohamed EL OUAFA, Minister of General Affairs and Governance, Morocco

11.00 – 11.30 Break

11.30 – 13.30 First Session

Anti-Corruption and Integrity in Arab Countries: Progress Achieved and Challenges Ahead

***Objective:** Review progress achieved in fighting corruption and enhancing integrity in the Arab region, explore key challenges that stand in the way of achieving further progress, and propose concrete ideas to address these challenges through cooperation at the national, regional and international level.*

- **Chair**

H.E. Anouar BEN KHELIFA, Minister of State in charge of Governance and Public Function, Tunisia

- **Phase I of UNDP's Regional Project on "Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries"**

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

- **From the Central Authority for Corruption Prevention to the National Authority for Integrity, Prevention and Combatting of Corruption: Outcomes and Prospects**

Mr. Moulay El Hassan ALAOUI SLIMANI, Head of Cabinet, Senior Advisor to the President, Central Authority for Corruption Prevention, Morocco

- **Brief Reports and Interventions by Participants**

- **General Discussion**

13.30 Lunch

Thursday 20 November 2014

09.30 – 11.00 Second Session

Increasing Transparency and Accountability through the Implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption and Related International Standards

***Objective:** Review progress achieved on UNCAC implementation in the region and related remaining gaps, and consider options to ensure that future efforts in this area are advanced in*

synergy with efforts to implement related international and regional standards, particularly the Arab Convention against Corruption, and are more concretely geared towards effectively increasing levels of transparency and accountability.

- **Chair**

H.E. Ghassan MOUKHEIBER, Member of Parliament, Lebanon

- **Panel**

Mr. Nizar BARKOUTI, Director at the Prime Ministry, Tunisia

Ms. Salma AL ESSA, International Relations Commissioner, Kuwait Transparency Society

Mr. Charbel SARKIS, Coordinator of the Anti-Corruption Technical Committee, Senior Legal Advisor, Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Development, Lebanon

- **General Discussion**

- **Conclusions**

11.00 – 11.15 Break

11.15 – 12.45 Third Session

Enhancing Integrity and Reducing Corruption Risks in Key Vulnerable Sectors

***Objective:** Determine the most suitable approaches to design and implement focused initiatives in sectors that are considered of particular importance for development efforts including sectors that generate revenue for the state, such as tax, customs and non-renewable natural resources such as oil, gas and minerals, as well as sectors that deliver social services such as justice, health, water, education, electricity and others.*

- **Chair**

Dr. Stuart GILMAN, Senior Partner, Global Integrity Group

- **Speakers**

Mr. Mohamed Hossam RASHWAN, Vice-President, Administrative Control Authority, Egypt

Dr. Hikmat ABU ALFOUL, Director of Control and Internal Audit, Ministry of Health, Jordan

Ms. Aida ARUTYUNOVA, Anti-Corruption Programme Specialist, Global Anti-corruption Initiative (GAIN), UNDP

Ms. Arlette JREISSATY, Judge at the Court of Cassation, Lebanon

- **General Discussion**

- **Conclusions**

12.45 – 13.00 Break

13.00 – 14.30 Fourth Session

Expanding Opportunities for Constructive Engagement against Corruption

***Objective:** Identify new groups of stakeholders that require an investment to involve them in addressing corruption, and encourage new and innovative thinking regarding necessary policies and tools to enhance their ability to constructively contribute to the development, implementation and monitoring of anti-corruption reforms, including working on finding sustainable and effective frameworks to enhance communication and cooperation between these groups while benefiting from the unique dynamic that the Arab “Anti-corruption and Integrity Network” enjoys in this area.*

- **Chair**

Dr. Juanita OLAYA, Independent International Expert on Governance and Anti-Corruption

- **Panel**

H.E. Dr. Bilkis ABOUSBA, Assistant Professor at Sana’a University, former Vice-President of the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption, Yemen

Dr. Salem FARHAN, Director of International Conventions, National Anti-Corruption Commission, Saudi Arabia

Ms. Bouchra GHIATI, Vice-President, Commission for Ethics and Good Governance, General Confederation of the Enterprises of Morocco

Mr. Mouheb AL GAROUI, Executive Director, I-Watch, Tunisia

- **General Discussion**

- **Conclusions**

14.30 – 15.30 Lunch

15.30 – 17.00 Fifth Session

Examining the Specificities of Anti-Corruption and Integrity in Arab Countries in Transition

***Objective:** Conduct an interactive discussion between participants to explore key specificities of Arab countries in transition, including commonalities and differences, with a view to informing a more contextualized approach which must be adopted in such contexts compared to other contexts in the region.*

- **Chair**

Dr. Ghada MOUSSA, Director of the Governance Center, Ministry of Planning, Monitoring

and Administrative Reform, Egypt

- **Panel**

H.E. Ramzi NUZHA, Board Member, Anti-Corruption Commission, Jordan

Mr. Mohamed BENALILO, Director of Studies, Cooperation and Modernization, Ministry of Justice, Morocco

Dr. Ahmed ASHOUR, Professor at the Alexandria University

Dr. Manal ABDELHADI, Director General, Department of Relations with Non-Governmental Organizations, Commission of Integrity, Iraq

- **General Discussion**

- **Conclusions**

17.00 – 17.30 Closing Session

***Objective:** Present the findings of the consultation and the way forward towards the next phase of cooperation.*

- **Conclusions and Closing Remarks**

Mr. Radwan BEN KHADRA, Legal Advisor to the Secretary General, League of Arab States

Mr. Bruno POUEZAT, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Morocco
