Dear Reader,

This News Update includes information on (a) the commemoration of the “International Anti-Corruption Day” by the UN (p.2), ACINET (p.3), and in a number of Arab countries (p.5); (b) a workshop in Egypt for the Asia-Middle East Dialogue (AMED) countries” (p.8); (c) a regional workshop on investing and prosecuting corruption (p.9); (d) a new member in ACINET (p.11); (e) a cross-continental e-discussion on “capacity development for anti-corruption” (p.12); and (f) the usual stop at Arab Anti-Corruption Highlights (p.13).

Please direct your comments and inquiries to info@arabacinet.org or fax +961 1 981645.

Best Wishes for the New Year
The United Nations commemorates the International Anti-Corruption Day

The United Nations commemorated the 2009 “International Anti-Corruption Day” this year with an international media campaign entitled “your no counts”. The campaign was organized by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and was accompanied by a wide array of activities across the globe.

This Day, which is commemorated on the 9th of December each year by virtue of the UN General Assembly Resolution 58/4, is an important international platform to highlight the negative effects of corruption and reconfirm the global consensus to confront it in the framework of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

This year, the UN Secretary-General delivered a message on the occasion focusing on how corruption hinders efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and stressing the fact the development is not the only casualty of corruption, but that “corruption steals elections. It undermines the rule of law. And it can jeopardize security. As we have seen over the last year, it can also have a serious impact on the international financial system.” The Secretary-General stressed in his message the importance of the UNCAC and its implementation review mechanism, which was recently adopted by the third session of the UNCAC Conference of State Parties (CoSP3) in Doha, noting that
“from now on, states will be judged by the actions they take to fight corruption, not just the promises they make”.

The message of the Secretary General also included a clear call to the private sector to adopt anti-corruption measures in accordance with the Convention.

To view the full text of the Secretary-General message in English, please visit this link www.un.org/en/events/anticorruptionday/sgmessages.shtml.

For more information on the United Nations campaign to fight corruption, please visit www.yournocounts.org.

The Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity Network commemorates the International Anti-Corruption Day

In commemoration of the “International Anti-Corruption Day”, the Arab Anti Corruption & Integrity Network (ACINET) issued a press statement highlighting the special significance of the event this year, especially for the Arab region, because it comes at the heels of two historic international events hosted by the region in the State of Qatar.

The first is the sixth Global Forum on Fighting Corruption & Safeguarding Integrity, which concluded a series of global forums that were launched in 1999 making considerable contributions to the global anti-corruption

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movement. The other event is the third session of the Conference of State Parties (CoSP3) to the United Nations Convention against Corruption. This year CoSP witnessed the birth of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the UNCAC, which is the global instrument that provides an inclusive and comprehensive framework to help countries address the “corruption – a phenomenon that is sophisticated in its manifestations and clear in its implications”.

The press statement also presented an overview on ACINET’s efforts in 2009 as well as major achievements in the region in relation to UNCAC implementation.

In addition to the statement, which is the second issued by ACINET on this occasion since the network’s establishment in mid 2008, a number of ACINET members organized different activities to commemorate the “International Anti-Corruption Day”. Some of these occasions will be featured in this issue of the ACINET news Update.

To view ACINET press statement, please visit:
Officials and civic actors commemorate the International Anti Corruption Day in several Arab countries

The commemoration of the “International Anti-Corruption Day”, this year, was marked by a considerable increase of related activities in the Arab region. Officials and civic actors from Jordan, Bahrain, the occupied Palestinian territory, Kuwait, Lebanon, Egypt and other countries commemorated this important international event in various ways.

“We are all partners against corruption”, was the slogan under which the Jordanian Anti-Corruption Commission commemorated the “International Anti-Corruption Day” on December 9th under the patronage of his Excellency the Jordanian Prime Minister, and in cooperation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The event drew significant media coverage and attracted over 150 participants representing governmental sectors, the private sector, civil society, academia and journalists. A short documentary film was produced interviewing citizens on corruption issues and ways to fight it and text messages were dispatched to citizens on the occasion with a view to disseminating the slogan under which Jordan has decided to commemorate this Day.

In Bahrain, the Bahrain Transparency Society (BTS) commemorated the “International Anti-Corruption Day” on December 8th in cooperation with the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Representatives of state institutions, including the Attorney General’s

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Office, attended the event in addition to members of the legal and civic communities. Statements focused on the importance of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and related implementation efforts in the Arab region, including the efforts of the Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity Network (ACINET). Discussions also highlighted related Bahraini efforts and called for advancing them especially in relation to the transposition of UNCAC’s provisions into national legislation; reforming the criminal justice system; and enhancing the independence of the judiciary and the prosecution services. This event is a part of a series of events that UNDP is supporting in Bahrain to empower local stakeholders to advance anti-corruption and integrity efforts in the Kingdom.

In the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN) commemorated the “International Anti-Corruption Day” by organizing a march to the Palestinian Prime Minister’s headquarters in Ramallah on 6 December 2009. The General Union of Palestinian Charities, a group of deputies in the Legislative Council, and representatives from the private sector joined the march. In his speech to the rally, the Prime Minister promised to proceed with the establishment of the commission on illicit enrichment, confirming his Government’s will to support the enablement of this commission immediately after its establishment.

The Kuwaiti Transparency Society (KTS) also held a seminar on the occasion on December 7th. The seminar discussed progress made on
anti-corruption efforts in Kuwait, including the presentation of different draft laws to Parliament, including a draft anti-corruption law and draft laws on financial disclosure, conflict of interests and whistleblower protection. The seminar also provided an opportunity to present the work of KTS which compiled press articles published over the year in local newspapers on transparency, integrity, accountability, anti-corruption and good governance. The articles were sorted according to scientific criteria, and printed in 360-page book for the benefit of studies and scientific researches.

In Lebanon, the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA) celebrated on December 9th along with its members, and partners, the “International Anti-Corruption Day” in partnership with UNDP. A panel of experts addressed the participants on the importance of sustaining an open and productive debate on corruption in Lebanon. Panelists highlighted the consequences of corruption, progress made on anti-corruption efforts in Lebanon, and the challenges ahead, including the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). The event coincided with LTA’s 10th Anniversary. On the occasion, a documentary was screened for the first time, showing LTA’s work over the past 10 years.

Finally, Egypt commemorated the Day in a ceremony hosted by the Ministry of State for Administrative Development in cooperation with UNODC and UNDP. Participants included representatives from the key ministries and
anti-corruption bodies in the country in addition to representatives of a number of international organizations, civil society organizations and embassies of countries with a successful record of anti-corruption experiences.

Some observers view this significantly increasing interest in commemorating the “International Anti-Corruption Day” this year, compared to previous years, as a positive indicator of increasing awareness and developing political and civic commitment to advance efforts aimed at promoting accountability, transparency, and integrity and implementing the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in the countries of the Arab region.

An inter-regional workshop on “Best Practices in Achieving Transparency and Integrity in the Asia-Middle East dialogue (AMED) countries”

The Governance Center at the National Management Institute of the Ministry of State for Administrative Development in Egypt organized an interregional workshop on “best practices for transparency and integrity in the Asia-Middle East Dialogue (AMED) countries”, in Cairo on 6-7 December 2009. The workshop was organized in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Program.
The World Bank Integrity Vice-Presidency organized a regional workshop on “Strengthening Cooperation to Investigate and Prosecute Corruption and Related Financial Crimes in the MENA region” in Sharm el-Sheikh (Egypt) on 14-16 December 2009, in partnership with UNDP’s Programme on Governance in the Arab States (UNDP-AR). The two-day workshop discussed the institutional framework and the policies of the governmental anti-corruption agencies in the participating countries, in addition to the mechanisms of communication between citizens, anti-corruption oversight agencies and investigation bodies. Successful experiences on the establishment of ombudsman offices were also presented. The workshop developed a number of recommendations and a program of work that was submitted by Egypt to AMED countries for discussions and utilization in future steps.

For more information about the workshop and conclusions, please contact Dr. Ghada Moussa at gmoussa@ad.gov.eg.

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POGAR) and in support of the Arab Anti Corruption & Integrity Network (ACINET).

The workshop brought together judges, prosecutors, investigators and inspectors from 11 Arab countries including Jordan, Bahrain, Algeria, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian National Authority, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Egypt, and Yemen. This is in addition to high-level officials and experts from the World Bank, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Participants discussed recent progress on the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in their respective countries, in addition to ACINET’s activities in 2009 and the areas of focus for the next year.

They were also informed about the World Bank’s role in fighting corruption in development projects; and presented with the preliminary results of a World Bank study on anti-corruption policies and practices in the region, as well as the results of a survey conducted by the Egyptian Cabinet’s Information and Decision Support Centre (IDSC).

The major part of the workshop was dedicated to a case study that enabled participants to share their expertise and experiences in the context of four working groups. The groups discussed the legal and institutional frameworks for investigations and prosecutions in corruption crimes and related financial crimes, as well as the

موجز الشبكة العربية لتعزيز النزاهة ومكافحة الفساد

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العدد 15، 31 كانون الأول/ديسمبر 2009

مع برنامج إدارة الحكم في الدول العربية التابع لبرنامج الأمم المتحدة الإقتصادي (UNDP-POGAR)، وفي إطار دعم أعمال الشبكة العربية لتعزيز النزاهة ومكافحة الفساد (ACINET).

شارك في ورشة العمل قضاة ووكلاء نائب ومحققون ومفتشون من 11 بلدًا عربيًا هي الأردن والبحرين والجزائر وجيبوتي والسعودية والسلطة الفلسطينية والعراق والكويت ولبنان ومصر واليمن، بالإضافة إلى مسؤولين رفيعي المستوى وخبراء من البنك الدولي (World Bank) وبرنامج الأمم المتحدة الإقتصادي (UNDP) ومنظمة التعاون والتنمية في الميدان الاقتصادي (OECD).

تباحث المشاركون في آخر مستجدات تنفيذ اتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لمكافحة الفساد (UNCAC) في بلدانهم بالإضافة إلى نشاطات الشبكة العربية خلال سنة 2009 والمحافظات المزمنة التركيز عليها خلال السنة القادمة. كما تعرضوا على دور البنك الدولي في حماية مشاريع التنمية من الفساد، وطعوا على النتائج الأولية لدراسة أعدتها البنك حول سياسات وممارسات مكافحة الفساد في المنطقة، بالإضافة إلى دراسة إستطلاعية لآراء المصريين حول الفساد من إعداد مركز المعلومات ودعم القرار التابع لمجلس الوزراء المصري.

أما القسم الأخير من ورشة العمل فقد تركز على معالجة حالات عملية مكّنت المشاركين من تبادل خبراتهم

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The Egyptian Ministry of Interior joins the Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity Network

During the month of December 2009, the ACINET’s Regional Support Unit received an accession letter to Network from the Egyptian Ministry of Interior. The letter was sent through the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice of the League of Arab States. The Egyptian Ministry of Interior plays a very significant role in the fight against corruption, through its Directorate of Public Funds’ Investigations which handles intakes and investigations related to corruption cases before transferring them to prosecution.

For more information please write to arkan.el-seblani@undp.org.
the files for the Attorney General’s office for prosecution.

With this new accession, ACINET members become 31 anti-corruption institution from 13 Arab countries, and the number of Egyptian members becomes four.

For more information about the ACINET, please contact info@arabacinet.org.

A cross-continental e-discussion on “capacity development for anti-corruption”

UNDP’s Regional Centre in Bangkok launched an e-discussion on “capacity development for anti-corruption”, which went on for five weeks. It focused on two topics (i) capacity assessments of anti-corruption agencies in the light of UN Convention Against Corruption compliance reviews; and (ii) governance assessments in public service delivery, notably health, education, water and sanitation.

The e-discussion was hosted on the Asia-Pacific Integrity in Action Network (AP-INTACT), and cross-posted on other regional anti-corruption networks, including the Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity Network (ACINET), to maximize south-south learning and cross-regional exchange.

Ultimately, the e-discussion brought together anti-corruption experts and practitioners from the Arab region, Eastern Europe, the Central Independent States, and Asia and the Pacific for an unprecedented exchange of views and
experiences. It attracted tens of responses and yielded new knowledge that will feed into a regional anti-corruption workshop for the Asia-Pacific countries in early February 2010.

It is expected that this successful experience will pave the way for similar experiences in the future for the Arab region, noting that this is the first time that an e-discussion of this nature, and on this topic, was organized in the framework of ACINET.

The conclusions of this e-discussion will be translated into Arabic in preparation for the identification and the formulation of similar e-discussions for ACINET on issues that are of particular interest to its member.

Arab Anti-Corruption Highlights

- *Jordanian Anti-Corruption Commission develops its 2010 work plan:* the Jordanian Anti-Corruption Commission (JACC) held a series of meetings on 6-8 December 2009 to discuss its 2010 Workplan in the light of the national anti-corruption strategy. The meetings were attended by representatives of ministries, institutions, government departments and other stakeholders. The Workplan which was adopted at the end includes a number of activities and steps that serve the implementation of the
United Nations Convention against Corruption UNCAC. This includes a legislative review of laws that criminalize corruption to ensure compliance with the UNCAC; establishing more effective criminal procedures to deal with acts of corruption; reviewing asset declaration laws; and working to encourage the adoption of laws that sanction companies involved in corruption, protects witnesses and whistleblowers, and promotes cooperation and coordination between the authorities involved in the fight against corruption in Jordan as well as with the regional and international organizations. For more information, please visit www.jacc.gov.jo.

Anti-corruption efforts in Iraq lead to judicial sentences and the recovery of embezzled funds in December: The Iraqi Commission of Integrity (CoI) seized and recovered one million one hundred thousand dollars of embezzled money from the Baghdad Municipality. CoI also declared that it has identified key leads to recover the remainder of the amount that was embezzled from the municipality and which amounts to 17 billion dinars. On the other hand, the Samawah Criminal Court sentenced to imprisonment three employees in the Ministry of Commerce based on cases investigated by the Col. The General Director of the Company for Trade in Foodstuffs was sentenced to one-year imprisonment to, while assistant general manager received two years, and the media advisor to the Minister of Commerce received a one-year sentence. For more information, please visit www.jacc.gov.jo.

Gamal al-Shamly's inaugural address to the Arab Network of Integrity and Anti-Corruption

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The Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) in Yemen organizes a national workshop on good governance: SNACC organized a national workshop on good governance in Sana’a on 20 December 2009 in cooperation GTZ. Participants learned about SNACC’s mandate and functions and the components of the national anti-corruption strategy, and its development stages. The workshop also discussed the measures which have been adopted in light of the UNCAC including laws and preventive policies and practices. The workshop brought together a number of officials, academics, specialists and representatives of civil society organizations. For more, please visit www.snaccyemen.org.

Assessment studies on transparency and public reporting in Yemeni institutions: the Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC) in Yemen organized a conference in Sana’a on 13 December 2009, in cooperation with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to launch assessment studies on transparency and public reporting in Yemen institutions. The studies were carried out by a team of researchers on four institutions including the Parliament, the Central Organisation for Control and Auditing (COCA), the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC), and the Supreme Judicial Council. These studies are first of their kind in Yemen, dealing with the most prominent oversight, legislative and budgetary accountability of the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) in Yemen. The workshop was held in cooperation with GTZ (German Technical Cooperation). The studies were carried out by a team of researchers on four institutions including the Parliament, the Central Organisation for Control and Auditing (COCA), the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC), and the Supreme Judicial Council. These studies are first of their kind in Yemen, dealing with the most prominent oversight, legislative and budgetary accountability of the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) in Yemen. The workshop was held in cooperation with GTZ (German Technical Cooperation).
judicial institutions. They include an analysis of these institutions’ commitment to the public's right of access to information, in addition to an assessment of the level of public reporting and transparency. Moreover, the studies evaluate the legal framework of the institutions and in particular the information management and the policies for information dissemination. They also discuss cooperation with the media and access to information and reporting mechanisms. For more information, please visit the website www.economicmedia.net.

• The Shura Council in Bahrain approves accession the United Nations Convention against Corruption: On 21 December 2009, the Bahrain Shura Council, which is the Parliament’s chamber of senators, approved the draft bill proposing the ratification of the UNCAC, annexed to the Royal Decree N. 64. This approval follows that of the Nuwab Council, which is the Parliament’s chamber of representatives. The next and final step would be the royal approval which will conclude the ratification process in Bahrain. After which, the Kingdom becomes the sixteenth Arab country that ratifies the Convention.

• A seminar on the United Nations Convention against Corruption in the Kuwait University: The faculty of Law in the Kuwait University organized an anti-corruption seminar on December 21th. The seminar, which is a rare occurrence at the level of the region’s universities, addressed
the challenges of corruption, noting that it is a human phenomenon, that cannot be eradicated, but efforts are needed to overcome it both in the public and the private sectors. The seminar also addressed the legal framework to combat corruption in light of the various provisions brought forward by the United Nations Convention against Corruption which outlines the needed legislative steps for state parties. Speakers also stressed the importance of a law to protect witnesses, experts and whistleblowers and the need to establish a Kuwaiti anti-corruption body that enjoys financial and administrative independence.

- **A workshop to assess the public procurement systems in Jordan:** The Government Tenders Directorate (GTD) in Jordan held a workshop on 20-24 December 2009 in cooperation with the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to assess the public procurement systems in place in Jordan. The workshop was attended by members of the National Committee in addition to international experts. A number of recommendations came out and were submitted to the GTD director for his approval before being submitted to the Cabinet. For more information, please visit [www.gtd.gov.jo](http://www.gtd.gov.jo).

- **The Iraqi Commission of Integrity organizes its annual scientific conference:** Under the slogan “towards guiding and activating the role of media in combating corruption”, the annual scientific conference organized by the Iraqi Commission of Integrity under the presidency of the Iraqi National Committee for Integrity under the slogan “towards guiding and activating the role of media in combating corruption” was held in December 2009. The conference discussed the role of the media in preventing corruption and increasing transparency, as well as the importance of legal protection for witnesses and experts. The conference also discussed the need to establish an independent anti-corruption body in Iraq that enjoys financial and administrative independence.

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conference of the Iraqi Commission of Integrity (Col) was convened on 23 December 2009. The conference was attended by officials and distinguished academics and researchers. At the end, participants highlighted the role of the media as a key partner in anti-corruption efforts, to join efforts calling for activating its role in various educational institutions to promote concepts of integrity and the preservation of public monies. For more information, please visit www.nazaha.iq.

Dubai issues a new law to combat corruption: The office of the Governor of Dubai announced the issuance of a new law to combat corruption in the Emirate on 29 December 2009. The new law allows the imposition of prison sentences of up to 20 years. This law is the latest of a series of measures taken by the Government of Dubai, following the Emirate’s debt crisis and several prominent corruption cases involving senior officials of companies listed on the stock market. The aim of the law, which will be effective immediately, is to promote the “levels of protection of public and private funds, and safeguarding the economic interests of the Emirate, as well as the protection of the financial and contractual rights covered by its rules.” It also aims to facilitate the recovery of the assets that are proceeds of unlawful acts.”