Dear Reader,

This News Update includes information on (a) preparations for the first regional training for non-governmental practitioners on anti-corruption assessments (p.2); (b) the launching of the 2009 Global Integrity Index (p.3); (c) a regional workshop on political ethics and conflict of interest (p.4); (d) the prospective launch of regional work on integrity in the private sector in the Arab region (p.5); (e) extending anti-corruption cooperation between UNDP and Yemen (p.7); (f) a new specialized corruption prosecution office in Yemen (p.8); in addition to (g) a usual stop at other Arab anti-corruption highlights (p.9).

Please direct your comments and inquiries to info@arabacinet.org or fax +961 1 981645.
Preparations for the First Regional Training for Non-Governmental Practitioners on Anti-Corruption Assessments

Preparations are underway to organize a regional training session for non-governmental practitioners on anti-corruption assessments. The session, which will be held in Beirut (Lebanon) on 29-30 March 2010, is designed to contribute to the efforts aimed at empowering Arab non-governmental actors to contribute more effectively to the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

It is the first link in a chain of regional activities that will be organized by UNDP’s Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR) over the next two years, in cooperation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UNDP’s Oslo Governance Centre (OGC), with a view to supporting the establishment of a regional group of non-governmental experts on anti-corruption assessments, and developing the capacity of its members to become resource persons for UNCAC implementation efforts and related assessments in their own countries.

The overall objective of this regional training session is to introduce participants to basic concepts and experiences of anti-corruption assessments. The session will bring together practitioners from various non-governmental
sctors in most of the Arab Countries, including civil society organizations concerned with governance, transparency, integrity and development, in addition to private-sector associations, the media and academic and research institutions.

Global Integrity Releases its 2009 Index

On 23 February 2010, “Global Integrity” released its 2009 Index, which includes, this year, an assessment of anti-corruption mechanisms in 35 countries including Algeria, Jordan and Lebanon, noting that the number of countries varies from year to year.

The Index assesses the existence, effectiveness, and citizen access to key anti-corruption mechanisms at the national level in a country. It does not measure corruption per se or perceptions of corruption. Instead, it provides an “entry point for understanding the anti-corruption and good governance safeguards in place in a country that should ideally prevent, deter, or punish corruption”.

The Index utilizes a methodology based on a quantitative analysis rather than being a survey. It is a compilation of country-specific expert assessments backed up by standardized scoring criteria, sourcing requirements, and a blind peer review process.

ACINET News Update

Regional Workshop on Political Ethics and Conflict of Interest

The Arab Parliamentarians against Corruption (ArPAC) organized a regional workshop in Beirut (Lebanon) on 18-19 February 2010, with the support of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) in the framework of a joint project between the two organizations.

The regional workshop was attended by parliamentarians and activists from Jordan, the occupied Palestinian territory, Bahrain, Algeria, Kuwait, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, and Yemen in addition to the British Ambassador to Lebanon and a number of regional and international experts. The workshop focused on ways to utilize the Guide on Parliamentary Ethics and Conduct Systems which was developed last year by the Global Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC) in cooperation with WFD. The Guide provides clear and useful guidance to parliamentarians advocating reform with a view to enabling them to lay down the foundations of effective ethics and conduct systems that correspond to their countries’ political and cultural circumstances, while fully respecting "the Arab Parliamentarians against Corruption " (ArPAC)
related fundamental international standards.

During the workshop, participants were informed about best ways to use the Guide. They also discussed corruption challenges in their countries and exchanged views and suggestions on how to empower Arab parliamentarians in their legislative and oversight duties, using the standards put forward by the Guide.

For more information, please visit the link http://arpacnetwork.org/ARPACArticles.aspx?aid=452&Lang=E.

**Integrity in the Private Sector to be Addressed at the Regional Level in Bahrain in March**

With more global attention being directed to the importance of strengthening integrity in the private sector as a foundation of sustainable development, Arab stakeholders in the region are becoming more interested in this subject. The need to support its introduction to the ongoing anti-corruption dialogue in the region has thus become necessary, especially given the fact that despite the various significant economic reforms achieved, the region continues to face serious challenges that weaken their competitiveness and ability to achieve productive integration in global
markets. This is besides increasing evidence of the slowing down of human development in many Arab countries.

With a view to supporting the exploration of ways to strengthen integrity in the private sector in Arab countries, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are preparing to organize a regional workshop in Manama (Bahrain) on 16-17 March 2010. The workshop will bring together representatives from the private and public sector from Jordan, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon and Egypt, as well as experts representing specialized regional and international actors.

The workshop is hosted by the MENA Investment Centre under the patronage of Sheikh Mohamed Bin Essa AL KHALIFA, the Chief Executive of Bahrain’s Economic Development Board (EDB). Public and private sector experts will have an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences on the important challenges that face the private sector, and to explore solutions in light of international anti corruption standards, instruments and best practices.

The Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity Network (ACINET) will be represented in the workshop in the person of its Chair, H.E. Dr Abd SHAKHANBEH, Jordan’s Anti-Corruption Commissioner. The workshop is expected to

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النزاهة في القطاع الخاص في البلدان العربية، يعمل برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي (UNDP) ومنظمة التعاون والتنمية في الميدان الاقتصادي (OECD) على تحضير ورشة عمل إقليمية متخصصة في المناخ (البحرين) بتاريخ 16-17 آذار/مارس 2010 بمشاركة وقود تضم ممثلين عن القطاعين العام والخاص في الأردن والبحرين والسعودية والعراق ولبنان ومصر، بالإضافة إلى خبراء يمثلون جهات إقليمية ودولية مختصة.

تستضيف الورشة مركز الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا للإستشار (MENA Investment Centre) برعاية الشيخ محمد بن عيسى آل خليفة، الرئيس التنفيذي لمجلس التنمية الاقتصادية البحريني (EDB)، وهي تهدف إلى تمكين خبراء من القطاعين العام والخاص من تبادل الأفكار والتجارب في إطار نقاشي يغطي مناقشة أهم التحديات التي تواجه عمل القطاع الخاص، ووسائل مواجهتها في ضوء المعالم والصكوك الدولية لمكافحة الفساد والممارسات الدولية الجيدة.

تشترك شبكة النزاهة العالمية في تحقيق النزاهة ومكافحة الفساد (ACINET) ممثلة برئيسها، رئيس هيئة مكافحة الفساد في الأردن، معاييي الدكتور عبد الشخاب، في أعمال الورشة التي يوقع أن تساهم في تعزيق التعاون والتبادل الإقليميين في مجال تعزيز النزاهة في القطاع الخاص، وهو عنصر أساسي في الجهود الإقليمية والدولية الساعية نحو إقتصاد أكثر قوة وعدالة ونزاهة.
contribute to regional cooperation and knowledge sharing on integrity in the private sector, a key element in regional and global efforts towards a strong, fair and clean economy.

Extension of Anti-Corruption Cooperation between Yemen and UNDP

The Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) in Yemen announced, on 24 February 2010, the extension of its cooperation with UNDP’s Country Office in Yemen in the framework of a project launched in 2007 to support media and civil society organizations in advocating transparency. SNACC’s President, Mr. Ahmed AL-ANSI, stressed the importance of the ongoing partnership with UNDP noting its role in strengthening the role of civil society and media in the field of anti-corruption.

Over the past two years, the project enabled Yemeni civil society organizations to implement various activities on transparency and integrity. It also contributed to enhancing the role of journalists in the fight against corruption; and provided six local radio stations with modern digital systems to enhance their coverage capacity. The project led to increasing the knowledge of SNACC and CSO practitioners on budget monitoring, control of public resources and access to information. Moreover, it

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increased knowledge on national and international anti-corruption legal instruments.

The project will work during the first half of 2010 to expand the training of civil society organizations and local councils to include nine Yemeni provinces, in respect of the principle of decentralization and balanced development. The training will address several issues including methodologies for measuring corruption and inclusive self-assessment processes, benefiting from international experience that will be provided by UNDP. The project will also strengthen cooperation between SNACC and the media; provide local radio stations with a studio that would help enhance their work; and develop an anti-corruption media campaign. Small grants will be allocated to civil society organizations to help them undertake activities to promote and advocate transparency.

For more information, please visit www.snaccyemen.org.

A New Corruption Prosecution Office in Yemen

On 1 February 2010, the Yemeni Supreme Judicial Council decided to establish a specialized prosecution office to undertake cases investigated and referred by the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC). The direction is to organize this new office and begin investigating and trying judicial cases in the first half of 2010. The formation of this new body that will work under the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) will certainly be a new step forward in the fight against corruption and a significant contribution to the fight against corruption in Yemen.
Office as a separate unit under the existing Public Financial Prosecution Office.

This decision was reached upon deliberations prompted by a Memorandum issued by the Minister of Justice suggesting the establishment of the mentioned Office to expedite and enhance the professional quality of corruption investigations in accordance with the Anti-Corruption Law, the Criminal Procedure Code and the Penal Code, with a view strengthening the Yemeni government’s efforts in the fight against corruption. For more information [www.snaccyemen.org](http://www.snaccyemen.org).

**Other Arab Anti-Corruption Highlights**

- **Local training on anti-corruption and legal protection of whistleblowers in Yemen:** The Human Rights Information and Training Center (HRITC) in Yemen organized a local training session on 6-9 February 2010 in Aden (Yemen), with the support of the “Article 13 Alliance” and in cooperation with the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). The session brought together thirty participants from eleven provinces and trained them on ways to control and monitor corruption crimes, and also on the legal protection of whistleblowers. The training also addressed the preparation of shadow reports, while emphasizing the importance of creating a

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national cadre of human resources capable of systematic monitoring and adequate analysis of corruption issues and ways to address them. For more information, please visit www.hritc.info/index.php?action=showNews&id=110.

• A Palestinian committee to audit media allegations about corruption in the Palestinian National Authority: The State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau (SAACB) formed a committee to audit what was lately circulated by media outlets about corruption cases in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). The objective is to verify the validity of these allegations that, if true, would constitute a serious deviation in the proper management of public funds. On another front, SAACB finalized the audit and control on all PNA institutions including the President’s Office, for which the process was comprehensive taking place between 15 November 2009 and 15 January 2010 – a first stage, which will be followed by others. For more information, please visit www.saacb.ps.

• Kuwait Transparency Society presents a report on the Third Forum on Transparency in Kuwait to the Emir: Kuwait Transparency Society (KTS) presented a full report on the Third Forum on Transparency in Kuwait to H.H. the Emir of Kuwait on 16 February 2010. The Emir stressed the importance and need for a national cadre of human resources capable of systematic monitoring and adequate analysis of corruption issues and ways to address them. For more information, please visit www.hritc.info/index.php?action=showNews&id=110.
to hold wrongdoers accountable if they are proven guilty of acts that harm the country’s interests or undermine the dignity of its citizens. H.H. stressed the need to ascertain the elements of conviction before making allegations and undermining security and stability in Kuwait. For more information, please visit www.shafafeyah.org.

• Jordan’s Anti Corruption Commission Reaches Out to Civil Society: The Jordanian Anti-Corruption Commission (JACC) held a seminar in Amman (Jordan) on 17 February 2010 to introduce its mandate and functions to a number of civil society organizations and activists. Discussions addressed JACC’s role in the investigation and prosecution of corruption, the detection of corruption cases, and the referral of perpetrators to judicial authorities. Discussions also addressed the Commission’s role in preventing corruption and promoting the values of fairness and justice, through coordination with the concerned ministries and departments, especially the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the University of Jordan. In conclusion, participants were informed about JACC’s achievements last year at the enforcement and prevention levels. For more information please visit www.jacc.gov.jo.

• A Lebanese parliamentary suggestion to
form a specialized anti-corruption agency: the Administration and Justice Committee in the Lebanese Parliament deliberated the establishment of a national anti-corruption agency on 17 February 2010. A draft law has been developed to this end, prior to Lebanon’s accession to the UN Convention against Corruption in 2008. The deliberations were held during a meeting attended by ministers and representatives of the Lawyers’ Syndicate. The attendees discussed the composition of the agency, the procedures of investigations and confidentiality issues, as well as the possibility to provide this body with the authority to prosecute and to sanction.

• Workshop in Iraq on the role of media and whistleblowing: The Iraqi Commission of Integrity (Col) held in Baghdad (Iraq) on 23 February 2010 a workshop to encourage the media to reveal financial and administrative corruption. The focus was on means to strengthen investigative journalism and utilize it in support of the Commission’s objectives based on the important role of media in the fight against corruption. During the workshop, the Col revealed that it had developed a draft law on access to information in line with the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Participants recommended increasing the involvement of media professionals in training sessions to

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build their capacity on investigative journalism, in addition to developing a code of conduct for journalists that identifies methods of dealing with information and avoiding libel and defamation. For more information, please visit www.nazaha.iq.