Dear Reader,

This News Update includes information on (a) ACINET’s first event for 2009 on “Witness and Whistleblower Protection” (p.2); (b) new ACINET memberships (p.3); (c) efforts to develop an advanced UNCAC Self Assessment Checklist (p.3); (d) preparations to organize “Global Forum VI on fighting Corruption and Enhancing Integrity” in Qatar (p.6); (e) 20th UN/INTOSAI Symposium (p.7); (f) the 4th Global Conference on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in Qatar (p.9) and (g) a usual stop at Arab anti-corruption highlights (p.9).

Please send your comments and inquiries to the following fax number +961 1 981 645 or to the following address info@arabacinet.org.

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The Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity Network Launches its Activities in 2009: Regional Workshop on Witness and Whistleblower Protection in Rabat

The Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET) is organizing a regional workshop on “witness and whistleblower protection” in Rabat (Morocco) on 2-3 April 2009, under the patronage of the Central Agency for the Prevention of Corruption and Ministry of Justice in Morocco, and with the support of UNDP’s Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (UNDP-POGAR). This workshop will be the first ACINET event in 2009.

The workshop’s objective is to launch a wide and focused process of knowledge sharing on this relatively under-addressed topic in the Arab region, which is also of key importance to the fight against crime in general and corruption in particular.

ACINET members and representatives of concerned Arab governmental bodies will be invited to participate in this workshop, in addition to a number of prominent regional and international experts.

On the side of the workshop, ACINET will hold its first General Meeting, under the leadership of its current Chair, H.E. Dr. Abed SHAKHANBEH (Head of the Jordanian Anti-Corruption Commission).

For more information about ACINET’s...
New Members Join the Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity Network in February 2009

In February 2009, ACINET’s Regional Support Unit received two letters of accession to ACINET’s membership.

The first is from the “Central Inspection Bureau” in Lebanon, which is headed by Judge George AOUAD who has made significant contributions during the process of establishing the Network in 2009. The second is from the “Commission of General Oversight on Public Bodies”, under the Prime Minister in Tunisia, which is headed by Mr. Redha ABEDLHAFIZ.

Efforts to Develop the UNCAC Self Assessment Checklist

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is working in cooperation with a group of

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international experts and concerned organizations to develop a new self assessment tool called the Omnibus Survey Software. In addition to the UNCAC, the new tool includes the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its three protocols.

This new Software is being developed in the context of the preparation for the 3rd session of the Conference of State Parties (CoSP III) to the United Nations Convention against Corruption that will be held in Doha (Qatar) on 9-13 November 2009. For this purpose, a first expert group meeting was held in Vancouver (Canada) on 15-18 March 2008, and a second one was held recently in Vienna (Austria) on 22-23 February 2009.

Work to develop the new Software builds on the UNCAC Self Assessment Checklist software, which was developed in 2007. The new software however differs from its predecessor in a number of ways, which are expected to facilitate its usage and enhance the capacity to gather and analyze information in a more efficient manner.

During the last expert group meeting in Vienna, the new Software was presented and discussed for the first time in addition to sample questions from the checklist, which is expected to enable a clearer view on (i) the concerned State’s compliance with the provision and (ii) technical assistance needs on each article.

The meeting will be followed by a number of expert meetings in member states to test the new Software and to provide input and feedback.
of steps:
First, the new software will be developed in light of the inputs provided during the expert meeting in Vienna.

Second, three State Parties from each regional group will be requested, through the chairs of the regional groups, to volunteer to test the new Software with a view to providing inputs from a user’s perspective.

Third, cooperation with UNDP’s Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (UNDP-POGAR) will be launched to present and discuss the new Software, albeit only the UNCAC checklist, in the framework of the Arab Governmental Expert Group (AGEG) on UNCAC Assessment, which is considered to be a successful model at the global level in the area of self assessment capacity development. It comprises experts from 17 countries, who have been trained on self assessment methodologies and tools, and have thus become a key building block at the level of the Arab region in relation to UNCAC implementation.

At the end of this process, and after the different consultations are completed, the new Software will be fine-tuned and then presented at the Conference of State Parties in November 2009, where it will be discussed and related priorities and usages will be specified with a view to serving the implementation of Convention.
In the context of the preparations to organize “Global Forum VI on Fighting Corruption and Enhancing Integrity”, which will be hosted by Qatar, the International Organization Committee (IOC), which is chaired by H.E. the Public Prosecutor in Qatar, Ali AL MARRI, met for a second time in Doha on 9 February 2009, after a first meeting in Athens on 4 October November 2008. The second meeting was attended by 22 experts including representatives of key international organizations working in the area of anti-corruption.

The meeting produced a number of outcomes including a decision on the date of the Global Forum, which will be 7-8 November 2009, hence preceding the 3rd Session of the Conference of State Parties (CoSP III) to the UNCAC, which is expected to be held in Doha as well on 9-13 November 2009.

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Participants also agreed on the outline of the Global Forum’s programme. It is expected to address a number of important issues with linkages to the current global economic crisis properly highlighted, in addition to on a number of key topics that are directly related to the agenda of the upcoming in CoSP III.

The previous Global Forum was organized in South Africa on 2-5 April 2007. For more information, please visit the following website www.globalforum5.gov.za.

**20th UN/INTOSAI Symposium**

In cooperation with the United Nations the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions’ (INTOSAI) General Secretariat organized the 20th UN/INTOSAI Symposium “INTOSAI – Active partner in the international anti-corruption network; Ensuring transparency to promote social security and poverty reduction” in Vienna (Austria) on 11-13 February, 2009.

170 participants from different Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) and international organizations and institutions attended the Symposium and agreed that SAIs were uniquely positioned to fight corruption due to their overview of all government operations. In this context, the 20th
UN/INTOSAI Symposium adopted, with a vast majority, thirteen concrete recommendations, which may be reviewed by visiting the INTOSAI website (see below).

A number of ACINET members participated in the Symposium, including the “Board of Supreme Audit” in Iraq and the “Central Audit Agency” in Egypt, which was particularly active as the chair of the INTOSAI Working Group on Fighting Corruption and Money Laundering. The Agency’s representative also presented a working paper on “Recommendations for best Practices to Fight International Money Laundering and Corruption”, where emphasis was put on the importance of increasing INTOSAI membership to enrich the exchange of knowledge among its members, and on the need to pay special attention to transparency in the data that is provided by SAI, so that INTOSAI may be able to support its members in playing a more effective role in fighting corruption.

For more information on the INTOSAI, this Symposium and its various recommendations, please visit www.intosai.org/en/portal.
Under the high patronage of the Prince of Qatar, the 4th Global Conference of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) was organized in Doha on 16-18 February 2009.

During the conference, focus was put discussing the best solutions to exploit natural resources with a view to developing societies and the role that regional organizations, local governments, companies working in extractive industries, and civil society organizations in supporting transparency and implementing it as a key element of good governance.

For more information about the conference, please visit the following link www.eitransparency.org/DohaConference.
Combating Corruption in Jordan. The lecture addressed the causes and political, social, and economic impact of corruption, in addition to the role of JACC, where he emphasized the preventive and restorative roles of the Commission and presented an overview on the quantity and quality of cases that have been addressed so far. This was followed by open discussions and a number of questions and answers. For more information, please visit www.jacc.gov.jo/more_news.aspx?nw=27.

Finalizing the draft “Guide on Auditing Institutional Risks” in Iraq: The “Board of Supreme Audit” (BSA) in Iraq finished preparing a guide for auditing institutional risks (auditing fraud and corruption) in cooperation with UNDP Iraq. Based on this guide, the BSA also completed a pilot audit of the “State Company for Agricultural Supplies”, which is a self-financed public-sector institution. A copy of the guide has been provided to the international “Institute of Internal Auditors” (IIA) for technical feedback.

“AMAN” Palestine selected among top 20 non-governmental organizations in the Arab region: The Palestinian “Coalition for Integrity and Accountability – AMAN” was recently selected among the top twenty non-governmental organizations in the Arab region.
region during the “Alexandria Contest”, which is organized by the Arab Reform Forum at the Alexandria Library in Egypt. This comes only after a few months from AMAN’s winning the Achievements Award in Dubai. For more information about AMAN, please visit the following website www.aman-palestine.org.

- Lebanese Transparency Association organizes a conference on “Transparency in the Budget”: The Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA) organized a conference on “Transparency in the Budget” in Beirut on 4 February 2009. The results of the Open Budget Index for the Arab region were announced during the meeting, followed by interventions and discussions that focused on transparency in the budget process, and the role of civil society in enhancing transparency. For more information about LTA, please visit www.transparency-lebanon.org.

- Efforts to develop a Global Guidebook on Parliamentary Ethics and Conduct: The Global Working Group on “Parliamentary Ethics and Conduct”, which is under the Global Organization for Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC) met in London (United Kingdom) on 20 February 2009 with the support of the “Westminster
Foundation for Democracy” (WFD) with a view to discussing a draft Guidebook, which aims at supporting systems that would reinforce parliamentary ethics and conduct. The Group is chaired by the Lebanese Parliamentarians, Ghassan MOUKHAIBER, and works in cooperation with a group of parliamentarians and international experts.

Central Organization for Control and Audit in Yemen organizes a training session on self assessment in the area of integrity: The “Central Organization for Control and Audit” (COCA) in Yemen organized a training session on self assessment in the area of integrity, based on the Dutch experience. During the training, emphasis was put on the importance of developing and enriching the integrity self assessment tool, which was originally developed in the Netherlands and under the framework of the INTOSAI. For more information about the workshop, please visit COCA’s website www.coca.gov.ye.

The Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) adopts Executive List and appoints a Secretary General: The Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) finalized and adopted the Executive List, which will be part of the governing legal framework for SNACC’s work. It also appointed Dr. Ahmed ALKADI as the Secretary General. For

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- Court of Accounts in Tunisia and France hold a joint meeting in the context of bilateral cooperation: The “Cour Des Comptes” in Tunisia organized the second periodic bi-annual meeting with its counterpart in France on 19-20 February 2009. The meeting focused on methodological and organizational changes needed to advance the role of Courts of Accounts in exercising the needed oversight and control on public finances. For more information, www.courdescomptes.nat.tn.

- A draft anti-corruption law in Iraq: The BSA, the Commission on Integrity (COI), the Higher Judicial Council and the inspectors general in Iraq joined forces to develop a draft anti-corruption law in Iraq. The draft law was referred to the Council of State for comments, before being submitted to the parliament.

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