



Capacity Development and
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Anti-Corruption Division
Organisation for Economic
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ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific

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8th Regional Seminar
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8th Regional Seminar: Good Practices in Corruption Prevention

Key lessons on 'good practices' emerging from presentation and discussion

INTRODUCTION

1. Within the Asia and the Pacific region, there is a growing consensus on the need of anti-corruption programs in the national development process. Several countries in the region have recognized the need to review and strengthen their legislation, institutions, and practices and systems to meet the standards set by the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and the UN Convention against Corruption. In response to this need, the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific was launched in 1999 under the joint leadership of the Asian Development Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Initiative is a regional network for the benefit of officials from member countries and jurisdictions to engage in coordinated and systematic actions in the fight against corruption. In the last ten years, the Initiative has made significant contribution in fostering policy dialogue, providing analytical support, and developing capacity of its member countries in a range of thematic areas, such as Promoting Integrity and Fighting Corruption in the Public Service, Effective Prosecution of Corruption, Denying Safe Haven to the Corrupt and the Proceeds of Corruption, Conflict of Interest, Asset Recovery and Mutual Legal Assistance, and Curbing Corruption and Fighting Bribery in Public Procurement,

2. Preventive measures are equally critical in the fight against corruption as prosecution measures, as also provisioned in the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and the UN Convention against Corruption. During the 12th Steering Group Meeting, the Macao Commission Against Corruption specifically requested to host a practical workshop on corruption prevention programs. More than 75 participants from twenty-four countries, including participants from the host country, participated in the 8th Regional Seminar of the ADB/OECD Anticorruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific. The seminar was hosted by the Government of Macao, China and the Macao Commission Against Corruption. The seminar provided an opportunity to review and discuss international developments and experiences related to corruption prevention in four important thematic areas: (i) media strategy and multimedia products for getting out effective messages; (ii) education initiatives, covering anticorruption messages in education; (iii) innovative approaches for engaging the private sector and civil society in effective anticorruption campaigns; (iv) working across the government to reduce vulnerability to corruption.

3. The seminar was formally launched with Welcome Remarks on behalf of ADB/OECD Initiative by Mr. Xianbin Yao, Director General, Regional and Sustainable Development Department, Asian Development Bank and Welcome Remarks and Keynote Address by Ms.

Florinda da Rosa Silva Chan, Secretary for Administration and Justice, Macao Special Administrative Region.

4. Twenty presentations were made by experts on country-level cases on initiatives to reduce opportunities for corruption. Members and Advisors of the Initiative actively supported the seminar serving as chairs and speakers.

SESSION 1: ROLE OF PREVENTIVE MEASURES IN FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

5. An overview of the seminar - brief description of the themes, structures, and approaches to be followed in the various sessions - was provided. The first session set the stage of the seminar by covering the way UNCAC and OECD Anti-Bribery Instruments address preventive measures, the types of measures that will be covered in the seminar and those that will not be addressed, and the importance of civil society in the prevention of corruption.

6. Key 'good practices' lessons:

- Gap analysis (self-check assessment) as a diagnostic tool to identify broad reform areas for UNCAC implementation should be led by the host government since it contributes to government ownership of the diagnosis and findings. In addition, capacity of government agencies is developed during the diagnosis exercise.
- Effective implementation of preventive measures requires strong regulatory framework, capable institutions, and mobilization/participation of public with support of civil society. Public engagement in reporting of misuse of authority has been effectively implemented in a number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Compliance instruments for preventing bribery in international business have been developed but its effective implementation remains a challenge. More work is needed (i) to develop benchmarks of compliance to reward corporate bodies that strictly adhere to it, and (ii) to develop compliance framework and programs for SMEs.
- Corruption is pervasive in both developed and developing countries and the best approach to fighting it is to build effective institutions. Corruption vulnerability points need to be identified by individual countries.
- The fight against corruption will require a holistic approach. Long term control of corruption will require a fundamental change in mindset and culture.
- Ensuring security to whistleblowers is important to fight corruption but can be challenging in some member countries. Providing protection to witnesses during the prosecution process is another challenge. Exchange of country experiences in this area would be useful.

SESSION 2: GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT AND PREPARING MEDIA OR COMMUNICATION PLAN/STRATEGY

7. The session discussed multimedia products that have been developed by TI Bangladesh, Anti-Corruption Commission of Bhutan, Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission, and

PRC's Corruption Prevention Department. India's Public Affairs Center, an NGO, shared experiences on the importance of sharing information to fight corruption. The country presentations highlighted (i) considerations while designing the multimedia product; (ii) culturally specific messages; (iii) how the products have been used; and (iv) impacts of the message. An interactive session on how to prepare a media or communication plan/strategy by integrity institutions was organized.

8. Key 'good practices' lessons:

- Anti-corruption messages need to generate political will, which is critical for the success of preventive measures. Messages should reach out to public servants since they are the change agents in anti-corruption reforms. They have the opportunity to be heroes (an island of integrity) in the fight.
- Corruption can be fought but one needs to keep at it. Therefore, media campaign is a long-term engagement and should be supported by advocacy, research, partnership with government, and mobilization of people. Knowledge, skills and experiences will be essential to produce results in this area.
- Majority of poor people accept corruption as a way of life since they lack awareness of their rights. Anticorruption messages need to challenge and change this belief/perception through education and awareness. Poor people's accessibility to media needs to be assessed as well - what works best in reaching out to majority of poor people at the country level?
- The cost of media is an issue while getting the message out. TV spots may be effective but they are usually expensive. FM radio is cheap and provides accessibility to the poor. Therefore, targeting the audience carefully and selecting the medium is important to achieve the best impact. In addition, intermittent use of media/message is most effective for enhancing knowledge and awareness of people.
- Anti-corruption messages in the form of music videos that build on cultural values and nationalism usually go well with the younger generation. Messages need to sow the seeds of integrity on young people for long-term fight against corruption. Media campaigns should be targeted at school level as well as college/university levels. Students in most countries are strong advocates of anti-corruption.
- Transparency of government's exercise of power (workflows, processes, rules, etc) through on-line information can be an effective preventive measure. E-governance, when implemented effectively, can result in better compliance and corruption prevention. However, its adoption and application requires education and awareness initiatives.
- Corruption is frequently caused by asymmetry in information sharing. Providing more information to the public (getting the message out) on their rights is important and the media can contribute significantly in this area. Media agencies frequently tend to concentrate mainly on highlighting the negative elements and impact of corruption, but less on providing information that can curtail corrupt practices.

- The right to information legislation is essential but its effective implementation is often lacking. The media should play an important role in educating the public about the contents and interpretation of the legislation.
- Anticorruption agencies need to be cautious of media reporting that distort facts to sensationalize corruption news and events. It is essential to develop partnership with the media and support its capacity building.

SESSION 3: EDUCATION INITIATIVES – CHANGING MINDS

9. The session discussed examples and experiences of anti-corruption commissions of Malaysia and Macao in incorporating anticorruption messages in educational and awareness programs. Hong Kong University presented its anticorruption educational programs and its impact in the region. The programs are largely based on Hong Kong's success in fighting corruption in recent years.

10. Key 'good practices' lessons:

- A common platform is needed for sharing educational programs and experiences on corruption prevention among the member countries of the Initiative. Showcasing individual cases and learning from each others' experiences is helpful since it contributes to pursuit of knowledge, which is a never ending process.
- Education interventions need to incorporate success stories in corruption fight since this has a bigger learning impact. Further, success of anti-corruption education is dependent on the quality of resource persons. World renowned practitioners on corruption control should be invited to address educational events.
- Integrity officers from anti-corruption commissions should offer their knowledge and experiences in developing educational programs. A partnership approach between anti-corruption agencies and educational institutions should be developed. Education and training programs should be designed in response to specific needs of in-country public sector agencies.
- It is important to develop standardized modules on values and ethics for educational purpose in close coordination with the government (ministry/department of education). Training modules should be designed flexibly so as to allow adjustments according to specific needs of the clients.
- Students and participants should be engaged in assessing the quality and effectiveness of educational courses. Such feedback will improve the quality of educational programs.
- Education programs should reach out to a range of stakeholders - public sector, students, media, etc. – since wide support and engagement is needed to fight corruption. Education programs should be targeted at the young to develop a 'new generation of integrity'. The objective is to catch them young. The programs designed for the young should focus on the importance of honesty and ethical behavior, rather than highlighting anti-corruption jargon and tools since the former approach is more-readily understood and accepted by the

young. TV messages, video messages/games, etc. on anti-corruption measures are readily accepted by youth as they reflect the preferences and life styles of the younger generation.

- Education and awareness programs are particularly relevant during election time since it provides an opportunity to remind the voters the integrity issue while choosing new leaders. Also, the candidates standing for election should be made aware of ethical standards and behavior during the election process.
- Electronic education packages on anti-corruption offer wider reach but need to be further developed.

SESSION 4: ENGAGING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY

11. The session discussed innovative approaches to engaging the private sector and civil society in effective anticorruption campaigns. Examples of civil society engagement in anticorruption campaigns from the Philippines, India and Korea were shared.

12. Key 'good practices' lessons:

- Corruption can be prevented through systems checks and citizen's vigilance. Government and civil society can engage in the formation of policies and programs to improve service delivery. Social accountability, as a preventive corruption measure, can engage citizens with governments in monitoring the allocation and use of public resources.
- Citizen report cards provide information on corruption and demand public accountability. It reveals both positive and negative aspects of service delivery. Periodical reporting can measure overall trend in the level of satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction.
- Positive political response to results of citizen cards can contribute to major institutional reforms and improvements in service delivery. However, political leadership and commitment is critical.
- The majority of anti-corruption strategies are guided by a concept of 'short-termism'. Development of youth integrity (i.e., solid ethical infrastructure) is fundamental to long-term and sound national integrity system.

SESSION 5: WORKING ACROSS GOVERNMENT TO PREVENT CORRUPTION

13. The session discussed the importance of collaboration and partnership among government agencies to prevent corruption. Anticorruption and integrity agencies from Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore explained how they have started working with other government agencies to reduce vulnerability to corruption.

14. Key 'good practices' lessons:

- Corruption impact assessments by anti-corruption commissions of public sector agencies can lead to major institutional reforms. The assessments can contribute to reducing

corruption-causing factors and improvements in the policy formulation and execution process.

- Culture of integrity has to be developed to fight corruption and top management of public sector agencies should take the lead in the development of such culture. The focus should be on changing the mindset of people since genuine change can only come from people.
- Promoting integrity will require strong ownership by government, support from leadership/senior management, frequent partnering and experience sharing, and appointment of 'ethics officers' in each public sector agency. Different tools for improving integrity – integrity management manuals, workshops, self-learning packages, etc. – have been developed.
- Partnering between anti-corruption agency and civil service bureau is needed to develop ethical culture in the public sector. Governments need to appreciate that a clean civil service is one of the cornerstones of effective governance.
- Audit contributes to fight against corruption but there is limitation to audit function. Audit provides the 'bark' and the anti-corruption agency supplements the 'bite'. Therefore, the working relationship and collaboration between the two agencies needs to be nurtured. Collaboration needs to focus on sharing of experiences and information, undertaking joint cleaning up tasks, and building relationship and understanding between chiefs of two agencies on national ethical values.

CONCLUSIONS

15. The seminar was focused on presentation of practical cases and examples of actual and existing practices and strategies to reduce opportunities for corruption. It offered an opportunity to share experiences of member countries on delivering messages, developing educational and awareness programs, collaborating with civil society organizations, and partnering among government agencies to prevent corruption. The seminar also provided an overview of the risk areas for implementing corruption prevention measures, and identified challenges that need to be addressed. The participating member countries appreciated the networking opportunity offered by the seminar and acknowledged that the 'good practices' shared during the two-day event would contribute to policy reforms and actions at the country level.