

Recommendations

Upon a kind invitation from the Arab Administrative Development Organization, one of the Arab League specialized bodies, the 11th annual conference on innovation and renewal in the Arab management and which was titled "Towards a national strategy for combating corruption" held in Cairo in 3-5 July 2010. The conference was held in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of state for administrative development, Transparency International, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Arab Anti-Corruption Organization.

The conference was inaugurated by his Excellency Professor Mohamed Saad El-Alamy, the delegated minister for the Prime Minister charged with modernization of the public sectors in the Kingdom of Morocco and the head of the good governance initiative for the Middle East and North Africa countries and the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the General manager of the Arab Administrative Development Organization, with the participation of more than two hundreds and fifty participants included high profile administrative and law officials, academicians, representative of political and economic research centers and representatives from the private sector and specialized international organizations.

During the three days, the conference discussed four main themes; the first theme was concerned with corruption practices and the protective and procedural efforts taken by Arab countries to curb this phenomenon, the second discussed the requirements of designing and drafting a national anti-corruption strategy, while the third theme dealt with the bases of success into implementing the national strategies for combating corruption, as for the fourth one, it presented the Arab and international experiences in combating corruption. The studies and researches offered to the conference discussed the directions of the

policies and practices to promote integrity and curb corruption in Middle East and North Africa countries and the member states in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as well as the nature of lessons learned from building a connected set of integrity mechanisms and operations and the requirements for implementing them. The conference touched on the role of transparency as a momentum in combating corruption, and how states can move from designing policies to standing up for the problems that impede the way of countries when implementing anti-corruption policies.

The importance of the conference stems from the fact that it is being held in a critical period where countries in general, including the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, face unprecedented economic and social crisis, especially corruption practices in social, economic and administrative spheres of life. The situation becomes more critical in the presence of an incubating environment for corruption where corruption practices find the protection and the climate for spreading, and perhaps the deficiency in the administrative work could lead to a state of mind in individuals that justifies corruption and finds excuses for its continuation and spreading in the daily life outside the scope of economic operations to plague the ethics and values of society, the political system, the declining growth, the widespread poverty and the deprivation of citizens of decent life services, in addition to problems in wealth and income distribution as well as negative impacts on the flow of investment and economic performance in general.

On the other hand, corruption remains constrained and threatened in the presence of systems which implement a great deal of accountability of employees in the state bodies. Hence, participants see the necessity of confirming a set of recommendations that could help in diagnosing corruption and the threats it constitutes to the security, sovereignty, progress and prosperity of countries. The recommendations include:

- (1) Complying with anti-corruption international conventions, especially the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2003 which aimed at promoting and strengthening measures to prevent and fight corruption more effectively, facilitating the support of international cooperation and national assistance in the fight against corruption and promoting integrity and accountability to achieve more transparency, efficiency and the sound management of public affairs and property.
- (2) Middle East and North Africa countries should move more rapidly towards issuing the necessary legislations to combat corruption, developing the legal measures necessary to strengthen the rule of law and activating the capabilities of the specialized bodies concerned with implementing anti-corruption measures.
- (3) Adopting a national program to protect society from corruption crimes and to develop mechanisms and controls for strengthening the national economy and protecting it from negative practices and raising the ethics of public office.
- (4) Developing national plans to promote transparency and accountability and to enhance the performance through the implementation of preventive and punitive measures for achieving the concept of good governance and greater transparency and efficiency, developing high standards for dealing with the private sector, civil society organizations, and media, and developing and promoting judicial and administrative measures to address corruption actions.
- (5) Developing measures for cooperation among Governments, regional and international organizations and Arab civil society groups that contribute to monitoring the enforcement of laws concerned with dealing with cross-borders issues and obtaining the support and assistance of the participating states in addressing corruption and promoting the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption, as well as using of the modern means and techniques in this area through the

revitalization and expansion of the information environment in measuring the performance of state agencies and transparency in disclosing information at all levels.

- (6)** Reforming the educational system so as to ensure a community culture which starts from the school through the educating the young generation about the risks of corruption and implanting in them the virtue and good ethics, as well as the sound upbringing to create a generation that understands and realizes the risks of corruption on society in all its forms, in addition to creating a community environment that is keen to spread the spirit of justice, integrity and nation-building.
- (7)** Developing and strengthening of regulation, control and internal oversight measure in all governmental institutions to promote the management ability to minimize corrupt practices and the different forms of corruption.
- (8)** Strengthening the financial system of the State, through the adoption of the principles of transparency, competency and efficiency in the management of the general budget, and ensuring community participation in maintenance, implementation and monitoring of programs and projects, and the development of a tenders and contracts system in accordance with the principles of transparency to ensure the establishment of the foundations of fair competition and equal opportunities.
- (9)** Improving the mechanism of citizens' participation in decision making to promote transparency and accountability and enhancing the service offered to them qualitatively and quantitatively, as well as raising the quality of life.
- (10)** Issuing the necessary legislations to implement and employ the concept of electronic administration in completing citizens' transactions with a view to reduce the chances of direct contact between the citizen, the service seeker, the public officer who provides the service as a means to reduce corruption.

- (11)** Activating the role of media in raising awareness and disclosing facts and realities in an objective and honest way, and working to establish a society that adheres to the moral dimension, integrity and caring for the public interest.
- (12)** Tracking developments in the methods of fraud and corruption in the world with a view to identify them and educate the citizens, government institutions and private sector on how to avoid them.
- (13)** Participants felt that such meetings and conferences contribute greatly in raising awareness and exchange of ideas, opinions and experiences among different countries in order to use and mainstream them with a final aim to develop businesses and performance quality and to raise the level of the public officer practices and behaviors.
- (14)** The conference calls for providing technical support and assistance in capacity building for agencies concerned with the anti-corruption work in Iraq and Palestine and the Arab States that are building bodies, institutions and modern equipment in the areas of governance and corruption fighting.
- (15)** Finally, participants recommend that the Arab Administrative Development Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Transparency International and the Arab Anti-Corruption Organization issue guides for the ethics of public service and best practices in this area as a key reference and an effective method for the prevention of corruption and reducing its impacts and practices to build a more fair, equal and impartial society as an ultimate reflection of sound management and good governance.