Minutes of the Meeting

Participants

**Member countries and jurisdictions:** Afghanistan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; Cook Islands; Fiji Islands; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Korea; Kyrgyz Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Samoa; Singapore; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Vanuatu; Vietnam

**Advisory Group:** German Technical Cooperation (GIZ); Transparency International (TI); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

**Secretariat:** Asian Development Bank (ADB); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Chair of the Meeting

The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Adérito de Jesus Soares of the Anti-Corruption Commission of Timor-Leste.

Summary of the Discussions

1. Opening and Adoption of Agenda

   Following introductory remarks and adoption of the Meeting agenda, President of Timor-Leste Taur Matan Ruak provided the meeting’s opening address.

2. Afghanistan’s Membership in the Initiative

   On 1 May 2013, Afghanistan endorsed the Initiative’s Action Plan and became the Initiative’s 31st Member. During the meeting, the Initiative heard a statement by Afghanistan and welcomed Afghanistan to the Initiative.

3. Review of Implementation of the Initiative’s Strategic Principles and Operational Activities

   In 2010 the Initiative adopted a statement of its Strategic Principles and Operational Activities. The Steering Group decided in its 17th meeting in 2012 that a review of the Strategic Principles would be appropriate. At the 18th meeting, Members considered a Secretariat discussion paper assessing the Initiative’s implementation of the Strategic Principles in 2010-2013, highlighting issues for consideration by the Members, and proposing improvements moving forward. Members agreed on the following points:

   (a) The Initiative has succeeded in supporting Members’ implementation of UNCAC. Future activities of the Initiative should continue this focus, particularly in areas where the need for technical assistance has been identified (such as in UNCAC Implementation Reviews).

   (b) The Initiative has provided a forum for regional dialogue on corruption-related topics. This network should be enhanced by encouraging existing Members to attend the Initiative’s events, and by encouraging non-Members to join the Initiative. A Member’s focal point should allow another agency to attend an event if that agency would benefit more given the topic covered. This has occurred in the past with some Members. For Initiative-funded Members, the Secretariat will consult with the focal point in the future before deciding which agency should be funded to attend the event.
(c) In recent years, fewer Members have provided annual written self-reports on their activities and recent developments in the anti-corruption field. In some cases, Members omitted to report because of internal administrative issues. In others, there were insufficient developments during the reporting period. In the future, Members will provide written self-reports biennially. Members will be divided into two groups according to the alphabetical order of their names. Each group will be requested to provide a written self-report prior to every second Steering Group Meeting.

(d) The Secretariat will explore alternatives for the format of the self-reporting and presentations during future Steering Group Meetings. Members and the Secretariat will collaborate to identify recent developments in Members that may be of interest and hence suitable for oral presentations during Steering Group Meetings.

(e) The Secretariat will contact Members after each seminar or conference to encourage them to disseminate and consider the information that they had acquired at the event. The Secretariat will also continue to gather information from Members on the steps that they have taken in this regard. The follow-up reports on the implementation of Thematic Review recommendations should also continue. The Secretariat will make greater efforts to encourage Members to provide such reports.

(f) The Initiative will continue to choose the topics of future seminars and conferences by vote. The topics should aim to avoid duplication with work done in other fora. Joint events with other international organisations will be considered. Themes should be chosen well in advance so that Members can determine which and how many officials they would send to the event, and make the necessary budgetary arrangements accordingly. Members, including the host of the event, would consider organising and conducting specific panels in seminars and conferences.

(g) Members will make greater efforts to raise awareness of the Initiative in their jurisdictions, and report steps taken in this regard as part of their biennial self-reporting.

(h) The Initiative will finance the attendance in the Initiative’s events of one official from each Member classified as eligible to borrow from ADB’s Asian Development Fund (ADF). Members whose representative will no longer be funded will begin the internal process necessary for considering these issues.

(i) The Initiative will not pursue the creation of a multi-donor trust fund or a list of advisory experts. Scoping Exercises will be conducted only if additional resources are available.

4. Presentations by Steering Group Members on specific issues and/or activities

Prior to the meeting, the Initiative’s Members were asked to provide written self-reports on their recent activities and on developments in the anti-corruption field. By the time of the Meeting, 17 Members had submitted written reports, which were made available on the Initiative’s website. During the meeting, Members were invited to give oral presentations on particular activities and developments that were of interest to other Members. Nine Members – Bhutan; Bangladesh; Cook Islands; Korea; Macao, China; Malaysia; Philippines; Thailand; Timor-Leste – presented orally in the meeting. The presentations covered topics such as recent conferences and training events;

1 This includes ADF/Ordinary Capital Resources (OCR) blend countries.

2 This will affect the following Members: Cook Islands, Fiji, India, Indonesia (though not currently requesting funding), Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand.
consultations and collaborations (including partnership agreements and MOUs); legislative reforms; initiatives to enhance corporate responsibility and diligence; anti-money laundering measures; whistleblower protection; national integrity strategies; public procurement; codes of conduct for public officials; and institutional developments. Vietnam presented its implementation of the conclusions of the 11th Regional Seminar that it hosted in October 2012. Each presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session.

5. Presentations by Advisory Group Members
As in previous meetings, Members of the Advisory Group were invited to present their recent activities. Presentations were made GIZ, Transparency International and UNODC.

6. The Initiative’s 2013/2014 Activities including Thematic Review on Corporate Compliance
The Secretariat informed the Steering Group that a consultant has been chosen to conduct the Thematic Review on Corporate Compliance, Internal Controls and Ethics Measures. A questionnaire on this topic will be sent to Members in the fall. In the meantime, Members should identify and contact the relevant bodies in their governments that would be involved in the Thematic Review, and inform them of the upcoming questionnaire. The review is anticipated to be largely completed by the 2014 Steering Group Meeting.

The Initiative’s 19th Steering Group Meeting and 9th Regional Conference will be held in Cambodia, likely in fall 2014. The Secretariat will make inquiries to ensure that the event does not conflict with events organised by other international organisations in the anti-corruption field. Members will decide the theme of the conference by vote in fall 2013. Steering Group and Advisory Group Members were invited to suggest to the Secretariat themes that should be included on the ballot.

7. Preparation for the 5th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption
In the 17th Steering Group Meeting, the Initiative agreed to deliver a message to the 5th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the UNCAC in November 2013 in Panama. In the 18th Meeting, the Steering Group adopted the text of the message to be delivered. Timor-Leste agreed to deliver the message on behalf of the Initiative at the Conference.

The Initiative will also deliver messages in the next meetings of the UNCAC Working Group on Asset Recovery (Vienna, 29-30 August 2013) and Implementation Review Group (26-27 November 2013). The purpose of the message is to encourage UNCAC States Parties to make use of the Initiative’s 2008 Thematic Review on Mutual Legal Assistance, Extradition and Recovery of Proceeds of Corruption and 2010 Thematic Review on Criminalisation of Bribery. The Secretariat will approach Members for volunteers to deliver the message.

8. Consultation with the Private Sector, Media and Civil Society
For the second time, the Initiative held a consultation session with the private sector, media and civil society during its Steering Group meeting. Representatives of six organisations attended the session in Timor-Leste. The discussion covered topics such as the particular challenges in corruption facing Timor-Leste, and the role that the private sector, civil society and the media should play in preventing and fighting corruption in Asia-Pacific.