

Good Governance for Development (GfD) in Arab Countries Initiative  
Programme on Rule of Law and Judicial Reform

**Regional Conference on Supporting (UNCAC) Implementation in Arab countries**

Dead Sea, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan  
21-23 January, 2008

**Opening Session,**

by Mr. Luc Stevens, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative

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Your Excellency Mr. Ayman Odeh, Minister of Justice of Jordan

Your Excellency Mr. Abed Shakhanbeh, Chairperson of the Anti-Corruption Commission

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants

On behalf of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) it is a great honour for me to welcome you all to the regional conference entitled "Supporting UN Convention on Anti-Corruption Implementation in Arab Countries".

I greatly appreciate your attendance which if anything proves that many Arab countries are making combating corruption a priority.

The negative impact of corruption on development is no longer questioned. Evidence from across the globe confirms that corruption impacts the poor disproportionately. Corruption hinders economic development, erodes the rule of law, reduces social services, and diverts investments in infrastructure, institutions and social services.

Moreover, it fosters an anti-democratic environment characterized by uncertainty, unpredictability and declining moral values and disrespect for constitutional institutions and authority. It also undermines efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Corruption therefore reflects a democracy, human rights and governance deficit that negatively impacts poverty and human security.

Thus, success in meeting the MDGs objectives will depend on the "quality" of governance and the level of effectiveness, efficiency and equity in resource generation, allocation and management.

UNDP has been involved since 1997, in accountability, transparency and integrity programmes as part of its interventions to strengthen democratic governance.

Regionally, our Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR) supports regional and national key governance institutions to address governance needs and concerns, with the aim of enhancing good governance practice and governance reform in

the Arab world. I am glad to welcome them today, and wish to express our deep appreciation for organizing this conference.

Having said that, I also wish to turn to Your Excellency Mr. Ayman Odeh and the Government of Jordan and thank you sincerely for hosting this conference.

Jordan is a country that has long recognized that corruption is the key element in economic under-performance and is an obstacle to poverty alleviation and development. As said by H.M. King Abdullah, I quote "corruption wastes capabilities, breeds frustration and undermines citizen's confidence in their institutions, robbing them of legitimate opportunities".

At the request of the Government of Jordan UNDP is actively supporting interventions that help the country meet its aspiration for a country that is free from this phenomenon.

In a direct involvement with anti-corruption, UNDP Jordan had a project of cooperation with the previous Anti-Corruption Department before becoming an independent institute known now as the "Anti-Corruption Commission". The project managed to build the Department's institutional and human resources capacity through internal and external training courses that is required to carry out the processes effectively and free from any undue influences. And Your Excellency, Mr. Shakhaneh we will remain committed to continue to provide this support for your esteemed Commission if you deem necessary.

Our two projects in support of enhancing the capacity of the House of Parliament and the National Center for Human Rights aim also at promoting the active participation of Jordanian citizens and groups outside the public sector and raise public awareness regarding the existence, causes and gravity of and the threat posed by corruption.

In addition, our various e-Governance projects, such as the e-Accounting and the e-Procurement will strengthen assist in creating an effective system of procurement and accounting that is based on transparency, competition and objective criteria in decision making, that are effective in preventing corruption.

The launching of the UN Global Compact last October should increase the role of the private sector in collectively addressing issues related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). And we are glad to say that already six companies in Jordan have joined the UN Global Compact that includes their share of responsibility to eliminate corruption.

Prevention and eradication of corruption is a responsibility of all and needs the support and the involvement of individuals and groups outside the public sector, such as civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, if their efforts in this area are to be effective.

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished participants,**

Attitudes on corruption are changing. Today there are signs of growing intolerance toward corruption. The UN convention which is the subject of this conference was entered into force in December 2005, is both a cause and an effect of this trend. Its provisions are the most comprehensive, universal and even-handed measures for tackling this global challenge.

While it is true that the nature and effects of corruption are unique to each country and society, nevertheless, there are many successful anti-corruption initiatives in the Arab world. I hope this conference will encourage active participation and the sharing of experience and best practices among all of you.

We need to take concrete measures and meaningful steps to deter, prevent and combat corruption at all levels. Let us unite our efforts to continue the fight against corruption; to ensure a corrupt-free world.

Thank you for your attention