



“Beirut Declaration Against Corruption”

Issued by the Fourth Conference of the
Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network

“Reconciling Hopes with Realities
in the Fight against Corruption:
Paving the Way for Innovation”



Beirut, Republic of Lebanon
14-16 April 2013



Beirut Declaration Against Corruption



**Issued by the Fourth Conference of the
Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network**

**“Reconciling Hopes with Realities
in the Fight against Corruption:
Paving the Way for Innovation”**

**Beirut, Republic of Lebanon
14 - 16 April 2013**




Beirut Declaration Against Corruption

The Fourth Conference of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET), held in Beirut at the Ministerial Level under the patronage of His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lebanon, concluded its works on the evening of 16 April 2013 after more than two days of plenary sessions, parallel workshops, and side activities, which were attended by more than 250 participants representing 30 countries and including ministers, heads of regulatory and judicial bodies, senior officials, parliamentarians, judges, and activists from civil society and the business community from 20 Arab countries.

After expressing sincere gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency the Chair of ACINET for all the efforts he has made during his leadership of its third work cycle in 2012-2013,

And after welcoming the transfer of the ACINET Chairmanship from the Kingdom of Morocco, represented by His Excellency the President of the Central Authority for Corruption Prevention, to the Republic of Lebanon, represented by His Excellency the Minister of Justice,

Also after presenting genuine thanks to the Republic of Lebanon, both people and State, for the distinguished hosting




of the Conference and to His Excellency the Prime Minister for the generous patronage and the special attention,

Complemented with the presentation of genuine thanks to all the members of the organizing committee and the large team of unknown soldiers who supported them in achieving their tasks,

And also complemented with the presentation of genuine thanks to the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lebanon, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its regional project on Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries (ACIAC) for the pivotal role they have played in ensuring successful organization, and also to the other partner organizations who contributed to this success, namely the Office of the Comptroller General of Brazil (CGU), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Office on Drugs and crime (UNODC), the Stolen Assets Recovery Initiative (StAR), Transparency International (TI), and the League of Arab States (LAS),

The Fourth Conference of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network adopted the «Beirut Declaration Against Corruption» as follows:



“We, gathered in Beirut, ministers, heads of regulatory and judicial authorities, senior officials, parliamentarians, judges and activists from civil society and the business community, striving to contribute effectively to achieve our peoples’ aspirations for a better future where corruption is shunned in our societies and integrity is hailed as a code that guides us all to the road of peace, development and prosperity,

Convinced that corruption undermines human dignity and damages people’s lives, especially the poor and the marginalized, compromising the quality of the life they lead and threatening them in their own security, health, education and livelihood,


Recognizing that continuing without finding deeper and more comprehensive responses to corruption is jeopardizing our countries’ present and future, even if in varying degrees, and is constituting a situation that is unacceptable to our peoples, especially the youth,

Desiring to reinforce the valuable efforts that have been, and are being, made by many in our countries to strengthen integrity and fight corruption, and to promote new efforts in all sectors and on a wider and more impactful scale,

- Declare that the time has come for us to lay the foundations for a new era in the fight against corruption, characterized by creativity, innovation and openness to other views, and based on merging new legislative and regulatory approaches together with ethical and value-based approaches.
- Emphasize that achieving further progress in this field requires us to work vigorously on creating an overall

atmosphere where freedoms prevail and human rights are respected.

- Highlight the importance of working to integrate, more clearly, the principles of accountability, transparency and integrity in constitutions, in a manner that guarantees the separation of powers and cooperation among them, reinforces their answerability, and enables them to properly manage public affairs and funds.
- Commit ourselves to exert additional efforts to implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption and adopt its provisions in our countries, both in texts and practices.
- Call on all stakeholders, politicians, parliaments, governments, regulatory and judicial bodies, media, business, and civil society in all its shapes and forms to build true partnerships and productive cooperative relationships against corruption.
- Draw attention to the need to consider the issue of political corruption in order to explore its dimensions, define its manifestations, and develop mechanisms to address it, in a manner that paves the way for serious and productive work in this regard.
- Urge the provision of genuine attention to the judiciary by strengthening its independence, integrity and professionalism according to international standards, given that the value that it is supposed to add in the area of anti-corruption, is still generally limited compared to peoples' aspirations and the ambitions of those who have been demanding judicial reform and modernization for decades.



- Consider that holding the corrupt to account cannot be achieved solely by relying on traditional approaches in the field of criminalization and law enforcement, thus inviting us all to explore, adopt, and implement new approaches that are capable of achieving better results, such as effective administrative sanctioning systems for petty corruption, parallel to criminal processes, in a manner that may allow the avoidance of complications arising from the pursuit of criminal processes alone; or laws to combat illicit enrichment, in its proper sense, in a manner that restrains those accustomed to enjoying impunity; or the simplification of judicial cooperation mechanisms at the bilateral, regional and international levels in a manner that corresponds to the requirements of swiftness and effectiveness in addressing transnational corruption crimes.

- Stress that fighting corruption cannot be achieved in an effective and sustainable manner without exerting efforts that are specifically devoted to corruption prevention, including the prompt development of effective systems for this purpose, according to international standards, particularly those of the UN and the OECD, that address the right of access to information; financial disclosures; conflicts of interest regulation; and the professionalization of public office.

- Take note that Arab experiences in formulating and implementing national anti-corruption strategies are still quite young, and that enhancing them requires stronger support that enables such strategies to be anchored in a clear vision adopted at the State level; based on diverse and in-depth studies and assessments; formulated according to specific priorities, the results of which are measurable; putting special emphasis on specific sectors

that are important to the State's interest and daily lives of people; and anchored in a genuinely participatory process that involves all stakeholders - strongly welcoming in this regard ACINET's decision to place this matter at the center of its forthcoming programme of work in 2013 - 2014.

- Resolve on expanding the participation of various non-governmental actors in anti-corruption efforts, and enabling them to raise their voices and make them heard so that they become transparent swords rooting out corruption and a constant call for a societal culture that rejects it.
- Encourage all stakeholders to move towards the active and effective utilization of Information and Communication Technologies to promote transparency and prevent corruption, through initiatives of social media and e-government that do not only focus on making information on public affairs available, but also on decision-making mechanisms and aspects relevant to the implementation of these decisions, especially the financial aspects.
- Deem it necessary to conduct a thorough and explicit review of the role of anti-corruption agencies in the Arab countries in terms of their independence, powers, and the financial and human resources allocated to them, as well as in terms of their relationships with the concerned parties, especially other regulatory and judicial bodies, the private sector, and civil society organizations.
- Adopt the proposal submitted to the League of Arab States regarding the establishment of an Arab court and granting it the necessary jurisdiction to deal with transnational grand corruption and the recovery of asset derived from it.

- 
- Recommend the establishment of a regional mechanism whose tasks are to coordinate among Arab countries regarding the recovery of assets derived from corruption; to activate the various types of cooperation among brothers, including the consolidation of amicable dispute resolution mechanisms; and to support efforts relating to asset recovery requests from other countries.
 - Propose looking into the establishment of an Arab observatory concerned with gathering and analyzing information to draw a clearer picture of current Arab integrity and anti-corruption efforts, as well as related variables and progress.
 - Express our eagerness to direct more attention to the role of education in enshrining the values of citizenship and building a culture of integrity and corruption rejection, calling on all stakeholders to crystallize innovative initiatives in this field.
 - Call, in conclusion, on the media to increase their engagement in anti-corruption efforts in a more serious and objective manner, given the importance and gravity of their role in the modern age, and the great value that they can add to such efforts.”

Beirut, 16 April 2013



