

MEDIA AND PRIVATE SECTOR IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION
Working Group 3
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Rapporteur Report

Chair: Soji Apampa, SAP, Nigeria

Rapporteur: Erastus Ethekeon, Universitat Jaume I, Spain

Panelists:

Vivienne Pearson, Business Unity, South Africa

Alvaro Bernardo Zepada Herman, Guatemala

Djillali Hadji, TI Algeria

Topics Discussed:

1. The role of business sector in the fight against graft in South Africa.
2. The role of the construction industry activists in Guatemala.
3. The media in the fight against corruption in Algeria.

Corruption concerns:

- i. Government - Government Corruption through double standards.
- ii. Business - Government corruption through procurement process.
- iii. Business – Business corruption by applying double standards.

Vivienne Pearson

Briefly shared the experience of the corporate business sector in fighting graft with emphasis on the activities and the role of the insurance sector in South Africa. Some of the key measure to address the above issues of corruption as follows:

- Prevention and Ethics: The business sector has developed codes of ethics / corporate governance rules and standards to govern conduct of business. Unilever Center for Ethics was cited as a corporate sector initiative that develops standards and educates businesses.
- Transparency and accountability through information sharing using Fraud Hotlines by industry.
- Financial support by business sector to anti-corruption efforts and initiatives.
- Cooperation/ collaboration with government and other stakeholders through the National Anti-Corruption Forum.

Alvaro Bernardo Zepada Herman, Guatemala

Gave an account of fight against corruption in the construction industry in Guatemala. Some key highlights include:

- Planning for change in the industry being initiated by a few individuals (seven) and eventually creating a broad network of coalitions against graft in the business sector.
- Cited the role of donors/ foreign powerful government in assisting business sector coalitions in capacity building and pressuring the government to cooperate in giving access to information on contracts and procurement.
- Emphasized on information sharing by industry and business and the importance of monitoring government tendering / contract and procurement processes and implementation of the same.

Djillali Hadji, Algeria

Spoke of the struggles of the media against graft in Algeria. Some highlights are as follows:

- Cited frustrations/ suffering of the media in the hands of an oppressive dictatorial regime. He cited frequent arrests and intimidation of journalists by government.
- Lack of political good will from the government seriously hampers the role of the media in the fights against corruption. The case for Algeria was given with the current regime being accused of not showing any political will and commitment to fight corruption.
- Military dominance in political and economic affairs contributes greatly to muzzling of the “free” press.
- Media ownership determines the role it can play in the war on graft. A government owned press does not do anything on graft. Privately owned media can fight for reforms.

Lessons learned / recommendations

- i. Private sector and media should realize and assert their role in the fight against corruption. They should adopt “zero tolerance to corruption” attitude.
- ii. Private sector must develop codes of ethics and corporate rules and standards to govern the conduct of business. These codes and rules must be adhered to and enforced by all, even in cross- national trade.
- iii. The private sector should be involved and help in investigation.
- iv. Integrity awards for clean and ethical businesses and proactive anti-corruption media and businesses
- v. The business community and media should strive to create and instill a culture of ethics in doing business.
- vi. Cooperation / collaboration or what has been described as “constructive engagement” within and among the private sector, the media, the civil society and the government as players in the fight against corruption is necessary. The National Anti-Corruption Forum in South Africa is a good example.

- vii. Political will and leadership is key to enhancing the role of the media and private sector .
- viii. Stakeholders should encourage free flow and sharing information on corrupt activities and individual/ companies e.g. fraudulent claims, tenders, and staff recruitment retention and dismissal etc.
- ix. Donors, international organizations, development partners and powerful states can assert positive influence over corrupt regimes/governments to combat graft.
- x. Free, open and vibrant media is necessary in the war on corruption. It plays an investigative role, in reporting and educating the public.
- xi. Protection of the media as the ultimate whistleblower is important. This can be done through reforming oppressive “colonial” laws e.g. the Subversion Act and enacting new laws that will protect and grant the media the rights / duties and responsibilities to report on graft.
- xii. Media and private sector should be included in any discourse on corruption for purposes of enhancing their participation and knowledge on corruption. Concern was raised that there were no journalists participating in the group. Journalists attend conference only to cover the event mainly the first day and disappear and not participate.
- xiii. Media ownership determines the role it can play in corruption reporting. Privately owned media should be encouraged. (Not so much was discussed due to time constraints).
- xiv. Proper education and professional training for the media.
- xv. The role of business in financing political activities / parties was raised but no recommendation given.