Short Session Report

Session Title: Infrastructure transparency: Combating corruption and changing lives in Latin America
Date & Time: 2 December 2016, 16:30-18:00 hours
Report prepared by: Annette Kleinbrod, Transparency International

PLEASE INCLUDE BEST QUOTES!

Experts:
- Alfredo Cantero, Presidential Director for Special Projects, Strategic Delivery Unit, Ministry of the Presidency, Honduras
- Angelica Maytín, Chief Executive Officer, National Authority for Transparency and Access to Information (ANTAI)
- Alejandro Salas, Americas Regional Director, Transparency International
- Álvaro Zepeda, Guatemala Chamber of Construction

Moderated by: Christiaan (Chrik) Poortman, Chair of the Interim Board, Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST)

Session coordinated by: Bernadine Fernz, Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST)

Main issues raised in kick off remarks. What’s the focus of the session?

CoST, the infrastructure transparency initiative, works with governments, industry and local communities around the world to deliver better value from public infrastructure investment by increasing transparency and accountability.
CoST was launched in 2012 and includes 16 participating countries across four continents. The initiative is strengthening public infrastructure delivery globally, gaining momentum and expanding its impact across Latin America with Panama as its newest member.

What initiatives have been showcased? Briefly describe the Game Changing strategies/ ideas (if applicable)

The presentation focused on CoST as a game changing strategy, with examples and insights from across Latin America, in particular from Guatemala, Honduras and Panama.

CoST promotes transparency by disclosing data in accordance with the CoST Infrastructure Data Standard (IDS), featuring 40 data points across the project lifecycle – not just the procurement process. This helps to inform and empower citizens, enabling them to hold decision-makers to account. Informed citizens and responsive public institutions can lead to the introduction of reforms that will reduce mismanagement, inefficiency, corruption and the risks posed to the public from poor infrastructure.

The panellists were highly appreciative of the CoST approach as they saw it considerably reducing corruption and mismanagement in infrastructure projects. One panellist remarked, “I feel CoST does help. As even if it does not reduce corruption, at least it scares everybody with regards to corruption and makes them more aware. Now they are forced to think.”

Briefly describe the highlights including the thematically interesting questions and ideas that were generated from the discussion or from the floor, and session quotes.

Highlights – thematically interesting questions:
- Political will from the top is crucial, they need to be mobilised. However, the government also needs executive capacity. In the same regard, it is important for civil society to have representation and capacity building support, as they need to have the ability to listen and the capacity to decide.”
- Larger companies are often deeply concerned about the technical capacity of civil society when there is discussion of the multi-stakeholder approach. However, CoST provides a dynamic forum in which each stakeholder is supported and enabled to have their voice. CoST is one of the best examples to illustrate this.

Session quotes:
- “The region [Latin America] is the most unequal region in the world, at the same time it has economic potential. Improving infrastructure in the whole region is the essence to break this inequality and boost the potential the region has. Corruption is a major factor hindering this development.” – Alejandro Salas, Transparency International
- “We know in the past, there were countries, especially in Europe, who decided to not participate in mega-construction projects in Panama, because they
Angelica Maytín, National Authority for Transparency and Access to Information (ANTAI)

What are the key recommendations, follow-up Actions (200 words narrative form)

CoST goes beyond transparency to ensure accountability; however to date, its work focuses on the governance of investments and does not include the governance of workers. CoST could share its experience and develop partnerships with human rights organisations to provide greater transparency and accountability on the treatment of construction workers.

Key Insights that could be included in the IACC Declaration

- High level commitment to transparency is vital for driving forward reform.
- Multi-stakeholder working can be a proactive tool for enabling justice, equity, security and trust but stakeholders must be supported in building dialogues.

Rapporteur’s name and date submitted

Annette Kleinbrod, 2 December 2016

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