Short Session Report

Session Title: Parliamentarians Acting Now in Partnerships
Date & Time: October 24, 12:00 – 2:00pm
Report prepared by:

Experts:

Dr. Fadli Zon
Chair/Deputy Speaker, GOPAC/Indonesia House of Representatives

Hon. Shakeel Shabbir Ahmed
Chair/MP, GOPAC Kenya/National Assembly of Kenya

Michael Aastrup Jensen
Member, Parliament of the Liberal Party, Denmark

Margaret Quirk MLA
Chair/MP, GOPAC Australia/Western Australia Legislative Assembly

Hon. Taefu Lemi MP
Main issues raised in opening remarks by Dr. Fadli Zon:

- The critical role that Parliamentarians play in a country’s anti-corruption efforts
- The need for collaborative engagement recognising that Parliamentarians will also need to partner with Government and members of civil society.
- Parliaments play a critical role in holding Governments accountable
- Corruption is a threat to democracy, it violates social justice, and destroys trust in state institutions
- UNDP, GOPAC and the Islamic Development Bank have jointly produced the Parliamentary Handbook highlighting the role of Parliament in implementing the SDGs.
- GOPAC working to encourage Open Government and Open Parliament and the need to be more inclusive and transparent.
- GOPAC also advocating the need for Parliamentarians to not be part of the problem but part of the solution.
- GOPAC working towards strengthening the anti-corruption
movement amongst Parliaments/Parliamentarians and the need to move with the same goals and the same level of ambition

Focus of the session

● Share Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) experiences and how they are advocating for the role of Parliamentarians in global anti-corruption efforts
● Also an opportunity to hear from other Parliamentarians that are not a part of GOPAC and their current measures they are taking to fight corruption
● Discuss the need for Parliamentarians to explore and strengthen collaborative engagements
● Discuss civil society perspectives and perceptions on the role of Parliamentarians in anti-corruption

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

● The role of UN in brokering partnerships between Parliaments and non-state actors.
● GOPAC’s current approach in demanding integrity and accountability from members and other Parliamentarians
● Kenyan put in place a legal framework that supports whistle blower protection
● In Australia, they are working towards strengthening Australia’s national integrity system recognising that corruption in Australia is institutionalised rather than personal. Corruption has become an elections issue and will influence the federal elections. They are working to restore trust in the Australian Parliament – the Grattan Institute report highlighted that Australians do not like the current system and they want to change it. Australia is working on promoting Open Governments and recognise the important role that civil society plays in that process.
● Samoa highlighted current initiatives by the Samoa Parliament and what they have in place to combat corruption. This also includes their recent accession to UNCAC. Samoa promotes the notion that corruption is a fight by all of us for all of us.
● Vanuatu with the use of the Right to Information are working towards promoting transparency. Young people are mobilising
their local youth council and network to promote the demand for accountability from Parliamentarians. The role that Vanuatu Youth Council is an indication of the possible extension of the scope of possible and innovative partnerships for Parliamentarians.

- Denmark has consistently been rated high on the TI corruption index and this owed mostly to their recognition that transparency is key. Denmark has open voting and any citizen can access information regarding voting history and performance of Parliamentarians. Each word is transcribed and ensures that every account provided by Danish parliamentarians is recorded. All Parliamentarians are also supposed to demonstrate a high level of transparency and they are obliged to disclose other positions outside of Parliament and also information on gifts received or boards that they may be a part of.

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

- No party alone can fight corruption. Even Parliament, despite their legislative power to fight corruption cannot do it alone.
- GOPAC is currently active in 62 chapters and are keen to engage with other Parliaments. Denmark has been urged to share what they are doing well so that other Parliaments can learn of good practices.
- People are losing faith in institutions because of the perception that political institutions and parties have been captured and aligned to big business, other interests and are party to the collusion that happens.
- The issue of political financing and the need to encourage Parliaments and parliamentarians to be transparent
- Tunisia raised the issue of allegiance of Parliamentarians to their party interests and how they can often compromise integrity – using the example of the initiative to establish a collective – Parliamentarians against corruption but led to a disappointing outcome as they chose to align to party interests – how does GOPAC ensure members maintain integrity. GOPAC responded stating high expectations of its members and there have been
instances where members have been asked to step down/resign when they act contradictory to the values/principles of GOPAC. Kenya shared measures that they have in place including the recording of biometrics to hold Parliamentarians accountable and ensure they are physically in attendance at Parliamentary meetings/sessions. The need for compliance behaviour and that they too must abide by the law and lead by example.

• Samoa stated the need for transparency as the start of the campaign towards anticorruption

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

The fight against corruption requires collaborative engagements and genuine partnerships. There is also a need for platforms that will enable foster innovative partnerships for Parliaments and other non-state actors.

Parliaments that are highly ranked on the Transparency perception index e.g. Denmark to be encouraged to share information and good practices with GOPAC and other Parliaments.

Open Governments and open Parliaments are strongly encouraged and are critical in the fight against corruption.

Parliamentarians are critical given their legislative power and that they hold Governments accountable. There is a need for them to demand more transparency from members and other Parliaments working towards restoring public trust.

Key Insights that could be included in the IACC Declaration

• Parliamentarians have a critical role to play and have a responsibility to collaborate with other key actors in the fight against corruption

• The recognition of GOPAC and their role in promoting anticorruption across Parliaments
States are encouraged to promote open Parliament and open Governments as a pre-requisite to restoring public trust in Parliaments/Parliamentarians

The need for Parliaments to strengthen engagement with civil society and other non-state actors. There is a need for innovative partnerships to further promote transparency and accountability.

Parliaments should adopt sharing of good practices and measures that they have taken to promote anti-corruption.

Rapporteur’s name and date submitted

Lavenia Rokovucago 24 October 2018

This Short Report needs to be submitted within 2 hours after the session.