Short Session Report

Session Title: Public Service Excellence and Preventing Corruption
Date & Time: Tuesday, October 23, 2018, 12:00-14:00
Report prepared by: Stina Eriksson, Programme Analyst, UNDP

Experts:
Mr Anga Timilsina, Programme Adviser on Anti-Corruption, UNDP
Mr Nika Gilauri, Senior advisor, McKinsey and ex Prime Minister of Georgia
Ms Nicole Botha, Head of the Global GIZ Sector Programme on Anti-Corruption and Integrity
Mr Tom Tiki, First Assistant Secretary, PNG Department of Finance
Ms Joy Aceron, Director, Government Watch (G-Watch) Philippines

Moderated by: Ms. Candice Welsh, Chief of Implementation Support Section of the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch of UNODC
Session coordinated by: Aida Arutyunova, Programme Manager, UNDP

Main issues raised in kick off remarks. What’s the focus of the session?
The focus of the session was to present work of UNDP, UNODC, GIZ, Government and Civil Society on public service reform and the prevention of corruption. It also marked the launch of the UNDP publication on Public Sector Excellence to Prevent Corruption, which aims at providing a theory of change wherein corruption is prevented by efforts to achieve public sector excellence and vice versa.

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

Mr. Gilauri provided examples of how his government was able to reform public sector and at the same time decrease levels of perceived corruption, 10 times increase of tax revenue, quadrupling GDP, and change mindsets of civil servant to move from perceiving themselves as decision makers to service provider of the citizens of Georgia – all in the course of only 8 – 10 years. This was done through simplifying regulations, bureaucratic processes, tax laws, and provide civil servants with personal incentives such as increased salaries and a bonus system for personal performance and institutional compliance.

Mr. Tikki described the Phones Against Corruption project (introduced in 2014), which enables citizen monitoring of corrupt acts in PNG. Through free and anonymous SMS, citizens can alert the Department of Finance of wrong doings and possible cases of corruption. Results include 2 legal verdicts, 5 cases in courts, 10 completed cases, 15 investigations in progress and 45 pending cases.

Ms. Botha gave a presentation of a public sector compliance study done in Peru, where GIZ has supported in developing a Public Integrity Model on the findings of gaps in the effectiveness of integrity policies I Peru’s public sector. Recommendations included e.g. promote integrity in political and public entities’ leadership, regional and municipal level strategy for the Integrity Office, include the Supreme Audit Institution in the corruption prevention strategy, and the development of integrity plans focusing on public procurement.

Ms. Aceron raised the point that there is a gap in theories and actions, and the major challenge in sustaining best practices. Corruption persist
despite a great number of piloted initiatives in the Philippines. The challenge of politicians providing money in exchange for votes as an obstacle in creating real citizen demand for corrupt free societies. Corruption if systematic and institutional reforms are needed to win back the citizens from the corrupt.

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 included the success story of Georgia and the thorough walk through on public sector reforms made by Mr. Gilauri’s government to increase integrity among civil servants and regain citizen’s trust in public institutions, and how this also translated into an impressive economic development.

Several of the questions from the floor related to the adaptability of Georgia’s reforms to countries with a larger population, high rates of illiteracy and diverse ethnic groups, and in a context of shrinking civic space and weak citizen empowerment. Furthermore, UNDP and GIZ use of frontier technology, such as internets of things and AI, to prevent and predict corruption was asked.

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

Every anti-corruption effort and measure to achieve public sector excellence is context specific. What has worked well in Georgia, Hong Kong or PNG may not translate well to another country. However, the key features and concept of public service excellence and corruption prevention, i.e the end goal, is similar in all contexts. Strong institutions, which are transparent, inclusive and accountable, where civil servants act with integrity to serve the public, would generally prevent corruption. However, a precondition to achieve this is always political will. Efforts will never succeed unless there is a main driver within government and/or public institutions themselves to become clean from corrupt activities. Change is needed on the individual level, organisational level as well as at the macro-level, including in terms of social non-acceptance of corruption. This was shown by the displayed
of reforms in Georgia, which were cross-cutting at all these levels; by the findings in UNDP’s publication on Public Sector Excellece; in the recommendations by GIZ on the Integrity Model for Peru; as well as by initiatives to engage citizens in monitoring and promote social accountability in the Philippines and PNG.

Key Insights that could be included in the IACC Declaration

A recommitment to ethical leadership, both among political leaders as well as among public officials, to achieve public sector excellence and prevent corruption.

Rapporteur’s name and date submitted
Stina Eriksson, October 23, 2018

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