



13th International
Anti-Corruption Conference

IACC

IACC today

**MON03
NOV08**

THE 13th INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION CONFERENCE NEWSPAPER

ISSUE 05



The 13th IACC: A Collective Commitment

Seeking to put an end to the misery, alienation and instability that corruption breeds, the 13th IACC closed with a call, in the *Athens Agenda*, the final conference communiqué (available at www.13iacc.org), to address corruption, to strengthen financial, environmental and natural resources governance and enable equitable development.

"In the spirit of ethical inquiry and justice, the global anti-corruption community today sets forth with delegates returning to their countries, rich and poor, carrying ideas, tools and practical solutions to prevent and stop corruption," said the Honourable Justice Barry O'Keefe, Chair of the IACC Council on the conclusion of the conference. "It is imperative that governments, business and civil society work together to fight corruption to ensure a cleaner, healthier and fairer world", added O'Keefe.

The 13th IACC brought together more than 1300 participants from 135 countries who, in the closing statement of the conference, recognised the central role of transparency and accountability in mitigating the current financial crisis and preventing future failures. During the four-day IACC, participants explored how corruption undermines all facets of sustainability: fostering conflict and violence, distorting natural resource exploitation; aggravating climate change and

hampering our response to it; and deepening global inequalities.

Inter-disciplinary cooperation was identified as a priority for the anti-corruption movement, with the recognition that the linkages between corruption and climate change, and corruption and human rights needed to be more fully explored and integrated.

Participants also recognised the long-term importance to the anti-corruption movement's work of the UN Convention against Corruption as the global, comprehensive anti-corruption framework for preventing and combating corruption was recognised, as well as the urgent need need to spur political will for ratification and the review mechanism.

The need for greater civil society engagement on issues ranging from asset recovery to political finance was echoed by many and governments were therefore called upon to ensure the space and the freedom for civil society to operate. Civil society was also called on to bolster its own governance.

The global financial crisis was an omnipresent factor in many of the conference's discussions. There was concern that the crisis poses a threat as companies seek to cut costs and governments scale back development assistance, further burdening the poorest countries. But it was also seen as presenting

opportunities for the anti-corruption movement, in terms of a closer focus on corporate governance and financial regulation, particularly on a global scale. Above all, commitments were made to do the utmost to prevent the financial crisis from undermining progress made in the fight against corruption.

The *Athens Agenda* noted that if the anti-corruption movement is to remain relevant and effective, that it must recognise diversity, the role of power structures and mechanisms of exclusion. Furthermore, efforts must be made to reach and mobilise people from all quarters, and from all age groups.

The reality that corruption harms all people and ultimately all communities, but that the poorest bear the greatest burden, was echoed throughout the conference. And their sustainable livelihoods were recognised as being the first priority, starting with endeavours to give them a stronger voice. Informed and empowered citizens are the most powerful tools against corruption.

The declaration concludes that, "on a global scale, our fates are intimately linked." As they returned to their home countries, participants committed themselves "ferverently to fighting corruption in order to guarantee our common sustainable future, so that we can hand coming generations a cleaner, healthier and fairer world than the one we inherited."

Plenary 4:

Sustainable Globalisation

Sustainable globalisation is not yet a reality. The financial crisis has brought into focus the deficiencies of the current system and the inequity it has fostered. As a goal, sustainable globalisation appears further away now than it has for many years.

The fourth plenary of the IACC brought together panellists from a range of backgrounds; Claribel David, Executive Director of the Asia Trade Forum; Dmitri Vlassis, Secretary of the UN Conference of State Parties; Katherine Marshall, senior fellow at Georgetown University; Ntombifuthi Mtoba, Chair of the Board of Deloitte and Touche, Southern Africa; and Georg Papandreou, the President of Socialist International and PASOK; while the session was moderated by Daniel Altman of the *International Herald Tribune*.

It is impossible to approach the subject of globalisation without considering the recent financial shock waves that have

swept through the world. Mtoba spoke of the failure of both actors and theorists to fully take into account the problems inherent to the current model of globalisation. This view was echoed by David, who highlighted deregulation, low interest rates and inadequate assessment of risk as key issues facing policy makers. Papandreou took the view that too much power was concentrated in the hands of too few, with too little accountability. The panel agreed that while the balance between shareholder and stakeholder interests remains so unequal, it is the most vulnerable – the bottom billion – who suffer the fall out from globalisation.

On the basis of this critique, the panellists gave several recommendations to promote truly sustainable globalisation. Vlassis asserted that it could only be achieved through the combination of economic growth and social stability; Marshall added that development assistance had to be maintained, even expanded, despite the obvious constraints of today's dire situation and deficient system. The message was clear: if globalisation is to be sustainable, it must address the inequity that it has created.

During the discussion, some differences

in opinion on strategy among the panellists emerged. Vlassis's view that the focus should be on implementing legal frameworks like the UNCAC in an essentially top-down process, while acquiring the buy-in of the public, contrasted with David's emphasis on the role of the individual consumer - including the state - and the pressure they could bring to bear on governance from the bottom up. Nevertheless, all panellists confirmed transparency, accountability and education as vital components of their approach.

Corruption is a serious obstacle to sustainable globalisation. To combat it, individuals and institutions must actively support each other. With this intention, it was appropriate to close the plenary with a resolution of support for Nuhu Ribadu, Nigeria's former chair of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, whose physical safety is reportedly in jeopardy due to corruption cases he has investigated. While it is a continuing concern that some anti-corruption advocates still live their lives in fear, the unanimous passing of a resolution from such a diverse audience is an encouraging sign that these individuals do not stand alone.

Final Plenary:

The Road Ahead: Global Transparency for a Sustainable Future

As the global economic crisis unfolded, anti-corruption practitioners widely denounced pervasive greed, short-term incentives, lack of transparency and the absence of regulation and oversight that could have mitigated financial collapse. Though promoting concepts like accountability and transparency is crucial, it is often less clear how these terms translate into practical prescriptions or where change should occur.

At the final plenary of the IACC, Transparency International's Managing Director Cobus de Swardt posed the question: 'If you had the choice to stop either international or national corruption at the push of a button, which would you choose?' Opting for the former, he cited the gravity of destruction wreaked by corruption at the international level. However, he and other speakers stressed that criticism as well as proposals for change must be targeted at all levels. De

Swardt asking, "Do we have the courage to push both buttons?" Gabriel Negatu of the African Development Bank called for improved leadership, strengthened institutions and enhanced national capacity to fight corruption and improve confidence, trust and accountability between Africa and its partners. Arguing that it is only fair that these changes are complemented by honest commitments from the North, he pointed to how OECD countries have been reluctant to ratify the UN Convention against Corruption and their lacklustre performance in enforcing the OECD Anti-bribery convention.

At the global level, the World Economic Forum (WEF) proposes strengthening the public-private dimension of governance institutions. Richard Samans, Managing Director of the Centre for Public-Private Partnerships at the WEF, argued that measuring progress in median living standards offers a more realistic assessment of global economic performance. He advised that the frameworks of economic and governance institutions integrate issues like labour rights, environmental standards, ethical concerns and consumer protections.

His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan Bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

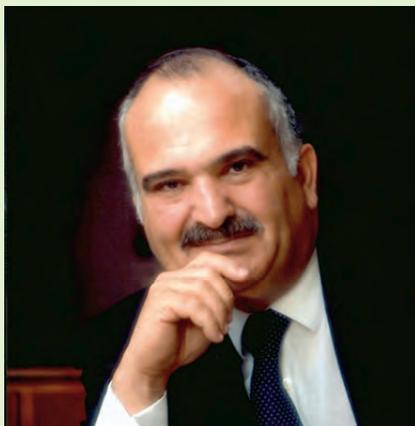
called for intraregional discussions that include the voices of those most affected by inequitable distribution of resources. Seeking practical solutions, he cautioned that 'greening' world businesses will have no impact on the global energy base while the reserve standard of the US dollar remains tied to fossil fuels.

Ingrid Srinath, Secretary General of CIVICUS, argued that multilateral institutions force developing nations to go 'hat-in-hand' to meetings where their futures are decided as a matter of policy. She noted that at the national level, democratic governance is under threat, with a CIVICUS study reporting 87 countries to be actively constricting civil society operations. Though a knowledgeable and empowered citizenship paves the quickest path to sustainability, Srinath highlighted that there is little serious investment in civil society from global institutions, the private sector, or within the sector itself. Investment in this sector, she suggested, is the surest way forward.

Above all, there was consensus that devastating though the financial crisis is, it provides anti-corruption activists with the impetus for collective action towards a common goal.

IACC Interview:

His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan



His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal

What do you think should be done to make the fight against corruption more effective in the Middle East?

Governments must regulate themselves there is no doubt. You see parliaments today keep finding reasons for legislation, following the promulgation of the legislation. Legislation is promulgated individually on individual things and clusters of inter-related families have to appear in a thematic approach. Of course this is not different to the international community, where fads and ad hoc measures seem to take precedence over interdisciplinarity. One minute they are talking about fighting malaria when we don't even have mosquito nets, or we don't have beds if we have the

mosquito nets. There is no inter-related thinking to fighting AIDs or whatever issue it might be.

Secondly, citizens and civil society organisations must also be active in pressing their governments and holding them accountable to conventional standards, which means there must be substance to the dialogue between civil society organisations, citizens and governments, which is why I am so concerned with the continued legal illiteracy. Legal illiteracy has to be attended to if citizens are going to exercise their responsibilities.

Thirdly, international institutions can help keep anti-corruption conventions high on the international agendas and provide fora for discussing progress, and of course this is something I hope can be a subject of standards. Because various UN conventions exist on combating corruption in all forms, I think that there is an assumption that just because these conventions exist and there are signatories to them that somehow this malaise will be attended to. But I think that the question of developing a culture of good governance is basically what anti-corruption amounts to, and a covenant between good governance and citizenship is extremely important.

Studies show that corruption can siphon off oil and gas revenues into the pockets of the elite. What do you think is the single most important action needed to ensure that the wealth from natural resources benefits all citizens?

I believe in custodianship and stewardship as common denominators between all schools of thoughts and beliefs and faiths.

I was moderator for seven years of nine faith groups. In terms of morality and climate change and morality and the environment, I think one of the most interesting legal rulings is that of the Sheikh of the Azhar, Dr. Mohamed Sayyed Tantawi, in which he recently calls for 20% of the profits of oil and other natural resources to be deposited into an alms foundation. Now, after 9/11 of course, Zakat was stopped in the United States, because some organisations were siphoning money off to terror groups, as described by security agencies. But as far as the wealth of subterranean mineral resources is concerned, I think it is essential to see them focus once again on a cohesion fund. South East Asia has been able to do that; you have Vietnam and Thailand, two countries with totally different regimes as part of that wider bloc of the ASEAN countries. Why is it that the West Asian countries cannot follow that example of empowering the poor? I think the reason for it is basically the unilateral relations that have governed oil countries relations with the industrial world and with Arab countries or non-Arab countries - so we all go to petition oil countries for their support. I think the current crisis might make it more patently obvious that inter-regional and intra-regional cooperation is required and in that context I go back to Paul Volker who called for a regional development bank, or development fund. The focus is not on making the rich richer, not even on sustainable development - keeping people at a certain level of development - but developing talent and developing local communities. In that context, I think the intersection between society and nature will mature and prosper.

Jordan is expanding economically at a significant rate. Have you concerns that in this period of rapid growth, where perhaps existing systems and structures may struggle to keep pace, that some may well be left behind?

There is the reality that in terms of political economy the carrying capacity of each economy is immediately affected by the presence of refugees, DPs, IDPs - stateless persons - driven, for example, in carrying up to 1 million displaced Iraqis. Officials speak of figures in excess of half a million, but this figure equates for 12% of the local population, certainly in terms of the first impact of the first arrivals of the Iraqis, some of whom have returned now. And my question is how to improve this temporary status? I think the time has come for the region to remove brand names - Iraqi, Palestinian, Jordanian, Israeli, Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian - and to begin to look seriously at carrying capacity for the region. Just as an empirical database of natural human and economic resources to give you some kind of indication of whether or not you can begin a realistic recovery capacity plan. To do that, I believe investment has to be supra-national in energy and water for the human environment, We have to realise that continuing to fight within the context of depleted rivers - the Tiber, the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Nile and the Jordan, which rapidly doesn't exist - requires a new approach. They could at least begin with these two existential requirements - water and air are no longer human rights, they are commodities on the world markets.

Doha to Hold Third Conference of State Parties to the UNCAC



Dr. Ali Bin Fetais Al Marri

The State of Qatar is set to hold the third Conference of State Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in late 2009. The International Organizing Committee for the Global Forum VI against Corruption will form a side event to the conference.

IACC today spoke with His Excellency Dr. Ali Bin Fetais Al Marri, Attorney General of the State of Qatar (Minister), about the forthcoming conference and its significance for the country.

Dr. Ali Bin Fetais Al Marri noted that the decision to host the conference was very important for Qatar, emphasising the need for transparency and fighting corruption, particularly in light of the current financial situation. He spoke of the challenges for rich countries like Qatar to fight corruption, calling it a difficult mission, and underlined his government's commitment to do so.

Dr. Ali Bin Fetais Al Marri also extended his thanks to the organisers of the 13th IACC and praised them for the excellent conference. It is his hope that the Conference of State Parties to the UNCAC will be an equal success.

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in October 2003, the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) is the first global framework to harmonise anti-corruption efforts worldwide. It is widely recognised as the most promising initiative to curb the scourge of corruption. This convention is unique not only in its worldwide coverage, but also in the extensiveness and detail of its provisions. The UNCAC embodies a comprehensive approach to corruption, recognising the importance of both preventive and punitive measures. It also addresses the cross-border nature of corruption, and includes provisions on the return of ill-gotten assets.

Covering the Truth: Investigative Journalism, Access to Public Information and Media Corporate Governance: Is There Anything New?

'To the press alone, chequered as it is with abuses, the world is indebted for all the triumphs which have been gained by reason and humanity over error and oppression'
James Madison, 1798

As the anti-corruption movement calls for transparency and accountability, investigative journalism emerges as an obvious partner, providing a lens through which corruption can be exposed and analysed. One of the final workshop sessions of the conference was dedicated to the role of journalism and the conditions necessary for it to function successfully.

The relationship between investigative journalism and anti-corruption civil society is reciprocal; both work in ways that help the other. Journalists investigate corruption cases, which not only assist in prosecuting corrupt individuals, but also demonstrate the dynamics of corruption and even its prevalence. Similarly, civil society pressure pushes for an environment in which journalists can work effectively; for example, by contributing to protections for whistleblowers and campaigning for access to information laws.

Whistleblowers are the key to many corruption scandals, as they have the insider information to expose hidden corruption and malpractice. Executive Director of Transparency International Romania, Victor Alistar, discussed the new whistleblowing law in Romania, revealing the protections that exist for those that take personal risks to expose corruption and the importance of civil society in promoting such laws and ensuring that all the required features are in place.

Similarly, Dario Sotto, Deputy Director of the Trust for the Americas, described civil society's role in promoting access to information legislation in South America. The region now has some of the best information laws in the world and civil society is facilitating access by training journalists on how to request information from government officials.

Despite this mutually reinforcing relationship between the media and journalism, there are both internal and external limitations. Alistar explained that although legislation is in place whistleblowers are cautious to come forward unless they are sure that subsequent investigations will take place. Martha Ruiz, Editor of Justice and Security for Semana magazine, described how reporters who investigated corruption in the networks between the militia, landowners, drugs and politics in Colombia faced physical threats and even death. Considering the internal structures, Pandelis Kapsis, Managing Editor of TA NEA, claimed that economically unviable newspapers are often bought up by large companies, concentrating media power in the hands of a few. Such companies often have other business interests, putting the papers' editors at risk of undue influence when reporting.

There is no doubt that the media is essential to the anti-corruption movement: they both have common goals to expose corruption and pursue the truth. It is a challenge for the anti-corruption movement to contribute to an environment that is as safe and as open as possible. As raised by Sotto, the freedom of information and the ability to access it is not only a fundamental human right, but a prerequisite of democracy.

we talk to ..

Eleftherios Anastasiadis Greek



What do you do?

I am a security guard at the Megaron conference centre.

How do you like the conference?

I think that it is not so easy to talk about the conference and corruption because of the situation all over the world. I heard some people in the plenaries and I like the idea of fighting against corruption for the future.

Do you think corruption is a big problem?

Corruption begins with us. If I have a mind for corruption, I do bad things. If I have a mind for good things, I will not be corrupt. I think it is a very big problem, and money is part of it.

Have you ever experienced corruption yourself?

Until now, no. And I have not been involved,

as I really prefer sleeping well at night!

If you think of corruption what do you think of?

Money, politics, no future.

What do you think you could do so that there is less corruption?

I don't know if I can do many things, but I can do small things in my area, with the people I live with. In Greece, we have a saying that goes: "Good deeds make good friends". If you have things in the right order close to you, you will live a nice life. I would like to do things for the people around me.

Editorial

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