

FACE

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION ENHANCED



Newsletter no.1 May 2008



Instead of introduction:

Anti-corruption and progress vs. corruption and poverty

What can UNDP do in the Western Balkans countries to support anti-corruption activities, thus exerting a direct influence on the development policies in the countries from the Region?

Of all the contemporary evils standing in the way of development of societies as we know them, corruption is probably the oldest in terms of historical ranking. As a twin sister of organized crime, corruption has taken hold of the primary position on the long list of social evils giving rise to a series of weaknesses that have a negative reflection on society. It affects in equal measure both the developed democracies and the totalitarian regimes, both in the richest and the poorest geo-political regions of our planet.

As this is the current state of affairs, we believe that there is not even a D of the word Dilemma as to whether and why an organization like UNDP should engage in the fight against corruption in the regions where UNDP is active.

Corruption and struggle with the poverty, as the core UNDP activity, are very closely linked. In the societies with "thriving" corruption we can find poor people. The higher the degree of corruption, the more severe is the depletion of all other natural and social resources and mechanisms of fight against corruption, that can be deployed to achieve development in its entirety. States erode internally at a faster or slower pace, regardless. Any additional measure or activity aimed at tackling problems in the economic, political or social sphere is rendered ineffective as they would produce only local effects, i.e they deal with the consequences rather than the essence of the problem.

Is the corruption problem identical everywhere? Generally speaking it is, though as a social evil, corruption manifests itself differently in different parts of the world. It depends directly on the level of development of democratic institutions which are a prerequisite without which the fight against corruption is impossible.

However, there are regions with similar political, economic and socio-cultural level of development, where we can speak about the same or similar group of problems caused by corruption. When

it comes to corruption, these regions are identified in that they suffer from identical weaknesses that are a consequence of corruption, and also they have identical or similar development tendencies. On the other hand, all of the above allows for identification of common measures applicable in a given region ensuring that the fight against corruption would become much more efficient. Needles to say, political will is a precondition without which it is not possible to proceed.

Any ambiguities surrounding the above considerations have been cleared out in UNDP over the past couple of years. The result of the recognition that there is no development and progress without anti corruption activities is the inception of a pilot project to cover the Western Balkan region, as it has been defined in the past decade, and which includes (in alphabetical order), Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia* and Serbia. The project should bring together the anti corruption measures in a common tool called anti corruption strategy of the Western Balkan.

The future WB AC Strategy should be another milestone for the future UNDP AC policy in the Region. It should also be a base for an Action plan which implementation will be supported by the donor's community.

The FACE (Fight Against Corruption Enhanced) news letter you are reading now is a part of the Project: Western Balkans Sub-Regional Mechanism for Facilitation of Anti-Corruption initiatives. The purpose of the FACE is to be a concrete and sublimated informer about the Project, its phases and activities. It will be available not only for all participants but also for the donor community, Diplomatic offices and other possible partners in the community, as well as for all who are interested. ■

Teo Blazevski
Media Consultant
of the Project

contents



Ms. Maria Luisa Silva Mejias
UN/UNDP RC/RR, Skopje, RM

Several considerations as a guideline for defining the strategy



Ms. Slagjana Taseva
Project manager

Why this project?



Macedonian meeting
/first conference

Approved goals and define the structure of the future strategy



Activities

Identification of common or similar ac projects

*Republic of Macedonia is a member of UN from April 1993 as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or FYR Macedonia as a provisional name for international uses

Ms Maria Luisa Silva Mejias:

Several consideration as a guideline for defining the strategy

"The good news is that countries of the Western Balkans have recognized that public corruption is a serious problem affecting the political, social and economic aspects of everyday life of their citizens"

It is my pleasure to welcome you all today on the occasion of starting up the activities of the regional project: to develop a UNDP Strategy to support the Western Balkans countries to address corruption... Corruption is a complex social, political and economic phenomenon that affects all the countries...

What is less frequently mentioned, though, and what puts the issue of corruption at the center of UNDP concerns is that corruption affects disproportionately the poor, syphoning out resources meant to protect the most vulnerable, who are also less able to participate and benefit from a corrupt system. Its absolute opposite to inclusive growth.

The good news is that countries in the Western Balkans have recognized that public corruption is a serious problem affecting the political, social and economic aspects of everyday life of their citizens... In this context, in 2006 we took the decision to start a new Project that is aimed at defining a UNDP comprehensive strategy in the Western Balkans to support anti-corruption initiatives.

UNDP offices in Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo and Macedonia, as well as RBEC NY and Bratislava, developed a sub-regional support project with a budget of \$ 60,000 which identified our office as the one to lead the initiative.

We were extremely pleased when a person with the credentials of Slagjana Taseva became interested in becoming the project manager. She joined at the end of the year, has been visiting the CO interested in this project and has already proposed a concrete timeline for implementation...

Five questions

Several consideration should guide us in defining the Strategy and the focus of our Programming

First, last November the EC recommended that all countries in the region take additional measures in solving the problem of corruption as a condition for the development of democracy, market economy and the rule of law. How can we better take advantage of the opportunities presented by the commitment this EU opinion generates in the region?

Second, that we focus on what is relevant,

the main problem to be addressed...What should be the substantive thrust of the programme? How can we support this to transform such commitments and infant steps into concrete and robust development results that yield donor support?

...If we want to be recognized as a partner in fighting corruption in the region, we should not only focus on having a very sharp programmatic strategy, but we should also make sure that UNDP staff have the capacity to talk authoritatively on these issues we want to address and that knowledge management frameworks and networks exist, including robust policy products that allow us to make a qualitative difference...

What are the niches in the fight against corruption in the region that UNDP could really deliver that do not duplicate or substitute what others are doing and what are the internal capacities and tools required to occupy those spaces?

Fourth, I find it particularly important that we recognize the programmatic implications of UNCAC, a Convention that has been ratified by all countries in the region, and that we anchor our activities around it...Which areas of UNCAC should be in the focus of our capacity building efforts and what kinds of synergies should be established with the Office of Drugs and Crime to ensure UN coherence in the area of anti-corruption?

Fifth and finally...Who are the key international and national actors working on AC in the region and which of them should be our closer partners?

We will succeed

...My suggestion is to be sober. Complex topic. Many others have failed before us due to insufficient consideration of :

- the real and powerful economic and political interests behind corrupt practices;
- the values that underpin societies and cultures which render imported models unsuitable for success;
- the right timing and most adequate sequencing of reforms for social transformations to effectively happen.

However, I am not saying this to discourage you. On the contrary...■



"Many others have failed before us... but we will succeed"

Words from the Project Manager:

Why this project?

Western Balkans Sub Regional Mechanism for Facilitation of Anti-Corruption(AC) Initiatives coordinated from the Macedonian CO is focused on defining a sub-regional strategic approach, knowledge management and exchange, identification of replicable project components, and support to implementation of lessons learned in critical AC field

Anti-corruption has emerged as a priority area for UNDP in the Western Balkans sub-region. Through the 2006 Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund, several Country Offices (COs) received seed funding for anti-corruption initiatives, and these projects and others have been initiated. Many of them are likely to expand over the coming years. In a context where several COs in the same sub-region are entering a relatively new field, it is timely to intensify cooperation and facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and replicable successful methodologies among COs for application throughout the sub-region.

This Project will create a sub-regional AC Strategy as mechanism to facilitate UNDP COs in the Western Balkans in pursuing anti-corruption initiatives. The Project is focused on defining a sub-regional strategic approach, knowledge management and exchange, identification of replicable project components, and support to implementation of lessons learned.

The Project Western Balkans Sub Regional Mechanism for Facilitation of Anti-Corruption Initiatives coordinated from the Macedonian CO also aims at further strengthening of the COs as a professional community. It will also advance their role in national and regional anti-corruption (AC) programming and will raise awareness among the COs about the programmatic implications of the need to strengthen the anti-corruption capacities and mechanisms of the countries in the sub-region.

This is especially perceived as a necessity in view of their EU accession process, and the requirements of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). Facilitation of the ongoing activities within the EU assessment processes and UNCAC implementation processes, as well as building up the required capacities at the national level, present a challenge both in terms of strengthening the inner capacities and cooperation among the COs in the sub-region, as well as in terms of their cooperation and coordination with the EU, other relevant international actors (UNDOC, OECD, CoE, Stability Pact), and the wider donor community.

The EC in its Progress Report published in November 2007, makes a statement concerning the entire sub-region that "The enforcement of the rule of law, notably through judicial reform, and the fight against corruption and organized crime are the top priorities". Also, all countries in the Western Balkans region have ratified the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). This creates for the UNCAC an additional niche to the need for the establishment of a coherent and sustainable anti-corruption policy based on a unanimously accepted and unique, legally binding mechanism. Therefore, in addition to the Aquis, the UNCAC should be the anchor ensuring a unique methodology based on consistent system of programmes and activities that arises from UNDP's comparative advantages.

It is therefore timely to intensify cooperation and facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and replicable successful methodologies among COs for the purpose of application throughout the sub-region.

The first phase of the project has made it possible to identify the experience and define the possible advantages of UNDP in order to lend support and help to the countries in the WB Region in their difficult fight against corruption. It is in this sense that we are trying to answer the question of how UNDP can use this opportunity for a renewed commitment and renewed political pressure? The process has been worked out carefully by using all relevant and available knowledge and experience in the efficient fight against corruption in the WB countries and further afield. We are strongly aware of the fact that in this part of the world, there has been an inflation of AC Strategies. It has enabled us to realise that it will be of the best value to have in mind the three main issues by identifying: What are our needs? What does the region need? What is the common denominator? On other hand, no government can operate in a haphazard fashion. There is a need for a structured approach in correlation with other UNDP activities.

Therefore, in the months to come we will be presenting more details of our



*Ms. Slagjana Taseva
Project Manager*

activities and process of development of the SUB REGIONAL Anti-Corruption STRATEGY. As I stressed earlier, it will not be an imposing, but it will be a facilitating mechanism. Not only for the UNDP COs, but also for all interested stakeholders and partners.

The first, Fact finding phase of the Project has been completed. By publishing this first issue of the Newsletter that we entitled as The FACE (Fight Against Corruption Enhanced), we have entered the second phase of sharing our idea and the achievements with the external partners so as to receive their reaction and comments. ■

Macedonian meeting/first conference

Aproved goals and define the structure of the future strategy

First sub-regional meeting was held in Skopje at the beginning of February 2008. The meeting was a part of the first Phase of the Project Western Balkans Sub Regional Mechanism for Facilitation of Anti –Corruption Initiatives. High representatives of UNDP Western Balkans Country Offices, a representative from Europe and the CIS Regional Office, as well as representative from UNDP HQ from New York attended the meeting organized by Macedonian CO

Introduction of the Project Western Balkans Sub Regional Mechanism for Facilitation of Anti –Corruption Initiatives (in future text only the Project) to the participants, recognition and approval of the final goals and proposition and definition of the structure of the key document from the Project - the future Anti-Corruption (AC) Strategy, have been the main elements of the meeting.

The participants of a one day conference were the representatives of the UNDP Western Balkans (WB) Country Office's (CO), **Mr. Phil Matsheza** from UNDP AC Democratic Governance Group, Bureau for Development Policy, New York, **Mr. Dan Dionisie**, from the UNDP Europe and CIS, several representatives from Macedonian UNDP CO, as well as **Ms. Maria Luisa Silva Mejias**, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia* and **Ms. Slagjana Taseva**, Project Manager, UNDP Macedonian Office.

After the introductory speeches and the discussions about the common problems which cut across anti-corruption fight in WB countries, the main part of the discussions were about how to concentrate on the structure of the future AC Strategy, which is one of the main Project goals.

WB Anti-Corruption, UN and the EU

In her introductory speech Ms. Maria Silva Mejias, the UN/UNDP chief in Macedonia CO underlined that there are five points of concern where participants of the Project should start so as to further realise and achieve the goals. Ms. Silva Mejias pointed out that last November the European Commission issued a report about the WB countries progress towards EU accession, where the fight against corruption is underlined as a common need. This EC political criteria for the WB countries is an op-

portunity to be used by the UNDP in its efforts to build the regional AC Strategy, said Ms. Silva Mejias, speaking about the first consideration.

She also spoke about focusing on the relevant, i.e. identified AC activities and actors that need further support and everything else that is sublimated in a very robust and clear program with very clear development results that will receive national and international support. As a point of concern Ms. Silva Mejias mentioned the need to identify UNDP's comparative advantages through WB CO's; the advantages of the fact that all WB Countries have ratified the UNCAC (United Nations Convention against Corruption), the first world wide legally binding instrument of this kind that provides a global response to corruption problems; and the last point of consideration – identifying the key national and international actors in the Region, already involved in the AC activities.

Also, Mr. Phil Matsheza, pointed out the EC, i.e. European Union and the WB countries aspirations toward EU membership as a very important element for the Project. He stressed that serious AC activities and fight are not possible without political will. But in the case of WB countries, instead of political will, what is relevant is the EU accession. Therefore, there is a need to include EC in the first stages of the Project.

The main Project goals were summarized by Mr. Den Dionisie. Creation of joint AC Strategy, knowledge management, creating a database of existing project in the sub-region WB, codifying learned lesson, recognizing the replicable models, creating the donors network, ect.

Mr. Dionisie underlined that one of that first ideas for the Project was to facilitate resource mobilization, and that project is about facilitating anti-corruption, without any impositions.



*Mr. Dan Dionisie
Policy Specialist*

Project phases and definition of the structure

The Project will be realized step by step in four phases – stressed the Project Manager Ms. Slagjana Taseva.

The **Phase 1, Desk Review and Fact Finding Mission** has been partially completed (at the time of the conference), as the data collecting, collecting and codifying the lessons learned, preparing of a matrix of UNDP AC activities and mapping of ongoing activities are in progress, said Ms. Taseva. The remaining three phases should be finished until November 2008. At that time we should be ready to present the AC Strategy, as a final document of this Project, she added.

In the future discussion the Project Manager should pay attention to the other strategic important questions (pillars) as

the **Political system, the Judiciary, Public administration and Local Self- Government, Law enforcement agencies/Watchdog bodies, Economic and Financial system, Civil sector, Media and Private sector**. This groups were identified together with the target institutions which may be active in the future AC fight.

At the end of the meeting, after the fruitful discussions about the questions which are in correlations with the phases of the Project, the Project Manager and the participants jointly proposed the structure of the key document, the future Strategy.

According the proposed structure, the main elements should be **Situation analysis, Internal UNDP capacity, Strategic approach to Anti -corruption, Program of anti-corruption activity, Building the Center of excellence and Partnership strategy.**

COs and other UNDP unit representatives participating at the meeting:

Ms. Maria Luisa Silva Mejias, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

Mr. Tetsuo Kondo, Deputy Director UNDP Kosovo;

Mr. Phil Matsheza, Policy Advisor. Anti-Corruption Democratic Governance Group, Bureau for Development Policy, NY;

Mr. Dan Dionisie, Policy Specialist, Public Administration Reform and Anti-corruption, UNDP Europe and the CIS Bratislava Regional Centre;

Ms. Olivera Puric Team Leader Governance Cluster UNDP Serbia;

Mr. Mato Meyer Programme Specialist Judicial Reform/Rule of Law, UNDP Serbia;

Mr. Miodrag Dragisic, SIC Team Leader, UNDP Montenegro;

Mr. Boris Ristovic, Anti-Corruption Project Associate Social Inclusion Cluster United Nations Development Programme, Montenegro;

Ms. Denika Blaclock, Policy Advisor, UNDP Kosovo

Mr. Thomas Dedeurwaerdere, Project manager, Capacity Building for European Integration Project, UNDP Kosovo;

Mr. Ljupco Gjorginski, Program Officer, Decentralisation Practice, UNDP, Republic of Macedonia

Mr. Fatmir Musa, Project Manager, Fighting Corruption to Improve Governance, UNDP, Republic of Macedonia, and

Ms. Aleksandra Vasilevska, Project Assistant, UNDP, Republic of Macedonia

Ms Slagjana Taseva, the Project Manager, UNDP, Republic of Macedonia



Identification of common or similar ac projects

Problems within anticorruption in the Western Balkans (WB) countries are the same or very similar. This hypothesis and practice has been confirmed again during the Project Manager recent visits to the Region of WB CO's as a part of the Project Phase 1, named as Desk Review & Fact Finding mission

It is crucial for the success of our final goal, defined as developing of a UNDP Strategy to support WB countries in addressing corruption, to create a database with the ongoing or recent anti-corruption (AC) activities in the region of West Balkan (WB), regardless of whether they are UNDP or someone else supported activities.

At the same time, there was the need for identifying and mapping different activities in correlation with the UNCAC (United Nations Convention against Corruption). This will help us to produce an accurate AC Strategy as part of the UNDP mission and in correlation with the region of the WB needs.

At the Phase 1 of the Project Western Balkans Sub –Regional Mechanism for Facilitation of Anti-Corruption Initiatives, those activities are described as:

- a) Collecting the data; b) Collection and codification of the lesson learned; c) Preparation of the Matrix of UNDP AC activities; d) Mapping of the ongoing activities; and the creation of an e-mail network.

All the activities of the Macedonia based UNDP office, as the Project coordinating office, have been finished over the past five months of the project implementation. At this stage the Phase 2 project activities are ongoing.

Montenegro AC activities -leading position Montenegro

Speaking about UNDP projects in the WB countries offices, the Project manager has identified several finished or ongoing projects ([Projects Table Annex 3a.doc](#)). What we can see immediately at first glance is that in some countries there is a progressive or mature phase of implementing AC Projects (both in terms of quantity and quality). On the other hand, some of the countries on the UNDP map are with only one or two projects. However, in all WB countries there are AC related projects, which is essential when we are speaking about a common AC Strategy.

From the UNDP Projects table we can see 3 projects running in Albania, one

project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3 in Kosovo out of which a wider Program is under way, 7 projects in Montenegro and four of them are running, 3 in Macedonia, two of which are in progress, and one project in Serbia. As we can see, the most advanced AC activities exist within the portfolio of the UNDP CO in Montenegro.

There are same or similar projects in different countries. For example: the project Access to Information has been implemented in two phases in Albania (from 2003-2005 and 2007-2008). A project with a similar title is ongoing in Kosovo as a two year Program.

It is the same case with the Development of the AC Legislation projects. This kind of project has been implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Montenegro.

At the same time, there are some unique projects in other countries as it is the Macedonian CO Project for reducing corruption at the local level. This Project aim is to work with the local authorities for the best results in the fight against corruption.

As we can see there are lots of possibilities to find a good and unique new idea about the possible facilitating of the AC efforts from the own, UNDP experience and to take and implement an already finished or ongoing project, which has been proven efficient in some of the WB countries.

UNCAC related activities

During the past months of this year the Project Manager based in Skopje UNDP Office has worked on the process of identifying different kind of activities that may be in correlation with the UNCAC ([Mapping & UNCAC.doc](#)).

The method of operation was to identify UNCAC priorities as they are defined in Article 1 of the Convention and after that to find common projects in WB countries that may be connected with some elements of the articles in the prevention



related chapter of the UNCAC. Thus, under the **Article 5** which is addressing **Development of anti corruption policies and practices**, we identified the ongoing or finished project in Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro.

In Macedonia there are two projects which are developed with the UNDP support., in Montenegro there are 5 projects, and in Albania there is one project supported by the UNDP office. All of them may be connected with Article 5 of UNCAC.

There are also several projects in connection with **Article 6** of UNCAC, addressing **Establishing of the anti-corruption bodies**. In Macedonia there are two projects, one is the under auspices of UNDP, in Kosovo there are 3 projects and two of them are within UNDP portfolio.

Efficient , merit based, non-partisan, trained and ethical civil service, which is in Article 7 of the Convention, may be seen in correlation within 2 Projects in the WB countries. One is in Serbia and this one is under the UNDP, and the second one in the Kosovo.

Also under the Article 7, where there are paragraphs related to **Transparent funding of political parties and elections; Codes of conduct for public officials; Transparent and objective public procurement and management of public finances;**

Public reporting-transparency in the public administration, ect. We can find many correlated projects which have been conducted with UNDP and other donors support.

The situation is similar with the **Independence of judiciary and prosecution service; Accounting and auditing standards in the private sector, Transparency among private entities, Prevention of conflict of interest/camouflage, Participation of the society, Prevention of money laundering**, ect., ect.

As the base for comparison we can use also the UNCAC **Article 33** related to **Protection of reporting persons (whistleblower); Article 34 for the Consequences of act of corruption, and article 35 - Compensation for damage.**

Some of the project we found as being correlated within UNCAC are the UNDP projects. Some of them are project of the European Commission together with the Government bodies and agencies, and some of them are projects of the watchdog organizations.

In the same Phase 2 of the Project Western Balkans Sub Regional Mechanism for Facilitation of Anti-Corruption Initiatives, there will be the further mapping and collecting data of ongoing AC activities which are in correlation with the main goal of the Project. ■

Usefully links

Western Balkans Sub-Regional Mechanism for Facilitation of Anti-Corruption Initiatives
<http://anti-corruption.pbwiki.com/>

Anti-corruption Practitioners' Network - a regional UNDP project that facilitates professional networking and capacity development for Anti-corruption agencies in Eastern Europe and the CIS
<http://anticorruption.undp.sk/>

UNODC's Anti-corruption page
<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/index.html>

UNDP's Public Administration Reform and Anti-corruption page
<http://www.undp.org/governance/sl-par.htm>

UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre's Public Administration Reform and Anti-corruption page
<http://europeandcis.undp.org/governance/parac/>