

Short Workshop Report Form

Number and title of workshop: WS 5.2 Gender Equality, Women's Security and the Millennium Development Goals: How far is Corruption a Hindrance?

Coordinator: Lilian Ekeanyanwu

Date and time of workshop: 11 November 2010 09:00 – 11:00

Moderator: Sudarsana Kundu, UNIFEM (now part of UN Women)

Rapporteur: Helle Dossing, Transparency International Secretariat

Panellists:

- Ezinwa Okoroafor, Country Vice-President, International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Nigeria
- Londa Esadze, Caucasian Office of Transnational Crime and Corruption Centre (TraCCC), George Mason University
- Cecilia Blondet, Proetica, National Chapter of TI in Peru
- Arwa Hassan, International Development Specialist, Berlin, Germany
- Lilian Ekeanyanwu, Head, Technical Unit on Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms, TUGAR, Nigeria

Main Issues Covered

The moderator outlined some of the themes to be discussed:

- Why and how does corruption affect women more than men?
- Why do women and men perceive corruption differently?
- Many genderised forms of corruption, such as sex for grades, other forms of sexual exploitation, and illicit abortion are not recognized by existing frameworks for measuring corruption.
- What are some of the solutions to reducing the gendered impacts of corruption?

The gendered impacts of corruption impedes the achievement of *all* MDGs through constraints imposed on access to services and financial resources, application of the rule of law and access to decision making.

Corruption is an accountability failure and it is, therefore, important to ensure that States are accountable and capable of delivering on gender equality commitments.

She referred participants to the UNDP/UNIFEM (now part of UN Women) primer on gender and corruption available at the UNDP booth at the conference and at the website and at (www.unifem.org).

Main issues from the presentations

Cecilia Blondet's presentation focused on poor women in rural communities. According to her, women form the poorest strata of the society. Gender biased institutional power structures and women's inability to claim their rights combined with their low economic status have led to women's sustained marginalization. As a result, women have taken a fatalistic approach and no longer seek to influence the state, thereby increasing the gap between state and the vulnerable population.

This calls for women's empowerment, which will make it possible for socially excluded women to access justice and claim their citizenship rights.

Ezinwa Okoroafor went on to speak about corruption and women's access to justice in the West African sub-region made up of 15 member states of ECOWAS.

She emphasized the need for all persons including the poor and disabled, to be empowered to take advantage of and use the legal system.

Challenges faced by women include:

- Customary and religious laws and practices
- Financial constraints occasioned by lack of access to the formal sector.
- Complicated or non-existent legal processes for right enforcement.
- Non-implementation of provisions guaranteeing women's rights.

There are many legal frameworks for actualizing women's rights, but there are great problems in terms of domestication and implementation.

Londa Esadze made a presentation on "Corruption, Gender and Trafficking in Women: possible correlations and legal solutions".

She presented the claims by researcher, both for and against on the linkages between women's political participation and corruption. Her own analysis of the top ten countries in the CPI and the percentage of women in parliament show a positive correlation – the more women, the less corruption.

Although the proposition of a direct correlation between the number of women in Parliament and the level of corruption was challenged by several participants and panellists, citing examples from Bangladesh and Peru, where more women in leading positions and in Parliament had not led to lower levels of corruption, there was agreement that it is important to increase the number of women in government to make governance systems more gender responsive and to reduce women's political marginalization.

Lilian Ekeanyanwu in her presentation focused on currently existing opportunities for engendering the processes of the monitoring mechanisms of UNCAC and UNTOC. The UNCAC review process which has commenced can be appropriated to encourage countries to report on the typologies of corruption which primarily affect women and in which the currency of exploitation is the Woman's body i.e. 'Body Currency Corruption'.

The big question is how to engender the monitoring process. Currently, the conception of corruption and the existing definitions do not include manifestations of body currency corruption. . Even though these typologies of corruption such as sex for grades, slave labour, illicit abortion and trafficking in persons are criminalized, the existing legal frameworks are archaic and do not provide deterrent sanctions. There is therefore a need to canvass for the expansion of the UNCAC and UNTOC review processes to capture these typologies in the monitoring. This will compel State Parties to review and upgrade their laws and

implementation processes in these areas.

Arwa Hassan's presentation was about increasing women's participation in government in Muslim countries. Building trust, breaking taboos and involving traditional and religious leaders".

She provided a case study of a project carried out in Mauritania by the German Government development agency-GTZ.

The project recorded successes in getting women involved in local governance by canvassing for the support of religious leaders and using the teachings of Islam. Her presentation asserted that conventional notions of women's inferior place in Muslim societies rests on misunderstood interpretations of Islamic teachings.

The GTZ Mauritania project on governance and women instigated public debate on women's rights where Imams participated actively. Women started to come forward with confidence and men started to change their perception of women.

The results were very positive: Female MPs now hold a third of seats in local and district assemblies and 18 % in parliament.

Main Outcomes

The panelists recommended a number of solutions and ideas for ways forward, including :

1. The need to build public accountability and governance systems that are responsive to women's needs, such as increasing transparency and access to information, generating sex-aggregated data on corruption for evidenced based policy making, citizen participation in monitoring public programmes and increasing women's representation in government.
2. Empower women so that they are able to influence governments and canvass for their own rights.
3. Simplifying governance processes to enable women to have greater access to governments, including demystifying the court processes to increase women's access to justice, electoral reforms for greater access to the political process.
4. Canvass for expansion of the reporting and self assessment templates for UNCAC and UNTOC to capture the typologies of corruption which impact mostly on women in order to encourage State Parties to report on their prevention and enforcement processes on those issues.
5. Building greater awareness on issues of gender and corruption, and using creative methods to gain support for women's issues such as using religious leaders and teachings. It is important to identify champions and work both with informal and formal levels of governance systems.

Main Outputs

The workshop was successful in terms of gathering around 50 participants who engaged actively in the discussions.

Recommendations, Follow-up Actions

Please see under Main Outcomes

Workshop Highlights (including interesting quotes)

Women's participation in decision-making and politics is a fundamental right of citizenship. We must make sure that governments are equally responsive to men and women. The gendered impact of corruption affects society as a whole and unless governments address these issues, the MDGs will remain unattainable.