

Participation of Society **GLOBAL TASK FORCE**

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Participation of Society

Corruption thrives wherever a lack of transparency prevails and where government and business activities are shrouded in secrecy. Corruption diminishes in direct proportion to public demand for integrity. It is for this reason that Article 13 of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) calls for States Parties to take appropriate measures to promote the active participation of civil society in the fight against corruption and to ensure that legislation promotes transparency in terms of information and procedures.

Where citizens feel that their rights to information and their freedom to express public concern about corruption are diminished, this often leads to civil unrest, political instability and a general breakdown of law and order.

There are a number of well accepted practices that support the participation of society in the fight against corruption and effective oversight of government, including access to information and whistleblowing legislation, the establishment of independent reporting and investigative bodies as well as making administrative and parliamentary committees more transparent through televised hearings, open meetings and invitations to witnesses.

GOPAC and Participation of Society

The Participation of Society Global Task Force (GTF-PoS) highlights the importance of parliamentarians engaging with their constituents and working collaboratively with civil society to raise awareness of corruption issues and lobby for legislative and administrative changes aimed at combatting corruption. It focuses on the representational role of parliamentarians in ensuring that the voice of the people is heard by government and reflected in appropriate anti-corruption legislation and it demonstrates the advantages of incorporating the technical expertise of civil society organizations in formulating policy and legislation.

The GTF-PoS engages and motivates GOPAC Regional and National Chapters and parliamentarians through the sharing of experiences and best practices, and by promoting practical tools and techniques for public engagement on anti-corruption issues. It helps different parliamentary systems develop suitable legislation to promote transparency, access to information, and protection of civil rights for those who take a stand against corruption.

The GTF - PoS National Workshop

The GOPAC GTF-PoS national workshop is a two-day event with the main goal of generating interest and commitment by parliamentarians to enhance engagement with civil society, and to ensure that those affected by policies are involved in the decision-making process.

The workshop also aims to provide participants with the tools to promote legislation that provides for effective public access to information; mechanisms for reporting and investigating complaints of corruption; and safeguards the rights of individuals who take a public stand against acts of corruption.

The GTF-PoS works with civil society organizations involved in the fight against corruption such as Transparency International and the UNCAC Coalition.

Objectives

- Generate interest and commitment from parliamentarians to enhance engagement with civil society
- Highlight the importance of social inclusion to ensure that women are properly represented and that minority groups are not marginalized
- Provide broad-based capacity-enhancing activities to participants focusing on their roles as elected representatives of society and their responsibilities under Article 13 of the UN Convention Against Corruption
- Develop a tailor-made action plan at the national level to raise public awareness of corruption issues and to educate the population on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption
- Consider appropriate legislative action to provide effective public access to information and protection of the freedom to receive and disseminate information relating to corruption

Guidelines

- Workshops are held in Parliament
- A GTF-PoS regional member acts as Workshop Facilitator
- The Global Secretariat develops the agenda and subject matter resources
- The Global Secretariat covers participation costs of the GTF technical experts
- The National Chapter covers all local costs