



Political Dialogue: an Instrument to Facilitate the Implementation of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption



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The adoption of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (CUAPLC), on July 11, 2003, clearly recognized the negative effects of corruption and its devastating effects on social, economic and political transformation in the African continent.

Similarly, Article 4(m) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and Aspiration 31 of Agenda 2063, illustrate the firm commitment of African leaders to instilling a culture of rule of law and good governance. Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063 even goes so far as to declare that by 2063 corruption and impunity will be a thing of the past.

The African Union Advisory Board on Corruption is tasked as the main continental body to monitor and ensure that Member States implement anti-corruption measures.

According to Article 20 of the Convention, national anti-corruption agencies are required to cooperate for the purposes of implementing the Convention.

Furthermore, according to Article 22, paragraph 5, point h), national agencies are required to report to the Advisory Board, at least once a year, on the implementation of the Convention.

As part of its efforts to increase and facilitate collaboration among key anti-corruption actors, the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption has initiated "Policy Dialogues" of African anti-corruption agencies. corruption, in accordance with Article 22.5 (c) of the Convention which recommends to the Council: "to develop methodologies to analyze the nature and extent of corruption in Africa, and to disseminate information and raise public awareness of the negative effects of Corruption and Related Offences", and following Decision EX.CL/Dec.891(XXVII) of the Executive Council of the African Union, which encourages the Advisory Board on Corruption "to continue its efforts to relaunch the activities of this organ, in order to promote the effective implementation of the AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption in Africa, to interact and collaborate with all organs and mechanisms concerned with the fight against corruption in AU Member States and at the regional level, with the aim of looking into the devastating effects of corruption and ill-gotten gains on the continent, and submitting a report to Council executive on concrete proposals to fight corruption on the continent".

The Annual Dialogue on Combating Corruption in Africa is thus an annual platform (flagship program of the Council), which brings together all key stakeholders to discuss and reflect on a specific thematic area relating to the fight against corruption.

The aim is to solicit their contributions, in particular on progress, challenges, experience and lessons learned in this area. The Dialogue therefore constitutes a platform for sharing and collecting knowledge and ideas, making it possible to formulate recommendations to be implemented.

The first edition took place in Arusha, Tanzania from November 15 to 17, 2017 and brought together around a hundred participants from across the continent. This meeting was organized in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and had the following objectives:

- initiate consultations on the action plan for 2018 in response to the Executive Council Decision cited above;
- obtain support for Project 2018 and the fight against corruption in general;
- engage in consultations on the Strategic Plan in response to the Executive Council Decision to enrich the Plan;
- brainstorm on measuring corruption in Africa, including how to integrate the issue of illicit financial flows into the current questionnaire of the Council on the Implementation

of the Convention (CUALPC).

The 2nd edition of the Dialogue took place from October 2 to 4, 2018 in Arusha and brought together 37 African anti-corruption agencies. The objectives of this second edition were to:

- Provide a platform for collaboration between the CCUAC and national anti-corruption agencies;

- Encourage a dialogue promoting the exchange of ideas and innovative thinking between national anti-corruption agencies on the measurement of corruption;

- Give national anti-corruption agencies the opportunity to disseminate the results of their research and to share information and good practices;

- Consult State Parties on accepted measures of corruption and compile any suggestions on possible corruption indicators;

The 3rd edition of the Dialogue was held from 9 to 12 October 2019 in Kigali, Rwanda and had the theme: "Towards a Common African Position on Asset Recovery".

The Dialogue focused on challenges and developments in the asset recovery landscape, with the overall objective of using shared experiences and lessons to inform the development of the African Common Position on Asset Recovery.

It brought together representatives from Member States, International Organizations, National Anti-Corruption Agencies, Civil Society, Academia and other stakeholders to reflect and debate on this topic.

In view of the health crisis, the 4th edition of the Africa Anti-Corruption Dialogue was held virtually from November 22 to 24, 2020, with the theme "Combating Corruption through Effective and Efficient Justice Systems".

This edition of the Dialogue brought together participants from national anti-corruption agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), media, academia, international organizations and other interested individuals.

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The Dialogue was organized in the form of 4 webinars, the titles of which are:

- Strengthen transparency and accountability in the response to the COVID19 pandemic;
- Fight against corruption through effective and efficient judicial systems ;
- Reflections on the state of the fight against corruption in Africa;
- Non-State Actors Forum.

The 5th edition of the Annual Dialogue of African Anti-Corruption Agencies whose theme "Regional Economic Communities: Key Actors in the Implementation of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption", was held virtually from November 9 to 11, 2021.

She gathered National Anti-Corruption Agencies (NACA), Civil Society Organizations, Universities and other Stakeholders.

Presentations and detailed reports were presented and rich exchanges between the participants took place on the state of the fight against corruption at the level of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the mechanisms for the fight against corruption, policies and laws adopted at the level of RECs and member countries.

The National Anti-Corruption Agencies (NACA) exchanged on best practices in the fight against corruption at the national level, and cross-border collaboration at the sub-regional level, and Non-State Actors, jointly reflected with the Council on how to strengthen their cooperation.

The 6th edition of the Annual Dialogue which was still to be held virtually, will take place towards the end of this year 2022, under the theme "Strategies and mechanisms for transparent management of funds intended for Covid-19", in response to the various concerns raised in this area by civil society organizations and donor countries and organizations.

It will above all be an opportunity for the Advisory Council to make an assessment of the measures that have been taken by each State Party, to comply with the directives given to them, for a transparent management of the funds allocated for fight the Covid-19 pandemic. Guidelines aimed at strengthening transparency and accountability in the management of resources used in the fight against COVID-19 during the period of the pandemic, and which make it possible to verify that the management of resources allocated to COVID 19 complies with the provisions of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, and national anti-corruption laws.

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In this sense, the States were invited to:

- Set up or plan an online platform to provide information to the public and shareholders, on the resources received and their use;
- Establish or plan an online platform to provide information on public procurement and calls for tenders in order to reduce the opacity of calls for tenders and contract awards;
- Ensure that the names of the beneficial owners and shareholders of the companies to which contracts have been awarded are accessible to the public;
- Audit COVID -19 resources every quarter, and make the corresponding audit reports public;
- Develop/review/strengthen the participation of stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, and the private sector in the management of COVID -19 resources;
- Provide a mechanism for citizen involvement in monitoring COVID -19 resource management during the pandemic, and to set up hotlines to report cases of corruption and misconduct;
- and to enforce the laws, and bring actions against corrupt persons and ensure the protection of whistleblowers and witnesses.

This 6th edition would be another opportunity for an exchange of experiences between the States and the Advisory Council, to feed the Council's documentation on good practices within the framework of this theme.

Ultimately, the main objective of the policy dialogue is to provide a platform to create synergies between the implementing body and the various institutions, regional and continental actors, and other stakeholders in the fight against corruption. corruption in States parties.

The policy dialogue will also provide a platform for building consensus on strengthening coordination and harmonization of efforts among all stakeholders, and minimizing duplication through a common understanding of the Convention.

It also makes it possible to identify policy frameworks and propose strategies to create a political and financial environment conducive to the engagement of the private sector and civil society.

As such, on the sidelines of the political dialogue, the Council has organized since the 3rd edition organized in Kigali in 2019, the forum of civil organizations in order to involve them fully in the fight against corruption and similar offenses, as well as in the popularization of this Convention, in accordance with Article 12 of the Convention.

Finally, the Political Dialogue creates an informal framework for judicial cooperation in the prosecution of corruption offenses between States Parties to the Convention.

In short, the Political Dialogue is proving to be an important working instrument of the Advisory Council in the implementation of the AU Convention on the Prevention and Fight against Corruption, and that the participation of national authorities and agencies for the fight against Corruption of States Parties, to this continental forum on the fight against corruption, is of paramount importance for the future of the African continent.