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African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AU-ABC)

## **Report of two Day Expert Workshop on *Report Writing*, Organized by GPAD- UNECA on 4-5 February 2012 at Kuriftu Resort, Debre Zeit, Ethiopia:**

**Introduction:** A meeting of experts on Report Writing took place at Kuriftu Resort, Debre Zeit, Ethiopia from the 4-5 February 2012. The ultimate objective of the meeting was to brainstorm among scholars and practitioners on how best to write a robust report to the Executive Council, as prescribed in Article 22 (5. h) of the African Union Convention on Corruption. It was agreed that such report should go beyond a mere descriptive and be more analytical in nature. In addition, it was also intended to discuss and provide a comprehensive methodology approach that will lead to a production of a substantive report on the progress made by State Parties in complying with the AU Convention on corruption.

**Objective and Expected Outcomes of the Meeting:** UNECA invited leading experts including three members of the Board to the meeting. Also in attendance were three members of staff of the GPAD-ECA and two members of staff of the Secretariat of the Board, as well as representatives of national and international anti-corruption institutions, such as the UNODC, OMBUDSMAN office, and renowned academic experts on governance and anti-corruption from within and outside the continent. The expert meeting was animated by four presentations. The first day of the meeting was devoted to presentation and discussion of past reports written by the AU-ABC to the Executive Council; lessons on how similar reports were written with specific reference to AGR and UNCCOR; and proposal on how the July 2012 report should be written. The second day of the meeting was dedicated to analysis and recommendation of methodology (ies) to be employed and time-line for writing the report.

### **Welcome Remarks and Introduction of Participants:**

The meeting was opened by Mr. Said Adejumobi who warmly welcomed all the participants to Kuriftu Resort and wished them a fruitful deliberation. He highlighted the objectives and the expected outcomes of the meeting to include thinking through the report writing process with the AU-ABC; strategize on how to come up with a good report that will not be descriptive of the Board activities alone but that which is substantive in nature- a report that addresses the progress made

by the State Parties in complying with the AU Convention on corruption and recommendations; Finally, to come up with strategies on how to gather information for the report and put in place time line for writing the report.

**Presentation of Papers by Experts:**

- a. *Annual Reports of AU-ABC on corruption: The past experiences*, by Prof. Adolphe Lawson
- b. AU-ABC Report on the Implementation of the AU convention on Corruption- Framework Proposal by Ambassador Leonidas Havyriamana
- c. The implementation of UNCAC (UNODC Methodology and approach to report writing: Lessons for AU-ABC by Ms. Brigitte Strobel-Shaw, the Chief, Conference Support Section, Corruption and Economic Crime of UNODC Vienna, Austria;
- d. UNECA methodology and Approach on African Governance Report (AGR) writing: Lessons for AU-ABC by Prof. Said Adejumobi, the OIC- GPAD-UNECA.

**Major thrusts of the presentations and discussions**

1. Sources for Writing the Report
2. Mandate and Constituency of the Board
3. The Structure of the Report
4. Borrowing (Tapping) from best practices the (UNODC and UNECA) Experiences
5. Visibility of Report with option for re-packaging
6. Timeline Issues
7. Key Questions that emanated from discussions
8. Recommendations made by Participants:

Following each of the above presentations, there was an extensive and exhaustive discussion on each of the paper thereby leading to various questions, suggestions and recommendations on how the AU-ABC report for the July 2012 Summit should be written. Some of the major conclusions of the day are highlighted below with explanation.

***Sources for Writing the Report***

- There was a consensus among the participants that sources of data should go beyond information gathered from the completed questionnaires (completed by the anti-corruption institutions and government officials), and that a broader approach to information gathering be employed:
- The statist nature of the current source of data was argued to be restrictive and therefore should be broadened (information from the State Parties and anti-corruption institution was argued to be from once source, the state.
- Efforts should be made to tap from other sources of data available, e.g. documentation from CSOs, the citizens, and data from reliable and credible literatures on the state of corruption in the continent

- The issue of shadow report by the civil society on the report was raised and it was proposed that a multi-stakeholders' participation approach that include the civil society organizations in data gathering and validation workshop is better as this will prevent two conflicting reports.
- The forthcoming advocacy missions by the Board members should target State Parties that have responded to the questionnaire to probe relevant stakeholders for more information to populate the report. For example, corruption in the private sector should also be investigated.
- The expert Committee should identify key NGOs that work on corruption and make use of their data in countries that have responded to the questionnaire
- Relevant media should also be engaged for data and information on corruption
- It was agreed that advocacy mission is critical to the report writing: Participants proposed that there is a need for AU-ABC to prioritize advocacy visits to State Parties that have responded to the AU-ABC questionnaire for more information to make the July 2012 a robust report.
- It was also agreed that advocacy mission to ratify the convention should be prioritized

### ***Proposed Structure of the AU-ABC Report***

There were different suggestions as to what the structure of the report should look like. The recommendation that dominated the day discussion was a structure that embraces the following:

- *Descriptive Section*
- *Analytical Section*
- *Prescriptive Section*

### **Proposed principles that should guide the writing of the report**

- Objectivity - to guarantee report's credibility
- National and continental ownership by the people rather than by the government
- Popular Participation and inclusiveness- methodological and stakeholders validation workshops
- Rigorous of approach - the process should be scientific

### **Methodologies**

- ✓ **Desktop Research (Primary and Secondary)**
- ✓ Considering the context, it was agreed that AU-ABC and UNODC cannot use the same report writing template, the UNODC Peer Review mechanism was argued not to be applicable for the AU-ABC report writing.
- ✓ It was however agreed that the UNODC data could be useful for AU-ABC report writing exercise, but application for permission to the relevant State Parties may be required.
- ✓ A composite methodology was recommended.

### ***Timeline Issues***

- Considering the dates that the AU-ABC report is to be submitted to the Assembly (July 2012, and the fact that the report must be submitted earlier in May for translation into all the four AU official languages, it was agreed that some of the recommendations coming out from the meeting may not be accommodated in the July 2012 but the subsequent reports
- Considering the limited time, there may not be the need to re-invent the wheel, data and information from AGR, UNODC and CSOs should be collected and utilized for the July 2012 report
- Review of the current questionnaire is critical to ensure a holistic coverage of the Conventions, however, it will not be feasible for the 2012 report because some State have responded to the questionnaire already, but the exercise will be required in the future

***Some of the Recommendations made and Consensus Reached:***

1. AU-ABC should Collaborate with the two institutions (UNODC and UNECA) and make use of the data generated from State Parties (it was emphasized that Permission would be required from the affected State Parties before UNODC data on State Parties can be made available to AU-ABC)
2. Emphasis should be laid on credibility of methodology and approach, as these will guarantee continental acceptability and popularity of the report
3. Put together in the report anti-corruption practices that are good and make recommendation where suitable for such practices to be adopted
4. Data sources should go beyond the present questionnaire to include others sources- CSO, Advocacy mission
5. The report should go beyond being a statist
6. Preparation for the background information should simultaneously go alongside the Board's advocacy missions
7. Effort should be made through the advocacy missions to increase State Parties responses
8. There is a need to develop a workplan for the report writing exercise ( Considering the limited time of 3 months at the Boards' disposal)
9. UNECA to engage technical experts to support the Board in writing the report