

INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION CONFERENCE 2024

Vilnius, Lithuania 18-21 June 2024

SESSION REPORT

Please know you may design the structure of this report to better suit the session. It's important to capture the key outcomes and solutions proposed for the future.

Session Title: Challenging Paradigms: Leading With Integrity And Gender Perspectives In Masculinized Industries

Date: 21 June 2024

Time: 05:15 PM - 06:15 PM (GMT +3)

Report prepared by:

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Moderated by:

Verena Zoppei
Advisor in the Sector Programme Anti-Corruption and Integrity
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Panellists:

- Viola Bölscher
Head of Sector Programme Anti-Corruption and Integrity
GIZ
- Silvina Coria
Head of Internal Oversight
OPCW
- Inés Castresana
Coordinator of the Project Integrity in the Private Sector
Poder Ciudadano

Share the thematic focus of the session, its purpose and corruption risks?

Leadership with a gender perspective is fundamental for a business that creates value for its stakeholders and is sustainable in the long term. The academy, civil society, the private and the public sector have made progress in showing the nexus between gender and corruption; however, more work needs to be done to empower women from different backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, and races to occupy leadership positions, especially in traditionally

masculinised industries, to break down barriers that still exist, such as the fear of reporting corruption for fear of reprisals.

The session focused on the intersection of gender and anti-corruption efforts, examining how corruption affects women and marginalized groups differently and exploring the role of the private sector in mitigating these impacts. The purpose was to discuss strategies for empowering women, addressing gender disparities in corruption, and enhancing integrity in both public and private sectors. Corruption risks identified included such as sextortion, but exclusion from economic opportunities and the reinforcement of existing gender disparities were also discussed. The session highlighted the role of the private sector in promoting gender equality and integrity.

Summary of panellists' contributions & discussion points (please be as detailed as possible)

Viola Bölscher pointed out that women are disproportionately affected by severe forms of corruption like sextortion, where sexual favors are demanded in exchange for services. This kind of corruption not only reinforces existing gender disparities but also exacerbates systemic inequalities. Marginalized groups, including women, often suffer more from corruption and often lack of resources and legal assistance to report corrupt acts and access justice. She advocated for gender-focused corruption prevention programs in the private sector and detailed strategic actions for companies to adopt, such as including sextortion in risk analysis and promoting female leadership. Viola highlighted the multifaceted relationship between gender and anti-corruption, emphasizing that women are often victims of corruption but can also be powerful agents of change when given the opportunity. Cooperation with the most affected populations could lead to the most impactful changes. She noted that a more diverse workforce within a company correlates with lower levels of corruption, as the corruption chain is disrupted when individuals from different social groups and genders are involved. The private sector plays a crucial role in promoting gender equity and preventing corruption. To maximize their influence, companies should classify sextortion in their risk analyses, develop gender-focused training and protocols, and foster an organizational culture that emphasizes gender equity, non-discrimination, and non-violence. Promoting female leadership and fostering diversity are essential strategies. Such efforts not only contribute to a more ethical and trustworthy corporate culture but can also enhance productivity, talent retention, and the company's reputation. Viola highlighted the importance of including gender-sensitive anti-corruption efforts at all levels of corporate policy. Viola mentioned how the German feminist development policy can help to promote gender-sensitive anti-corruption measures by addressing systemic inequalities, empowering marginalized groups, and fostering inclusive, transformative approaches that challenge the roots of both corruption and gender discrimination. She introduced the Alliance of Integrity as an effective multi-stakeholder initiative that brings together representatives from the private sector, civil society, public sector, and academia to promote business integrity and prevent corruption. It builds an extensive global network of anti-corruption and compliance experts, facilitates knowledge exchange between stakeholders and contributes to a level-playing field through strong collective-action approaches. Within their "From Companies to Companies" programme the Alliance for Integrity trains experienced compliance officers from bigger companies to pass on their knowledge to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The initiative includes amongst others training programs for women entrepreneurs and female executives as well as peer-to-peer learning formats, like for example "IntegriTee" in India, providing the platform for women to discuss integrity challenges with a focus on gender diversity and inclusion. The Alliance for Integrity thus actively promotes gender-

sensitive anti-corruption efforts worldwide, providing tailored support and resources to enhance integrity and transparency in various business environments.

Silvina Coria discussed strategies to empower women in male-dominated industries, emphasizing the need for mentorship and sponsorship programs to support women's advancement. Transparent promotion and evaluation processes are essential to reducing biases and ensuring fairness. She highlighted the importance of diversity and inclusion training to challenge and change existing stereotypes and biases. Supportive networks and affinity groups within organizations provide women with a sense of community and belonging, which is crucial for their professional development and retention. Silvina noted that men have historically benefited from such networks and that women, especially those starting their careers, need similar support. Furthermore, she highlighted the potential of AI in identifying and mitigating corruption risks, provided these technologies are designed and managed without biases. Diverse teams should be involved in AI development to minimize inherent biases, and training datasets should be representative and scrutinized for biases. Regular audits and transparency in AI processes are essential, along with integrating gender-sensitive criteria to promote equality. Creating inclusive work environments is fundamental for genuine progress. Protecting whistleblowers and promoting transparent processes are crucial steps every organization must take to empower women and uphold integrity. Silvina emphasized that strong mentorship programs are key to breaking down barriers for women. Transparent promotion processes not only ensure equity but also strengthen organizational integrity by reducing biases. Companies and organizations that embrace gender diversity in leadership are better positioned to challenge unethical behaviors and drive long-term success, aligning with broader goals like the Sustainable Development Goals. She concluded that intersectionality in integrity is crucial for developing effective and inclusive anti-corruption strategies.

Inés Castresana discussed the work of Poder Ciudadano in addressing gender and corruption intersections, emphasizing the need to view corruption as a human rights violation and a form of gender violence. She explained that women are more significantly affected by corruption due to pre-existing power inequalities and systemic vulnerabilities. Women, as primary users of public services such as healthcare and education, are particularly dependent on these services, and corruption in these sectors directly impacts them. Sextortion, a specific form of corruption, disproportionately affects women, making it essential to incorporate a gender perspective in anti-corruption policies. Sextortion is underreported due to stigma and fear of retaliation. She stressed the importance of incorporating a gender perspective in anti-corruption policies and the need for gender movements to integrate integrity perspectives. She also promoted actions like zero tolerance for gender-based violence in the public sector and the creation of gender-sensitive reporting protocols. Inés articulated the critical intersection of gender and corruption, asserting that corruption must be viewed as a human rights violation and a form of gender violence. Without such a perspective, integrity policies would be incomplete as they would fail to address the differentiated impacts of corruption on various groups. Inés emphasized the urgency of integrating an integrity perspective within gender movements to ensure comprehensive anti-corruption strategies. She advocated for zero tolerance of gender-based violence in the public sector and for public campaigns and policies that integrate gender perspectives. Strengthening anti-corruption leadership within gender movements is crucial, as is raising awareness about sextortion as a form of gender-based violence. Inés called for protection systems for victims and whistleblowers. Promoting a more egalitarian culture within organizations and addressing abuses of power that affect women in integrity policies

are vital steps. She stressed the importance of women's participation at all levels of power to ensure the effectiveness of these policies.

Main outcomes of the session (include quotes/highlights and interesting questions from the floor)

The fight against corruption must recognize that women and marginalized groups are disproportionately affected.

Viola: " [Women and other] marginalized groups are not only disproportionately affected by corruption but also strong drivers of change."

To address gender disparities in corruption, the private sector can implement specific strategies such as promoting female leadership and integrating gender perspectives in compliance practices. While AI has the potential to help combat corruption, it is crucial to ensure that it is free from gender biases.

Silvina: "AI has the potential to revolutionize our approach to corruption but we must ensure it is built and managed without bias."

There is a need for gender-sensitive anti-corruption policies that consider the unique vulnerabilities of women and other marginalized groups.

Inés: "Corruption must be addressed as a violation of human rights and as a form of gender violence."

Some of the actions discussed in the session included the importance of creating networks, classifying sextortion in risk analysis, providing employee training with a gender perspective, developing controls and prevention protocols, creating reporting channels for whistleblowers, implementing inclusive and gender-sensitive policies, promoting female leadership, and fostering diversity to reduce corruption levels.

Key recommendations for the future and concrete follow-up actions

Key recommendations for the future include the need for private sector companies to prioritize gender-sensitive anti-corruption efforts, implement the strategic actions discussed in the session, and conduct regular audits to ensure the effectiveness of their prevention measures.

Concrete follow-up actions include amongst others:

- Develop and implement gender-focused corruption prevention programs in the private sector.
- Establish mentorship and sponsorship programs for women in male-dominated industries.
- Integrate gender-sensitive criteria into AI systems to prevent bias.
- Promote zero tolerance for gender-based violence in the public sector and develop gender-sensitive reporting protocols.
- Strengthen collaboration between anti-corruption and gender movements to create comprehensive strategies.

What can be done to create opportunities for scaling up the solutions discussed in the session? And by whom?

To create opportunities for scaling up the solutions discussed in the session, collaboration between governments, businesses, funders, civil society, and marginalized groups is essential. Transparency, accountability, and inclusivity are key factors in scaling up successful anti-corruption and gender equality initiatives.

- **Private Sector:** Implement inclusive policies and promote diversity in leadership positions to create a more ethical and transparent corporate culture.
- **Governments:** Develop and enforce gender-sensitive anti-corruption laws and policies, ensuring protection for whistleblowers and victims.
- **Civil Society:** Advocate for the integration of gender perspectives in anti-corruption efforts and support initiatives that empower women and marginalized groups.
- **International Organizations:** Provide technical assistance for gender-sensitive anti-corruption programs and promote best practices globally.

By coordinating efforts across these various stakeholders, opportunities for scaling up gender-sensitive anti-corruption solutions can be significantly enhanced, leading to more comprehensive and sustainable impacts.

Is there a specific call to action to key stakeholders, such as governments, businesses, funders, civil society, young people, journalists or any other stakeholder that should be noted? Please specify if relevant.

A specific call to action is directed towards private sector companies to prioritize gender equality, non-discrimination, and anti-corruption efforts in their policies and practices. Governments are urged to create an enabling environment for businesses to promote gender equity and prevent corruption, while civil society and funders are encouraged to support initiatives that empower marginalized groups and promote transparency and accountability.

Rapporteur's name

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Date submitted

27 June 2024

Action! This report needs to be emailed to iacc-av@transparency.org within 24 hours of the session. If you wish to update the report, please do so by 21 July. Thank you.