

African Anti-Corruption Research Network launched

From the 9th to 11th May 2023, The African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC), in collaboration with Stellenbosch University and GIZ convened a meeting of researchers, academics, anti-corruption agencies and other relevant stakeholders, including the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre in Arusha, Tanzania. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together key stakeholders involved in the fight against corruption to brainstorm on the idea of the establishment of an African Anti-Corruption Research Network (AACRN).

When giving the opening remarks, AUABC Vice Chairperson Hon. Pascal Antonio Joaquim stated that AUABC wanted to establish a research network as an effort to ensure that Member States adopt anti-corruption measures that are backed by evidence and data. He said this required a joint effort hence their bringing the delegates together to deliberate on the logistics of setting the network, and coming up with an African research agenda. Presentations by different stakeholders were made on topics like The Importance of Research in the Fight against Corruption, the connection between research and public policy/ policy making, and effective development of a research agenda. Anti-corruption agencies also made presentations on the research that they had done.

A steering committee comprising of AUABC, Stellenbosch University, Kenyatta University, Cameron Anti-Corruption Commission(CONAC) representing anti- corruption agencies, African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), Association of African Anti-Corruption Authorities(AACA) and an Independent Researcher was elected by the delegates to kick-start the process of operationalizing the network.

At the end of the workshop, delegates came up with the following outcomes:

1. There is a need for research on corruption and anti-corruption to focus on the role of the multilateral institutions in promoting the fight against corruption
2. The AUABC should consider establishing a research Unit that would liaise with key stakeholders and have overall coordination of popularization of the Network's research outcomes.
3. The need for strong laws and mechanisms to deal with impunity within African Union Member States who have ratified the AUCPCC
4. The challenges of lack of clear definition of corruption and recommends that State Parties to the AUCPCC to consider a possible definition
5. Proposed that research should focus on assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Anti-Corruption bodies

6. Conduct a mapping on the body of research available on the Anti-Corruption field/topic.
7. The need to establish scientific research structures to promote evidence-based advocacy against corruption
8. The importance of institutionalizing research chair on corruption to facilitate coordination, resource mobilization, advocacy and networking
9. The need to enhance accessibility of Anti-Corruption information, educational resources, and research outputs to policy-makers, scholars, the civil society organizations and the media, including training for Government Officials
10. The importance of increasing working alliances and strengthening partnerships between universities, research institutions and the NACAs in translating research into policy and practice
11. The need to have a systematic approach in fighting corruption that involves tackling cultural values beyond the legal and regulatory frameworks
12. There is a need to produce comparative research materials at a Continental level. This is important in triangulating cases in Africa, and come up with new ideas on areas of research, understand other perceptions, promote interdisciplinary of the areas under consideration and compromise on areas of investigation
13. To have a strong youth engagement and representation to ensure sustainability of the intergenerational activities on combatting corruption.
14. Recognizing the positive trends within the NACAs in conducting various types of research, there is however, the need to strengthen research capabilities including financial and human resource areas, as well as establishing research units
15. Promote participatory/action research to enhanced public awareness, develop a research interface between researchers and community members, and introduce and develop a culture for demand-driven research interventions
16. The AACRN shall have a defined governance structure, refined objectives with key activities to facilitate the implementation of the research agenda including information dissemination, and the overall coordination network.