

Promoting public-private cooperation to counter corruption in Rwanda with the Office of the Ombudsman

Experts from the Basel Institute's International Centre for Collective Action (ICCA) were in Kigali, Rwanda on 25-27 January to support the country's Office of the Ombudsman in developing Collective Action strategies for public-private sector cooperation to tackle corruption.

To kick-start this process, a workshop on the topic was held on 26 January in Kigali, preceded by preparatory meetings with the Office of the Ombudsman and the Private Sector Federation, the latter being an umbrella organization representing the business Chambers and Associations in Rwanda. The workshop brought together roughly 80 participants, mostly from a cross-section of the Rwandan private sector, as well as members of the public sector, and civil society. The event was opened by the Ombudsman, Ms Aloysie Cyanzayire and the meeting was facilitated by the Permanent Secretary of the Ombudsman's office Mr Xavier Mbarubukeye and Gemma Aiolfi of the ICCA.

In the presentations by Will Nero and Gemma Aiolfi, a variety of examples of anti-corruption Collective Action as a tool to promote trust, and to create a sustained dialogue with the aim of identifying joint activities for the private and public sectors, were described as an introduction to the workshop participants as to what might be possible for them to achieve through Collective Action.

In the second half of the workshop, small group sessions provided opportunities for in-depth exchanges between business and government with members of the Ombudsman office acting as facilitators to the discussions. Both private sector representatives and the civil servants raised examples of corruption challenges that they faced in their daily operations, as well as pointing to good practices among both sectors to mitigate corruption risks, and recommendations for further continuation of the dialogue and what more the private and public sector could do together to prevent corruption.

The ICCA and the Office of the Ombudsman will consolidate the ideas that emerged from the discussions, presenting main resolutions and suggested activities for implementation, with follow up through the office of the Ombudsman and the ICCA.

The visit to Kigali by Gemma Aiolfi and Will Nero happened to coincide with Transparency International Rwanda's press

conference on 27 January 2016 to announce the results of the 2015 edition of the Corruption Perceptions Index. The ICCA provided comments to the press corps on hand, supporting the speakers from TI and the Deputy Ombudsman Mr Clement Musangabware, who noted the progress made by Rwanda to improve its ranking in the annual CPI, while also stating that work is still much needed to improve collaboration between the public and private sector to tackle all forms of corruption, as well as greater interaction between Rwanda and regional states on anti-corruption best practice.



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