



ARPAC Progress Report

2005-2006



I. Overview:

The Arab Region Parliamentarians Against Corruption (ARPAC) - the Arab Chapter of GOPAC-was established in Beirut in November 2004 during a meeting entitled “Parliamentarians against Corruption: Improving Transparency and Accountability in the Arab Region.” This meeting was attended by 40 Parliamentarians representing 11 Parliaments: Jordan, Bahrain, Algeria, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Palestine, Kuwait, Egypt, Morocco, Yemen and Lebanon.

II. Objectives:

ARPAC’s main objectives consist of encouraging founding members to establish national chapters, persuading national chapters to build coalitions with the media, civil society movements and academics, and calling on the Arab governments to ratify the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). In addition, ARPAC arranges for national and regional workshops to promote methods for fighting corruption and to build the capacity of members of Arab parliaments to be better equipped to fight corruption and to promote transparency and accountability in the Arab region.

III. Report on Activities:

- 1) On **June 15 and 16, 2005**, in partnership with the Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR) and the Egyptian People’s Assemble, ARPAC has organized the **Arab Parliamentary Conference on the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)**. The conference was attended by a large number of parliamentarians from the Arab region, and key representatives from civil society, the judiciary, the private sector, the media, and oversight institutions. The aim of the meeting was to raise awareness among parliamentarians on the principles of the UNCAC and look at ways to practically use the UNCAC as a tool to fight corruption. The conference focused also on the oversight capacity of MPs throughout the region. ARPAC’s chairperson, Dr. Nasser Al Sane, and Secretary General, Dr. Houssam Badrawi presented their positions during the opening ceremony.
- 2) In parallel to the Cairo meeting in **June 2005**, **ARPAC’s board meeting** was held. During the meeting board members set the agenda for the coming months, and established a list of priorities, the first being the legal registration of the organization.



- 3) In **November 2005**, ARPAC was **registered** under Lebanese law as an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) with headquarters based in Beirut.
- 4) **On November 30 and December 1, 2006**, a meeting was held in partnership with World Bank and K in Kuwait City, Kuwait. The meeting entitled **“The Role of Parliamentarians in Controlling Corruption in the Arab World: Developing an Arab Parliamentarians Handbook”**, brought together parliamentarians as well as experts from the Arab region in order to discuss the adaptation of the Parliamentarians Handbook into the region’s context. The participants focused on the causes and consequences of corruption in the region, on the role parliamentarians can play to curb corruption, and several specific case studies were introduced.
- 5) In December 2005, ARPAC released the **report** of the establishment conference entitled **“The Role of Parliaments in Curbing Corruption: Facts and Experiences from the Arab World”**, in cooperation with the World Bank and Kuwaiti Parliamentarians Against Corruption (KUPAC).
- 6) The proceedings of the Kuwait meeting, as well as extensive research from ARPAC-Secretariat, and the contribution of Dr. Paul Salem, resulted in the release of the **“The Arab Parliamentarian Guide to Control Corruption” at the end of December 2005**.
- 7) **On February 16, 2006** an **organizational meeting** was held in Rabat- Morocco in order to discuss the logistics and task attributions for the May 2006 ARPAC annual meeting.
- 8) **In April 2006**, the official website of ARPAC (www.arpacnetwork.org) was launched.
- 9) From **April 6 to April 9, 2006** ARPAC was a very active partner of the **5th MENA Development Forum (MDF5)**. ARPAC organized 2 sessions:
 - A) **The UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and Related Legislative Reform in the MENA**. ARPAC along with the World Bank Group (WBG) and the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) held a session to discuss the UNCAC and the difficulties encountered in MENA



countries in encouraging national legislations to implement the convention.

- B) Initiatives for Strengthening Parliamentarians as Champions for Reform in the Arab World.** This session was held in cooperation with the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB), the World Bank, and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD). The session looked at the previous efforts of the four partner organizations in the region. Two themes were also focused on during breakout sessions: Governance, Anti-Corruption and Reform; and Economic Reform and Building a Strong Investment Climate.
- 10) **On May 24 and May 25, 2006** the Second annual meeting of ARPAC was held in Rabat, Morocco, the meeting was entitled **“Towards Improving the Oversight Capacity of Arab Parliamentarians: The Arab Parliamentary Conference to Fight Corruption”**. The meeting attended by more than 100 parliamentarians from the region was organized in cooperation with the Forum on Moroccan Women Parliamentarians, the Moroccan Parliament, and the PNOWB. Additional partners to this meeting were: The World Bank, Open Society Institute (OSI), USAID, Westminster Foundation For Democracy (WFD), and PWC Logistics. The major themes discussed were: the Role of Arab Parliamentarians in Budgetary Oversight, and the Establishment of Budget Offices in the MENA, Conflict of Interest Legislation. Additionally, “The Arab Parliamentarian Guide to Control Corruption” was presented, discussed, and distributed.
- 11) ARPAC, in partnership with GOPAC, organized a workshop in Guatemala during the 12th International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) entitled: **“Toward Strengthening Civil Society-Parliamentary Dialogue.”**
- 12) ARPAC, in partnership with GOPAC and the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), organized a parliamentary side meeting during the UNCAC Conference of State Parties the State Parties that took place in the Dead Sea-Jordan in December 2006. A Parliamentary Action Plan was agreed on and the action plan focused on improving legislation, increasing the oversight capacity of parliamentarians, and engaging the civil society in monitoring the implementation of the UNCAC.
- 13) **From June 2005 until December 2006** several ARPAC **national chapters** were launched and operated on the local level, coordinating activities with the Secretariat. These National Chapters are:



- A) Palestine
- B) Yemen
- C) Kuwait
- D) Jordan
- E) Egypt
- F) Morocco
- G) Algeria

IV. Future Projects:

- 1) ARPAC will be focusing for the coming couple of years on the following themes:
Code of Conduct for Arab Parliamentarians and conflict of interest,
Improving the Oversight Capacity of Arab Parliamentarians in Monitoring Public Funds as well working on the monitoring the implementation of the UNCAC.